JAMAICA HANSARD

Parliamentary Proceedings

of the

HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



Session 2013 – 2014 VOL. 39 #3

JANUARY 21, 2014 – MARCH 25, 2014
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JAMAICA HANSARD



PROCEEDINGS
of the
HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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SESSION 2013 – 2014

TUESDAY, January 21, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:28 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence

HON. ROGER HAROLD CLIFFORD CLARKE, CD, (PNP), Westmoreland, Central, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries

REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. NATALIE GAYE NEITA-HEADLEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sports and Deputy Leader of the House

MR. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, Attorney General, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister

HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing

HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce

HON. DAMION ORANDY CRAWFORD, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Rural, Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment

HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

OTHER MEMBERS

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern
MR. HUGH CARL BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Western,
MR. PAUL LENNOX BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Andrew, West Rural
DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western
DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western
MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central
MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, Eastern
MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern
MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central
DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern
MR. DESMOND GREGORY MAIR, (JLP), St. Catherine, North Eastern
MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western
MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern
MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central
MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern
MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western
MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern
MR. KEITH ANTHONY WALFORD, (PNP), St. Ann, South Western
MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western
DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Dr. Lynvale Bloomfield.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

STATEMENT BY MINISTERS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I am sure you will permit me to welcome back all the Members to the House, and to wish for everybody a peaceful and productive 2014. We, in this Chamber will, believe it or not, be even more productive than we were last year. And in that regard, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the Opposition, and ourselves, are now agreed on a schedule to complete Private Members' Motions starting today, and we intend to deal with remaining ones and new ones as they are placed before us, while we continue to complete the legislative task ahead.

(MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

By the middle of next week, I will be able to share with the Opposition the major legislation that we intend to have enacted during this quarter. Again, it's going to be...

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. PAULWELL: Okay, we will share it at the end of the sitting, today. And I want to give notice already Mr. Speaker, in relation to the Schedule for the Supplementary Estimates - we will pass this formally to the Opposition, but just to announce that there will be the tabling of the Supplementary Estimates on 25th February. But even before that, between the 4th and the 14th, the Tax Measures Committee will be established and will meet. That will be chaired by the Honourable Minister of Finance and Planning. On the 25th the Tax Measures Committee will complete its hearings and the Report tabled at the same time the Supplementary Estimates are tabled here.

(HON. JULIAN ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. PAUL LENNOX BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Andrew, West Rural, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western, entered and took his seat.)

(Mr. Desmond Gregory Mair, (JLP), St. Catherine, North Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP), St. Thomas, Western, entered and took his seat.)

On the 27th February the PAAC to meet to consider the Supplementary Estimates and the PAAC on the 4th March to Table its Report, and it will enable us to have the debates on the Supplementary Estimates on the 6th March 2014.

I will also, in another week or so, be apprising the House on the timetable for the estimates for the new financial year and budget debates that will ensue, so that there is sufficient time for full preparation.

So, all in all Mr. Speaker, we are going to have to meet regularly, every week; we will be meeting on time. And I really want to urge Members again, to be present for our 2:00 p.m. start, and to entreat that we be as productive as possible, as we intend to break all records in terms of the business that we complete during this Session. (Applause)

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Smith.

Mr. D. SMITH: Just to say that the Opposition also extends greetings to the Members on the return from our Christmas break.

The House Leader spoke to circulating a schedule for Private Members' Motion. We can confirm that we have received the Schedule, but I think the House Leader went a bit further in saying that we agreed. I don't

think we agreed, notwithstanding the fact that I don't anticipate any major difficulties, but the fact is that we do have the Schedule and we are working together on it.

(HON. COLIN ALFRED A. FAGAN, (PNP), St. Catherine, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, entered and took his seat.)

The House Leader also said that at the end of this Session we will be updated with the - sort of a Schedule for the first quarter of the year which, in fact, is excellent because we really don't want to be forced into a situation that confronted us in the last quarter of last year, where Bills were brought to this House without notice, and hurried debate. I would like to believe that that is a period that we would like to put behind us.

And it was during that period where it was established that the foul-up in tabling of the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Bill, which traditionally, would be tabled in this House where the Minister sits, it was tabled in the other House that created some serious confusion to Members and the public in general. I am told that there is precedence to it, although it is not the norm. And as such, we like the idea now of discussing on a quarterly basis, the programme for the next quarter.

I note with interest that we are looking at tabling of a Supplementary Budget, some time in late February, and the Opposition has already named all its Members for both committees: the Tax Committee, in relation to 65A in the Standing Orders, and we will be participating very vigorously during the period.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern, entered and took his seat.)
(HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, North, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning, with responsibility for the Public Service, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the Opposition - Leader of Opposition Business. Just to indicate that the Legislation that we intend to deal with this quarter will include rules governing - a law dealing with fiscal rules. That's one of the priorities that we will have to enact by the end of March. Then there is the Omnibus Banking Act.

(MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West, Central, Leader of the Opposition, entered and took his seat.)

This is to provide a modernized, comprehensive regulatory framework for banks, near banks, and building societies, including consolidated supervision of groups of companies. And then we are going to have the additional - some additional tax reform to be introduced, as well as the Flexible Work Arrangements Law to be approved.

And under the IMF arrangement, we will also have a new Electricity Act that will be introduced and passed. There are going to be some other legislation: the Anti-Gang and the DNA Bills. We expect to have them approved by the Parliament. And there is also, very importantly, the registration of political parties, to be enacted as well during this quarter.

So, as you can see, Mr. Speaker, that is a very hefty schedule, and we intend to complete those works by the end of March 31. Mr. Speaker, at this time, under Statements, the Minister of Education will make a Statement.

(MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Rev. Thwaites. (Applause)

Rev. THWAITES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this Statement is intended to cover Ministry Paper No. 8 of 2014, laid today on the Table of the House, entitled: *A Preventative Initiative in Schools to Ameliorate Jamaica's Crime Problem.*

Mr. Speaker, the public distress about crime, the personal disappointment that comes to lives because of criminal behaviour, and the extreme loss to the nation, cannot be dealt with only by the security forces. And certainly, as the Minister of National Security has often stated, cannot be dealt with only by methods of repression which are, very often, the cry that the public make.

Members of Parliament, members of the society generally, and particularly, parents and community members, all have an extremely important role to play in crime prevention. The Ministry of Education can't help much with crime control, but we can help with crime prevention. And Members are being asked to note the Ministry's preventative initiative to help ameliorate Jamaica's crime scourge, and to partner with the *Unite for Change* project which is to be launched by the Ministry of National Security.

Mr. Speaker, this is an instance, we hope, of joined-up government, but much more than joined-up government, it has to do with the collective energy and goodwill of the entire society. Criminals are not born, Mr. Speaker, they are formed, often by neglect or poor socialization. The major positive environments in the formative process are: school, church, and family. Every child goes to school at some time.

Mr. Speaker, do you realize how fortunate we are in Jamaica? In many societies with far greater wealth than ours, a place in school from the early childhood cohort to the end of a secondary experience is not assured. It exists in Jamaica, and we must make use of it because there is no other institution with such potential for positive socialization. As such, law-abiding habits ought to be expressly connected with the school experience.

A recent local study has been done, you know, Mr. Speaker, and it is appended to the

Ministry Paper under reference No. 8 of 14, identifying the links between the behaviour patterns of children and their later anti-social conduct. And the study, done by a research group in the police force notes that often, anti-social tendencies which later burgeon into serious criminal behaviour can be predicted from school days. Please see the attached study to the Ministry Paper, entitled: *Education on Crime - Evidence from Prison Inmates in Jamaica, dated March 2012.*

Studies, including this one, have shown that many who end up committing serious crimes were frequently absent from school, Mr. Speaker. They exhibited cognitive or social abnormalities from the earliest stages. They weren't assessed or treated adequately at the time. Mr. Speaker, listen to this: *"had little or no family support or teacher support; had little or no family support. And, most of those who end up with sentences for the most violent offences had dropped out,* or, Mr. Speaker, what you and I know, *"graduated with inadequate, or no certification."*

Mr. Speaker, we in Jamaica are going to have to be very frank with ourselves, you know. It is not all right to have a child unless you have some intention to, or basic means in order to provide for that child, and not just the mother, but to mother, and father, as well. (Applause) It cannot be a matter of pride, how much *pickney* you get; it must be an issue of responsible parenthood which is going to prevent the *fatherless crew* at the penitentiary from rearing its head in society, and costing us millions, and costing lives, and great economic and social cramp.

The Constabulary Force study identified certain junior high and high schools which the individuals, many of them in the study, attended - fact, Mr. Speaker, if you look at page 11 of the Appendix to the Ministry Paper, you will notice at Table 9, the name and type of schools most frequently featured in the sample in descending order and frequency. And it's frightening, sir.

There are 18 such schools and the number of their students, at one time or another, who have ended up in this category of offenders is noted. No one wants to put a pall of guilt or gloom on these institutions, but they have to be singled out, or they have been singled out only with the desire, as far as the Ministry of Education is concerned, to be offered special attention, as I will state hereunder.

There are 56 seriously affected schools, inclusive of the 18 identified by the study under reference. And, Mr. Speaker, beginning in 2014 - February 2014, next month, a special intervention will be crafted for each of these schools to do the following: first, to identify troubled, deviant, and seriously disadvantaged students; (b), second, to assess and address their situations; and thirdly, to prevent dropouts.

Mr. Speaker, I visited a high school in mid-island, recently, and it's doing much better than it was before, under effective leadership, but there are still a number of children who are dropping out of that school; the girls, because of early pregnancy, and the boys, either because there is no money to come to school or because of fractious behaviour which cannot be tolerated.

One of the difficulties is that nobody is tracking those students, what happens to them when they drop out and until many of them end up in chronically social deprived situations, generational social deficiencies, or in fact, in the most abject criminal situations.

Building from the emergency response beginning next month, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry also proposes a system-wide intervention to continue in 2014 and beyond. It will, one, administer a test to determine the social and emotional state of *at-risk* students, first in an early grade, and later at an intermediate level, for example, Grade 9 in selected schools.

This is not randomly chosen. Teachers will tell you that from Grade 1 they can isolate those students with particular problems. Perhaps not all of them, Mr. Speaker, but enough to warrant those being singled out for particular attention. And also, with the onset of the teenaged years and everything physical and emotional that takes place then, the Grade 9 is another pivotal period and therefore we must provide the assessment - the diagnosis and assessment that is necessary.

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Rev. THWAITES: Thank you.

Complete development of regional referrals centres to treat with major dysfunctional tendencies. I'm pleased to report Mr. Speaker, that the promise that was made for the enablement of referral centres in Mandeville, Montego Bay and Portland are well underway. I would wish that they could've opened in January, but before the onset of the Summer these will be available for teachers not only to say this child has a problem but I don't know what to do with them, but to refer them for further therapy - for therapy and for further attention at a nearby referral centre. Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, we should try and have one of these properly equipped in every parish. (Applause)

We want to offer teachers in primary schools training in counselling, parental engagement and primary therapies related to challenged children. And I'm happy to report that we've had discussions with the Jamaica Teachers' Association who are entirely supportive of this option for their members who are the serving teachers in this land.

We are requesting a revision of the courses in behavioural management in all teacher training institutions to ensure that they cover the emerging behavioural challenges being displayed by students.

Mr. Speaker, my own survey of the teachers' colleges tells me that many of the courses in relation to social control in the classrooms are quite old in their construction and that teachers simply are not being sufficiently taught how to deal with children with a severe social deficit that too many of our children are coming in now. They don't know how to handle it and they must be better equipped to deal with this unpostponable but very difficult task.

Further, the Ministry of Education by April, will appoint two social workers in each of the six educational regions, who will network with relevant ministries and agencies.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the network of social agencies in the country is not as thin as

we fear. There are many different agencies and ministries in Youth, in Justice, in Health, in National Security who are trying to do things that are similar to this, or contributory to this. But we work in silos too often and we need to bring together - and these social workers will have a low - an entirely limited - we need many more - will be start of interlacing those services for the benefit of our challenged children.

And very importantly, Mr. Speaker, the programme is going to provide instruction to principals at the National College of Education Leadership, on how to identify and respond to disturbed students.

What a change it would be, Mr. Speaker, what an epiphany, if in fact, those children who are disruptive, who are misbehaving, who are otherwise maladjusted, are not put in the back of the class, are not sent outside, sanctions and punishment may well be necessary, but rather we are, in fact cutting our noses to spite our faces if we don't realize that therapy is what is necessary. You have to deal and instruct with instances of this order as if it were a disease, as if it were an epidemic rather than as something that you think you can banish from your consciousness. Implemented a programme to detect and address disruptive conduct and dropout risk in certain grades by September 2015, and expand the opportunities for students to become involved in uniformed groups, sports and creative arts and thereby to engage and reform those with negative tendencies.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is very important if controversial, engage the police and the military, not as confrontational elements for our young people who see them as enemies, but rather, in a constructive way, as parts of a team, to periodically attend the most vulnerable schools in a nonthreatening way to befriend, promote order and reinforce positive, constructive behaviour. (Applause)

And I'd like to indicate, Mr. Speaker, that early approaches to both the military and the police through the aegis of the Minister of National Security indicate their interest and willingness. They would rather spend their time coming into the school, learning about and socializing the students rather than chasing them down dark alleyways when they're armed at nighttime. That is what we have to do.

Mr. Speaker, we have to provide in the community, an alternative to gang engagement. And so starting in 2014, the Ministry of Education proposes to strengthen all the programmes in schools, including home, family life and personal development programmes as well as the civics curriculum.

This, all in an effort to highlight appropriate values and attitudes expected of students, as well as to sharpen their understanding of the dead-end nature of gang involvement, as well as to reinforce positive and law-abiding behaviour patterns. These programmes will also emphasize character building and positive socialization as both preventative and corrective approach to antisocial behaviour.

Mr. Speaker, we invite those who have the capacity to write material, or develop plays, games that can inure towards positive value

orientation to do so. We have to do this for ourselves, and we have to recognise that there is no element in the society; creative security forces, church, parents, pedagogues, whoever, legislators who can absent themselves and point their finger to anyone else for a solution. The schools will be instructed to devote substantially more time within their periods for assemblies and form periods to the student's personal and social development in order to enforce order and discipline, wholesome interpersonal relationships and respectful speech.

You know, Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago I had the privilege of going to a school in the constituency of the Member for North East St. Elizabeth, and they had just had a tragedy, lost a student to violence there. And I listened to a form teacher pulled together students and discussed life issues with them in a way that encouraged them to express their frustrations and fears, and elicited from them commitments about their own behaviour. One may think of this as being superficial, but it is there that you sow the seeds. And if repeated enough and reinforced enough by a culture which does not necessarily do so, then it seems to me you have a better chance of guiding those students on the straight and narrow path.

Over the next three years schools will be enabled to intensify informed groups, physical education and sports and cultural engagement. And we're making modest financial provision so that we can encourage this and working hopefully, even ever more closely with the Division of Sports in the Office of the Prime Minister. Two persons with social work training skills have indicated will be deployed, and where necessary, teachers and volunteers will be chosen, trained and given responsibility for engaging students in sporting and cultural pursuits, and appropriate teaching and learning materials are being prepared.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we had a - sometimes we do valuable work and we turn our back on it. There is a publication that I've come across, a programme in fact, entitled Valuable Pathways, which was developed four or six years ago to inculcate values and attitudes, and it was put down and replaced by what? I have read through it and sought advice and it's one that will enable students to develop positive values and attitudes to improve behaviour in school, home and society.

And, Mr. Speaker, because we know of the critical role of parents, I've asked the National Parenting Commission to assist in this programme, to develop appropriate values and attitudes not only towards their children, but to others in their community. And one hopes, one dearly hopes Mr. Speaker that the media, the mass media, will be willing to be engaged as an important partner in this process.

Every school, Mr. Speaker, needs a community of care. It's not just for the Ministry, it's not just for the Board or the Principal or the teachers to turn out wholesome, young Jamaicans, every school needs a community of care. It won't cost us much. We invite today, and I trust that this

will have the support of the entire Legislature, we invite and challenge the service clubs, the sports clubs, the churches, the friendly societies, all other civic groupings to identify a school of special interest and commit themselves to a programme of youth mentorship in that school. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

Rev. THWAITES: Many of the students who do not know who their father is, one of the aspects of the study that I referred to, Mr. Speaker, indicates that very many, if not a majority of those incarcerated, had either no relationship or a very rocky relationship with their father. This has something to do with their behaviour and their position at the end of the day. It will create a community of care in our schools, if we recognize that school is not a place where you send di pickney go to, but rather you engage yourself, as so many do and so many more must, then it seems to me you can work in cooperation with the school boards, the administrators and the teachers in this regard.

It won't cost us anything, you know, sir. These - so many of the solutions to the social maladies in this country lie within our pocket and within our own wisdom. It is a matter of the will to change it. (Applause)

I'm pleased to say that a coordinating committee has been identified, which will include representatives of the Association of Guidance Counsellors, Deans of Discipline and School Safety, and will also have a wide ministerial - inter- ministerial complement. An eminent psychiatrist has been asked to chair it and I will announce the members of the committee shortly. It includes behaviour risks, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers and representatives from the Ministry of Health, National Security, Justice and Sports and Social Security.

I believe that there will be a cost factor for all of this, Mr. Speaker, but much of it can be afforded through inter- ministerial and interagency partnership and by the reallocation of existing resources.

Mr. Speaker, Members are being asked to note this initiative by the Ministry of Education. And more than that, more than that, each in our own constituencies and spheres of interest - spheres of influence, to commit ourselves and participate in this effort to prevent antisocial behaviour, to foster wholesome values and attitudes for ourselves, the benefit of ourselves and for the future generation.

May it please you. (Applause)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Holness.

Mr. HOLNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, no one with reasonable mind could disagree with what the Minister of Education has just said. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it is very good that the Minister is able to present a study to confirm what we've all suspected, that our education system as it is now, contributes to crime in the society. And it is good that we have data to use in the analysis of the problem.

But let me say to the Minister, Mr. Speaker that we have already analyzed this problem and there are solutions already in place. And what is disturbing, I would say,

and most Jamaicans would find this disturbing, is that we are always trying to reinvent the wheel. We're always trying to make a new intervention. But, Mr. Speaker, I'm not hearing from the Minister of Education, the kind of profound change that is necessary.

What I hear is another band-aid on the problem. I don't hear a programme that will address, Mr. Speaker, the almost 20,000 youngsters who leave the education system every year with no form of certification. And it is out of that pool that comes the students who end up in our prisons that form part of this study.

I can't quarrel with the Minister for presenting a band-aid solution, temporary in the interim. But you know, Mr. Speaker, I am fed up with the band-aids, let us deal with the problem with a big vision.

Mr. Speaker, when I had the opportunity, we laid down a policy, the National School Safety and Security Policy, and what we did at that time, we made sure to put in each school that was affected, a dean of discipline. We increased the number of school resource officers and I have to give credit where credit is due, the whole business of placing police officers in schools started under the former Minister of Education, Maxine Henry Wilson and former Minister of National Security, Peter Phillips. And it was a good programme, and we expanded it to ensure that schools that were affected by high levels of crime and antisocial behaviour had at least one school resource officer.

Mr. Speaker, the National Safety and Security Policy spoke to a strategy of diversion, in other words, Mr. Speaker, the same thing that I heard the Minister come to say, we are going to invite policemen into school and the military into schools to come and give talks that is being done, almost on a regular basis. And the Minister of National Security can attest to that, that the police have that as part of their traditional interventions to, go to the schools, that is nothing new, it's nothing new.

Mr. Speaker, what would be new, if you really want to show that you are going to tackle this problem, is to have coordinated with the Ministry of National Security, regular searches of our schools.

(*Sotto voce* comments by a Member)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, I hear a *sotto voce* remark from a Member, it is a very important point; schools are not prisons. But you know, there needs to be a debate as to what is the school in our society. Is the school somewhere where you just go and send your children and you turn your back on it, and you said the school is there and you forget about it?

Mr. Speaker, the school is probably the most important institution in the society. (Applause) Hold on, hold on; let me make another point. I happy to know you agree, but, Mr. Speaker...

Mr. PICKERSGILL: That's impatient of debate.

Mr. D. SMITH: You don't like anybody interfere with the Prime Minister, so shut up!

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. D. SMITH: Let the Opposition Leader speak without interruption!

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, and I don't want to be partisan in this. It is a very important point that the Parliament of Jamaica needs to appreciate. We must decide whether or not it is the society that shapes the school or it is the school that shapes the society. And until we make that fundamental principle established that our schools must be the nursery of our citizenry, then we will continue to have schools that generate a population out of which we have persons with this great propensity to commit crime.

It is a fundamental principle, Mr. Speaker, because we have to establish that what is illegal in the society is also illegal in the schools. Often times, if you want to make an impact on the education system and its impact on crime in the society, because that is what the Minister just brought us here in Parliament in a Ministry Paper to say that the education system is having an impact on crime.

Government MEMBER: You don't agree with that?

Mr. HOLNESS: Of course, but if you really want to make an impact then you need to establish clearly, that schools have rules and breaking those rules have consequences, and schools don't have lower laws than what the society have. That it is in the schools that you start to abide by the law. (Applause) That is where you start to make profound and fundamental changes. Which is why we advanced the concept of searching in schools, because what was the great manifestation of that link, was students being influenced in their communities to carry weapons whether it is knives or guns, and they take that same behaviour into the schools. We must establish the schools as zero-tolerance areas for the possession of weapons and anti-social behaviour. That is want I want to hear, if you really want to break that link. We are not turning the schools into prisons we are turning the schools into schools, into places where you go to learn to become good citizens. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I am tired of the band-aid, tired of it. When we recognize that coming out of the school system every year where over 20,000 students, 90% of whom were boys, who would end up in some form of anti-social behaviour, we put in place the Career Advancement Programme. We recognize that it is better to treat the problem in the education system, which is much cheaper than to treat the problem in law enforcement.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

Mr. HOLNESS: Precisely, in the correctional system. So it was a better use of public resources to prevent anti-social behaviour from transitioning into the society, deal with it in the schools, and it meant, Mr. Speaker, that we would have had to change the foundation, the legal foundation on which schools exist in the country.

Because, schools exist on the basis that parents give the right to the principal to teach their children. It is a legal principle call, well you know it Minister *loco parentis,* that's it,

did I get it correct, I think so. But that is it, the schools exist on that basis that is where all your laws are generated from.

Mr. Speaker, schools need to have...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, schools need to have legislation that establishes them in their own right, with rules and regulations.

Mr. Speaker, it is very challenging for schools to administer their rules, because the school rules, Mr. Speaker, are not treated as if they were the law of the land. You know, Mr. Speaker, the response shows how seriously they take the issue and how much they believe that the band-aid measures can work.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

Mr. HOLNESS: No what you would have done is to create an institution that has parallel enforcement as the rest of the society. Let me give you, Mr. Speaker, let me give you a perfect example. Let me give you a perfect example.

Many times, Mr. Speaker, the schools will find a student taking a knife to school, and what is the response to that? The response, 90 per cent of the time, Mr. Speaker, is that, it is not reported; it is treated within the schools. But it should be a requirement that once you detect an offensive weapon in the school, it should be reported...

A MEMBER: Somebody reports it.

Mr. HOLNESS: It is not reported, 90 per cent of the time it isn't. However, if that child is on the road and that child is accosted by a policeman and the knife is discovered that child gets into law enforcement. So it would appear that there is a distinction between breaking the law in the school and breaking the law in the rest of the society. What we need to ensure is that our schools are well coordinated with national security activities. So that a crime committed in the school is immediately reported, so that a student understands that the school is not a safe haven. That a student has the same obligation as the rest of the society to obey the law...(Applause) ...and that is when you start to make that difference, that is when you start to change the schools from having students leaving them and going out into the rest of the society not appreciating the importance of following the law. It is a profound - it is a fundamental change that is what it is.

So, I am not trying to belittle what the Minister has presented. I am merely saying that in the grand scheme of what this Parliament needs to do, this is a band-aid. We need to continue the investment in the Career Advancement Programme. We need to prevent the problem from moving out of the school system and into the correctional law enforcement system. Those who were trained and have skills demonstrate a greater capacity to resist the temptation of entering illegal activities.

Mr. Speaker, the identification of students at the earliest stages who show behavioural challenges is critical and we support the work that is ongoing. Because Minister you will agree that that is nothing new, good.

Mr. Speaker, because I would want, therefore, to put to the Minister that at some point it was early in my time at the Ministry, the Teachers' Association came to us to say

they estimate that at least five per cent of the population of most schools, and they were talking about high schools, have students whose behavioural problems may be above the capacity of the school to manage and therefore, they would need a facility of referrals, which you have just spoken of.

Mr. Speaker, we built in Malvern, St. Elizabeth, a school that would start that process and we intended to have them right across the island for boys and girls. It was in your constituency if I recall, it is not a prison. But it was a facility for referral. And I would like to ask the Minister what is the status of that and is it being used as a facility to deal with those students whose behaviour is above the capacity of the school to handle, beyond rather, the capacity of the school to handle.

Mr. Speaker, I have on the Question Paper, questions asking the Minister about the National School Safety and Security Policy. So, Mr. Speaker, I will rest my presentation and allow the Minister to answer the question on the school in Malvern and later on in the agenda we will take the question.

The Deputy SPEAKER: I have an order, Mr. Mair. So Mr. Hylton.

Mr. André HYLTON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to commend the Minister on an excellent initiative. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I represent a constituency that is quite diversified. A matter of fact, last check we found - we have approximately 13, what we refer to as inner-city communities and so we have varied challenges which I believe this kind of initiative will help with our youths and our youngsters. But, Mr. Speaker, I just really want to say to the Minister and to the Honourable House that the problems that we're facing in Jamaica a lot has been done to address these issues, but, Mr. Speaker, Marcus Garvey many years ago invited us as a people to emancipate ourselves from mental slavery. The problems that we're having everyday that in some cases that we have used band-aids to correct, comes directly from the plantation and until we look squarely, Mr. Speaker, it's not a romantic conversation that we wish to have or a lot of people want to have, but until we look squarely at the damage, psychological damage, that occurred to our people on the plantation with a view to finding a clinical approach, a deliberate clinical approach to reverse that psychological damage, Mr. Speaker, then we're going to continue year after year doing things that may not deal with the root cause.

(Cross talk)

Now, Mr. Speaker, that discussion we can have. We have had many discussions because the argument is, Mr. Speaker, slavery has ended a 175 years ago. But if you should look at the way we treat our children, a child didn't just become a criminal, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Member, please stick to the specific....please stick to the specific...

Mr. André HYLTON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A child does not become a criminal overnight. We have to find out what that child

went through from the parenting – as the Minister referred to and, also, how we as a community treat that child. I would also like to recommend to the Minister, Mr. Speaker, that we look...

(Cross talk/The Speaker gavels)

...that we look at how we treat our boys different -

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Hylton. Let me just remind this Honourable House that the Minister having made a Statement, the response must be questions to the Minister. I do not expect Members to rise to make a speech.

(Cross talk)

And I will not permit any more speeches if you have questions to ask, ask them. (Applause)

Mr. André HYLTON: Mr. Speaker, I thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was merely laying the foundation to get to the question, Mr. Speaker. But I would like to ask the Minister, have we considered whether in this series of recommendations in this programme, how we treat with our boys separate from girls because I believe that's a real issue in the school, Mr. Minister, the way boys learn versus the way girls learn. So I would like the Minister to look at that issue as well.

The next thing I would like to ask the Minister and if it can be included in this programme is, he spoke of the mentorship, which I believe is an excellent idea but, Mr. Speaker, just yesterday I was told of a story of a young sixteen year-old boy in one of my communities who was shown a gun...

(Cross talk)

...and the youngster, Mr. Speaker, was being initiated by a negative group in the community. So, Mr. Speaker, there is some sort of initiation that is going on...

Mr. WARMINGTON: That's not a question.

Mr. André HYLTON: ...but a lot of initiations are negative and my learned Member over there knows what I am talking about. And I am therefore asking, Mr. Speaker, whether we want to consider the youngster, especially young men at adolescence, whether there is some sort of initiation in whatever form of initiation or even through this programme to let them understand what it is to be a man. These thirteen/fourteen year-old boys who are in schools, has anybody started a discussion with them about growing up to be a man and what does that take. Can it be included in this programme, Mr. Speaker, because if there is not a positive initiation, there is likely to be a negative initiation? I thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Dr. Campbell. And remember...

Dr. CAMPBELL: Yes man, yes, yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to ask for permission to speak from a seat other than mine.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Permission granted.

Dr. CAMPBELL: Mr. Speaker, those who say that it cannot be done should not interrupt those who are doing it.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Dr. CAMPBELL: It is a commendable initiative of the Minister to look at preventing as opposed to treating with some of these issues.

Mr. SAMUDA: I, no bother come here with no speech, you know, ask a question.

A Government MEMBER: Come on behave yourself. (Laughter)

The Deputy SPEAKER: I am assuming... (Gavels) I am assuming that this is the preamble to the question, go ahead.

Dr. CAMPBELL: Mr. Speaker, just like other Members, I too was sent here by a constituency.

MEMBERS: Ahhhhh!

Dr. CAMPBELL: (Chuckles) They voted, so I am representing them.

(Cross talk)

But, Mr. Speaker, the issue is this, most initiative that you implement in a school will end up being some sort of temporary measure or some sort of band-aid; most initiatives that you do implement in a school, because the fact of the matter is that the real problem didn't start in the school. The real problem started in the homes -

Mr. D. SMITH: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: What's your point of order?

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Smith.

Mr. D. SMITH: I don't think you should allow the House to sit here and deliberately break the rules of the Standing Order. The rules clearly state that the person with the portfolio responsibility will have some latitude from the Speaker to respond other persons will ask direct questions. And I just can't sit here and allow you to flout the rules like that.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Your point is taken. (Gavels) Your point is taken, Member. I suspect there might be some amount of exuberance being displayed, but I am reminding Members that you are to ask questions. I will allow for a brief preamble, if necessary, but I do not wish for you to make a statement. The Minister has already made his Statement; you are to ask questions and I am going to be very firm on this. I'm therefore asking Members to cooperate.

Dr. CAMPBELL: Mr. Speaker, it is indeed, a question and let me cut the run up. I want to know of the facilitation that will be made for the individual Members of Parliament to play an active role in this programme because there are several times when programmes are launched nationally...

A MEMBER: Excellent question.

Dr. CAMPBELL: ...but on that individual basis the powers that be don't get involved in it. What facilitation will be made for persons at that individual level? Will the Members here be required to be a part of that mentorship programme to visit their schools as well, because some don't, and to become critically involved in that programme?

The second question is in relation to implementing some sort of educational programme in a similar way within the correctional facilities. The rate of recidivism of repeat offenders is about 26 per cent, what sort of programmes are we going to put in place to ensure that those persons, when they

come out, that they are now marketable and they can find something else to occupy their time, so that they don't end up repeating that offence or some other criminal offence?

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Mair.

Mr. MAIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, in your presentation I gather what you're trying to do is to detect at an early stage young men and women who might be in a troublesome situation who might evolve into criminal activity. In your presentation you alluded to something which I feel is at the heart of this problem and that is parenting. Our teachers have the burden of a part from teaching, parenting the children, which I think is wrong. My question is, wouldn't you feel it would be far much better to deal with this matter from its core, which is parenting. And probably the time has come where we put in place legislation, if it's possible, policy positions where we can hold...

(Cross talk)

I'm asking what the Minister's opinion is.

…where we can hold parents accountable for neglecting their children, because it's not fair for them to bring these children into the world and then pass it on to the State to deal with the matter.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Dr. Chang.

Dr. CHANG: Mr. Speaker, I have three questions. Straight questions, Minister.

A MEMBER: No run up.

Dr. CHANG: I don't take any run up. Spin bowling. (Chuckles)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Spin bowling, all right.

Dr. CHANG: First question is, will the students who are identified in the schools as problem students - once they are identified, will the social workers be allowed to follow them to the parents or their home situation? Because treating them and counselling them in school and sending them back to their home circumstances will not benefit the individual. Secondly, will you be taking a closer look at the competencies of the teachers in those schools and find some way despite the current Education Act to make reassignment, relocation, or retraining? From your Statement, you are looking at the curriculum of the teacher's colleges, that's fine. But we have a clear and present danger in the schools that you have named and oftentimes teachers can be - the lack of competency of some of the teachers can be a problem.

If you don't mind me giving a short anecdote, I know of a distinct case where a student was about to be expelled from school, a young man. I have a special relationship with a very good teacher and happened to come across the individual. And after discussion it was identified that the young man was giving trouble because his only family was an older brother who was in prison and he wanted to go to prison to join his brother. After discussion, he came back into the school, passed four CXCs and is now a very honest police officer with high integrity. (Applause) So something has to be done to ensure that you have teachers can identify and discuss the problem, because had he not crossed the path of that particular teacher who then said what is happening would have gone

expelled and maybe have joined his brother or maybe be killed.

The third thing you raised, which I would like to ask, are you making any special institutional arrangement for coordination of the social services. I have had some experience there and this is a major weakness. Every service commands the turf like a gang and refuse to work with each other, even when you push hard and you need some institutional level because in my first - in reply to my first question, I could draw the parallel where you might find the parent involved is one in need of PATH benefit but the social worker has been there from social security see a TV and a fridge, which might have been the product of illicit gain, but because they see it in the house they say you don't deserve PATH, if the social worker finds them you can resolve the entire problem in that family in terms of trying to redirect them in a new way and finding alternative path.

That's the kind of activity required and I have had some experience working; CSJP is active, SDC is active, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security is active, the Ministry of Education has parenting programmes and there are dozens of social programmes, but they each follow a parallel path rather than putting them together that you will find the limited resources could do much more work for those families that are affected and, in particular, these 56 schools which are in urban and rural areas you might find there is enough in the system to have some level of impact without crying out for more resources. Those are my three questions, Minister, and if you can answer them I would be obliged.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Minister Thwaites.

Rev. THWAITES: Mr. Speaker, I should like to commend the calm and eirenic tone of all but one of those who have responded. (Applause)

For the Member from the northern part of St. James, it is directly projected that the therapeutic and social initiative should follow the disturbed child - the challenged child to his home. If you don't do that - I gave the example of North East St. Elizabeth - then you are wasting your time, because the basis of the problem often is at home and has to be dealt with within the community that the child is going to live in. That is the problem with this detention centre or therapeutic centres, otherwise called, that was planned. First of all, it couldn't nearly deal with the scope of the problem. And secondly, it took the person outside of the very community that he or she has to live in. And every piece of expert advice that we got indicated that this was absolutely the wrong way to go. So, there has to be this link and there will be this link in between the environment of home and the identification and initial therapy at school.

Teacher competence is very important in this regard. And that is why we will be offering, beginning this summer, particular training for those teachers. You have to have a heart you know, Mr. Speaker, as well as the theoretical knowledge to deal with troubled young people, you have to have a heart. And,

therefore, we are seeking, with the cooperation of the Teachers' Association and the regional offices, to find those teachers who in fact are open for this kind of assignment and who will be receptive to this kind of training.

As far as reassignment is concerned, I am pleased to tell you that today we affirmed once again the protocol with the Jamaica Teachers' Association, where the Ministry and the JTA will combine to advance the extent of voluntary relocation of teachers. They recognize, as well as we do, that the static tenuring of teachers for the whole of their teaching career does not serve the education system well. And remember, the ultimate outcome is student attainment, you know, not the satisfaction of any particular element in the system. And so, we look forward to that becoming a sturdy and complete option. As far as the - I think I have covered those points and I do thank you for them.

To the Member from the far reaches of St. Catherine - I don't remember the location - parents are in fact legally accountable for many aspects of their children's conduct. And I agree with you that the law needs to be strengthened in this regard, and a tremendous amount of public education, colleague, needs to be done.

But at the end of the day we have to ask ourselves some very practical questions. Locking up a father who is inattentive to his children does not improve the children's condition. And, therefore, we have to devise many more artful and sensitive social ways, while at the same time making it quite clear that there is an ultimate sanction. But you are quite correct.

What I have concentrated on and what is the particular remit of the Ministry of Education is what happens in the schools, and it does involve the parents. I mentioned the critical role of the National Parenting Commission. But it goes beyond that. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Member's question allows me to say the overall problem that we are dealing with is far beyond the reach of any school or any one institution. You are talking about the condition of society; you are talking about the dominant cultural norms, many of which are antithetical to wholesome personal development and to effective education, yes.

When you look at the images of perfection and of achievement that are paraded in our newspapers on a regular basis, and you see how completely contrary this is to the ethnic basis, the ethnic character, to the social mores and the possibilities of the majority of our people, you will realize that when Phillip De Armond Curtin two generations ago wrote *The Two Jamaicas,* he chose an apposite title.

When we have stage shows and cultural events which idolize hedonism, often, may it please you, with a degree of public support, public in every sense, public support - what we are doing is to communicate to our children ideal and a vision of what is okay in their lives, which is completely antithetical to the kind of responsible parenthood that is the fundament of your principle, sir. We, as a whole have to deal with that, we have shied

away from it for generations. All we can do in the schools is to state it clearly what the situation is.

I do not accept the matter of deciding whether the school serves the society or the society serves the school, that is a tautology which I can't figure out, yes. There is a responsive relationship between the school and the society that goes on, on a daily basis. What we must do, as a society, is to determine those values and attitudes, those standards of discipline, of cognitive achievement and of social aptitude which we are going to promote in the schools. And we are going to use every element at our disposal in order to achieve this.

With regard to the concerns of the Member from South West St. Ann, how can MPs help? Oh, I am so glad for that question you know, Mr. Speaker. The MPs should become the leaders of mentoring in their schools. (Applause) And the Parish Councils - the Parish Councillors should be of tremendous assistance, visiting schools not only when there is some infrastructural problem or when there is some disciplinary issue.

MPs must be extremely careful, may it please you, Mr. Speaker, when they nominate and recommend persons to be Chairmen of School Boards. (Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Rev. THWAITES: They, like the church leaders, Mr. Speaker, who own or sponsor half of Jamaica's schools, must not choose the person who is your best friend or the most loyal member or supporter, you must choose the person who is fair, honest and able to contribute to upgrading the educational opportunities to advance student achievement at that school. The Members of Parliament have a critical but not a unitary role in this regard. So MPs, take the lead in that regard.

And I would like to assure the Member of Parliament that the programme is expected to roll out in the prisons, as well, in the correctional institutions and in the Children's homes. And I am pleased to report also that the Ministry of Education has begun and will continue to offer teachers in the Children's Homes, in the places of detention and in the prisons - and up to this week there has been consultation between the Commissioner of Corrections and the Permanent Secretary towards that end. Education is for everybody. (Applause)

Miss GRANGE: Mr. Speaker...

Rev. THWAITES: With regard to the questions of - question of how to treat with boys, Mr. Speaker, this too, is a most trenchant observation. Boys are lagging behind girls - 20 per cent in achievement at the Grade 4 level and at the Grade 6 level. What we do know is that boys learn differently from girls, and it is necessary that the pedagogy to boys in relation to them has to be far more practically oriented. And that is why the engagement of - early engagement in science and technology, framing their appreciation of English and Math - the two core subjects - around doing things, solving problems, playing games, is of such

importance. And the new curriculum which is being piloted now between Grade 4 and Grade 6 emphasizes this.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, in many primary schools now teachers are using their own wit and they are separating the boys and the girls at a particular age, you know, between, say, Grade 3 and Grade 5, so that they can deal with the particular separate developmental needs that exist in those cohorts.

As far as cultural initiation is concerned, I take the Member's point as well. But I want to indicate that this is where the promotion of uniformed groups, the inculcation of sports - sports, you know, Mr. Speaker, not as a so-that-my-team-and-my-school-can-always-win, but sports as you get a sense of relationship, a sense of cooperation, a sense of hearty and sober competitiveness, yes, where the coach is not just concerned with physical fitness or with skills and aptitudes, but rather, with character. This is what we have to do in our schools; this is how we have to stretch existing resources to meet the needs. I take the Member's point.

Mr. Speaker, finally, you know, I am not going to enter into this band-aid argument. All I am going to say is that administering tests to determine social and emotional at-risk students at two stages in the education system has never been done before and is not a band-aid; it is a critical aspect of diagnosis. Offering teachers in primary schools special training in order that they may deal with difficult children and children with deep-seated emotional and cognitive challenges, is not a band-aid, and it has never been done universally before.

Revising courses in the teachers' colleges, particularly to meet the social and emotional situation of the children that teachers will deal with has never been done before, and is not a band-aid. Training principals, yes, in a concerted way in order to be able to deal with discipline and practical assessment of their students has never been universal and has never been as pointed as is now being done by the National College of Education and Leadership, it's not a band-aid.

Further, appointing of social workers in order to facilitate the kind of interlacing that the Member from St. James spoke of has never existed before and it's not a band-aid.

(DR. THE HON. KENNETH WYKEHAM McNEILL, (PNP), Westmoreland, Western, Minister of Tourism and Entertainment, entered and took his seat.)

Why do we have to use pejorative phrases in order to cramp and to disregard the efforts that are sincerely put and which can make some difference? Do we have to score points like that? Is that part of the apologia that is necessary for previous performance or the lack thereof, Mr. Speaker? I don't think that is worthy of us.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Rev. THWAITES: I want to say that expanding opportunities exponentially to join uniformed groups and to have a different character of sports and cultural activities has

never been done before and is now being done, and it's not a band-aid, sir. And while there have been a few instances where the police have gone into schools largely in very awkward and difficult circumstances, sometimes only in a few in a salutary and healthy capacity, yes, doing it universally and doing it in a sustained fashion according to a curriculum of engagement, is not a band-aid and it has never been done before.

I rest my case. (Applause)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Deputy Clerk laid on the Table of the House the following:

- **Ministry Paper No. 1/2014**
  The Financial Sector Adjustment Company (FINSAC) Limited and the Independent Auditors' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended March 31, 2012
- **Ministry Paper No. 2/2014**
  Financial Institutions Services Limited Annual Report and the Auditors' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended March 31, 2012
- **Ministry Paper No. 3/2014**
  Casino Gaming Commission Annual Report for the year ending March 31, 2013
- **Ministry Papers No. 4 - 7/2014**
  Cabinet Agenda issues dated
  11th November, 2013
  18th November, 2013
  2ndDecember, 2013, and,
  16th December, 2013
- **Ministry Paper No. 8/2014**
  A Preventative Initiative in Schools to Ameliorate Jamaica's Crime Problem
- Jamaica Intellectual Property Office (JIPO) Annual Report for the Financial Year 2008/2009
- National Council on Education Annual Report for the Financial Year 2012/2013
- HEART Trust/NTA
  The National Training Agency
  Annual Report for the Financial Year 2012/2013
  And
- Port Authority of Jamaica (PAJ) Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Financial Year 2012/2013.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Spencer.

Mr. SPENCER: Members of this Honourable House

A MEMBER: Use the mike.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Spencer, I am to advise that your matter comes under Public Business. Public Business. Okay.

Mr. PAULWELL: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move the following motions.

Be it Resolved that in accordance with Standing Order 65A, this Honourable House appoint a Committee on Tax

Measures for the 2013/2014 Session of Parliament comprising the following Members:

Dr. the Hon. Peter Phillips, Chairman
Hon. Horace Dalley
Dr. the Hon. Morais Guy
Mr. Paul Buchanan
Mr. André Hylton
Mr. Audley Shaw
Mr. Karl Samuda
Mr. Edmund Bartlett
Mr. Gregory Mair

And also, Mr. Speaker,

Be it Resolved that, notwithstanding Standing Order 76(1), this Honourable House of Representatives appoint a Select Committee comprising the following Members:

Hon. George A. Hylton, Chairman
Hon. Peter Bunting
Mr. Richard Parchment
Mr. Mikael Phillips
Mr. André Hylton
Mr. Paul Buchanan
Mr. Audley Shaw
Mr. Karl Samuda
Mr. Delroy Chuck

to sit jointly with a similar Committee appointed by the Senate to consider and report on a Bill shortly entitled, "The Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, 2013"

And I further give notice, Mr. Speaker, that at a later stage today, I will move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take these motions.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the time being what it is, I move for the suspension of the Standing Orders for us to take Question and Answers outside of the time normally permitted to do so.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that we move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to allow for Questions and Answers?

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we will take Question 3 and Question 7, the Member will ask Question 3.

Mr. MAIR: First of all, Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the expiration of 21 days, I'd be asking the Minister of Finance and Planning the following question.

Part 1:

Can the Minister advise when the FINSAC Commission, of Enquiry Report will be tabled in Parliament?

I now would like to ask the Prime Minister if she would be kind enough to answer the questions I've tabled under Numeral 3 on the Order Paper?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Madam Prime Minister.

The PRIME MINISTER: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to respond to the questions from the Member from St. Catherine.

Question 1:

Can the Prime Minister advise how long was the former Director General of the OUR serving in that capacity and why his contract was not renewed for another 3 to 7 year term?

Answer:

The former Director General was initially appointed on February 9, 2009 for three (3) years, thereafter, he was appointed on February 10, 2012 for one (1) year.

As is presented, Mr. Speaker, in the OUR's Annual Reports over the period of his service, Mr. Mian piloted the Office through a series of policy changes, projects and programmes in support of the country's development agenda.

Under his stewardship, the Office of Utilities Regulation work toward improved efficiencies, strengthened competition and service-expansion across the utilities and the administration appreciates his significant contribution.

Having, Mr. Speaker, brought the OUR to its present point, it was felt that the time had come for the organization to benefit from new perspective and an injection of fresh energy, in order to take it further toward the fulfillment of its core mandate.

Again, Mr. Zia Mian, is owed gratitude for his four years of dedication to improving the utilities regulation environment, as well as for his years of servicing the country's energy sector, which predated his time at the OUR.

Question 2:

Can the Prime Minister advise on what basis did she recommend that the Governor-General appoint the present Director General to the post?

Answer:

Mr. Speaker, several months were dedicated to a search process, which resulted in the recommendation of the present Director General to the post.

The process began with the placement of advertisements in the local and international media, inviting applicants to respond by April 2, 2013.

A five member panel was appointed by the Cabinet Secretary, reviewed 17 resumés and decided on a shortlist of six (6) persons.

From the initial round of interviews, Mr. Speaker, two (2) candidates were selected to sit a second interview, after which the single candidate that was recommended for the appointment was identified.

The Committee used weighted criteria, which had been settled at onset to assess the capabilities of each interviewee.

During the final interviews that were conducted on August 16, the Committee closely examined the candidate paying specific attention to leadership capacity, communication skills and the capacity to master the relevant technical issues and act on them. This was undertaken with a view to assessing the ability to manage the many and varied stakeholder

relationships that the post owner must navigate.

Question 3:

Can the Prime Minister advise how long is the term of appointment of the present Director General of the OUR?

Answer:

Mr. Speaker, the present Director General is appointed for three (3) years, effective November 1, 2013.

(Applause)

Mr. MAIR: Thank you.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Mair.

Mr. MAIR: Thank you, Madam Prime Minister.

Madam Prime Minister, the OUR Act clearly states that the Director General is appointed by the Governor-General on the Prime Minister's recommendation for a period of not less than three (3) years and not more than seven (7). Could you please advise me how is it that you renewed Mr. Zia Mian's contract for only one year and why?

The PRIME MINISTER: I think you should bear in mind that he served for three (3) years before. So he got a one-year extension, because - and that is quite permissible.

Thank you.

Mr. MAIR: Madam Prime Minister, reason is that the Interpretation Act allows you to do so. But where I was going, Madam Prime Minister, is that, I assume, if you did not recommend Mr. Zia Mian's appointment to be renewed for a further three (3) years.

(Heckling by Government Members)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Mair, please continue.

Mr. MAIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Madam Prime Minister, Mr. Mian's contract was extended for a year, am I right to say it was not renewed for three (3) years because at that point you had taken a decision that you would not renew his contract after that extended one (1) year and have in place a new Director General, am I correct?

The PRIME MINISTER: After three (3) years that was determined and one (1) year extension was granted to Mr. Mian.

Mr. MAIR: Where I'm going, Madam Prime Minister is that, why is it….

(Heckling by Government Members)

Mr. MAIR: No, but she's not answering my questions. The Prime Minister is not answering my questions and I give crystal-clear questions. The question is, if you had taken a decision in February of 2012 to only extend by a year through the Interpretation Act, the appointment of the Director General, why is it that you did not initiate then to find a new Director General?

Why is it that in February of last year, you appointed an interim Director General during a period, eight months, within which over US$800 Million of procurement took place on the oversight of the OUR. Why wasn't it done earlier, Madam Prime Minister?

The PRIME MINISTER: You rightly stated earlier that the Director General would be selected on the recommendation of the Prime Minister to the GG. I did exactly that. He got one (1) year extension and I thought it

was time for the organization to get new leadership.

A Government MEMBER: As is your prerogative.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

Mr. MAIR: Mr. Speaker, I am not satisfied with the answers from the Prime Minister.

(Heckling from Government Members)

Mr. MAIR: She has not answered my question.

However, Madam Prime Minister, another concern I have apart from that of having an interim Director General in such a crucial period...

(Cross talk)

The Speaker gavels.

Mr. MAIR: …leading the OUR.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Penny session please be quiet.

Mr. MAIR: Don't you think the OUR is supposed to be an independent organization? Don't you think it goes against that principle when we appoint former executives, chief executives of institutions like the National Water Commission and JPS? Isn't there a conflict of interest to you, you don't see it there? Shouldn't we bring at the head of the OUR somebody who has no past history in these institutions just to give us at least the perception that when leading this organization it is truly independent?

Mr. BUNTING: What about when you use Danville Walker as a candidate in the election after he was Director of Elections? Why you never applied the principle then?

(Cross talk)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) Members, I would like to hear the Prime Minister.

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to indicate I did not get on a binge of my own in terms of the new appointment. A panel was identified, the panel was put in place, they did the interviews and advertisements were made both local and international. At the end of the interviews there were 17 applicants. They went down to 6 and at the end of the interviews this gentleman came ahead of the others, and that was in the true spirit of transparency. (Applause) The Prime Minister did not go on a binge of her own. She did not just recommend somebody, a panel was put in place and the panel did the interviews and made the recommendations.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Argument done!

The SPEAKER: Mr. Samuda.

Mr. SAMUDA: Prime Minister, you made mention of a new direction. Would you like to elaborate on what you have in mind when you say a new direction? There is a follow-up question to that I am going to ask you, but if you could just indicate what you mean by a new direction.

The PRIME MINISTER: The Member that asked the question rightfully said it's an independent body. It's an independent body and so I have to be careful, I am not going to get into that aspect of it.

Mr. H. BUCHANAN: Boundary!

Mr. SAMUDA: The only reason I asked, Prime Minister, is because you said that it was necessary for the change because you saw the

need to move in a new direction. I am simply asking, could you indicate what is that new direction?

The PRIME MINISTER: I wanted some new energy at the OUR. It's an organization that works very hard and it is important to all of us sitting in this Honourable House on both sides, so I had to take a decision. But I did not go on a binge of my own and say I want A, B, C, D or E. What I did - a panel was put in place, they did the interviews and made the recommendation.

Mr. H. BUCHANAN: Why oonu a fight against the black man?

Mr. SAMUDA: Prime Minister, I am struck by what you said that you needed some more energy, no pun intended. Are you satisfied, or is your Minister satisfied that the OUR is placing sufficient emphasis on renewable energy and alternate energy as is a requirement of the office and the whole basis on which that office was established is not just simply to determine prices but to determine...

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Samuda, please. The question that you are asking, is it in relation to the appointment of the Director General or are you going beyond that?

The PRIME MINISTER: If you will allow me, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Okay, I will allow you, Prime Minister.

The PRIME MINISTER: I want to remind the Member that the OUR is not just about energy, it's about water; it's about a number of other things, transportation, water, a number of other things. And there are projects that we intend to move and want them to be moved. And I hope that the new Director will bring the level of energy that is necessary to the organization at this time that we can get things moving.

The Deputy SPEAKER: House Leader, next question.

Mr. McKENZIE: On what basis the Speaker intervened?

(Heckling)

On what basis he intervened? Is something him do all the while. Is something him do all the while.

Mr. H. BUCHANAN: I bet you never asked him.

Mr. McKENZIE: I am not afraid to ask him that. (Laughter)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker...

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Holness.

Mr. HOLNESS: ...if the Prime Minister will permit, I would like to ask her a question as a follow-up to the questions that she just answered. Don't fear.

A MEMBER: The question that was disallowed?

Mr. HOLNESS: No, they were not disallowed, they weren't asked.

Mr. McKENZIE: The Speaker can't disallow...

Mr. ATKINSON: Of course he can.

Mr. McKENZIE: On what basis?

Mr. HOLNESS: The Member from North East St. Catherine raised the question of the appointment of the Director General of the OUR. The issue of concern to many

Jamaicans is the length of time it took to find a permanent replacement and during the interregnum to have an important energy project.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Pickersgill)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, and during the time whilst there was an acting head that an important project was approved. There is, Mr. Speaker, speculation that this was done to facilitate the approval of the project. Madam Prime Minister, can you say that this was not the case?

The PRIME MINISTER: Absolutely not! (Applause) No way!

Mr. PICKERSGILL: What if?

Mr. McKENZIE: How you mean what if? How you talk about what if? How you mean?

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Pickersgill)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. McKenzie, are you speaking on a point of order or are you...

Mr. McKENZIE: You never asked the Minister that if he was speaking on a Point of Order.

The Deputy SPEAKER: No, no!

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Pickersgill)

Mr. ATKINSON: Stand up.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: You are a very contentious person.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. McKenzie, may I ask that you be calm.

Mr. McKENZIE: Am I the only person disrupting the sitting?

Government MEMBERS: Yes.

Mr. McKENZIE: Why are you signalling me out for attention?

MEMBERS: Yes.

Mr. PARCHMENT: Even Warmie behaving!

Mr. WARMINGTON: Shut up!

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Holness.

Mr. PAULWELL: We will now move on to Question 7, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: We move to question 7. Yes, okay.

(Cross talk)

(The Speaker gavels.)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, Question #7 standing in my name to the Minister of Education, will the Minister provide the answers?

Rev. THWAITES: Mr. Speaker. The answers to Question 7 are in fact prepared. I regret that, it appears that the Clerk has not received them and I am asking the kind indulgence of the Member, to whom I apologize, they will be available next week for answering.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Dr. Baugh. No, sorry, you want to...

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, as we are at Question Time, I do have other questions on the Order Paper, questions directed to the Prime Minister regarding your extensive travels, Prime Minister.

(Cross talk)

What is the issue? Mr. Speaker, the questions have been languishing...

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Members, Members, Members, please. Mr. Holness.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, the questions have been on the Question Paper for

a very long time. I remember we had an extended debate about giving the seven days. I understand that the Prime Minister will be travelling again.

The PRIME MINISTER: Yes, yes!

Government MEMBERS: Yes!

The PRIME MINISTER: In the interest of Jamaica, yes.

\ **The Deputy SPEAKER:** Mr. House Leader, go ahead.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we are giving an undertaking. As the Member can appreciate, the question wasn't only related to the Prime Minister but to the rest of the Government….the work is being done….

(Cross talk)

(The Deputy Speaker gavels.)

Mr. PAULWELL: ...and I am therefore seeking the indulgence so that we can provide proper answer the following week. All right.

Mr. HOLNESS: Next week.

Dr. BAUGH: Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Dr. Baugh.

Dr. BAUGH: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the expiration of 21 days I will ask...

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Warmington)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Dr. Baugh, sit. (Gavels) Members, we will not continue in this fashion. We need to hear the Member that is on the floor. I am warning. This is a warning.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Warmie.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Warning. Dr. Baugh.

Dr. BAUGH: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the expiration of 21 days I will ask the Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the following questions.

Thank you.

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I just thought that I would note a situation that I am very uncomfortable with and I don't…

Mr. PICKERSGILL: We are listening, so come with something sensible. (Laughter)

Mr. D. SMITH: I am bringing to the attention of the House - this is a serious House. This is not a House for clowns. It is a serious House. I noticed that when the Leader of Opposition is on his feet there is continuous heckling from across that side of the House.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Rubbish!

Government MEMBERS: No!

Mr. WARMINGTON: It's a lie.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Crawford)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Desmond, why you never allow your leader to speak?

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Clarke)

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister when she is on her feet deserves the full attention of the House, and we commit ourselves to show her the respect which is due. And I am saying - I am warning that if this individual, the Leader of Opposition does not get that type of respect….

Mr. PICKERSGILL: What you going to do?

Mr. D. SMITH: You will find out. You will find out.

Mr. Speaker, the House Leader gave a commitment in regard to one outstanding question of the Leader of Opposition. There are at least two others which are long overdue. So, in a short while I expect him to give a

commitment as to when those questions will be answered. But before I take my seat, Mr. Speaker, at the expiration of 21 days it is my intention to ask the Minister of National Security these questions.

Part 1:

Will the Minister provide an update on its social intervention efforts as it relates specifically to the Community Safety & Justice Programme (CSJP)?

Part 2:

Will the Minister indicate the number of CSJP initiatives going on presently, and advise of the communities in which these initiatives are being undertaken?

Part 3:

Will the Minister advise the House of the budget of the CSJP and indicate whether it represents an increase or a decrease over the previous year?

Part 4:

Will the Minister indicate whether there has been any scaling down of existing CSJP initiatives, and if so, in which communities?

Part 5:

Can the Minister advise the House of any parallel or complementary social intervention efforts to the CSJP?

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, just to note that the remaining questions are directed at the Minister of Transport, Works and Housing. Are they ready?

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Dr. Guy)

Mr. PAULWELL: Okay, we will do them next week.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Hutchinson.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker, at the expiration of 21 days I will ask the Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining the following Questions:

Question 1 Part 1:

Will the Minister state when the newly constructed building at Ginger Hill will be opened as a Postal Agency?

Question 2 Part 1:

Will the Minister state when the following areas will be completed with the extension of supply of electricity:

a) Mahogany Hill, Ginger Hill
b) Red Hills, Lacovia
c) Poor Piece, Newton
d) Jane Land, Elderslie
e) Breadfruit Tree, White Hall
f) Parsley
g) Johnson Bush, Woodlands

I will also ask at the expiration of 21 days the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries the following questions:

Part 1:

Will the Minister state the functions of the Agro Investment Corporation?

Part 2:

Will the Minister state the management structure for these farms?

Part 3:

Will the Minister state if there are any plans to construct buildings and, if so, what is the timeframe?

Part 4:

Will the Minister state the status of the recovery programme for the farmers at Plantation Garden River?

Part 5:

Will the Minister state if any consultants or specialists have been hired for these projects?

Part 6:

Will the Minister state if there is any debt relief being considered for the farmers at Plantation Garden River?

(Cross talk)

Dr. WHEATLEY: You don't worry about that.

(The Speaker gavels.)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the expiration of 21 days, I will ask the Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining, the following questions:

Question 1:

Is the Minister aware that under the Urban Renewal (Tax Relief) Act, the largest telecommunications provider in Jamaica, Digicel, is an approved developer, pursuant to which the company constructed its corporate headquarters in downtown Kingston, Jamaica?

Question 2:

Is the Minister aware that the company obtained certain incentives including tax reliefs under the programme?

Question 3:

Is the Minister aware that since the completion of construction and occupation of the building the company has been relocating a significant number of its executives outside of Jamaica?

Question 4:

Can the Minister indicate to the Honourable House if this is part of the company's plan to relocate its Global Headquarter outside of Jamaica?

Question 5:

If the answer to Part IV is in the affirmative, can the Minister indicate whether the relocation of the Global Headquarter outside Jamaica would run counter to the tax incentive scheme granted to the company under the Urban Renewal (Tax Relief) Act?

Question 6:

If the answer to Part 4 is in the affirmative, will the Minister give an indication as to the possible fiscal and operational impact such a move would have on Jamaica and the Government's fiscal accounts?

Question 7:

If the answer to Part 5 is in the affirmative, will the Minister advise of steps the administration has taken or is contemplating to either avert this course of action all together or to minimizing the likely fallout in the event of any significant scaling down of operations?

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I now move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take the motions, notice of which I gave earlier.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that there be a suspension of the Standing Orders to enable the House Leader to take the motions, notices of which were given earlier.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the motions relate to the appointment of two committees: the Tax Measures and also the Joint Select Committee, Members from this Chamber to deal with the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act. I therefore move for the approval of both motions.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the motions be approved.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker, on December 10, I asked the Leader of the House - I asked about an advertisement, invitation of a tender for the King's House land for private development. I asked about something called King's House Foundation that was supposed to - that invited tenders, or persons interested to submit tenders by January 31. And I asked then, the position of Cabinet, or who gave permission for the sale or development of King's House land. I said then, that this piece of land should be sacrosanct and should not be subject to private - you know, given to private developers for development.

And the Minister of Finance then, who was the - in charge of the Government, gave an assurance that Cabinet would have looked at it and review the issue and report back to the House. It is now January 21st. I don't know if the Leader of the House can shed some light on this issue here, because I asked then, for Cabinet to shut down this issue of the development of King's House land by private individuals. And I asked exactly who made up this King's House Foundation.

And the other issue I would like to ask now is where the funds are going to go? Who is gonna be in charge of these funds if it is allowed to happen? But, I don't believe it should happen any at all. So, I need to know what is the status; if there is a report based on the question I asked on December 10.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I am not aware that there is a report. I think we have to ensure that when these questions are directed, there is a mechanism within the - the Clerk of the House to make sure that the follow-ups are done. The Minister of Finance did undertake to - but he is not in the Chamber today. So, I will now give an undertaking to do the research, and to ensure that the appropriate information is returned to Parliament next week.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Undertake that it be shut down.

Mr. PAULWELL: I can't give that undertaking.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: You can't dictate that!

Mr. WARMINGTON: I asked…

(Inaudible comments pursue)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Spencer.

Mr. SPENCER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Members of this House are reminded that... (Inaudible)

(*Sotto voce* comments/Laughter)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Spencer, we are not hearing you enough so, I don't

know if you need to move to another... with permission. You may be permitted to speak from that seat.

Mr. SPENCER: Thank you very much for anticipating that.

At the first meeting held on September 17, 2013, your Committee took the decision to invite members of the public to contribute to its deliberations. In that regard, notices were placed in the *Sunday Gleaner* and the Observer, dated September 22, 2013, requesting the participation of interested individuals and groups.

Your Committee held six meetings September 17 and 26, October 2, 9 and 15, and December 10, 2013 in its consideration of the matter, and received input from the Jamaica Cancer Society, the National Council on Drug Abuse, Jamaica Coalition of Tobacco Control, the Carreras Group Limited, Red Bones Cafe, Dr. Delroy Beckford, and the Ministry of Health.

Your Committee was informed that the Public Health Tobacco Control Regulations, 2013, were in keeping with the World Health Organization Framework Convention for Tobacco Control. The Members were told that the Government has lauded locally and internationally, for its strong tobacco control regulations. As it relates to the aim of the regulations, the Committee was told that it would protect the general public from exposure to tobacco smoke, protect the health of all workers, regulate the contents and emissions of tobacco products, and require disclosure of information on constituents and emission.

Your Committee learnt that tobacco was responsible for 11 per cent (11%) of non communicable and three per cent (3%) of communicable diseases related deaths, and that the use of the product had a negative effect on nearly every organ in the body, in general produced. It was also indicated that the use of tobacco among the population posed a direct threat to Jamaica's achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, related to educational attainment, violence and health care.

Regarding the local situation, your Committee was told that 14.5 per cent of the population currently uses tobacco cigarettes. Most importantly, it learned that 23.9 per cent of students, ages 13 to 15 years, were consumers of the product, with approximately 86.3 per cent, having their first cigarette before the age of 14.

Additionally, your committee learned that the NCDA conducted a rapid assessment survey so as to ascertain the views of the public on the Regulations, in four parish capitals: Kingston, Port Antonio, Montego Bay, and May Pen. It was reported to your Committee that 96 per cent of respondents were aware of the regulations, and that 83 per cent was in agreement with the Regulations.

Your Committee was informed that the public supported the Regulations due to the hazardous effects of second-hand smoke, the need to protect the younger generation, the offensive smell of the tobacco smoke, respiratory illness and the loss of relatives due to smoking.

It was further reported that the respondents believed that it was the best law to be implemented, and the fines should not be rolled back. (Applause)

Your Committee was told that countries like Barbados and Trinidad, as well as North American countries that had a ban on smoking had provisions within their laws for bars, restaurants and other similar establishments to establish outdoor smoking solutions. Additionally, your Members were of the opinion that provisions should be in place so that businesses will be able to cater to their patrons who consume tobacco products. In that regard, your Committee recommends that the definition of outdoor areas and other definitions be amended so as to facilitate the establishment of outdoor smoking solutions.

Graphic Health Warnings on Packs

In relation to the provision for a seventy five per cent pictorial health warning on the packs, your Committee was told by two of the presenters that the requirement was unlawful, draconian and was unnecessary, and ran the risk of giving sustenance to the illicit trade in cigarettes. It learned that the FCTC did not require, nor authorize seventy five per cent labeling and that CARICOM counterparts and the other countries in the English speaking Caribbean and Latin America had adopted a maximum of fifty per cent. On the other hand, four of the presenters highlighted that seventy five per cent was not excessive, particularly within the Jamaican context as it was needed to ensure that the maximum effect was achieved, and that individuals would become aware of the risk associated with tobacco smoke.

The Committee learned that the decision to include graphic health warnings and the size that had been stipulated were based on scientific evidence as study showed that size did not matter, and that bigger pictorial health warnings were more effective than smaller ones. It further learned that scientific evidence demonstrated that the impact of health warnings and messages increased with their prominence in comparison with small text only, health warnings. It was said that larger warnings with pictures were more likely to be noticed, better communicate health risk, provoke greater emotional response and increase the motivation of tobacco users to decrees their tobacco consumption and to eventually quit. In considering the matter, some of your Members were of the opinion that seventy-five per cent (75%) was excessive and that the regulation should conform to CARICOM standards. Others were firm that the greatest deterrent to smoking was the large graphic health warnings as indicated by scientific studies. Due to the fact that your Committee was unable to arrive at a consensus, the matter was put to a vote. Based on the result of the vote, the Committee made the decision to recommend a fifty per cent pictorial health warning on the packs.

Graphic Health Warning at Point of Sale

Concerning the trade in single sticks, your Committee submits that the health warning in text will be appropriate as opposed to graphic health warnings.

Transition Period

During the deliberations, representatives from Carreras Group Limited told your Committee, that it was a duty under the global agreement re: the technical barriers to trade and fundamental principles of the WTO to permit WTO Members to reasonable interval between the publication of the Regulations and its implementation or entry into force. The representative expressed the view that the global treaty duty had been breached with the provision of only six months and remind the Members that the CARICOM standard for transitioned was nine months. In considering the matter, your Committee was unable to achieve consensus in respect of a transition period as some Members were in favour of a twelve month transition period and others were in favour of a nine-month transition period. Consequently, the matter was taken to the vote. Based on the results of the vote, the Committee made the decision to recommend nine months transition period.

Compliance with the Regulation

Representatives from the Ministry of Health told your Committee that it recognized that there was a continuation of self-enforcement as evidence. Since the promulgation of the regulations, your Committee was told that the Ministry supported the decriminalization by the removal of the custodial sentences for individuals. It was however informed that the Ministry believes that it was imperative that the Regulations maintained effective deterrents through penalties. The representatives from the Red Bones Café submitted that the fines for individuals and should be lowered. The Committee was told that the current fines were disproportionate to income levels in Jamaica and that for first offence; it would take a minimum wage earner, five months pay to pay the fine. But, if he failed to do so, he would be placed in jail for three months. Your Committee engaged in a vibrant discussion, considering the matter.

Some of your Members were of the opinion that the fines were excessive when compared to monetary penalties for the possession of marijuana, which was illegal product and as such they should be reduced. Others believe that the fines were comparable to other Caribbean and international jurisdiction. But most importantly, that the fines were to deter persons from acting in violation of the regulations. At the end of the discussion your Members arrived at a compromise on the fines to be imposed. The recommended fines are as follows:

- Five Thousand Dollars for the first time offences;
- Twenty-five Thousand Dollars for the second offence; and
- Fifty Thousand Dollars for all subsequent fines.

The definition of the word ‘workplace’ in the Regulations was contested, as some members were of the view that a private residence should be captured by the definition in circumstances where such a residence also served as a place of employment for other persons such as domestic helpers. However, the majority of your members were not in support of legislation that could interfere with

a smoker's right to privacy in his or her home. Nevertheless, your Committee recommends that the definition be amended to avoid ambiguity. Your Committee also submits that it should get an opportunity to review the amended definition.

E-cigarettes and Chewing Tobacco:

In its deliberations, your Committee considered the implication of regulations regarding two alternatives to the smoking of cigarettes namely, e-cigarettes and chewing tobacco. Your Committee does not wish to make a recommendation in respect of e-cigarettes at this time, as research on the product was inconclusive, as its effects on users and others who are exposed to it. On the other hand, your Committee is firmly opposed to a ban on chewing tobacco, which unlike cigarette smoke, is not detrimental to non-users.

Public Education:

Your Committee, the Ministry of Health, as well as interested groups that participated in the deliberations, endorsed the proposal to have a robust public education campaign beginning in schools. The aim of the programme would be to make the public aware of the limits of regulations as well as the effects of tobacco smoke on the body and the environment.

Recommendations Submitted:

Other recommendations that were submitted to your Committee during its deliberations are contained in Appendix. Your Committee wishes to express gratitude to the individuals and the organizations who contributed to the deliberations. Thanks are also extended to the Clerk of the Houses and the staff of the Houses of Parliament for their administrative and technical input, and a very special thanks and gratitude to Honourable Anthony Hylton, Richard Parchment, Denise Daley, Jolyan Silvera, Dayton Campbell, Keith Walford, Hugh Buchanan, Olivia Grange, Marisa Dalrymple-Philibert and Mrs. Shahine Robinson. Thanks, because without them we could not have achieved.

Thanks very much.

That's your Committee report.

(Applause)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health is going to respond next week, at which time we will close the debate and move on.

Mr. Speaker, I move for the suspension of Standing Orders to allow the Parliament to take Private Members' Motion.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that for the suspension of the Standing Orders to allow for Private Members' Motions.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Member from North East St. Ann will now make her contribution.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mrs. Robinson.

(Applause)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTION

Mrs. ROBINSON: Mr. Speaker, let me thank you and this Honourable House for affording me the opportunity to debate and bring focussed attention to the motion standing in my name.

While it has taken quite some time in coming, I think this debate has the potential of triggering and effecting real change in the way business is conducted in the craft industry. I believe it is as important as it is timely for the nation's Parliament to bring the plight of players in what must be considered the most important segment of the national economy into sharp focus. By so doing, it is envisaged that we will come away with definitive steps and initiatives, both at the national and local level that will address the concerns and challenges confronting traders in the craft industry.

Mr. Speaker, I speak of the many men and women who ply their trade in the craft industry. And while they're often overlooked, if not left out of the mainstream altogether, they are unsung heroes in their own rights.

Mr. Speaker, there can be no denying that the operators of micro and small business ventures like craft vendors, are the lifeblood of any economy. This statement is as accurate about micro and small enterprises in Jamaica, as it is anywhere else in the world.

To take it a bit further, Mr. Speaker, it is evident that there are undeniable links between activities in the craft industry and the tourism sector as a whole. Indeed, the craft industry may be considered a subsector of the tourism industry. So significant is the role of craft in key areas of tourism product, expansion and development such as community and heritage tourism that the Tourism Product Development Company has, to my certain knowledge, sought to wrap its head around strategies aimed at guiding actions in the subsector that will result in the evolution and marketing of a sustainable craft industry. This, I believe, should be our collective goal.

As Member of Parliament for St. Ann North East, a constituency replete with traders in the craft industry, I'm acutely aware of the plight and concerns of the vendors. And I've witnessed firsthand, the difficulties they have been experiencing as they try to eke out a living. They try to eke out an existence in an activity with which they've been associated virtually all their lives. In fact, some of these traders are second and third generation traders.

Mr. Speaker, the problems now confronting vendors in the craft industry are many. At present, they have no prominent position within the ambits of any ministry. They suffer from relatively low levels of visitor traffic, particularly through designated craft markets. And they do not enjoy the benefits that accrue from the economies of scale that many of their large counterparts derive by virtue of their size and capacity. They're also often plunged into noncompliance as it relates to their market fee obligations due to the falloff in visits and business volumes.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of historical context, it is important to note that our craft industry featured prominently in the evolution of our tourism product. In fact, it can be argued that the tourism sector started with craft being amongst its key traditional offerings. And so craft vending from an

offering perspective has to be considered as being right up there with the usually acclaimed sun, sea, sand and taxi operators.

Mr. Speaker, I am among those who believe that the net effect of efforts designed to bring craft into the mainstream and give it greater prominence will give visitors a more refreshing and inspiring look into Jamaica's culture and heritage. This in and of itself is a critical component of the overall thrust to bring tourism into communities across Jamaica, and realize the kind of integration I alluded to in the very wording of the motion.

There are distinct subgroups in the craft industry. They include: craft producers, craft traders and master craftsmen. According to the available data, there are approximately 1600 craft traders, 300 craft producers and 80 master craftsmen.

The truth is, Mr. Speaker, that while other subsectors of the tourism industry have grown by leaps and bounds over the years to the point where they may now be considered as competing with, and ranking amongst the world's finest, craft in this country seems to have been languishing behind. In short, Jamaica's craft industry is yet to reach its optimal potential; it has yet to become all it can be.

Mr. Speaker, craft vendors complained about difficulties in accessing cruise passengers and tourists. The physical infrastructure of 15 craft markets which are owned by the local parish councils are in need of repairs. Most operators in the craft subsector are craft traders who purchased goods primarily from wholesalers and often from craft producers who have limited skill and sometimes almost no organization.

Unfortunately, the creativity, ingenuity and dynamism of our people are not being unleashed, as we have too many players in the craft industry being merely involved in the trade of commodities. Sometimes the things that they sell originate from as far away as places like China.

This is untenable and an undesirable situation and has to be attributed primarily to the lack of policy coordination, policy coherence and governmental oversight that have attended the industry. And as such, craft vending has been left behind without the kind of structure and organization that is befitting an industry, that is so valuable to the national economy, that is so important to the tourism product expansion, and more importantly, critical to securing the livelihood of thousands of Jamaicans.

It is my considered opinion and that of several others with whom I've consulted, that it is time for us to bridge the existing gaps and address the plight of the craft industry in a meaningful way. Achieving this cannot and will not occur by chance; it can only come on the back of targeted intervention, focused attention, administrative dynamism and the kind of policy coordination that will bring structure and organizational capacity to this potentially lucrative activity.

Mr. Speaker, it is true that attempts have been made to respond to the complaints of craft vendors, and attempts have been made to address the many challenges confronting them. But it is equally true, however, that

these attempts have been haphazard and sporadic at best, and as a result, have not achieved the desired outcomes, nor yielded the results intended. With this being the case, the craft industry has just huddled along without the benefit of State intervention to impact it in a meaningful and sustainable way.

And so, Mr. Speaker, as a starting point, I call for the placement of the craft industry under the direct auspices of a government ministry, with a Minister directly responsible, having oversight of ensuing activities and attendant developments industry, because this doesn't seem to be the case at present.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, craft vending in this country seems to be taking place without the kind of portfolio oversight and ministerial rigor that should attend such significant area of business endeavour. Needless to say the ministerial rigor and portfolio oversight of which I speak are crucial to the continued development and transformation of the craft industry. And this is what we should be going after, the transformation of the industry; a transformation that will see it becoming a more dynamic, formalized and attractive area of endeavour to both the craft traders and their customers.

Let me at this stage point out that over the years whenever concerns emerge or especially when matters of an exigent and far-reaching nature arise, the first port of call amongst craft vendors is the Ministry of Tourism. And to illustrate this point, we may consider events in recent times where disgruntled craft traders appeared on national television, raising alarm at the extremely low business volume they were experiencing at a time when they should perhaps have been seeing greater vibrancy in the sector; they specifically called on the Tourism Minister to address their concerns. And I think the concerns for some of them were physical infrastructure, visitor traffic and visitor spend.

Mr. Speaker, again the craft vendors in Fern Gully and Swansea they are despondent because while they were displaced due to road improvement work along that corridor, they don't feel that enough has been done up to this point to put them back on track, and they too call on the Minister of Tourism.

And it is not difficult to see why this is the case. Craft vendors, by virtue of the nexus between craft vending and activities in the tourism industry, see the tourism ministry as their natural and logical fit.

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mrs. Shahine ROBINSON: For others, the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce is the appropriate fit but notwithstanding the divergence of opinions, I urge the Government, pursuant to its own due diligence, to make a determination as to where it would wish to locate the activity in terms of portfolio responsibility and render the State apparatus more readily available to respond to the industry and engage in efforts aimed at addressing the challenges confronting the craft vendors.

As it now stands, the TPDCo, working under the aegis of the Ministry of Tourism, issues licenses to individuals in the craft industry. While I am sure that there are certain requirements that must be satisfied in being

approved and certified by the TPDCo as a trader in the craft industry, one is not altogether certain of the kind of analysis and economic assessment that is undertaken by the entity before issuing these licenses.

It would appear on the face of it that once an application that satisfies the established criteria is made then it is approved.

In a bid to clarify this situation TPDCo needs to advise as to whether it gives any consideration to the question of viability; taking into account the likelihood of success and the prospects of vendors achieving reasonable returns on their investments. For it cannot be that an industry as critical as the craft industry, be left to grow to a point where it is oversubscribed or may very well be saturated; rendering the attainment of economic success that much more elusive and the calls on the Minister of Tourism that much more.

Beyond all of this, Mr. Speaker, the Government must seek to encourage craft vendors to develop new techniques and build capacity in relation to product innovation. They must explore ways in which a more leveled playing field may be secured for small craft vendors. They need to upgrade and refurbish craft markets across the island. Many of them are owned by the Government to enhance the aesthetics of these places of business, since many of them in terms of physical appearance are not as attractive and appealing as they should be.

They should facilitate and stimulate greater levels of compliance amongst craft venders as it relates to their market fees because visitor traffic at these markets and business volume in general, would tend to grow up to the extent that the facilities themselves are refurbished and made that much more attractive and enticing.

Mr. Speaker, the craft sector needs to be positioned in a manner that will truly allow it to compete in a more effective, diversified and nuanced way. And more importantly, encourage visitor spend by enhancing the shopping experience, thus raising levels of visitors satisfaction.

Efforts to revitalize the craft industry going forward should be centered on improvements in product quality, infrastructure and marketing. It would be prudent in the pursuit of the aforementioned that we have meaningful collaboration among such key stakeholders as the JBDC, the Edna Manley College for the Visual and Performing Arts, the Rural Agricultural Development Agency, the HEART/Trust NTA and the Tourism Product Development Company. Because as far as I am aware, Mr. Speaker, TPDCo is well-placed to undertake and help to develop design capacity, improve training in production and packaging, facilitate access to loan funds and develop new marketing opportunities.

The ultimate objective of an envisaged collaborative effort is the formation of a partnership across the different organizations and ministries now operating in this area, with a view to improve the livelihood of individual craft producers and traders.

Specifically, the implementation of a strategy geared towards rationalizing the craft

industry and improving marketing opportunities for craft development is most advisable and prudent at this time.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to talk a little bit about tourism linkages hub. The notion of the tourism linkages hub presents tremendous possibilities, not only for direct stakeholders in the sector such as craft vendors, but also for national development in general. The linkages hub, certainly as we envisaged it, is a platform for strategic expansion and development of our tourism product. The hub is essentially an information repository, a repository that is predicated on an understanding of the demand by the tourism sector for goods and services used in its operation.

The tourism linkages hub can go a far way in helping to bridge existing gaps between the tourism sector itself and other local industries. This is to be achieved through the provision of information as to the products and services that can be supplied to the tourism industry by our local agricultural sector, agro processing, and manufacturing which in manufacturing would include our craft traders and the services sector.

What I am most excited about, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that the tourism linkages hub is poised to facilitate meaningful integration across sectors, and is well placed to providing sector interests with a more reliable basis on which they cannot only quantify the demand for goods and services from the tourism sector, but also make the strategic business decisions and get a better grasp of the role they can play in satisfying that demand.

To the extent that our craft vendors, farmers, manufacturers and other key service providers are able to seriously tap into the tourism sector, we would be in a position to significantly reduce imports from abroad, because a lot of the craft that is sold on the craft markets are in fact imported from abroad. We would be able to boost production locally, enhance business volume across the different sectors, put more people, more of our people to work and secure the growth we so desperately need.

Mr. Speaker, whatever we do going forward, must redound to the benefit of our craft traders. It is about time that we seek to give them their slice of the tourism pie.

Mr. Speaker, currently they feel as though they are barely getting some of the crumbs. We must change this; we must create the resolve to change this.

Undoubtedly the players in the craft industry, the trader themselves have their own role to play in raising and maintaining the highest standards where product quality, differentiation, merchandizing and customer service are concerned.

Mr. Speaker, it is only when we get all these things right that we will truly be giving life to the mantra espoused by the Tourism Ministry of making tourism an activity for all.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Dr. McNeill, you rise to speak.

Dr. McNEILL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to start by thanking the Member from North East St. Ann for

bringing this Motion. Like you, we on this side, I think there is nobody in this House who is not seized of the importance of the craft industry to tourism and to Jamaica and the importance that this activity has in the economic livelihood of Jamaicans in all our resort areas across the board.

I want to just go back to what you said about linkages, and just start there.

In tourism, we have always had a policy thrust and I think all along the line a lot of focus has been placed on things such as bringing visitors here, marketing, airlift and all these things are important. And quite frankly we have been doing it quite well, I think, just the result of last year, us being able to achieve the two million visitors to Jamaica... (Applause) ...I think that we are doing well in that regard.

But there is no presentation that I have made, no presentation that I have made anywhere we have not pointed out that more important even than bringing the visitors here, than the airlift all these things, the important thing is to ensure the benefits that go to the Jamaican people. And the way that we have to look at that is how we deepen the linkages, how we are going to ensure that persons in agriculture, manufacturing, the craft traders, entertainment all can benefit from tourism. So it is something that we have actively worked on.

One of the first policy initiatives that we did was the formation of a linkages hub .which is up and running under the Chairmanship of Donavon Perkins with a very active Board that meets regularly and is moving ahead in actually deepening the linkages that exists.

So I think that I have heard you mentioned your support of it, it is probably the most important initiative that is taking place in tourism now, that of deepening the linkages.

In terms of what you said about craft, I get back to it, craft is very important. You made the point about craft markets, on record we have about fourteen (14) craft markets, those craft markets across the island all, many of them are managed by different organizations some are parish council, come are UDC, some are planning authority, it differs. They have different rules so some craft markets have one rule others have the other. Historically the TPDCo has been the overall management of the craft markets in terms of regulations, licensing *et cetera*. But again, the craft industry as such is multi-ministerial; it is part of a joined-up government because production there, elements of JBDC that deals with the development of craft itself in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, Port Authority deals with some elements because of the dealings with the cruise shipping. And of course, tourism has its elements of it.

When we went into Government in January of 2012, one of the first meetings we held which was held at the end of January was with the presidents of all the craft markets, and we had a discussion. And out of that we reiterated what the problems are and the needs of the industry.

Through the last two years, we have been working with the craft markets discussing, looking at what the problems are. And one of

the things that we recognize is that for the craft markets to develop, it can't be that just everybody comes and says well you need this or you need that. There needs to be a role, the craft industry itself has to help govern itself, they want to be part of governing themselves.

So we looked at the models that exists in other countries and there is an interesting example of what has happened in Bahamas which had similar problems to us, and what they did was to create a craft authority which governs all their craft markets, which has representations from the craft vendors on it, and a very successful model that exists there.

So what we did was to engage the Ministry of Tourism, and in the Ministry of Tourism we decided that what we needed for the craft industry was for the craft industry to have its own rules, its own rules and regulations that govern it. So over the last year, we put together a concept paper towards the development of a craft policy for Jamaica, and on November the 28th we carried this to Cabinet, and it was approved by Cabinet for us to develop the craft policy fully, because we believe that there has to be a policy that governs them.

You made some points, and I made note of them because they are interesting. You said that the problems that you picked up in your discussions are low traffic, low economies of scale, accessing both cruise and stop-over visitors, craft production, and I think within that we are talking about the fact that a number of times when you go into the craft markets, a number of the shops it is the same thing you are seeing in all the shops, there is no diversity. The fact of the multi-ministerial portfolio problems, and last but not least, the issue of physical infrastructure in the craft markets.

Okay, in our concept paper which we are taking to policy and we intend to move very quickly through this, I will give you a specific time when we expect it to finish, but as you know in government; these things can take a little longer than you want. But we have gone and have had consultation with the craft traders on this already, and it is our intention to set up a body, an authority, which would govern the craft markets which would put a sort of a level playing field to all the craft markets so that *J* they have the same rules, the same regulations and that we could govern it and keep it working in a manner and that they would feel part of developing it.

Within that concept there are some areas that you have to look at. Number one has to do, as you said, with the physical infrastructure. Again that discussion when you have fourteen craft markets, it is a matter of having discussion to prioritize what needs to be done. We are spending about $60 Million this year on craft markets but a lot of that is remedial work rather than major projects going forward. But we expect when the authority is set up that the authority would have a role to play in determining and deciding what are the priorities in terms of what work needs to be done.

The second thing has to do with the training. Under Team Jamaica that programme is ongoing. JBDC is doing a project with them and, of course, you know that we have the

languages programme which is doing well and we have about $15 Million in the training programmes now.

The talk about persons coming to the craft market, and the volume, that is a problem that has come about because of a number of issues. It has to do with the physical infrastructure; it has to do with what they sell, perceptions, but in a large part it has to do with marketing. So under the authority, and part of what we are working on, is how we can work with the craft traders in each of the market in developing a marketing programme which would be a sort of a global thing like how we do Brand Jamaica and then all of the hotels carve out their part. We could do craft, 'Craft Jamaica' and then each of the craft markets, could go for their share. But they are going to need brochures the sea trade at the conferences that are held each year for cruise shipping, a delegation that could have discussions with the cruise lines and to develop what they can.

But also there are other things, to market is also to better the experience. So we want to see within that how we can come together and assist with some funding so that you can have your little mento band or theme days, a pirate day or something; something in your craft market that allows for more marketability and allows for more traffic to come through.

At the root of all of it is the point of diversity, craft production and we have to address that problem seriously. They have been meetings between HEART, SDC, JBDC, Edna Manley - you have mentioned - we have had those meetings. As a matter of fact, the Minister of State has been instrumental in pulling some of those programmes together and has been marshalling the majority of the meetings with the craft markets just to push this policy through.

And one of things that we have done, and he mentioned it last year in his presentation, is in association with JIPO we have trademarked Authentic Jamaica. And what we have done is to go to like Edna Manley and different places for them to come up with all sorts of different designs of craft, put different things out there and what we will do is trademark them 'Authentic Jamaica' and those things will only be sold in the craft markets. So if you want 'Authentic Jamaica' you have to go to the craft market which can drive business through the craft market. So we feel - and what we're going to do working with JIPO you have artist who are making the designs, you'll have producers who will produce the actual craft and then you'll have traders who will sell it. The traders will get a percentage, producers will get a percentage and the artist will get a percentage. So you're really spreading the benefits of tourism right across the board.

So as I said we have a process that is underway. We are continuing the discussions with the craft traders, but as I said this is not a problem that came up today it is something that has been around for some time, but we have made a determined decision to put something in place that we believe will make a difference to the lives of every craft trader in Jamaica. And as I said when I started, I think that it's nice to know that the Opposition is on board on a project like this and certainly any specific suggestion that you have that we can

incorporate we'll be willing to put, because we believe that this something very important for every single Jamaican.

With those words, Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Charles.

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, just a few words to give support to the Member from St. Ann who has brought this very important topic to the Parliament. You know it has always bothered me that the only time we remember the craft industry and the people who work therein is when we see literally war on television. They're being thrown out of here, thrown out of there, bounced here and bounced there. I think that the time has come, as the Member is explaining, that the craft industry should be looked at not as a little appendage of the Ministry of Tourism or one or two tourists might find them but Jamaica has much to offer in this area. And my colleague is saying whether or not this should be under the Ministry of Tourism or Ministry of Industry, [Investment and Commerce], because, Mr. Speaker, the craft vendors have to fight to get some tourist to come see them. It is as if they are boxed off from them. They have to break down walls to see them. They should be catered to like the PSOJ. They should be part of industry; big business.

We have some people in the hills of Jamaica that can do some kind of crocheting and some kind of woodwork and some kind of - all big things in craft, they have never seen a tourist, they don't get a chance to go and find them, they don't get a chance to see them. And I want to congratulate the Member for bringing it to the attention of the Minister, because too long have we been terrorizing these small business people by not giving them proper accommodation. When they are not fighting the parish council for a little space, they have to be on the street hanging their wares on the walls. We have to get out of that.

This is big business. Thousands of children depend on it to go to school. Thousands of parents depend on it to take care of their family. And, sir, major investment should be put in this industry. I'm wondering whether the call should not go beyond the Minister, a call directly to the Government and a call to the PSOJ to bring them into the light and for some major players to get there and work with them. But as I say, Mr. Speaker, the craft business is being described as a little local thing run by local people. We've got to get out of that mood. It's big business and we need to invite big people to get into it and need to invite the Government to offer them the same protection and assistance and investment assistance as they give to the other big business in the country. So that they, too, can develop this Jamaican industry and we all will be benefiting.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Applause

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. House Leader - Mrs. Ffolkes Abrahams, you still wish to speak?

(Cross talk)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of State would like to make a contribution and we will facilitate that next

week along with other speakers who wish to, but we intend to close next week.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Okay.

Mr. PAULWELL: So, Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend further debate on this matter until next week.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that we suspend the debate until this week for finality.

Put to the House and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, it is not intended to do any further business today. So I, therefore, move for the adjournment of the Parliament until next Tuesday the 28th of January at 2:00 p.m.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that this Honourable House adjourns until next Tuesday, January 28 at 2:00p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

This Honourable House now stands adjourned. (Gavels)

The House accordingly adjourned at 5:10 p.m. to resume its sitting on the 28th of January, 2014 at 2:00 p.m.

TUESDAY, January 28, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:17 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

MR. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House.

MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security

HON. NOEL GEORGE DELANO ARSCOTT, (PNP), Clarendon, South Western, Minister of Local Government and Community Development

REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. NATALIE GAYE NEITA-HEADLEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sports and Deputy Leader of the House

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change

HON. COLIN ALFRED A. FAGAN, (PNP), St. Catherine, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development

HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern

MR. HUGH CARL BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Western,

DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western

MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central

MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern

MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western

MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern

MR. DESMOND GREGORY MAIR, (JLP), St. Catherine, North Eastern

MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western

MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern

MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern

MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central

MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern

MR. DARYL WESLEY PHILLIP VAZ, (JLP), Portland, Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. Raymond Pryce.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

The SPEAKER: Before we get down to today's business, let us welcome some visitors we have here today from Tomlinson's Christian Academy and Ascot High School. (Applause)

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

The SPEAKER: House Leader.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Member from South West St. Catherine had asked certain questions some weeks before and he repeated them last week, and I did undertake to provide the Member with the answers to the best of my abilities. And I want to say to the Member that I have done the

research and I can confirm that in December 2007 the King's House Foundation wrote a letter to the then Prime Minister, Mr. Bruce Golding, seeking permission to acquire portions of the King's House lands to do a development. The proposal was to enable the Foundation to enter into a development with joint-venture partners and the proceeds of which would enable the Foundation to undertake its works in relation to the maintenance and the proper functioning of King's House.

(HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. THE HON. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, CD, (PNP), St. Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. LISA RENE SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture, entered and took her seat.)

(HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. SHARON FFOLKES ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, entered and took her seat.)

The Cabinet of the day, by Cabinet Decision 1608, approved the proposals on the basis that the transfer would have been done without cost, that is, that there will be no amount paid for the land and that the arrangement was sanctioned by the Government.

Indeed, the arrangement was perfected because the King's House title was subsequently modified to reflect that 10 acres were transferred to the Foundation on which basis the Foundation applied to the KSAC for approvals and such approvals have been granted. And I am now aware that the Foundation is now seeking to attract a joint-venture partner to pursue this project. I have the documentation and those facts are what I had acquired to the best of my abilities, Mr. Speaker.

May it please you.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Warmington.

Mr. WARMINGTON: I am still not satisfied with what I am hearing.

The issue is, when I raised the issue I raised it twice here, is the concern I have of the sacrosanct of King's House lands for it to be used for housing development. And now I am hearing that it is transferred to this Foundation at no cost. I am still to hear who are the members of this Foundation. All right. I don't hear who are the members of the Foundation, and that was a part of the question I asked last week, and when this Foundation was established and the legality and everything around the Foundation. So the question is still incomplete. What I can say is that a member of the Foundation spoke to me.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mrs. Shahine Robinson)

Mr. WARMINGTON: The answer is still incomplete. Thank you.

What I can say is that a member of the Foundation spoke to me yesterday. I got a call that he was preparing a response for the Minister...

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Government Member)

(DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. KENNETH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, West Central, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. ROBERT DIXON PICKERSGILL, (PNP), St. Catherine, North Western, Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. WARMINGTON: What? Someone called me then and said they are (sic) the Financial Officer for the Foundation. I still don't know who the members are and asked to meet with me tomorrow. Because I need to see where - to show me the part of land you are talking about that it won't affect the King's House property itself. I didn't expect the answer today until after the meeting and I am satisfied with what is out there. So I am still not satisfied with the answer.

The SPEAKER: You are not satisfied with it in terms of its incompleteness or what?

Mr. WARMINGTON: I asked a much deeper question than what he is answering there. I asked for other stuff.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Why you don't write the question so we can know how deep it is?

(Laughter)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Writing won't show you how deep it is. You might have to use a stick to poke down to see how deep it is; writing won't show you depth. So I am waiting until I see what is there and get more information tomorrow before I really get at the member again to see if he can give me more information, and whether or not I am satisfied.

The SPEAKER: So you might have further follow-up questions after your meeting tomorrow?

Mr. WARMINGTON: Not only follow-up question but a follow-up request, because I had asked for certain things where the Cabinet was concerned, certain intervention. But it might not be necessary if what I am told, if initially what I am told is what is the case, it might not have to.

The SPEAKER: Okay.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I will share with the Member the members of the Foundation. I have it and I will share it with the Member just now.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of...

The SPEAKER: Mr. Vaz.

Mr. VAZ: Mr. Speaker, if you will allow me.

In relation to this matter, Mr. Speaker, I have somewhat of a background based on where I sat at the particular time in the Office of the Prime Minister. There was a letter

rightly, as you indicated, written to the Prime Minister from the King's House Foundation requesting this piece of land for development on the basis that what the Government supplied King's House on an annual basis was far less than what was required to, not only to keep it functioning but in terms of plant itself, which, as you know, based on the architecture and the age, was under constant maintenance and repair. It was on that basis that the request was made and it was, as you indicated, carried to Cabinet and supported on the basis that the land would be transferred from the National Land Agency, Commissioner of Lands, to the King's House Foundation.

But, Mr. Speaker, to go further than that, part of the conditions, as I recall, was that in this joint-venture agreement that was proposed, since King's House Foundation was not in a position to develop it on their own, not only was there talk about what portion of the profit would be for the King's House Foundation, Mr. Speaker. But if my recollection serves me correct, which I think it does, there was a clause in there that it will be a percentage at minimum of the sale price of the land. As we know in business and especially real estate development business, a net profit can be anywhere from a dollar to any amount, so as to make sure that this, what it was designed to do, would be able to be carried through. So I wanted to just clear that as I had some information on it. And I am sure the other information that the Member has asked can be easily gotten and, as I said, before I hope that will shine some additional light on it.

Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Okay.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance will now make a statement.

The SPEAKER: Minister Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, in late December, last year, the Government laid in this Honourable House the Fiscal Policy Paper Interim Report and the adjusted Letter of Intent and Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies that had been agreed with the International Monetary Fund. And I wish to make some comments on both documents, and also to use this opportunity to provide an update on the economy and the challenges confronting us in the New Year.

Fiscal performance, Mr. Speaker, has remained resilient through the 2013/14 fiscal year with the Central Government primary surplus and budget deficit targets, all being met. This continuing fiscal consolidation effort bodes well for the attainment of the key primary surplus target of 7.5% of GDP for the fiscal year 2013/14 over the medium term.

(Applause)

STATIN has also reported that there was real GDP growth of 0.5% in the September 2013 quarter following a decline of 0.2% for the preceding quarter. (Applause) This expansion largely reflected increased output in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, Mining and Quarrying, Construction and Hotels and Restaurants sectors.

Specifically, for the December - for the quarter ending December 31st and the quarter ending March 31st, the projection is for

growth to continue and indeed to strengthen. (Applause)

Miss HANNA: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: With respect to inflation, the trajectory for the fiscal year to date has shown that inflation has been in line with projections. Inflation for the calendar year - of 2013 - was 9.6% and for the fiscal year ending March, we are projecting an inflation outturn in single digits, which was in line with the band stipulated during the budget.

On the issue of the external accounts, estimates for the fiscal year to September 2013 indicate that there was an improvement in the current account deficit relative to the corresponding period for 2012/13.

For the fiscal year to September 2013, the current account deficit was estimated at US$678.7 Million, which represented a reduction of some 33.8% or US$347.8 Million when compared with the corresponding period for 2012/13. This positive development was reflected in the performance of nearly all sub-accounts. The Goods and Services sub-account recorded the greatest improvement of US$294.8 Million due mainly to a reduction in imports. This trend is expected to continue for the rest of the fiscal year. (Applause)

Against the background of estimated improvements in the Balance of Payments to end December, the Net International Reserves increased to US$1052.8 Million at end of 2013 relative to the US$884.3 Million at the end of March 2013. (Applause) This met the IMF's target.

Further improvement in line with the IMF Programme target is expected by end March, 2013 (sic) due to programmed inflows from multilateral institutions and improvements in net private capital flows.

Members of the House will recall that the Financial Administration and Audit (Amendment) Act, 2010, requires that upon presentation of the annual Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, the Minister shall lay before both Houses of Parliament, a Fiscal Policy Paper setting out:

a) a Macroeconomic Framework;
b) a Fiscal Responsibility Statement; and
c) a Fiscal Management Strategy.

(HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, North, Minister Without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. LESTER MICHAEL HENRY, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, Central, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition, entered and took his seat.)

The FAA Act also requires the Minister to lay before each House of Parliament at least twice in each financial year a Report on the performance of the economy, the public finances of Jamaica and the actions taken under the Fiscal Management Strategy.

Further regulations developed to support the FAA Act requires the Minister to table before each House of Parliament an Interim Report that shall focus primarily on the mid-

year outturn, the implications for the remainder of the financial year and the medium-term arrangements under the programme; and to provide information which will inform discussions relating to the ensuing financial year, while providing a preliminary and indicative view of that year's Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, and present expenditure data at a relatively aggregate level.

(DR. DONALD KEITH DUNCAN, (PNP), Hanover, Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

This first Interim Report which covers the six-month period April to September 2013 was presented to Parliament to satisfy this requirement. Additionally, it serves to engender active debate and participation in the management of the public finances of Jamaica and the performance of the economy.

The Fiscal Policy Paper will be considered by the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee tomorrow, I believe, and a Report is to be submitted to the Committee on Tax Measures, which has been appointed. All of this is an important element in ensuring greater transparency in our fiscal process. It should also contribute to greater adherence to fiscal rules. And hopefully, Mr. Speaker, we, in this House, will be equal to the task of having a rational discussion on the options available to the country on both the expenditure and revenue sides of the Budget.

The IMF Board's consideration of the second review of Jamaica's economic programme, April to September 2013, under the Extended Fund Facility, was approved on December 18, 2013. The Supplementary Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies included an update of the quantitative criteria through September 2014, as well as the addition of specific commitments related to tax reform, streamlining incentives, improving the business environment, financial sector reform and the strengthening of the social protection framework.

The IMF Board approval resulted in a drawdown of special drawing rights of Nineteen point Nine Seven Million SDRs, or approximately Thirty Million US Dollars (US$30M) by Jamaica, bringing the total drawdown from the Fund to date to approximately Two Hundred and Seventy Million US Dollars (US$270M).

(Applause)

(MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. Speaker, the positive second review also facilitates access to loans from the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank of an additional Two Hundred and Seventy Million ($270M) by way of budgetary support.

The next IMF review mission to Jamaica will be over the period February 5 to 14, to assess performance of the quarter ending December 2013 and the outlook going forward.

Our assessment - that is to say the Government of Jamaica's assessment - indicates that all quantitative targets and structural benchmarks for the December quarter have been met. (Applause)

Among the key tasks going forward, and to be undertaken in the current quarter, are legislative amendments for the enhanced fiscal rules, tax reform and other legislative reforms, including the passage of the Omnibus Banking Act.

The Government of Jamaica, Mr. Speaker, developed and submitted to the IMF in August last year, a conceptual framework for the design of legally binding fiscal rules. The enhanced fiscal rules will seek to bolster fiscal transparency, ensure a sustainable budgetary balance and consolidate the gains of fiscal consolidation. The transparency and automaticity of fiscal adjustment...

(Mr. Shaw took his seat beside the Leader of the Opposition)

Government MEMBERS: Yes! Yes! All right!

(Applause/Heckling)

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...will be enhanced by an explicit time...

(Heckling)

(The Speaker gavels.)

Mr. BUNTING: Yu light a candle, sing a sankey and find yu way back home!

(Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, the transparency and automaticity of fiscal adjustment will be enhanced by an explicit time-bound adjustment path to sustainability. In that regard, legislation to enable adoption of these fiscal rules will be enacted by the end of March 2014. The enactment of the fiscal rules means that Parliament will have a greater responsibility in the management of the fiscal affairs of the country, which will mean, Mr. Speaker - as I mentioned before - an even more serious engagement by parliamentarians about fiscal issues.

Key elements of the framework involve, first of all, an effort to limit the annual budgeted overall fiscal deficit of the Public Sector to achieve a reduction in public debt to no more than 60 per cent of GDP by 2025/2026. (Applause)

The rule will establish an automatic correction mechanism that would be triggered by substantial cumulative deviations from the annual overall balance target. The application of the automatic correction mechanism can exempt specified social spending from potential adjustment.

The rule will also include an escape clause limited to major adverse shocks and triggered only with parliamentary approval. Independent validation of the event or shock will be required before the escape clause can be initiated by the Ministry of Finance and Planning.

In relation to coverage, the fiscal rule will take into account all fiscal activities associated with the public sector, as well as the fiscal implications of public/private partnerships capturing all associated actual or contingent fiscal liabilities and risks. And it will also finally deal with the question of the effectiveness of current enforcement and compliance regime. This will be enhanced to

further encourage greater *ex ante* compliance with the new rules-based framework. Measures include transparency and accountability through parliamentary hearings and public statements by officials. The Minister of Finance and Planning will be required to explain deviations from the fiscal rules in a mid-term budget review in Parliament, and outline corrective steps to get back on track with the annual fiscal rule target.

Mr. Speaker, collectively we have to ensure that we are the last generation that carries such a high burden of debt... (Applause) ...and that we will rescue future generations from a similar situation.

As was indicated in the Fiscal Policy Paper tabled in April 2013, comprehensive tax reform is a critical component of Jamaica's economic reform programme, and remains a priority for the Government. The Government of Jamaica recognizes that the tax system needs to become more supportive of economic growth.

Among the measures required for the current quarter is the presentation of a Blueprint for Tax Reform, which has been prepared and which I propose to have considered by the Committee on Tax Measures of this Parliament.

(MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, Eastern, entered and took her seat.)

Other commitments require a strengthening of tax administration. Beginning this quarter, Tax Administration Jamaica will implement the Third-Party Information Provisions of the Revenue Administration Act, 2013, on a phased basis. In the new financial year, starting April, 2014, businesses in selected sectors will be required to submit detailed information relating to their depositors, independent contractors, suppliers and business customers.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to deal with a matter that has been the source of some public debate. This concerns the issue of the revenue needs for the next fiscal year, and specifically concerns the fact that a study is being conducted regarding the possibility of collecting the tax on petroleum products by way of GCT.

(HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing, entered and took his seat.)

Some of this debate in the public space reflects genuine concerns, some perhaps have other motives. Let me be clear, however. The issue to be studied concerns the relative merits of collecting the tax on fuel by way of a Special Consumption Tax, as we do now, or by way of a General Consumption Tax. There are merits and disadvantages related to each approach which we need not go into here at this time.

Let me state, however, that it is not the intention of the Government to increase the net revenue take from petroleum products. (Applause) The issue is about the most

efficient means of collecting the revenue. The focus of the Government, going forward, is on maintaining our basic fiscal targets, including specifically, the primary surplus target of 714 per cent, which may require adjustments either on the revenue or the expenditure side.

Mr. Speaker, make no bones about it, we have to live within our means.

(Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated, there has been a return to growth, modest though it is. This has been the result of greater levels of confidence and of the country's performance under the Economic Reform Programme. When the Government reduces its borrowing this should have a positive impact on the lowering of interest rates, generally, and more significantly, on the lowering of the debt burden. Our debt burden as measured by the debt to GDP ratio is firmly on a downward trajectory, and should be about 5 to 7 per cent less for this fiscal year than it was at the beginning of the Economic Reform Programme. (Applause) More immediately, the fiscal incentives introduced towards the end of last year reflect our determination to support the productive sector by reducing duties and the effective rate of taxation on productive enterprises.

Measures are being put in place - as has been explained by the Minister of Energy - to bring cheaper sources of energy to market and reduce the cost of electricity going forward. (Applause)

There have been positive developments in other areas of the economy. Agriculture is growing at an annualized rate of about 5 per cent. (Applause) Arrangements for the divestment and expansion of the Kingston Container Terminal should be concluded this year, as has been indicated by the Minister of Transport. (Applause) Plans for the construction of new port facilities and industrial zones associated with these port facilities are proceeding and more will be said to this House by the Minister of Transport on another occasion. (Applause) Work is proceeding on the North-South Highway link, as we speak.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: We are enhancing the business environment and increasing access to credit by small businesses. To this end, we have passed the Security Interests in Personal Property Bill, and we have established a Central Collateral Registry.

We have also put in place new arrangements to drive the process of public sector transformation to make the public sector more efficient and business friendly and to be more effective at service delivery. All these elements and more constitute the growth agenda. It is this that will provide the improved quality of life for all Jamaicans.

Mr. Speaker, there have been positive performances and encouraging indications all around. There are challenges which still remain, but we need collectively to ensure that we meet these challenges and ensure that we have a stronger level of economic growth in the year 2014 and going forward.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

(The Speaker gavels.)

Mr. SHAW: (Smiles) Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I believe it is the recent custom that in a statement a brief reply is allowed.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: From whom? From whom?

(Laughter)

Mr. SHAW: From the appropriate authority.

(Laughter/Applause)

Mr. SHAW: (Laughs) Mr. Speaker, the presentation of the Fiscal Policy Paper by the Honourable Minister, as you know, has its antecedence in the previous administration when I had the honour of introducing the fiscal responsibility framework from which the Fiscal Policy Paper is derived.

(DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

So, the presentation by the Minister on the Fiscal Policy Paper, which will be examined, I believe, by the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee tomorrow, and which no doubt will form a part of the debate in the upcoming Supplementary Estimates.

I take note of the observations that have been made by the Minister and would like to just make a few comments, Mr. Speaker.

In listening to the Minister, Mr. Speaker, one could easily be led to believe that all is well, that everything is hunky-dory.

Mr. ROBINSON: He never said that.

Mr. SHAW: The truth is, the truth is that there are many issues that are confronting us now and confronting the economy, which, in the view of the Opposition, requires perhaps a more targeted, a more focused and even a more aggressive response from the Government at this time. Because the truth is, while we acknowledge the issues raised by the Minister in terms of some of the critical benchmarks that have been achieved under the Agreement with the International Monetary Fund, we know that it is of some concern and some worry, for instance, that the exchange rate continues on a trajectory that is of concern to a lot of people including investors in the economy.

The truth is, that even as the Agreement is being implemented and the 'good news report' has been presented by the Minister today, that the dollar is now at $107.21 cents up to yesterday, and continues virtually on a daily basis, Mr. Speaker, on its slippery downward slide in terms of the exchange rate that we face.

And in consequence, it is affecting prices. And, of course, even at the average October to October inflation rate, which is now, for the first time in quite a few years, has now entered into the double-digit region again. It's in the double-digit region in large part because of the increase, the devaluation of the exchange rate, in large part also due to increase in bus fares among other things, Mr. Speaker.

But, we all know that when inflation goes up that the main impact of inflation is on prices, basic prices. In fact, the main impact tends to be on poor people food, on the things that people rely on on a daily basis, and that is basic things, basic foods, and that is one of the

main areas of impact in terms of the inflation rate.

Mr. Speaker, the truth is also, that there is every indication that interest rates are beginning to trend in the wrong direction. We have noticed that both the Government of Jamaica and the Bank of Jamaica have recently been experiencing rising rates on their medium-term tenures.

For instance, in terms of the Government of Jamaica Treasury Bill rate, which went to a low of 5.75% in February of 2013, immediately after the National Debt Exchange, that that six-month Treasury Bill has now climbed back to the 8% region, Mr. Speaker - by August of last year it has reached 8% - 8.13% in fact, before slipping back to just under 8% in September.

Equally, the Bank of Jamaica 180-day Certificate of Deposit rose from 5.97% in April of last year, when the bank resumed issuing longer term tenures after a three-year break from the end of the market to - it went up to 7.49% by August of 2013. Likewise, the BOJ's 365-day CD rose from 6.85% in June, 2013 to 7.65%.

So, Mr. Speaker, interest rates are beginning to trend in the wrong direction and the Minister himself knows that the private sector, including those who lend money, watch very closely the movements of both Government of Jamaica and Bank of Jamaica interest rates as the floor for them to set their own rates in terms of loans in the economy. That is a disturbing trend.

Equally, Mr. Speaker, the Minister did not make any reference to the fact that unemployment, the rate of unemployment has in fact increased over the past couple of years, gone up by almost 3%, Mr. Speaker, from 13% to almost 16%. Here again, another disturbing trend.

I wish to suggest to the Minister - and I don't want to throw cold water whatsoever on the benefits that are being gained from passing the two IMF Tests and as we have heard, there is *-m* indication that the third Test is about to be passed as well. But the issue, Mr. Speaker, is that as you pass IMF Tests there is a bigger test that needs to be passed. It is the test of investment, it is the test of economic growth, and it is the test of job creation, because that is the ultimate test that makes any sense to the people of Jamaica. (Applause)

And what I want to put to the Minister is very simply this, Mr. Speaker.

(*Sotto voce* comment by a Member)

Mr. SHAW: Over the past two years, a number of initiatives that were implemented by the previous administration have now been reversed by the present administration and there has been no supplements for those initiatives that had been reversed. I won't go into those now; I can go into them at an appropriate time. But the truth is, I just want to ask the Minister, where is the growth strategy?

We know what the strategy is. We know the structural benchmarks that are being achieved and the fact that you've passed one or two or perhaps three IMF Tests, with, we know clouds on the horizon, because even the Chairman of the EPAC Committee recently expressed concern about the ability to pass the

fourth test, which is the March Test, for obvious reasons. And the biggest reason, Mr. Speaker, would be, where is the growth. And my question is, where is the growth strategy? Because ultimately, it is the growth strategy, which encourages investment, which encourages job creation and which encourages the earning of money and the earning of foreign exchange, as well as revenue for the budget, that that is where the rubber hits the road.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: What pass the Test now? What pass the Test?

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, when the question is asked, when the question is asked of the Minister, where is the growth strategy? The Minister tells us, look to Goat Islands, look to Harmony Cove, look to the Port development - that's part of Goat Islands look to the North-South Highway and so on.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hi Andrew, a dis you bring him back for?

(Laughter)

Mr. SHAW: My question is, my question is, where are we in relation to those major projects?

A MEMBER: Is politics!

Mr. SHAW: Where are we in terms of the Goat Islands Project?

(DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. PAUL LENNOX BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Andrew, West Rural, entered and took his seat.)

The Honourable Minister recently went to China on a trip. The Honourable House has not been favoured with a Report on the outcome of that visit by the Minister to China as yet, but the country would want to know without the Goat Islands Project, what are the specific details of it? What is the time frame of that proposed investment? What is the Harmony Cove project? Where is the Harmony Cove Project? What is the trajectory of investment, what is the time frame of that?

And the Minister, who is Leader of the House, had announced sometime ago, that the bauxite and alumina sector would be seeing its revival commencing in 2014. That Alpart is supposed to reopen in 2014 and that....

Mr. PARCHMENT: That's not true! That's not true!

(Laughter)

Mr. SHAW: And we are told, Mr. Speaker....

(Heckling)

...we are told that by 2016, we will be looking at a reopening of the WINDALCO Project at Kirkvine. What we'd like to know is for the Honourable Minister to clarify what is the present situation in relation to the projection for the reopening of the Bauxite and Alumina Sector? And I simply say that because it is an important part of the firming up of the growth trajectory.

Indeed, the 1.3 to 1.5% growth that we achieved by the end of 2011, was in part due to the reopening of the Ewarton Alumina Facility. That did assist in the growth that we achieved at that time. So, it would be

interesting to know what is the update from the Government in relation to their discussions with RUSAL for the reopening of Alpart and for the reopening of WINDALCO at Kirkvine.

And, I end by simply saying to the Minister, that now is the time for the Government in the midst of the stabilization that is being achieved within the context of the IMF Agreement, now is not a time for passive reaction from the Government in terms of growth, now is the time for the Government to seize the initiative, to press the stimulus buttons of encouraging investment and growth in the economy, Mr. Speaker. It's very important that that be considered.

Look at - the question - the Minister mentioned that Tax Reform, by no means, is complete. And he has now mentioned that in relation to further tax reform initiatives that there will now be - we are now moving to a Blue Print for tax reform, to use his words. A Blue Print for Tax Reform.

Indeed, that is important, Mr. Speaker, because what has already been tabled in the House by way of the Fiscal Incentive Miscellaneous Legislation offers nothing really new to the productive sector. It's a new approach, but it's nothing new for the productive sector.

The manufacturing sector is not getting anything new. They used to get it by way of waivers, now they will get it by way of a new dispensation in the system, so it doesn't really offer new stimulus. So, that is why there is no considerable excitement in the productive sector because what is tabled so far is nothing new for the productive sector. So the question is, where is the something new and different that is going to stimulate investment and interest by the productive sector. That is the big question.

Finally, I want to just ask the Minister -I want to ask the Minister before I sit down, Mr. Speaker...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SHAW: I want to ask the Minister to indicate to us, what is the state of payment of bills, both in Central Government and, in terms of certain statutory bodies. And I pick out one particular statutory body, the National Housing Trust, because as we know, the Government is presently embarked on a significant raid of the resources of the Housing Trust to the tune of some $11 Billion per year.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. SHAW: The information that has reached me at this time is that the NHT, right now, is having difficulties keeping current with its payments to contractors. And I would like if the Minister can shed some light on the issue of where we are, in terms of the arrears in Central Government payment of outstanding Bills, and certainly, whether certain selected public sector entities, such as the National Housing Trust, are in fact - in the case of the NHT, it would be important to clear up that issue, especially as we know that there is this significant pull out of funds that is taking place right now - and whether that draw-down on funds is, in fact, affecting the ability of the National Housing Trust to pay its current bills to its contractors on a timely basis.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Samuda.

Mr. SAMUDA: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would just like if the Minister could indicate to us: these tests that you are required to pass are against targets set by the IMF, and in almost every instance you have been careful to indicate that whilst there may be tests laid out by the IMF...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SAMUDA: All right, you don't like the preamble. It makes you uneasy.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Dr. Phillips)

Mr. SAMUDA: All right, let me go straight to the question - all right, all right...

(*Sotto* voce comments)

Mr. SAMUDA: Now, you don't like the preamble; I will go straight to the question.

Mr. BUNTING: He is trying to figure the question himself.

Mr. SAMUDA: It is a laughing matter, I can see.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: You are the laughing matter.

Mr. SAMUDA: Who is speaking? (Laughter) Did we hear some - did we hear some blurring from this side.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Samuda, come to the question.

Mr. DALLEY: Get on with it.

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, can you indicate to us, what is the outturn, compared with the budget set by the Ministry, not the IMF target, the Jamaican budget? Explain to us, the difference, if there is one, in the performance of the economy when compared with our domestic budget.

Are you, Minister - see, I am relieved of all the preamble. Are you satisfied that your reporting on data - which has a lag time of somewhere about three months - to this Parliament, and it is used as a basis for assessing performance, are you satisfied that that degree of lag time enables Parliamentarians to properly judge the projections that are put forward by the Minister? Are you satisfied with the collection and distribution of data, as now we are looking at data from September? The Minister can elaborate if he wishes.

What impact, if any, has the price of oil had on the import bill, which has led to a favorable response this year over last year, in terms of the current account - the import bill. What impact has oil had on that?

Mr. DALLEY: No more questions, sit down now.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Don't be disrespectful and rude.

Mr. CHARLES: You can't answer the questions.

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, the Minister spoke of the fiscal rules that had to be introduced. Would you indicate, Minister, in terms of any deviation from the rules that you will be held accountable for, if it is proposed to implement a system of sanctions against the responsible Minister if breaches to the rules are experienced, and to what extent have you studied the kinds of sanctions that could be imposed, and the time frame within which the escape clause would be put in place

and the mechanism that would be adopted to handle the deviation from the fiscal rule?

Then, the question of the Port of Kingston as you mentioned in your Prospects for Growth; could you indicate the exact stage that you have reached in respect of finalizing the contract to engage the dredging of the Kingston Harbour, and what is the projected time for completion? It's in your paper so don't refer me to the Minister of Transport, or the Minister of Industry. That's your paper and I would like an answer from you.

(Laughter)

Could you indicate, Minister...

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. SAMUDA: No, but you can't come here as a Minister - when Ronnie makes a statement here he has to account for it. Why should you escape with another Minister? ...progress of the...

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, would the Minister indicate to this Honourable House - look, you have had weeks to make this paper; I have had five minutes to read it. And I am making these questions against five minutes of reading, okay.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SAMUDA: Answer me Mr... Wait nuh man; settle down *nuh.* It's a serious matter.

Mr. McKENZIE: What kind a foolishness...

Mr. SAMUDA: Desmond...

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. McKenzie)

(Laughter/Applause)

Mr. SAMUDA: Settle down man; settle down. This is a serious matter. It is the future of the country we are talking about - the economy, the future. Could you give us a report on the success, if there is any, of the Central Collateral Registry? How is that going - that you can refer to your Minister, he will answer. But I would like to know that because we recently passed it, and we know that is a useful tool, and I would like you to give us a reply on that.

And the question of the development of economic ports - economic port facilities - does the facilities relate to facilities within one port, or several ports, and what is the scope of these facilities of which you speak? And what general timeframe can we expect to see something started, because we were promised here, in May, that it would start before the end of the year.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Dr. Phillips)

Mr. SAMUDA: I will show you **Hansard,** both from the Prime Minister and from the Minister - all Ministers. And Minister, your incentive mechanism revolves around creating jobs, could you give us an idea of what level of success attended you when you visited China, obviously, to finalize the arrangements - and if it is not so, you can enlighten us - for the drawdown of funds against the US$350 Million Chinese facility to implement the M - what you call it - M-D-I-P, for enhanced road improvement - major road improvement? Could you give us - could you tell us in clear terms what was the purpose of your trip to China and what success attended

you in respect of being able to draw down money from that facility? And if you have not been able to, so far, could you give us an idea of when that drawdown will take place, which was due from last year?

Thank you.

Mr. DALLEY: Submit those questions in writing... (Inaudible) ...usual way.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SAMUDA: I didn't get the time; five minutes I read this paper...

The SPEAKER: Mr. Holness.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HOLNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I see where the Minister has received an award from one of our National papers. (Applause) It is noted, Mr. Speaker, but if I were the Minister, I would be very reluctant to accept any awards.

(*Sotto voce* comments/Laughter)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago, the Prime Minister made a statement which seemed almost counter to the statements made previously by the Minister of Finance, when asked whether or not the Government was contemplating any new taxes.

Mr. Speaker, the Government will be presenting, I gather, a subsidiary Supplementary - a Supplementary Budget in February. It is critical that the Minister clarifies in the mind of the public, any doubt the Prime Minister's questions...

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. HOLNESS: Answer to the question was not definitive. She was very non-committal as to the prospects of new taxes, whereas the Finance Minister was definitive in saying, there will be no new taxes. I think that needs to be cleared up when you respond, Minister of Finance. The statement presented by the Minister is welcome. It is good to give the nation an update. I see that you have taken great comfort in a 9.6/9.8 per cent inflation rate.

Let me make it absolutely clear, Mr. Speaker, we are not comfortable with an inflation rate that is likely - I hear your projection is single digit - but is likely to be double digit by the time the next Budget is read. I raise that issue, Mr. Speaker, to raise this question: inflation on the one hand, obviously driven by a runaway exchange rate - we are not clear as to what is the Government's policy on managing the exchange rate.

Mr. HOLNESS: There is to me, an inherent contradiction in fiscal and monetary policy as it is operating now.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Phillips)

Mr. HOLNESS: You prefer inherent?

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. HOLNESS: And she taught you as well?

Mr. Speaker, the Minister needs to clarify because what is happening...

Mr. CHARLES: There's a difference between biology and finance you know? There's a difference between biology and finance.

Mr. HOLNESS: ...is that the Bank of Jamaica Governor is making it clear that he is doing operations in the market to mop up

liquidity and to acquire foreign exchange. But on the other hand we hear that it is well may be necessary to have the dollar slide - its part that - the Minister needs to explain this - what is...

Dr. PHILLIPS: What are you proceeding to?

Mr. HOLNESS: No I'm asking you, I'm telling you what people are thinking, Minister, we're not clear, what is the policy? Because on one hand you're driving up interest rates, you're tightening liquidity, but we see, though you've said it has met the target, your NIR is dangerously low. I don't see the end game in the policy as it relates to managing the exchange rate.

In all of this, Mr. Speaker, we hear nothing about export. The shadow spokesperson on Finance dealt with the issue of growth. A part of the growth strategy, must be a clear strategy on export. (Applause) And I'm asking the Minister to say to the nation what is the export strategy, because it is the export strategy that will bring us the foreign exchange.

With those three questions, Mr. Speaker, may it please you and I await the answers.

Mr. CHARLES: Where is the beef, Minister?

Dr. PHILLIPS: You want to ask too?

Mr. CHARLES: Where **is** the beef?

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Speaker, I only have two questions for the Minister, very briefly.

(Cross talks)

Mr. BARTLETT: Don't worry about that.

(Cross talk)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Speaker, for the Minister, just two brief questions on the exchange rate. Because, Mr. Speaker, every month since April 2013, the Ministry of Finance has been revising the Jamaican to US dollar exchange rate as it uses to convert the external debt portion of the debt into Jamaican dollars.

Is there a danger, Minister, that if the Jamaican dollar continues to depreciate that it would blow up the total debt and threatens the debt to GDP target that is a key strategic objective of your fiscal consolidation efforts? And the second question is, with the foreign currency deposits now amounting to 63% of broad money, that is M3J, implying...

(Inaudible comments by Mr. Atkinson)

Mr. BARTLETT: Listen, you didn't do economics; you didn't do economics. (Laughs)

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Atkinson)

Mr. BARTLETT: Because I had to make sure that the Minister understands very clearly to answer on point.

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. BARTLETT: Yes, that's very important to understand what broad money means and to be able to deal with it.

(Cross talks)

Mr. BARTLETT: It's implying of course, Mr. Speaker, that Jamaicans with money to save prefer to hold their savings in hard currency and that the Jamaican dollar has been losing ground as a sure - what we called a store of value. And does this suggest to the

country, Mr. Speaker, that we have been paying a high price in terms of macroeconomic stability to maintain a currency mainly for domestic transactions?

Mr. DALLEY: They usually take back the job.

(Inaudible comments)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I expect that congratulations are in order for the return of the Opposition Spokesman on Finance.

MEMBERS: The Prodigal Son.

Dr. PHILLIPS: History will still determine whether in his sojourn elsewhere he underwent any transformation.

(Inaudible comments/Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: I don't know whether it was a...

Mr. SHAW: Do you want to know why?

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, very much so; very much so, and I should...

Mr. SHAW: All right.

Dr. PHILLIPS: But anyway, let me say, Mr. Speaker, I think a number of issues have been raised, and today is not the day for the debate, but I think we need to - we're having a debate on the Supplementary Estimates, which will provide an opportunity for the spokesman and the would-be...

(Laughter/Applause)

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...to participate.

Sotto voce comment by Mr. Shaw)

Dr. PHILLIPS: For everyone. But it is - the fact of the matter is that as far as the basic macroeconomic indicators are concerned, things are moving in the right direction. (Applause) The characterization that we said all is well is not our characterization, but things are moving in the right direction.

Mr. DALLEY: Oh, yes.

Dr. PHILLIPS: And I believe what I would hope for, Mr. Speaker, is that in addressing what is still a very serious challenge that the country has, a very high debt exposure, a still weak productive sector, very tight fiscal conditions that there - we don't need, in a sense, to outline a litany of the challenges and the problems and try to say that by virtue of that everything should've been solved in one year. Not possible. What we really need to engage in is a discussion as to how, and if you have a better way, or if anyone else has a better way of how we can go forward, then let's discuss it, let's consider it, because what is at stake is not the governing PNP or the opposition JLP, what is at stake is the future of Jamaica. (Applause) So, I hope that once and for all we can put our considerations beyond the realm of narrow partisan outlook.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: I'm not accusing anyone, but I'm appealing to everyone, this side, that side, outside that we recognize that as a country and as a region I daresay, we face perhaps the most severe challenge to our existence that we have ever faced since Independence.

Now, question was raised about inflation. Inflation numbers are there, determined by STATIN - they published them monthly, the fiscal - calendar year outturn 9.6%. It is there, it's a fact. And the projection that we have,

which is still a projection, is for a single digit. You say on what basis, I don't know, that - the assumption is on the path that has been there December, what the numbers for January look like, what the number - you are correct it was the bus fare which gave the blip, come October it went up and there was that - it has stabilized. But all of us would want it to be lower rather than higher and indeed, it has been the outturn is within the ban that was set during the budget and it is on the lower section of that ban. That is a good thing, not a bad thing, we don't have to find fault with it.

(Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: The question of interest rates has been raised. Now it's a more complex issue as you know, we have real negative interest rates at the point in time. And it is true that as far as the policy rates are concerned there has been some trend up, but you can't sustain real negative rates for any long time. And we need to draw the distinction also that between the policy rates and the rates to the end-users, and the truth is the rates to the end-users continue to trend down moreso for preferred borrowers, less so for others, but it is the case that they have been trending down. There have been no unemployment measures that take account of the current budgetary period, we have to see, but it is true that what we want to do is to, in fact, drive unemployment.

What has the Government done in this regard? What the Government has done in this regard is, first of all, to ensure that there is the emergency employment programme in JEEP. And by the way, by the way, the resources from the Chinese loan are there and will be disbursed in this quarter, in this quarter, in this quarter... (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...for first of all that section having to do with your JEEP programme. You've put it in?

Mr. SAMUDA: No, I'm waiting on you.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Long time!

(Inaudible comments)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Well it will be in Jamaican dollars your constituents will get it; you know the colour of that money.

(Inaudible comments)

Dr. PHILLIPS: But we've also set a floor on capital expenditures and even with the cuts on the capital side that we've had to embark upon to maintain our primary surplus, we have in fact, spent more on the capital side this year than was spent last year, which is also moving in the right direction, and we have maintained the floor that was set for... (Applause) ...on the capital budget and we have maintained the floor on the social protection side. On the PATH programme it was - what's the percentage increase, Derrick, on PATH, 30% increase on PATH beneficiaries, 15 last year and another 15 this year that was part of the commitment. So we recognize that there are difficulties but what more has been done, what more? Because this notion that nothing is happening on growth...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...the DBJ put aside $2 Billion for small business operations and it has all been taken up for the small business

operations. There was another $1.5 Billion that was provided by the NIF and that has all been on-lend too in providing for sustenance to have growth. And the recent business survey said, and it was quoted, so we don't meet again, it's a good thing, that more businesses have reported that they have investment plans for this current year than ever before since they've been doing the survey. That is a good thing. (Applause) It's not a bad thing, we don't need to try and pour cold water on it...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...because it is happening under this Administration, it's a good thing! (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: It's petty politics! Petty politics!

A MEMBER: Dem crazy man!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Those are the things that represent the test of growth. What are - the specific question was asked, a specific question was asked by the newly restored Opposition Spokesman on the arrears. Now the only question I have and I shouldn't really ask it. I thought that when you move, come forward, there would be others coming forward too.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, I thought so that is what I have heard, by information. But....

(*Sotto voce* comments by members)

Dr. PHILLIPS: I am not going to go into that debate that is why I said I am not entering into that debate.

(The Speaker gavels)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, specific question, our commitment is that there should be no arrears beyond ninety days in the Central Government and my information is that we are in that situation. I have not, I have not heard. I have not heard I will explore the specific question about Housing Trust and thing, but commitment is there.

The question has been raised about the - on the savings on the Oil Bill, I can't tell you what the specific amount of savings has been in dollar terms, but yes it has been of benefit to us. Again that is a good thing, you know, quite frankly, because it could have gone the other direction, the price of oil could have gone the other direction and we must thank God and I suspect it may be your prayers, but moreso the prayers of the thousands of Jamaicans... (Applause) No, but it is not the only thing. You know what we have benefitted from which could have gone terribly wrong no hurricane. (Applause) No hurricane. (Applause) Because last year we had Hurricane Sandy and we had to meet those obligations from within our own resources and we did, but we thank God that we did not have a hurricane this year and we pray that we don't have one coming this year either because it certainly would be a setback. And that is why, that is why, we seek to build our Net International Reserve and we are building them at the pace at which we are building them in order for us to able to withstand the unforeseen shocks which life inevitably brings from time to time. That is the only way we can do it, there is no one in this

world that owes us a living. The test of our independence as a country is our ability to manage our own affairs, provide for ourselves, live within our means and create this productive structure.

And I tell you this, Mr. Speaker, I tell you this, and I say it to all the Members of the House, a small country, facing a competitive, and I daresay in instances hostile global economic environment, cannot afford to confront this world on the basis of persistent division and fracturing of our national wage. (Applause) If we are going to face this world and face it successfully, we have to find the way to debate issues sincerely, honestly, up-front without the point scoring and find a way in which we can make progress in a world where nobody is owing us anything. And this is my plea, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Member from North Central -the Member from North Central St. Andrew asked some questions about the log time in the data and all of these. I want to suggest the fiscal policy paper is there and it states what data it has, and when the committee of which I believe you are a Member, PAAC meets....

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. Bartlett)

Dr. PHILLIPS: You can attend, they won't throw you out. If there can be a fuller discussion of what data is available, no data is being hidden, all data....

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. Bartlett)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Yes, every month, we post - as the data becomes available it is posted on the website and we bring it. Well, put it this way there has been no change in the provision, I know, but look, what we are having, what we are committed to, what was introduced when the fiscal framework was put in place is for the House to get this data to discuss it, and I find quick frankly that the committees of the House work, they work certainly better than the plenary does.

(*Sotto voce* comments by a Member)

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, because we find common cause more easily in Committee than we do in the plenary. But....

(*Sotto voce* comments by a Member)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Maybe. Yes, man, you will get them.

The fiscal rules legislation what is being proposed and in fact what is being prepared now is in fact the draft. These very issues that you posed are the issues to be worked out and the issues where this House will have an opportunity to present its views.

(*Sotto voce* comments by a Member)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Well, and that is the way I would like to hear you behave. (Applause) Because we, and I know that you have the country at heart, I believe so at any rate. We have to ensure collectively, no man everyone, everyone, everyone struggle to come in here by and large because they want to do good for Jamaica.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. Charles)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Pearnel, I believe so. I believe so from your days in New York until now, yes. But we, many of us who came in here, more than 20 years, some more than 30 years ago, we need to ensure that the generation coming, does not repeat the errors that have been made over the year that have us

now with a debt that at the start of the year, was upwards of 145 per cent, using the IMF measure, 145 per cent of GDP.

It is good that it is now below 140, it is a good thing, not a bad thing. (Applause)

So, Mr. Speaker, on the question raised about tax statement, let me make one point clear. I was asked a question about fuel tax, and I indicated that we have no plan. I was asked a question about...

(*Sotto voce* comments by a member)

Dr. PHILLIPS: I don't write the headlines though, but if you read the body of the article you will see what I was quoted as saying. I said, we have to meet our targets, our deficit targets, our primary surplus targets. And, there are two aspects to it. We either, if the revenue outturns as projected are on track then we don't have to have any revenue raising measures. If they are not, we have the choice, either we raise revenues or we reduce expenditures. I do not envisage any major, and in fact what I said specifically, our main focus is on tax reform efforts in the course of this year, we will see what we will see where the outturn is concerned. Can I say something...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. Charles)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Pearnel, look at it this way you understand it, you understand it, good that fills me with great satisfaction. That is alright, but if you understand me everybody understands me. (Applause)

The question of exchange rate, the question - you can help them; you can be responsible and explain to them what you understand.

Mr. CHARLES: Show us where is the growth?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Okay, show you where the growth is alright. Agriculture is growing as I said, analyzed by five per cent; tourism is growing, analyzed by more than five percent. Mining is growing, tourism has 2,000 rooms being refurbished and it went cross the two million stopover visitors mark for the first time ever and we must congratulate the Minister of Tourism. (Applause)

The question of the exchange rate, the exchange that we are determined is that the exchange rate is a market determined exchange rate, it is - the Bank of Jamaica from time to time intervenes; we have determined that it should be on orderly exchange rate not subject to the speculative pressures and the exploitation by the speculators. And ultimately, it has resulted in some opportunities both for import substitution as we see in critical areas where animal feed production is concern, for example, it has been of consequence in your tourism earnings and the growth in your tourism throughputs - these are aspects of it.

One of the critical challenges that we face in relation to all of this is whether or not we are going to incentivize the production activity of the Jamaican people or the consumption activity that goes on. For many, many years we have provided a subsidy in a sense on the consumption side, and the adjustment, we are committed to getting as much productive activity going it means a competitive exchange rate, market determined exchange

rate, it means that where the choices face us what we have to do is to put the Jamaican people to work by giving them a chance to compete internationally and you will never export since that was the question unless they are operating on the basis of a competitive market driven exchange rate. The adjustments have been difficult, it has been terribly difficult, but I daresay that it is necessary. When I see in the agro-park something else that people have been trying to bad mouth, when I see a thousand acres of sago being grown in Jamaica, producing the animal feed basic input in Jamaica as compared with corn that was imported putting American farmers to work, this one is putting Jamaican farmers to work, I said that is a good thing. (Applause)

Mr. SAMUDA: Minister, don't sit down, because you have answered only three of the eleven questions....

Mr. DALLEY: Table it, table it.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Well, take those three and then later table the others.

(Cross talk)

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I crave your indulgence to enquire of the Minister if this is a *modus operandi* of the Minister of Finance whereby the Opposition places before him specific questions - I put eleven questions before him and he has answered three. Now, I ask you to ask him what about the others?

(Cross talk)

That's what the House is for. The House is not to tell me as Opposition that I must take those three -

Mr. DALLEY: Take them!

Mr. SAMUDA: Hear this one. Hear his sidekick. (Laughter) Listen to his sidekick over here. Listen to Tommy Tucker over here. (Laughter) Just listen to Tommy, Tommy is singing for his supper over here.

Mr. BUCHANAN: Yuh memba when yu bruk Busta finger.

Mr. SAMUDA: That's irresponsible. Irresponsible, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. BUCHANAN: Yeah, you were…

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker.

Mr. DALLEY: Fix up your clothes, Minister.

(Laughter)

The SPEAKER: No man, don't do that, man.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I must confess I didn't find eleven. But those that I found I answered save one about China, and I will on a subsequent occasion come to this House with a full report on the issues that arose in that visit.

Mr. SAMUDA: I wanted to ask you more about the budget; your performance against your budget.

Dr. PHILLIPS: And I said…

Mr. SAMUDA: Not the IMF budget, your budget.

Dr. PHILIPS: And it has been good. I mentioned the area of our capital, but it is clear that we have had to cut some of our capital expenditure. All those targets are our targets. The primary surplus target is ours. The overall public sector deficit target is ours and we are on track. (Applause) The revenue targets are ours and we are on track. The inflation target is ours and we are on track. All

of them are ours and we are on track. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Samuda)

Dr. PHILLIPS: And I haven't said, I haven't said that. But it is obvious. The information is there. We have made adjustments. The overall public sector deficit suggests that if your revenues were less for any reason then you have to cut your expenditures. It is there. It is not a secret - it is in the very document that is before you which the House is going to consider tomorrow and where you are welcome to come.

Mr. Speaker, maybe this procedure that we are trying of these statements being given by the various spokesmen on one occasion might need to be considered, because it is being used as an alternative to asking questions in the normal procedure of the House and creating a kind of laziness of mind in some of our colleagues. (Laughter)

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Speaker, the Minister is probably quite correct -

Mr. SAMUDA: You don't have the answer that's why you....

Mr. BARTLETT: The Minister is probably quite correct in that context, because he might have been premature in this statement since the FPP had not come before the relevant committee of Parliament yet for full consideration, so that questions...

(Cross talk)

...the key questions...

(Cross talk)

...that the technical people...

(Cross talk)

...perhaps are little more competent to answer would be answered so that we have a better understanding by way of the report that would come to the Parliament from this Committee. For example, you know, the contradiction inherent…

The SPEAKER: No, Mr. Bartlett. Mr. Bartlett, hold on, hold on. You're going beyond your scope, man.

(Cross talk)

We can't enter into more speeches, you know.

(Cross talk)

Mr. HENRY: Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Henry.

Mr. HENRY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of - Mr. Speaker, I rise as a Member of the PAAC and I appreciate the substantive point being made but the Committee is an ongoing Committee and I would like to ask the Minister, with your permission, some guidance. Because I raised this in the last study of the fiscal policy in the Committee and the question I simply asked the technocrats, which I didn't get a satisfactory answer, on is if we are following the model of the Government versus the IMF Agreement where is the forecasting procedures in that model .i.e. - and I beg your patience, if you're following a model you should have a forecasting which tells me when does the rate of exchange remain stable, when does the unemployment begin to be affected and at what point in time does the country see the benefits that we're tightening our belt on this whole agreement to reduce the GDP to a proper manageable proportion. I was told that it couldn't have been answered.

I am hoping that tomorrow then that when I raise it as my major substantive question I will be able to go to the constituents and the public at large and say in 2016 we expect unemployment to have decreased by 2 per cent, we expect the dollar to have stabilized at $100 or $110 or begin to decline and that is what I am not getting from that Committee. And I will say this with respect to Parliament because that Committee speaks to the technocrats. The technocrats say to us, they're following policy and it is a new Committee in the last three to four years. So it is important we get that clear. So I am just hoping tomorrow, if the Minister assures me, that I will get the forecasting ability which relates to what really takes you forward and is the most important element of it, I would hope that some technocrat could answer me or hopefully now the Minister could tell me if there is such a model being followed that gives the people and myself some hope.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I suspect that the Member from Central Clarendon knows the economic programmes are predicted upon and our budget.... predicated upon econometric programmes that exist and are designed and which can be improved, and I have no doubt that in the discussions tomorrow at the PAAC at which the technical officials will be present that his questions can be explored further.

Mr. BARTLETT: You will tell us the model that is used.

Mr. HENRY: Thank you very much.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House, a copy of the following:

- **Ministry Paper 9**
  Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of the Real Estate Board for the Financial Year ended March 31, 2011
- **Ministry Paper 10**
  Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of the Planning Institute of Jamaica for the Year ended December 31, 2012
- **Ministry Paper No. 11**
  Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of the Jamaica Deposit Insurance Corporation for the Year ended March 31, 2013
- **Ministry Paper No. 12**
  Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of the National Export-Import Bank of Jamaica Limited for the Year ended March 31, 2013
- **Ministry Paper No. 13**
  Cabinet Agenda Issues dated 23 December 2013
- **Ministry Paper No. 14**
  Cabinet Agenda Issues dated 13 January 2014

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move:

Be it Resolved with reference to the resolution passed by the Honourable House of Representatives on the 21st day of January, 2014 appointing a Committee on Tax Measures that the name Morais Guy and Horace Dalley be deleted and the names Fitz Jackson and Julian Robinson be submitted therefor;

And Be it Further Resolved that notwithstanding Standing Order 65(a) the name Mikeal Phillips be added thereto.

And, Mr. Speaker, I give further notice that at a later stage today I intend to take this Motion through all its stages.

Mr. FERGUSON: Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Minister Ferguson.

Mr. FERGUSON: I beg for the recommittal of the Report from Committee. The Chairman of the Human Resource and Social Development Committee last week started the - had tabled the Report.

The SPEAKER: Yes, we will deal with that at Public Business.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the time being as it is, I moved for the suspension of Standing Orders to enable us to take Question and Answers.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the suspension of the Standing Orders to allow us to go beyond the official time for questions.

Put to the House and agreed to.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS
(Recommitted)

Mr. MAIR: Mr. Speaker:

The SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Mair.

Mr. MAIR: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the expiration of twenty-one days I will be asking the Minister of Education to answer the following questions:

Question 1:

Would the Minister of Education advise whether or not the Ministry plans to eliminate pit latrines in schools in the constituency of North East, St. Catherine?

Question 2:

If the answer is in the affirmative, would the Minister please provide the Honourable House with a schedule for this initiative?

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we will be taking Questions 5 and 6 this afternoon by the Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing.

The SPEAKER: Dr. Chang.

Dr. CHANG: Mr. Speaker, the questions standing under my name under Questions 4, 5 and 6 for the Minister of Transport and Works.

The SPEAKER: Dr. Guy.

Dr. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Question 1:

Will the Minister indicate the number of housing starts the Housing Agency of Jamaica has executed so far this year?

Answer:

173 studio units at Whitehall 3 Housing Scheme located south of Sheffield-Negril Main Road approximately 0.5 kilometres east of Negril, Westmoreland.

Question 2:

Can the Minister advise as to how many of the Food for the Poor houses

announced earlier this year to be constructed have actually been built?

Answer:

Regular units - 448 and for Hurricane Sandy – 433, a grand total of 881, and I would refer the Member to Appendix A to see which parishes and constituencies they are being built.

Question 2b:

Can the Minister advise as to whether upgrading work is being done in informal settlements?

Answer:

Yes, see Appendix B.

Question 3:

Will the Minister indicate the constituencies in which these solutions have been construed?

Answer:

See Appendix B.

Question 4:

Can the Minister advise as to when the Housing Agency of Jamaica last presented audited financial statements?

Answer:

The 2011/2012 financial statement have been tabled in both Houses of the Parliament while the 2012/2013 statement is about to be tabled in the Houses.

Question 5:

Can the Minister confirm whether an usually high number of senior personnel at the Housing Agency have resigned?

Answer:

The number of senior personnel - senior management that has resigned since April 2013 is one in May, one in October and six in November.

Question 6:

Can the Minister advise of the total number of resignations at the Agency in the last six months?

Answer:

September – 1; October – 1 and November 6, a total of eight.

Question 7:

a) Will the Minister indicate whether complaints regarded undue and unwarranted political interference in the administrative operations of the Housing Agency have been brought to his attention?

Answer:

No. The Minister has not received any such complaint.

b) If the answer is in the affirmative, what has the Minister done in response to the situation, and what steps have actually been taken to allay concerns regarding political interference in the Agency's administrative operations?

Answer:

See (a) above.

Dr. CHANG: Thank you, Minister.

First supplementary question is the accuracy of your report on the number of resignations. My understanding is that some 44 personnel have, between resignation and voluntary redundancy, departed from the Agency since April of last year, from that Agency, which was a total of 135, I think, on

the last count, or near 140 employees. This includes the resignation of the former Managing Director but also the exit of the newly appointed Managing Director, who was only appointed, I think, in November. These are - in addition to that the Deputy Managing Director and Chief Technical Officer have also been a part of that team, the total amounts to some 44 personnel, which would indicate significant discontent in the Agency. In fact, one would wish to ask if it is the intention of the Ministry to, in fact, wind down the Agency.

Secondly, in relation to the efficiency of the Agency in delivering the Food for the Poor houses, I take note that I have received a correspondence recently that that is being transferred to the JEEP. I want to ask, why is it so if they have performed satisfactorily over the last year?

On the question of political interference, Minister, of course, I am not implying the Minister involvement, but a number of the events emerged in the Agency which I had asked if you were aware of. One, the Housing Agency is a peculiar agency. It is the Minister's responsibility to appoint the Managing Director. I understand that the Minister did make a recommendation - did make an appointment which was then varied by the current Chairman of the Board without any reason given, which in fact could have contributed to that new Managing Director leaving the Agency. That lady has been a long standing employee of that Agency for a period long over 10 years. We inherited her and, as far as I am aware, is a very capable individual who left because of that dispute.

In addition to that I would like to inform you whether you have had - if you have not had the reports that the Chairman of the Board interferes daily in the operation of the Agency. And, in fact, under the Public Bodies Management Act we do not have Executive Chairman. The head of the Agency is the Executive Officer responsible for the executive activity. Examples of that include the Chairman refusing the BlackBerry phone delivered to - by the telecommunications company providing the two user groups and then instructed that a new telephone be bought for $65,000 in a company which is having serious cashflow problems. And then requested that the credit for telephone calls be increased to $80,000 against the information or the advice of the Managing Director and the executive of the company, and a company again which is having serious financial problems. That to me, Minister, smacks a serious interference in the operations of the company.

In addition to that, while they are going through the kind of cash flow problems which they have, in fact, indicated in the PAAC and is seeking loans to insure their viability, and in fact have started no new projects that will earn any income in the short term and that is of course significant, because if you are increasing your expense you should be seeking to increase your income. And the Whitehall project you alluded to was - in fact, that contract was advertised some two years

ago when I had some responsibility for that Ministry. I would consider therefore, Chairman, someone who undertakes the kind of activity I have alluded to is interfering in the day-to-day operations and rendering the company non-viable.

In addition to seeking the privileges I have alluded to, and there are others, should have a personal assistant assigned to her to work from her office. This was never done, and when the company was operating at a very productive way, not only were they active in upgrading the infrastructure for thousands of squatters, they were building several hundred houses on an annualized basis.

And the other question asked of you, Minister, are you aware that significant sums were paid to contractors on claims that were rejected by an earlier Board and they did not go for arbitration or to court, again, on the instruction of the Managing Director and the support of some Board members. And that, in fact, has placed the company in significant financial cash flow problem. I will not call the company's name because it's not the company's responsibility. There may be claims, but the Chairman and the Board has a fiduciary responsibility to protect the public funds, and therefore funds should not be paid out without a clear liability for those bills. That's my first supplementary question.

Dr. GUY: First to respond to that there was a reorganization approved by the Ministry of Finance at the Housing Agency of Jamaica and people took voluntary separation from the Agency. That number, the number of voluntary separation has been included in the number that you quoted.

Secondly, the former Managing Director did not resign. He had come to the end of his contract in September of 2012 and he was asked to stay on a month-by-month basis until a new MD was appointed and there was a period of transition when you had both.

Three, it is not the intention of the Government to wind down the Agency. I understand the concern when you mentioned that 44 personnel have been separated from the company, but it is not our intention.

As it relates to the Food for the Poor houses and the transfer or the retransfer back to JEEP, the FFP programme is a JEEP Programme, which is through Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing. The Housing Agency of Jamaica was initially tasked to do the assessment and the JEEP Secretariat has now decided that they are going to be taking back that particular function.

The other questions you asked about interference by the Board, I am not aware of some of the details that you have just indicated here, but I will commit to have those investigated and at a later date I will give them to you.

Your assertion that there is no new project that has been ongoing is correct. Bernard Lodge, which is one also of your legacy projects, finally came on board but there are some challenges just now which we are ironing out with them. My understanding as it relates to claims that were not honoured by the previous Board, but have now been honoured

by the Board, is that the Board took a decision to assess some of those and have found that the claims were in fact valid and such were paid over.

Dr. CHANG: Minister, I will submit the questions in writing since you are not aware of the details. I think there needs to be an outline on those claims. It's not just the contracts that were paid up, there is a dispute - I am not sure if it's settled yet with insurance, the award of insurance contracts, which you should be aware of, and in fact, one insurance company actually threatened with legal action. That is still ongoing from my understanding. And it reflects generally some level of mismanagement or poor policy at the Board of the Housing Agency, and as I said the level of staff that has removed themselves from the Agency would suggest a significant level of wind-down of the activity. When you have only one project that you are overseeing and the other project, which is a major project I agree, but is a joint-venture programme, which means there is very little technical work to be done by the Agency, one has to ask the question - but I would also ask what has been the cost of the voluntary redundancy programmes in the past? Because that has also put significant pressure on the Agency and had there been enough work, which there should be given the demand for housing, there would be no need for such a programme, what has been the actual cost of that programme today?

Dr. GUY: Well, as you indicate you will submit those as supplementary questions. I am not able to tell you the cost now, but, I mean, I will do that when those questions are submitted.

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Bartlett.

Mr. BARTLETT: To the Minister. Minister, the HAJ late last year indicated to us at your Committee of Parliament that there was a gap of $300 Million that was needed for the operations and that they would be getting $150 Million from presales to the NHT and then they were going to the market for another $150 Million. Would the Minister wish to state where they are in terms of this in the context of the Central Treasury Management arrangements and whether or not that going to market is indeed possible, and then we have a follow-up question to that, Minister?

Dr. GUY: As it relates to the National Housing Trust, they are at the stage where the National Housing Trust is approving that facility. The Ministry of Finance has given approval for the other one, so that has been considered by the Finance Ministry and it falls within what you asked about the Central Treasury Management.

Mr. BARTLETT: Minister, in the context of the fiscal consolidation efforts by Government, and bearing in mind that it seems to me that the HAJ has lost much of its competence, even in terms of its engineering and strategic skills based on even a report which came out of the flooding a few days ago in the St. Mary, and the problems in Bernard Lodge where the projection was for the end of March for you to start delivering. People have

paid and having paid have no hope of getting any delivery at the end of March as was projected.

Minister, isn't it time for you to look at merging perhaps the HAJ with the National Housing Trust, so as to improve the potential for competence while, at the same time, providing the requisite resources to enable it to function without having to go to the market at high interest rates to borrow money for the purpose of operating?

Dr. GUY: That particular decision as you realize falls under two ministries, two different portfolios. One, HAJ is the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing and, as you know NHT is the OPM. I would not necessarily say they need to be merged because they have two different operating entities. The fact of the matter, though, is that there has been a re-look at the operations of the HAJ and the Parliament will be advised of the new strategic direction that it will take.

The SPEAKER: Dr. Chang, you have another question to ask of the Minister.

Dr. CHANG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister please answer the question at Number 6 standing in my name?

Dr. GUY:

Question 1:

Will the Minister provide the House with information regarding the monthly operation losses incurred by the Jamaica Urban Transit Company (JUTC)?

Answer:

The monthly loss incurred is an average of $250 Million. As per the in-house financial statements as at November 31, 2013, the year-to-date loss from operation was $1.86 Billion.

Question 2:

Can the Minister advise of the bus Company's medium-term plans to reduce such losses?

Answer:

We have strategies to increase revenues as well as to reduce costs. The Company's medium-term plans to increase revenues include:

- Introduction of an exclusive bus lane on Mandela Highway. Since the implementation, an average of 28,000 passengers are being transported daily. There is a 13 per cent increase in passengers, and 11 per cent increase in revenue;
- re-engage adult riders through efforts to regularize operations at the Half Way Tree Transportation Centre. JUTC collaborated with the Jamaica Constabulary Force and schools administration to monitor the behaviour of the students in the Half Way Tree Transportation Centre. We have also instituted an adult-only service at the cost of a Hundred Dollars ($100.00) per passenger, to effect separation of adults and students. Changes were made to the departure location for the convenience of the commuting passengers;
- improve scheduling reliability - since September 2013 the Company increased the run-out to 350 units daily. In order to maintain these

numbers, approximately 12 containers of spare parts have been imported to assist with the maintenance and servicing of the fleet since August 2013;

- elimination of transfers at the Half Way Tree Transportation Centre, which is expected to yield approximately Five Hundred Thousand Dollars ($500,000) daily. The leakage which occurred as a result of the transfer system was Zero point Two Million ($0.2M) on weekends and Zero point Five ($0.5M) weekdays;
- 100 per cent Cashless system by March 2014 - both adult and concession fares will be collected by card by March 1, 2014, and this .will significantly reduce revenue leakage, bank and courier charges;
- increase non-fare box revenue - charters and special-events activities will be intensified; improve bus advertising revenue through greater engagement of major advertisers and advertising agencies;
- And cost-cutting initiatives to mctude fuel management systems in which the daily allocation of fuel dispensed to each unit has been reduced from 300 litres each to 200 litres; recruitment of a fuel officer to ensure that fuel procedures are adhered to, as well as to provide daily reconciliation of fuel purchased and used. The officer will be responsible for providing performance evaluation of each unit which assesses the quality of fuel utilized against the distance travelled and report all anomalies.
- There is also going to be a loss-prevention strategy to secure the company's assets and fare-box revenue. And in furtherance of that, a Franchise Protection and Inspection Division was created to address the issues of fraud and other sources of revenue leakage in the company, and to constantly liaise with officers of the Transport Authority and the Jamaica Constabulary Force to keep the Kingston Metropolitan Transport Region free of illegal operations;
- retraining of drivers to improve accident ratios. A total of 114 drivers were monitored and assessed on various routes by the company's driving instructors between October and November, 2013, 19 of which were retrained as they were driving below the company's standards. Emphasis was placed on overtaking, observation of speed limits, following distances, stopping and positioning at the bus stop, use of cross roads, use of the roundabout, lane positioning, cornering, reversing, proper use of mirrors and customer service. At the end of the training the drivers demonstrated significant improvement in areas in which they were deficient. The observation and monitoring process will continue until the

accident ratios are significantly reduced.

Question 3:

Whereas it has come to our attention that as of the 31st of March 2014, the Transport Authority will discontinue the automatic renewal of sub-franchise licenses, will the Minister outline the empirical and objective grounds on which a renewal of said license would be denied?

Answer:

The Transport Authority as the regulating body is required to ensure that the JUTC, having been issued with an exclusive licence, is required to provide 25,000 seats within the KMTR. The JUTC then advised that they would issue sub-franchise licences for approximately 7,000 seats, and permission was granted for this process.

The Transport Authority has been advised by the JUTC that they now have or will have the seating resources by April, 2014 to fill the 25,000 seats in the KMTR. They have also advised that certain sub-franchise routes which have been in operation since inception will be accommodated.

Those licensees who will be displaced by the JUTC can have dialogue with Transport Authority, with regard to consideration for other routes, especially Rural Stage Carriage licences, for the operation of alternate routes outside of the KMTR.

Question 4:

Will the Minister confirm that there will a reduction in the number of sub-franchise holders in the upcoming financial year?

If the answer is in the affirmative, will the Minister indicate whether this move is being proposed as a result of the expansion of the JUTC fleet and operation capacity?

Answer: ′

Yes. The Company is reducing the number of sub-franchise licences from 387 - that was the correct number then - initially, to 250, but based on other considerations the number has now been increased to 425.

I should indicate, Member, that these questions were ready from the 31st of December, so there has been some tweaking since then.

But this is in order to accommodate the 413 buses ordered by the previous Administration under the Euro Loan Agreement, signed in 2010.

Question 5:

Whereas a number of sub-franchise operators have been engaging in said activity virtually all their lives and would suffer great dislocation in the event their licence is rescinded, will the Minister indicate whether these operators have been consulted and whether there are plans to engage them in dialogue, going forward, in charting a course aimed at minimizing dislocation and arriving at an amiable settlement?

Answer:

This is not true; the operators will not suffer grave dislocation. A total of 23 routes will be available for the sub-franchise operators as of April 1, 2014. JUTC has always offered approximately 250 sub-franchise licences *per annum.* However, in 2008/2009 the Administration increased the number of licences to 382 and again to 482 in 2010/2011. Displaced owners will have to apply to the Transport Authority to get other routes, as was previously done.

Dr. CHANG: Thank you, Minister. We understand your answers, Minister. But in relation to those who are being displaced, one is the Minister aware that the licensed operators and some franchise now are quite willing to operate much closer with the JUTC, that is, accept JUTC regulation, time tabling? And the current licensed franchise holders are willing to operate closely with the JUTC to ensure there is good order in the system. Clearly, one of the problems out there is that some operators are seen operating pretty disorderly on the roads, and bring concern to citizens. The report I have - and I would like the Minister to investigate and confirm - is that most of these very wild operators are illegal operators.

And the second question I want to ask is, will the Minister confirm whether or not the removal and control of the illegal operators would not allow those who are licensed to continue operating for some time to be allowed time to phase out of the system? Because my understanding is that there are some 4,000 illegal operators in the Corporate Area, including taxis and coasters otherwise...

Mr. McKENZIE: And bicycles.

Dr. CHANG: ...seats, including some of the licensed hackney contract carriages operating as hackney carriages at peak hour.

It therefore seems reasonable that you should seek first to remove the illegal operators who are not only hurting the JUTC and the licensed operators, but also creating significant disorder on the roadways.

If this is done, would the Minister then consider discussing with the current licensed sub-franchisees a longer time to withdraw, because they have been given three months? And I think, Minister, it is unreasonable and somewhat untenable. You cannot say they will not be hurt, because many of the seats being offered on - the seats allocated for sub-franchising at the current system will not be able to use the current buses that they own. Most of the seats offered are for the small Hiace buses, in fact, some 5,000 seats, which is an increase on what was offered before. But the Coasters cannot operate on those routes. Indeed, part of the reason for keeping them is that the JUTC buses cannot operate on those routes either, because they are the kind of rural winding routes which require smaller units, and the kind of side routes, as well, where you go into the communities. I would therefore think that if you remove your illegal operators you could in fact retain those sub-franchise for some time.

The challenge they face, Minister, is that many of these are Jamaican small investors who have bought buses from bank loans, by

maybe providing security of their own homes or whatever their savings are, and you are asking them to make a dramatic change in their business plan in a three-month period. It's not possible to do so efficiently and effectively. Indeed, many of them won't know the kind of routes to run in the rural areas, the urban transport is quite different from rural transport. In addition to that, the JUTC has expanded its franchise somewhat; they come all the way from Clarendon now. There is also the current position that they will be asking the other bus operators to cease taking up passengers from Spanish Town, so there is significant overlap. And while it is not thousands, but there are significant number of operators who have investments tied up in quality buses, it would seem to me that the Ministry could look at a policy to first control their illegal operators. Once you have done that, you could look at absorbing them within the JUTC system, once they are willing to do so - as they have informed they are willing to do - so that they will run in an orderly and regular manner.

And, thirdly, as you have indicated throughout your medium term to reduce the losses of the JUTC without an impact to their additional seats, that is like pilfering, gasoline, cash - and I see you have an ex-Police Superintendent on the road - I would ask the Minister, can you give me an estimate of how much savings you will effect with all these changes, because maybe you will in fact have the Company running at a viable level. And, therefore, as I said, my concern is to give the current licensed operators, those who have tried to operate within the system, those, Minister, who should not be shafted, if you follow the rules you should not be, right - give them an opportunity to phase out their operation over time, because it would appear to me, there is good possibility without hurting the viability of the buses. Certainly, we should not be penalizing those who try to be formal and licensed at the expense of the illegal ones. That seems to me a process that should begin to take place immediately.

Can I have your comments, Minister.

Dr. GUY: I don't know who wrote the script or you were a fly on the wall, but interestingly, Member, this morning we had a meeting with the operators at the Ministry, and some of those...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. GUY: You are generous. Some of those points came out for discussion - some of those came out for discussion and the Ministry undertook to have some serious look into the concerns, some of them you have expressed.

As a consequence of that I can advise that the period that the JUTC for tendering for the routes has been extended by another week, and that we will have a meeting with the operators in another two weeks to discuss that. But internally we will be looking at some of the issues that were raised, which are similar to some of those that you have raised, and we will see how best we can facilitate, having regard to the fact that investments, as you indicated, and the period of time within the separation.

To deal with the illegal operators, the Transport Authority has requested of the

Ministry of Finance for an increase in the number of inspectors that is to be approved by the Ministry. But certainly, they have been given the mandate to go out there and clean up the operations on the streets, not only in relation to the illegal buses, but the illegal taxis, those who are also operating contrary to their routes as well and contrary to the licence that they have.

I am not certain of the number of 4,000, but certainly, we can investigate to find out that, but many numbers are being bandied about.

Since the measures that we have put into place to address the fare box as well as the efficiencies in the operation, I can say that from an average of $7 to $8 Million Dollars per day, the collection now is between $10 to $11 Million Dollars per day, right, in the system. In fact, I'll tell you when there was the partial withdrawal, we went up to about $14 Million for each day for the two days.

So, it indicates that if we put efficient measures in place....

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Chang)

Dr. GUY: I'm Sorry?

Dr. CHANG: What's your breaking point?

Dr. GUY: I can't give you that answer just now. But it is significant to more than this. But certainly, some of the concerns that you have expressed here, as I indicated, have been taken on board and we will have further dialogue with the operators to see how best we can settle, because there is a recognition that transportation is a partnership between the State and the private sector.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, Dr. Guy.

Dr. CHANG: Minister, one last thing. The illegal operators, I notice you have said you are seeking additional inspectors, which is fine, but illegal operators are illegal operators, the police can remove them. And have you sought the support of the Minister of National Security, because it is established in all large urban centres, if you have a what is termed, referred to in law enforcement as a zero tolerance approach to illegal activity, order improves. And the movement of illegal transportation is one of those things we can take off the roads and improve the whole operation of the system. Because anyone driving on the road at peak hour alone, the disorder alone drives fear into some people's heart and usually the illegal operators rushing, cutting in line, breaking the stop lights. That could go a far way in bringing some order to the city and helping the very process we are going through here; removing the illegal operators first, and then you work with the licensed sub-franchise holders to try and give them an opportunity to change their business plan and at least and continue to contribute to the public transportation where they have in fact made significant contribution over the last many years in Jamaica, because the public transport has gone up and down in its fortunes.

Dr. GUY: There is ongoing cooperation with the Jamaica Constabulary Force. I will indicate too that there is a special Unit of ISCF within the Transport Authority, which also assist them.

But I want to say a little further is that, in terms of the operations, it's not only the illegal

operators as you have alluded to, but those who are legally on the road, what they are doing is that they are having bad driving habits, practices which is also contributing to the mayhem that exists in the city. The....

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Chang)

Dr. GUY: Yes, that is part of the training process. The Transport Authority, we have trained and recertified about 5,000 drivers already last year and we are continuing the process of doing that with taxis and the other operators. We have a programme wherein which there is greater linkages between Tax Administration, the Jamaica Constabulary Force, so that people who have outstanding tickets will never be considered for a conductor badge or a driver's license. So those are some of the programmes that we have. But I want to assure you that with what is happening at JUTC, what is happening at the Transport Authority, and what is proposed to happen further at the Transport Authority, that some of this disorder and mayhem that is in the city, some of the illegal operators that are operating on the roads, we will address that soon to give breathing space to those that you have been seeking so much time support.

(Inaudible)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Henry.

Mr. HENRY: Minister, I'm dealing with Question 4. Will the Minister confirm that there will be a reduction in the number of sub-franchise holders in the upcoming financial year?

You proceed to say that the company is reducing the number of sub-franchise license from 387 to 250 to accommodate the 413 buses ordered by the previous administration. Would it be unfair of me to say, Mr. Minister, that that's a shift in policy? Because from my recollection the 413 buses ordered, most of them were to be used in a rural/urban transport plan, which was the policy of the previous Administration to expand the use and the movement of persons in three or four parishes, namely: Clarendon, Manchester and St. Elizabeth, in order to reduce the high cost of travel. Those are the buses that are painted blue in many instances, that you have absorbed into the JUTC and, therefore, you are reducing the sub-franchise holders, which was never the intention under the transport policy, because you are absorbing into it buses that were meant for the wider community of the country; in order to follow the policy of the then Government, that we had to reduce the cost of children travelling to school from $700 a day to about $180 to $200, and increase the travelling cost in the KMTR region, which you are exclusively still confining yourself to. Therefore, no benefit is treading and you are therefore further reducing and contracting in the KMTR region in order to say that it is the sub-franchise holders' reduction because of the buses.

I really want that to be clarified, because a shift in policy is of course, and therefore, my question would equally be, are you abandoning the rural/urban transport plan?

I believe you are pursuing a different line, but I speak as a rural Member of Parliament and equally as a former Minister that if we don't reduce this cost of transport and equalize it across the country - because the then plan by

the previous Government, was to take the JUTC off any subsidy, because if you reduce your $20 or $40 a day to $180, you'd have no need to subsidize the urban area alone. So much so that you now have buses travelling to Longsville in Clarendon, carrying children at $100-odd as an executive service. Whereas, of course, if they take a taxi to Spanish Town they get it at $20.

So the whole anomaly by the previous Government and the Administration was under a National Transport Policy that is in the Ministry, which speaks equally to that as an approach.

And in your Ministry rests the letter I wrote to the Minister of Finance to take the JUTC subsidy off, if we followed those policy when we ordered those buses.

So I grieve everyday when I see the yellow buses with blue on the front, which were meant to be travelling in Clarendon, Manchester, St. Elizabeth and the other parishes not being served to equalize with the Montego Bay Metro, which charges another price.

So, I merely want to clarify your shift in policy, and to equally ask you, if you could revisit the Rural/Urban Transport Plan, because it is one of the greatest burdens that's creating a lot of social problems in the country and, therefore, would mean money in the pocket of the parents, if we can reduce their $700 to $200 and equalize the KMTR region by the planning that was left in the Ministry.

So, I merely wanted to correct that position and to ask you, to ensure, that we be clear whether we are pursuing a Rural/Urban Transport Plan to equalize the transport cost across the country?

Dr. GUY: As most of that question and comment falls outside of what is asked by the Member there, I would submit that those questions could be submitted and the answers prepared for you.

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, Question No. 4, which was scheduled to be answered well over a month ago, asked by the Leader of the Opposition.

A MEMBER: Mr. Speaker, the questions will be answered next week.

Mr. D. SMITH: Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move for the suspension of Standing Orders to allow me to take the motion, notice of which I gave earlier.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the suspension of the Standing Orders to allow the Minister to take the motion, notice of which was gave earlier?

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we are amending the membership of the Tax Measures Committee as I indicated earlier, and so I now move for the motion to be adopted.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, under Public Business we will continue with the debate that was commenced last week by the Chairman of the Human Resource Committee.

The Minister of Health will do his response at this time, after which, we will return to Private Member's Motion by the Member from North East St. Ann, and we are hoping to conclude that this afternoon.

Dr. FERGUSON: Mr. Speaker, colleagues, I thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Committee's Report presented to this Honourable House last Tuesday by the Chairman of the Human Resource and Social Development Committee of this Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, in responding to the Chairman's and your Report, we have taken into consideration that since the tabling of those regulations in relation to tobacco control 2013, a number of other agencies and individuals have made intervention in relation to these regulations. We have had significant number of key stakeholders, we have had persons and institutions coming before your committee making presentations.

Based on those presentations, Mr. Speaker, and based on extensive consultations with the Chief Parliamentary Counsel, the Ministry has determined certain proposed amendment to the public health tobacco control regulations.

In keeping with its consideration and consultation, the Ministry's response to the findings and recommendations of the Committee is as follows:

- In relation to the Committee's recommendation re-defining certain key terms and allow designated outdoor smoking solution for business, the Committee recommended that certain key terms such as public space and enclosed area be re-defined, and that provision be made for the establishment of outdoor smoking solutions.
- The Committee recommended that the definition of workplace should be amended to avoid ambiguity.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Health response, the Ministry is mindful of the need for clarification to ensure proper enforcement has approved the amendments to certain definitions. The terms 'public place', 'enclosed area', will be re-defined to ensure greater clarity and appropriate enforcement. Smoke-free places will be clarified, this includes, but not limited to all outdoor service and dining areas, indoor areas, parks, Heritage Sites, excluding their parking lots, gateways and driveways.

The concerns of the Minister of Tourism and Entertainment and the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association with respect to said definitions were considered and addressed with a view to ensuring practical application in the industry, particularly, owners and operators of businesses including bars, restaurants, clubs and to those places established under the Public Health Tourist Establishment Regulations 2000, will be permitted to have outdoor smoking areas, which meet certain conditions to be prescribed under the Regulations.

However, staff of these establishments will 'not be required to serve in these areas, Mr. Speaker. Smoking in public parks will be prohibited, in keeping with the strong recommendation offered by the Minister with

responsibility for the Public Service, Ministry of Finance and Planning.

In respect of the definition of *workplace,* the prohibition will apply to enclosed workplaces in general. However, the general reference to homes and private vehicles used for employment purposes will be removed. Mr. Speaker, this is worthy of repeat:

In respect of definition of workforce, the prohibition will apply to enclosed workplaces in general. However, the general reference to homes and private vehicles used for employment purposes will be removed.

The Committee's recommendation in relation to graphic health warning on packs:

The Committee recommended 50 per cent pictorial health warning on packs.

The MOH response:

The Ministry has taken into consideration the recommendations of the HRSD Committee, as well as the recommendations from the Jamaica Coalition for Tobacco Control, the National Council on Drug Abuse, and international partners, such as the Pan American Health Organization.

The Ministry, mindful of trends to manipulate and obscure graphic warnings and the evidence that bigger is better - is prepared to adjust the existing requirements of graphic health warnings covering 75 per cent of the principal displayed area to be no less than 60 per cent in the first instance.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Dr. FERGUSON: Your Committee had recommended 50. I am guided, Mr. Speaker, by the fact that my ongoing duty is to promulgate regulations, necessitate review of this and other provisions as, and when appropriate.

In relation to the Committee recommendation on graphic health warnings at the point of sale, concerning the trade in single sticks, the Committee submitted that the health warning in text will be appropriate as opposed to graphic health warnings.

The Ministry's response:

The requirement for labelling of individual units of tobacco products, such as cigarettes, will be removed. So, we are not even asking for texts - will be removed. However, those engaged in sale of individual units will be required to have a graphic health warning displayed, in keeping with the specifications under the First Schedule of the Regulations.

Recommendation in relation to transitional period:

Mr. Speaker, your Committee recommended a nine-month transitional period.

Ministry's response:

Persons whose operations were subject to the provisions of the Regulations were allowed a period of six months to bring their operations in full compliance with the Legislation. In accordance with - the recommendations of the HRSD Committee, the transitional period will be extended to nine months, and will now expire on April 14, 2014.

In relation to the Committee's recommendation on penalties, Mr. Speaker, your Committee recommended the maximum fines as follows: $5,000 for the first offences, $25,000 for second, and $50,000 for subsequent offences. The Committee highlighted its support for decriminalization.

Ministry's response:

The Ministry has considered that the fines proposed by the HRSD Committee in respect of individuals who smoke in prohibited areas appeared to be too low to encourage compliance. However, the Ministry, in consultation with the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and the Attorney General's Chamber on the matter has settled on maximum fines as follows: $10,000 for first offences, $25,000 for second, and $50,000 for subsequent offences. So, all we have changed is the first offence; the other two we have accepted, Mr. Speaker, your Committee's recommendation for 25 and 50.

The Ministry is mindful of the fact that a Judge has the power to exercise his or her discretion in imposing penalties. This matter will remain under constant review, Mr. Speaker. Persons who have breached the tobacco regulations by smoking in prohibited areas will not be given a criminal record. No concerns were raised in respect of penalties proposed for businesses and bodies corporate. Let me repeat, Mr. Speaker:

Persons who have breached the tobacco regulations by smoking in prohibited areas will *not be given a criminal record.* (Applause) No concerns were raised in respect of penalties proposed for businesses and bodies corporate. The original penalties will, therefore, be preserved.

But, let me just say, Mr. Speaker, that there are some operators - some owners operating in the tourism industry, operating bars, and other kinds of facilities, having functions, and are engaged in breaking the law. I say to those persons, once we have settled these adjustments, we will, and we will ensure that the full weight of the law and the Regulations will be enforced. So, I want to make that very clear, Mr. Speaker.

In relation to your Committee recommendations on e-cigarettes and chewing tobacco, the Committee did not wish to make a recommendation as to e-cigarettes. The Committee, however, Mr. Speaker, expressed that it was opposed to a ban on chewing tobacco.

What is the MOH response?

The available evidence has not convinced the Ministry that e-cigarettes guarantee users an alternative to tobacco smoking. There are various ills associated with the use of e-cigarettes and electronic nicotine delivery system-ends, as they are referred to. Based on consultations with stakeholders and international partners as to the need for the reference to '*ends'* in the Regulations to be clarified, ends were specifically referenced as falling within the broad category of tobacco products, and therefore, will be treated as such.

In relation to recommendation on public education, the Committee endorsed the

proposal to have a robust education campaign, beginning in schools, to make the public aware of the limits of the Regulation, as well as the effects of tobacco smoke on the body and the environment.

The MOH response:

The Ministry fully supports your Committee's recommendation, Mr. Speaker, and through its Health Promotion and Protection Branch, the National Council on Drug Abuse has extended its public education campaign, in keeping with the need to engage the public on the harmful effects of tobacco exposure.

Other key amendments outside of your Committee Report that we took into consideration, Mr. Speaker, has to do with display of '*no smoking* signs'. The Regulation will provide clarity, in terms of the nature of, and where signs are to be displayed. This was of particular concern to the operators of bars, restaurants, clubs, and the tourism industry, based on an expressed need to preserve the aesthetics of the environment.

Authorized Officers:

The Ministry has continued to engage the authorized officers under the Regulation to ensure clarity and practical enforcement, Mr. Speaker. In this regard, the Ministry has had ongoing consultation with the members of the Police High Command. In keeping with the comments offered by the police, the reference to Member of the JCF was replaced, and will be replaced with '*constable'* to ensure greater enforcement by constables in general. In addition, '*standard officers',* under the Standards Act have been designated as '*authorized officers'.*

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry wishes to thank your Committee for its extensive work. The Ministry also wishes to express gratitude to the other stakeholders who have made interventions in Parliament, and through direct contact with the Ministry. I want to conclude, Mr. Speaker, by thanking all those who, in whatever way, have made a contribution in making these Regulations better, in relation to being enforced.

I want to further say, Mr. Speaker, that if you ask the country today, are you better off today, 28th January, 2014, *versus* that period before July 15, 2013, in relation to public - being in public places, the resounding answer, Mr. Speaker, will be - from every Jamaican of every walk of life - the resounding response would be, we are better off today than we were... (Applause)

I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that in a real way, Mr. Speaker, this, and these Regulations is good for Jamaica. Already, we have seen a reduction in the number of asthmatics and persons with respiratory disorders in our institutions.

Mr. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

Mr. FERGUSON: In years to come, Mr. Speaker, we will see less heart attacks; we will see less strokes, and less cancers, and our health care delivery system will be under far less pressure from this single Regulation.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Hear, hear!

Dr. FERGUSON: And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I appeal to my colleagues today, to

support these Regulations. The Committee, and your Committee have deliberated; the public has deliberated; the Ministry has continued to deliberate on these matters. We must now bring closure to this matter. Jamaica will be better for it, and I look forward with great anticipation to the outcomes of these Regulations.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Dr. Campbell had indicated previously, Dr. Baugh, so I'll recognize Dr. Campbell then...

Dr. BAUGH: That is okay, go ahead.

Dr. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First I'd like permission to speak from a seat other than mine.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Permission granted, Dr. Campbell.

Dr. CAMPBELL: Mr. Speaker, being a Member of that said Committee, I pondered long and hard as to whether or not I'd actually say something today, but I actually want certain things to be recorded as to where my stance is and as such I will say exactly that today.

In looking at some of the issues that were highlighted in the Report, starting with the graphic health warning and the percentage that was initially recommended and the recommendation that came from the Committee and what the adjustment is today, now all evidence points to the fact that the bigger the pictorial is on the box the greater deterrent it is. Now this is one of those cases where size does matter, Mr. Speaker, and it is...

Mr. SPENCER: It matters all the time.

(Laughter)

A MEMBER: Ruddy?

Dr. CAMPBELL: ...it is with that in mind, if you look at the persons that presented to the Committee, of the six persons that came - not persons, the six entities that came and made their presentation, four of the six agreed that 75% is what we should stick to, and that 75% is also what is taking place in other countries. Now, it is simple, the bigger the thing is, it is simpler and clearer for persons to see the wording and to understand exactly what it is that you're trying to achieve.

Now there's also precedence elsewhere in first world countries where challenges have been posed to the implementation of this 75% graphic health warning, and in those cases it is actually the tobacco company that has come out on the losing end of those challenges. If you're to look at the EU Court of Justice, they ruled against the British American Tobacco which is the majority shareholder in Carreras. And also the Supreme Court in Canada rejected the claim by the Tobacco Industry that the pictorial warnings were a violation of their freedom of expression.

Now my suggestion is that seen that we're moving from a textual warning to a pictorial warning, is that yes, I agree in starting at the 60%, but I would love to see us incrementally moving up to that 75 which is the most efficacious percentage in order to get the desired result that you're seeking. So I'd

suggest, therefore, that you start at the 60 but in a year you move it to 65, in two years you go to 70, in three years you're at 75, or you can do it every two years and you move up to that.

Because at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, we all know that smoking kills. And the fact of the matter, the result that you'll see at the end of the day will be better if we take those harsh decisions now.

Now, in relation to private residence, I've always had my own take on this private residence thing. Mr. Speaker, we have to ensure that we're protecting the health of all workers. I don't believe that a domestic helper is of any lower value than somebody who works in corporate Jamaica. If it is that those persons are being protected in those places, then I'm going to make that appeal that that also extends to our domestic workers. Because the fact of the matter is, as long as - not a wholesale advocacy, Mr. Speaker, but in a case where...

Mr. McKENZIE: Wah yuh waan fi sey, me caan smoke in a mi own house?

Dr. CAMPBELL: ...in a case where a private residence is the workplace of someone...

Mr. McKENZIE: A draconian business if me caan smoke in a mi own house.

(Cross talks)

Mr. McKENZIE: How yuh a go tell me me caan smoke in a me own house?

(Cross talks)

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

(Inaudible comments)

Dr. CAMPBELL: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I did not sneak into this House, yes, I was sent here to represent a section of this country and that's exactly what I'm doing. And no remark from anywhere, any quarter will stop me or silence me from saying what I have to say. (Applause)

Mr. SAMUDA: I'm with you a hundred percent.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. McKenzie)

Mr. SAMUDA: Same knife stick sheep stick goat.

Dr. CAMPBELL: Now Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. McKenzie)

Mr. SAMUDA: Same knife stick sheep stick goat.

(Inaudible comments)

Dr. CAMPBELL: ...my point is that if a household, Mr. Speaker, is the workplace of an individual then the law should apply, that is simply my point. If it is the workplace of an individual it should apply.

And why do I say this - because persons are speaking from an uninformed position. Why do I say this? Are they aware of the type of smoking that you have? You have firsthand smoking, Mr. Speaker, yes, which is that smoke that is coming from the unlit end of the cigar. You have secondhand smoking which is coming from the lit end of it, or that smoke which is exhaled by the person who is smoking. And then you have thirdhand smoking which is just from the gas and the particles that will remain on the surface after somebody has smoked.

What does the evidence show? It shows that 20% to 30% increase; increase, in all of these morbid conditions take place when persons are exposed to secondhand smoking in their home. Not only that, the children who live inside these homes are at a greater risk, 25% to 30% risk of becoming smokers. The evidence is right there, Mr. Speaker, this is not just an emotive presentation, the evidence is there.

But hold on, Mr. Speaker, the persons from the Domestic Association made their voices heard as well in their letter to said Committee. And what did they say in that letter?

(Inaudible comment by Mr. McKenzie)

Dr. CAMPBELL: This is what they said, Mr. Speaker:

"We would like to place on record that we support the ban on smoking and especially welcome the section that speaks to smoking in private residences which are at the same time the place where our members work. We ask that in its deliberation your Committee does all in its power to safeguard the health, safety and rights of significant proportion of the working population.

Signed: Jamaica Household Workers Union"

All I'm doing, Mr. Speaker, is making representation for the union of domestic workers. Now if somebody else is not interested in making that representation then they should remain quiet, but they can't stop somebody else from speaking.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Dr. Campbell just proceed please.

Mr. McKENZIE: Who must remain quiet? Yuh see how yuh love badger people.

Dr. CAMPBELL: If you don't... I am speaking.

(Inaudible comments by Mr. McKenzie)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Dr. Campbell please proceed.

Mr. SAMUDA: It is not a church gathering yuh nuh.

Mr. DALLEY: Ooh, now yuh know, fix up yuh clothes.

Mr. SAMUDA: Yes, sir.

Mr. DALLEY: Now yuh know it's not Sunday school.

Dr. CAMPBELL: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, 600,000 persons die from secondhand smoking. Persons who aren't smokers, not interested in smoking but just because they are exposed to secondhand smoking 600,000 worldwide; that smoke, 4,000 chemicals 69 of which are carcinogen, cancer causing.

Now all I'm asking, Mr. Speaker, is that there's a large percentage of the persons in this country whose workplace happens to be the private residence of another. And I'm simply saying, they're asking that their health be protected as well and I too would advocate that their health should be protected. That's all I'm saying.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. McKenzie)

Dr. CAMPBELL: Now, in relation to the fines, Mr. Speaker, this is a country where we tend to...

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Yes.

Mr. McKENZIE: The Member has raised a point and the Member should elaborate how is it going to be done. You can't make the point...

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. McKENZIE: ...point of order I'd like you to elaborate on it.

Mr. DALLEY: Sit down!

A MEMBER: Point of order? Disorder.

(*Sotto voce* remarks)

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. McKENZIE: Clarify for me please, please, don't leave it, how is it going to be done?

(Inaudible comments)

Dr. CAMPBELL: Mr. Speaker...

The Deputy SPEAKER: Kindly proceed Dr. Campbell.

Mr. McKENZIE: You're going to answer me please?

A MEMBER: Don't beg.

Dr. CAMPBELL: Mr. Speaker...

The Deputy SPEAKER: Proceed Dr. Campbell.

Dr. CAMPBELL: ...there is an established penalty that has been put in place for persons who violate and smoke in the workplace, an established penalty has been put in place. And to be frank, we're looking at the sanctions and we're saying to adjust it and to put it at - the Committee recommended five, the Minister has said - is asking for 10.

All I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, we're in a country where persons tend to sensationalize and they speak without speaking from a position of knowledge...

A MEMBER: A true.

Dr. CAMPBELL: ...from opinion and they posit it as facts and that is something that we're plagued with. Now, in Jamaica it was proposed at $50,000, Trinidad and Tobago TT$10,000, Barbados $250,000, Malaysia $3,150, Suriname $58,000, all of these countries also attract a criminal record with the exception of Suriname; all of them.

Now I'm not saying that persons should end up with a criminal record, I agree that we should remove the criminal record. My simple point, Mr. Speaker, is whether or not reducing the fines will still serve as a deterrent to persons who are smoking in these areas where we're trying to stop them from smoking. But let us listen to the voice of the people.

The National Council on Drug Abuse did a rapid assessment survey of which 96% of those persons whom they've interviewed said that they are aware. And of that, 83% of them said that they're in agreement with the laws as were originally presented by the Minister; 83% of them said that they're in agreement with it as presented by the Minister. That's what the Survey is saying. Why then are we moving away from what the people are satisfied with, an overwhelming majority satisfied with?

> *"The respondents believe that it was the best law to be implemented and that the fine should not be rolled back".*

Direct quotation from the Survey.

If it is that we are asking them how they feel about the regulations and they are in full

support, then for me, Mr. Speaker, that is enough evidence that we can listen to the people and agree with them. Persons have posited the argument that this will hurt the poor, and oftentimes when persons want to score political points they draw for the poor people card.

Now, Mr. Speaker, an individual who smokes a pack of cigarette per day for the year would have spent $250,000 to $260,000 for the year just base on that smoking habit.

The minimum wage earner is earning $291,200 for the year they would have lit up in flames the majority of that income. $250,000 to $260,000 out of that $291 that they are earning they would have spent on smoking. We wonder why more persons are not in a position to cater for their children to send them to school and to provide for them. Not to mention the health bill that they are going to end up with when they are eventually inflicted with the disease condition because smoking kills 50 per cent of its users, that is well documented as well.

My final point, Mr. Speaker, is that with all the advocacy that we put in place for reducing road traffic fatalities, for reducing gun related crimes for reducing the consumption of alcohol, for reducing the number of persons who are affected by HIV/AIDS, for all the efforts that we put into that and all the resources, the evidence again is overwhelming that smoking kills more people than HIV, alcohol MVA and also firearm related incidence put together, all of them combined, smoking kills more than all of them combined. Mr. Speaker, would anybody, would anybody, willingly copulate a coital activity with somebody who is infected with HIV, would anybody willingly do it when you smoke that is essentially what you are doing, it is worse than copulating with somebody who is riddled with HIV/AIDS.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Dr. Baugh.

Dr. BAUGH: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

I would just like to take the opportunity to commend the work done by the Human Resource Committee of the Houses of Representatives.

(Applause)

We must remind ourselves that this was sent to the Committee based on a very lively debate that took place in this House when the tobacco regulations were laid on the Table of the House. And we are pleased that the Committee has been able to facilitate a great degree of consensus on most of the issues concerning tobacco smoking.

I want first of all to commend the Minister on his initiative, on his dedication to it to see through and the success that it has achieved in Jamaica. (Applause) But, I am going to also commend the previous Minister of Health, the Member from South East Clarendon, who also took a position of making certain that it was contemplated by Cabinet, and in fact, instructions were sent to the Chief Parliamentary Counsel for the drafting to begin. And therefore, I believe that he has played a role in making this come to fruition at this point in time, so my commendation to

both, the current Minister and the former Minister of Health.

There is only one omission that I am concerned about and I raised it when I spoke in the House when we debated the regulations in this House and that concern the first protocol on anti-tobacco law that was promoted by the United Nations and that is to deal with contraband. Because even now as we speak, Mr. Speaker, the contraband issues concerning cigarette is a serious one. A lot of cigarettes come into the country because it is coming in illegally, it is not going to be dealt with in the Anti-tobacco law, because it is a - it is something that has international and regional dimensions. In other words, there are places and locations in the region or across the world where people are dedicated to dealing with contraband cigarettes and they come into the country illegally and represent a great risk. And therefore, the United Nations, exactly, the United Nations...

(*Sotto voce* comments by a Member)

Dr. BAUGH: ....had designed a protocol with great cooperation from so many countries and recommendations have been made. So as an addendum to what we have done here, to pass these regulations in Jamaica, the issue of the first protocol concerning contraband cigarettes, the trading of contraband cigarettes should be dealt with as well.

And in that light, Mr. Speaker, I also raised the issue which I think is an omission of the sale of cigarettes to minors. It is something I think that ought to be specially treated as well in the whole context, because one of the things that is happening, across the world, not only in Jamaica is that with the efforts to stop smoking, to educate people against smoking and this has been going on for some time. When I was Minister of Health in the 1980s I remember launching an anti-smoking campaign and those campaigns were quite effective. But statistics over the years have shown that there is a shift, in that, the people who are now taking up the habit, or first of all women was increasing in number and also children, under age children, adolescence so that they are becoming now the victims of the campaigns that were taking place to promote smoking of cigarettes. But in the context of what has happened I support the effort of the Minister and those involved to be very strict in terms of deterrence to advertising, deterrence to promotion, the labeling of the cigarettes as dramatic as we can make it and all the measures that have been taken so far to make sure we put an end to cigarette smoking.

I agree with Dr. Campbell that the statistics are clear, cigarette smoking causes cancer, and many other diseases including cerebrovascular circulatory diseases there is a disease call Berger's disease which any doctor will know about where smokers at some point in their lives started to develop gangrene of their extremities, of their finger tips and people have been known to lose all their fingers and all their toes and sometimes a limb as a consequence of smoking. So, smoking has a lot of implications especially issues of second-hand smoke and passive smoking. It has been known that spouses of smokers, and we do have in the medical fraternity a well-known doctor whose wife died from cancer of

the lung. She never smoked, he smoked and I won't call any names for obvious reasons. But this is a good example, that in fact, passive smoking is dangerous to the health of those who are not actively smoking, but the recipient of passive smoking. But the question now comes as to the debate that is being raised as to what happens in private premises. One has to respect the private premises of individuals and the people who may feel that they do have a right to do what they please when there are no victims. You know, this is a victimless crime if you want to call it that. They are not victims, he wants to smoke, or she wants to smoke, they can smoke in their private resident. But I do believe that measures should be taken first of all with proper health education, because it is a fact that in countries where smoking has been deterred and smoking has declined infrequency that the frequency of children presented with asthmatic attacks to emergency rooms has significantly declined as well. So smoking in a home affects children, there is no question about it and affects the health of children and will cause respiratory diseases.

But I believe that at this point that controversy can be settled by mostly depending on coercion, depending on health education for the workers in the home as well as those who use cigarettes, as well as the members of families so that they can impose the responsibility on individuals who smoke to make provisions for them to enjoy a smoke free environment. In other words, steps can be taken within a private residence to make sure that the people are not exposed to passive smoking if someone chooses to smoke. But there is going to be a limit to which you can apply the law in a private residence. I do not think that you can take it too far because you will now be invading somebody's private premises to impose upon them things against their will which we cannot do, Mr. Speaker, because people have their rights as well. But I believe that health education has a very important role to play, health education, to make sure that people understand the risk that they are taking and they all can take preventive action.

But in general this is a good thing that has happened, it has full support, there is no controversy, the only controversy I have with it, Mr. Speaker, as the Minister well knows was that it was done under regulations of the Public Health Law. I do believe that it should have been a substantive Anti-tobacco Law which should have been taken in the House in the first instance. But as a compromise we have debated it here, and it has gone to the Human Resource Committee and come back to the House and therefore it has my full support.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Dalley.

Mr. DALLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a few comments on this milestone achievement that the Minister of Health, his team at the Ministry of Health and also the work of the Joint Select Committee or the - was it a Joint Select Committee - the Select Committee, the

Human Resource Committee of Parliament has done in concluding the whole debate on banning of smoking in public places.

In the House today, are three former Ministers of Health, Dr. Baugh, myself, you and a Minister of Health, now the present Minister of Health.

Now, I couldn't understand, if in the House in 2013/2014, if there were so many persons who have worked in the field of health including a former Minister of State in the Ministry of Health and we could not conclude such a piece - important piece of legislation, in fact, history would condemn us. And I want to thank all the Members who have worked and have contributed to carrying this to where we are today.

The Minister, the present Minister of Health, my colleague here on the right his determination is one of steel and with all the public vilification... (Applause) ...during the rough days when people rose up against this banning of smoking in public places, in fact, it became a joke wherever you were assembled and persons were smoking, say, look here Fenton a come. (Laughter) He became public enemy number one among those persons who smoke. And there are a lot of people around who smoke, some smoke quietly, some don't smoke heavily and, but it is - I have to commend you my brother, my friend my colleague because you and your team in the Ministry of Health withstood all that vilification, all that outcry went back to work, listen to the work of the committee, listen to people, listen to the contribution and in your calm way came back with the necessary adjustments that we know this Parliament today will approve and I want to commend you on that.

I would like to also say, the country in the long run will thank you for your staunchness in defense of smoking, banning smoke in public place. All of us former Ministers of Health have had occasions where we promote the banning of smoking. We have had functions that we were invited to speak and to deal with the banning of smoke and the problem it caused with non- communicable diseases, the fact, the acquired diseases, our lifestyles, these are not things that are epidemic. There are things that we do that affect our own lifestyle, in turn, affect our health that is why they are called non-communicable and we have been a part of it from time to time during our tenure and we have brought the thing to - so far. But finally, we have reached a stage where we can publicly say we are there with this smoking ban in public places.

I have a daughter who is 20 years old and during the Christmas holidays she and some of her friends went to a club. She not a person who club a lot, she is more on the reserved side. But she returned and the first thing she said to me in the morning was; daddy, it was a pleasure to go to this club called Privilege. We oldsters - I don't even know where it is, lovely night club for teenagers it seems. I am told. But she said to me, nobody in the club was smoking and those who wanted to smoke had to go outside of the club. And I tell you it is a relief. And she asked me to give you her commendation because they left there with

their clothes smelling fresh and they left there without breathing in any secondhand smoke.

(Applause)

The Minister of Health will say or will tell you, if he wishes, that I have defended the position taken and supported him a lot in this debate even though sometimes I have been very firm with him when I think it was becoming outrageous.

And here I now turn to the smoking in your private home. You cannot pass a piece of legislation that you are unable to man, you are unable to patrol, you are unable to enforce. It is ridiculous. And I maintain that you can't say to the owner of his or her house that you can't sit on your balcony and smoke a cigar or smoke a cigarette - whatever you wish to do. And it is unenforceable and, therefore, should not be attempted to put on the list of places that ought to be banned. And I say there is no employer that I would believe would know that your helper, the person who cares for you and your family, prepare your meals, fix your home, attend to you and your family would be in the kitchen preparing the meal and you would stand beside her and smoke. I don't know if any employer would do that. If you want a smoke you would go outside, the balcony. And I don't if there any household helper who would also stand there and inhale second-hand smoking from his or her employer. So it is ridiculous to feel that you can go so far to ban it in private homes and it is impossible to enforce.

On the issue of a standalone piece legislation, here I would like to support Dr. Baugh because I think down the road and I'm sure the Minister of Health and his team would like to have a separate piece of legislation of some kind of anti-smoking or anti-tobacco legislation somewhere. Now, it is under the Public Health Act, which is the power he has, the Minister of Health has, and I'm sure down the road they might want to think as we have said.

The banning of smoking in public place and people have always said is not a fight by the Government against the tobacco companies or against those who smoke. The Minister says it over and over. He would wish that nobody smokes as a Minister of Health. But let it not be felt by anybody in any bar where you are now, any private place that you are now, any of the hundreds of thousands of persons who smoke that the Government of Jamaica is trying to take away your right to smoke. And the discussion, unfortunately, in the earlier part tended to go in that direction.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: A Desmond do that.

Mr. DALLEY: The Ministry of Health and the Government of Jamaica is not telling anybody you can't buy cigarette and you must not smoke cigarette, but we like to protect your health and protect the health of others that if your standing at a bus stop in Halfway-Tree and other people are at that bus stop in the middle of the morning, that it is illegal to smoke at that bus stop with people around you and nothing is wrong with that. As a matter of fact, you, yourself, should know that you can't stand at that bus stop and smoke. You can't go into a restaurant where other people are seated and then you start to smoke. That is illegal and

I'm hoping that - and it's also bad manners, bad manners. I'm hoping that we will be able to enforce this law to ensure that we protect others who do not smoke.

I fought to have the Minister and his team include banning in public parks because some people might say, I can go to Emancipation Park and I can sit down on the bench and smoke. No, it is a public park and it must be free from second-hand smoking. You can't go in a park and feel like you can do as you feel like. People exercise in the park; people go there to meditate, people go there with their children to relax. So you cannot smoke in Emancipation Park. There are certain places that you just can't; you want to smoke, well you have to find a way to go somewhere outside go hold a smoke.

I want to commend you, Minister. I would like to commend the work of the Human Resource [and Social Development] Committee. I would like to commend all the Members who supported the work and I'm hoping that today we will bring some finality to this issue of banning of smoking in public places.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Charles.

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, I just want to say a few words, just a few words to reinforce my strong belief that this Parliament has no reason to apologize to anybody. Those who feel that we are restricting their freedom; I have no problem about that. I have no problem in restricting the freedom of some for the protection of others, because I know we are protecting the majority against the minority.

Mr. Speaker, I told the Minister that I am quite upset with him because one of the things I see this Government has done over the period that is in my interest and in many of - the total interest is the perception that you ban cigarette smoking. Do you know how happy I was? For days I don't see no people smoking on the road. I can play tennis in the morning without the atmosphere being contaminated by these people walking in the place. One man smokes half a mile away it affects us. (Laughter)

A MEMBER: A true man.

Mr. CHARLES: And when they hear, Minister, that you going to charge dem some big money, come back to something I say I heard long ago, not original: big sanction for small crimes prevent big crime. A man who used to smoke come and tell me seh him neva know him could stop and since him stop he will never start again because him nuh have no $50,000 fi pay. And, Minister, the word has gone out that you drop the price, that the man dem can smoke now because the thing small. Is like a minibus man who tell me seh, boy him nuh mind break the thing because is only $2,000 and him can mek back that but if it go up to $40,000 him not going to break it. Big sanctions for small crimes!

And, Minister, the word must not go that is no PNP and JLP business. The Parliament of this land must join on this one. You have elected us to lead, the majority of us believe that it is in the best interest of the country, the people of the country and we are taking that

stance. I'm not going as far as some of my colleagues whether you want vote or not. But I am telling that the next generation of smokers who are the young people coming up now will be barred because of what we are doing now, will praise us.

I mentioned in this House and I'm going to put it in **Hansard** again, I have a son who is a doctor who told me that any time him see a doctor smoking he would like to see his record because it means he has never looked at other people's lungs or his own. (Laughter) We are destroying ourselves and I am glad to stand in this Parliament at this time in my parliamentary life and find it a pleasure to support something that all of us believe in and in the nation's interest. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHARLES: And, Mr. Speaker, politically it doesn't suit me to carry the Minister's flag say him is a great guy.

Government MEMBER: He is a great guy.

Mr. CHARLES: But I accept that the other Minister has said he has guts in doing what many of us would not have done (Applause) and so the rest of us must now develop guts to support it. So I am supporting it because I don't want you get all the praise. I taking some. (Laughter) And I appeal to all of us in here because trust me I am privileged to live in a medical family and I can tell you that it is one thing that the medical section that I am associated with praise the government for, praise the parliamentarians for and I am saying - and I am saying is me too. I inna it to.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes!

Mr. CHARLES: So stand up strong, Mr. Speaker. The country will be happy for it. As I said, the young people who are coming up who are not going to smoke even because the threat of sanctions. And Dr. Campbell has put his head out there and I'm prepared to put my head out there too. Any where I see a man smoking I bawl him down.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: True, true!

Mr. CHARLES: And I'm appealing to the people of the country, not only parliamentarians, let us all police this piece of legislation. (Applause) Let us police it in the interest of the people of Jamaica.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...white side or black side?

Mr. CHARLES: Well, whether it waan - I will shift the white side for you if you want, (Laughter) right. But let us as parliamentarians go into our constituency, talk to our constituency leaders, talk to our supporters. We don't want to hurt anybody. We're doing something that we are privileged to know is destroying you and we want to assist you and let us encourage them to police this legislation and get rid of it. You know, some people come to say buoy the Government gwine lose a whole heap of tax off of cigarette. Well, any government who is happy to collect tax while people are being destroyed, I don't want to be a part of that government.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHARLES: I don't waan be a part of that government. (Applause) Any government who say that, boy, let them smoke because you waan the tax, I don't want to be a part of that government.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHARLES: I don't want to live in that country with that government either and I'd do everything to destroy that government. I'll overthrow that government.

(Cross talk/Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: The Labour Party.

Mr. CHARLES: Because as I say in the interest of our country, we must join - we all are elected here to lead, you know.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Talk yaaah, Pearnel.

Mr. CHARLES: The people have put it in our hands. The people of Jamaica put their interest in sixty-three, of us hands, in this House and we must can get up and hold hand and say, look here, even some of you who still smoking know seh it wrong. You know it wrong but you tell yourself, bout you're addicted. A lie! (Laughter) You're not addicted. Lie! Lie, yuh telling. Just stop it, just stop it!

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHARLES: And if you need some help talk to that one there (pointing to Dr. Campbell) (Chuckles) He'll tell you how to do it, right.

(Cross talk)

So, Mr. Speaker, I close by saying I am happy to be a part of this historical moment when most of us or all of us are going to say to our colleagues, friends, family and supporters this is wrong and we are telling you follow us this time. All of us joining hands. Not a PNP, JLP, Opposition, Government. The Parliament of the land and the parliamentarians feel we should go this way in the interest of this generation that are smoking and prevention for those who may come to do it in the future.

Thank you very much. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Spencer.

Mr. SPENCER: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker.

Let me thank all the Members who have contributed to this debate. I especially want to single out my friend, Dr. Campbell. The same stridency and passion with which he spoke today is the same thing he carried to the Committee. (Applause) Even though sometimes he has been outspoken, I do appreciate his stance and wish for him all the best whilst his fight continues.

I just want to look at one piece of this thing. I want to thank the Minister for his input. And I am not afraid to say I have been consulting with the Ministry of Health regarding this Committee.

The private residence and workplace, the question is, the enforceability of the law. It would be very, very difficult to prosecute somebody in his home for smoking. And whilst I understand and appreciate the strong concerns - and there were strong concerns raised about it, but it would be very, very difficult to have the police coming into a home to prosecute for smoking. And, therefore, that is one of the compelling reasons why we adopted what we adopted.

Another thing I want to report, the e-cigarettes. Minister, there is still not enough evidence and information regarding e-cigarettes. So, what I would ask you to do, if

in your research and so on, you have come across anything - and there will be later on - I would like you to forward it to us so we can deal with it.

I take your point that - and I am sure a particular Member would agree with you because he was - I wouldn't say voted out - the fines of Five Thousand Dollars ($5,000.00) for the first offence, you said you would like it to be Fifteen Thousand Dollars ($15,000.00) and I don't have much problem with that.

Dr. FERGUSON: Ten Thousand Dollars ($10,000.00).

Mr. SPENCER: Ten. You can put it to the House and they will adopt it. So it is now Ten ($10,000.00) for the first offence, Twenty-five ($25,000.00) for the second offence, and Fifty Thousand ($50,000.00) for all subsequent fines.

And all in all, Mr. Speaker, I would like again to thank all those who took part today, and especially Committee members. They have worked long. And I need not tell you that there were some frightening moments in that Committee. But all in all we came out and we were together and united in our effort.

And so, Mr. Minister, if you would just read into the record for the adoption of the House, what you have proposed - the new proposal you have. (Applause)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Minister.

Dr. FERGUSON: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Chairman.

I have listened attentively to the interventions this afternoon. The points have been raised in terms of the - I know Dr. Campbell knows very well I am as strident as he has been, as it relates to this tobacco. I sleep it at nights, in terms of the harm to our people and people across the globe.

I spent the time today to focus on the Committee Report, and responding to the points. But as the records will show, the arguments and evidence...

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Minister, we are having a procedural matter here. The Chairman ought to have closed the debate and put the motion.

Mr. SPENCER: That's what I did.

The Deputy SPEAKER: No. You invited the Minister to...

(*Sotto voce* comments from a Member) (Laughter)

The Deputy SPEAKER: No, that's - no, that is not part of the Standing Orders. You need to proceed, Mr. Spencer.

Mr. SPENCER: Mr. Speaker, I now ask the House to adopt the proposals this evening.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Report and the proposals be adopted.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. CHARLES: Argument done! (Laughter)

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, it is not intended to do any further business today. We therefore ask that the House be adjourned until next Tuesday, February 4 at 2:00 p.m.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that this Honourable House adjourns until next Tuesday, February 4, at 2:00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: This Honourable House now stands adjourned.

The Honourable House of Representatives was adjourned at approximately 5:56 p.m., to resume on Tuesday, February 4, 2014, at 2:00 p.m.

THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SESSION 2013 – 2014

TUESDAY, February 4, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:20 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

MR. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House.

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

HON. ROBERT DIXON PICKERSGILL, (PNP), St. Catherine, North Western, Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change

HON. DERRICK FLAVIUS KELLIER, (PNP), St. James, Southern, Minister of Labour and Social Security

HON. ROGER HAROLD CLIFFORD CLARKE, CD, (PNP), Westmoreland, Central, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries

DR. THE HON. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, (PNP), St. Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health

HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, Northern, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, Attorney General, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change

OTHER MEMBERS

DR. KENNETH LEIGH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, West Central

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern

MR. PAUL LENNOX BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Andrew, West Rural

MR. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern

DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern

MR. LESTER MICHAEL HENRY, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, Central

MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition

MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western

MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern

MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern

MR. DESMOND GREGORY MAIR, (JLP), St. Catherine, North Eastern

MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western

MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern

MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern

MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. DARYL WESLEY PHILLIP VAZ, (JLP), Portland, Western

MR. KEITH ANTHONY WALFORD, (PNP), St. Ann, South Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. Raymond Pryce.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

The SPEAKER: Before we get down to today's business, let us welcome 100 first-year Law students from the University of the West Indies. (Applause) I suppose one day soon some of them will be right down here.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House a copy of the following:

- Maritime Authority of Jamaica Audited Financial Statements for the Financial Year 2010/2011
- Sports Development Foundation Corporate Plan 2014-2016

- Tourism Enhancement Fund Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for Financial Year 2012/2013
- Kingston Container Terminal Annual Report and Audited Financial Statement for Financial Year 2011/2012
- Report of the Joint Select Committee to consider and Report on the Bill shortly entitled The Criminal Justice (Suppression of Criminal Organizations) Act, 2013

(Cross talk)

(The Speaker gavels)

- Report on the deliberations of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee for the period July to December 2013
- Report on the deliberations of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee - the House of Representatives on the Fiscal Policy Paper for the Financial Year 2013/2014

This is an interim report.

- Capital Development Fund (Withdrawal) Order, 2014 under the Bauxite (Production Levy) Act

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

The SPEAKER: House Leader.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of National Security I beg to lay on the Table of the House a copy of the Report of the Joint Select Committee which was set up to consider and report on the Bill shortly entitled the Criminal Justice (Suppression Criminal Organizations) Act, 2013.

(MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central, entered and took her seat.)

(MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. NATALIE GAYE NEITA-HEADLEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sports and Deputy Leader of the House, entered and took her seat.)

(HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Works, entered and took his seat.)

The SPEAKER: Dr. Wheatley.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table of the House a copy of:

- The Report of the deliberations of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives for the period July to December 2013 and the Report on the deliberations of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives on the Fiscal Policy Paper for the Financial Year 2013/2014 Interim Report.

(REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. DONALD KEITH DUNCAN, (PNP), Hanover, Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, entered and took her seat.)

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of National Security, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House he will move:

Be it Resolved that the Report of the Joint Select Committee which was set up to consider and report on the Bill shortly entitled the Criminal Justice (Suppression of Criminal Organizations) Act, 2013, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 4th of November 2014 be approved.

The SPEAKER: Minister Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move:

Be it Resolved that the Capital Development Fund (Withdrawal) (No. 1) Order under the Bauxite (Production Levy) Act, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 4th day of February be approved.

I further beg to give notice, Mr. Speaker, that at a later stage today, I will move the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take this Motion.

The SPEAKER: Dr. Wheatley.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move:

Be it Resolved that the Report of the deliberations of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives for the period July to December 2013, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 4th day of February, 2014 be approved.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker...

Be it Resolved that the Report of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives on the Fiscal Policy Paper for the Financial Year 2013/2014 Interim Report which was laid on the Table of the House on the 4th day of February, 2014 be referred to the Committee on Tax Measures for consideration and report.

Mr. Speaker, I further beg to give notice that at a later stage today I will move for the

suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take the second mentioned motion.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education will answer Question 7.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Education answer questions tabled in my name?

The SPEAKER: Rev. Thwaites.

Rev. THWAITES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Question 1

Will the Minister give a policy update regarding the safety and security status of schools islandwide?

Answer:

The Safe School Policy was approved by Cabinet in March for tabling in Parliament in 2011. Since them the Ministry of Education has continued to implement the Security and Safety Policy guidelines in 164 high schools, 11 all-age and 86 junior high schools.

(Cross talk)

(The Speaker gavels)

The implementation in the 595 remaining schools will commence in September 2014.

This is the Security and Safety Policy Guidelines, Mr. Speaker. (Holding up the document)

The Ministry of Education continues to work with the schools to ensure that each has a functioning Security and Safety Committee comprising parents, teachers, chairmen of school Boards, the Jamaica Fire Brigade, the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management and the Jamaica Constabulary Force, among others.

In furthering the recommendations to the policy, the Ministry of Education is focussing on the implementation of an intensive Behaviour Modification Programme. It will highlight appropriate values and attitudes with specific reference to understanding the dead-end nature of crime and violence and to reinforce positive and law-abiding behaviour. It will also emphasize character building and positive socialization as both a preventative and corrective approach to anti-social behaviour. This initiative will include pulling together of all programmes to ensure there is no duplication and that all schools are covered.

Question 2

Will the Minister provide quantitative information regarding incidents of school violence over the past three years?

And, Mr. Speaker, there is an appendix to the answers which itemizes incidents in schools in 2010-2013.

Answer:

Thirty-one (31) such.

Question 3

Will the Minister indicate whether the Ministry has plans to further enhance capacity at the level of the Ministry and the schools themselves?

Answer:

A new Behaviour Management and Modification Programme, school-wide positive intervention and support programme, was introduced in 56 schools identified for special intervention in the 2013/2014 school year.

It will begin this month, Mr. Speaker.

This will be complemented by a coordinating committee comprising representatives of the Association of Guidance Counsellors, Deans of Discipline and school safety, Head of Guidance and Counselling Division, a noted Psychiatrist, in fact, more than one Principals of schools, representatives from the Ministries of National Security, Justice, Youth and Culture, Sports and Social Security, and a number of other capable persons, professionals. The Committee will recommend an action plant as well as implement, monitor and evaluate the approved interventions and embed them as necessary.

The Ministry of Education has also been incrementally increasing the number of Deans of Discipline with 110 currently in place in some of the most vulnerable high schools. Senior staff are assigned to undertake such duties in the schools that currently do not have Deans of Discipline. One hundred and seventy-four (174) trained resource school officers are assigned to 134 schools to give support to the Principals and other School Administrators in order to maintain discipline, safety and security. The Security and Safety Task Force Committee is in place with the task of providing advice and recommending policies to treat with all issues of security in schools.

The Committee comprises personnel from the Ministry of National Security, the Jamaica Constabulary Force, the Ministry of Health, the Child Development Agency, the Children's Registry, the Ministry of Youth and Culture, the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing, the Office of the Children's Advocate, the Principals Associations – there are two of them, and the National Parenting Support Commission and the National Parent Teachers Association.

The administration of the Safety and Security Unit has been strengthened with the secondment recently of a senior officer from the Ministry of National Security, Jamaica Constabulary Force – that was of December last year.

Additionally, the Ministry of Education has implemented a fencing project and has constructed boundary walls in fifty-two (52) schools across all six regions at a cost of $180 Million. The initiative was founded by the Ministry of Education, the Schools and Jamaica Social Investment Fund.

The Ministry of Education also proposes a special intervention in 2014. It will administer a social and emotional test to vulnerable students in certain grades – I should tell you an early grade as well as probably Grade 8 or Grade 9, as advised,

develop regional referral centres to treat with major dysfunctional tendencies, offer teachers in primary schools training in counseling, parental engagement and primary therapies relating to challenged children, introduce mandatory courses in behavior management in all teacher training institutions, appoint social workers in education regions who will network with relevant Ministries and agencies, provide training to school leaders on how to identify and respond to disturbed students, implement a programme to detect and address disruptive conduct and dropout risks among children by September 2014 and expand opportunities for students to become involved in uniformed groups, sports and creative arts and thereby to engage and reform those with negative tendencies.

Lastly, to engage the police and military as part of a team to attend to the most vulnerable schools, I should add, in a constructive fashion.

Question 4

If the answer to Question 3 is the affirmative, will the Minister indicate precisely what these plans entail and advise of the implementation schedule?

Answer:

And, Mr. Speaker, I believe I have largely answered this question in the responses to Questions 2 and 3.

Thank you.

(MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, Eastern, entered and took her seat.)

(HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. HOLNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister has presented a fairly comprehensive overview of the activities of the Ministry as it relates to safety and security. As a follow up to the Minister's presentation, could the Minister state what is the present status of the PASS programme?

Rev. THWAITES: The PASS programme has served a very useful purpose and is continuing, but is now being incorporated into the programme with the impossible acronym that I mentioned. School Wide Positive Behaviour Intervention and Support (SWPBIS) and extended to a variety of institutions where principals and others have indicated the need for special intervention.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, I asked the question because it seems as if each time this issue of safety and security is raised in schools we are reinventing the wheel. The PASS programme has been around for a very long time, initiated by the former Minister of Education, a very effective programme just needs to be continued in funding. The question is why are we changing this programme? What's the need to change this

programme and what new is being brought to the programme?

Rev. THWAITES: Mr. Speaker, what is necessary is the identification of anti-social and behavioural challenges at the very earliest stages at the student's life and whenever else in the course of the twelve years that a child is normally in school, these are detected. And what is new is the programme of early evaluation and immediate therapy. What we found in the past, notwithstanding the PASS programme, is that so many of our students were either undetected or if detected were not treated in the comprehensive manner that their malady, their condition, their challenge warrants. It is not the intention of the Ministry of Education to dispense with any programme by whoever generated, or with whatever pedigree that is serving our children well.

Mr. HOLNESS: Through you, Mr. Speaker. Is the Minister aware that the PASS programme has a component of early detection of behavioural problems, in addition to which we established the ASTEP programme, which also has a component of detecting early behavioural problems and the PASS already had established a treatment programme which the government spent significant resources on to treat students both within the school environment and outside the school environment. What new is the Minister bringing to the table with this programme?

Rev. THWAITES: Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, I'm not hanging my hat upon novelty at all. What I'm saying is that, that of existing programmes which work very well is to be kept and the ASTEP programme, to which the Member refers, is still very much in operation. But what we found was that many of the students who were enrolled in that programme, indeed, a majority of them were - the level of assessment was not profound enough to deal with their challenges and certainly the level of remediation was not providing the required stability afterwards, in order that they could proceed with their education and the growth of their personality. So the premise respectfully is not admitted. What we are doing is taking that which was there and improving it, refining it and adding more resources to it.

(Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, four or five years ago, there was a significant problem with behaviour of students within schools that was way above the capacity of schools to handle and as a result of that, representation was made to the Ministry of Education to provide for a facility or facilities where we could take students out of the existing school environment to have their issues treated in an environment that was conducive to turnaround. We established as a policy that we would create islandwide several such institutions. One we created in Malvern to deal with those students whose behaviour was over and above the capacity of the school to manage, these were the disruptive students. I have seen where the Minister has said that there is no need for such a facility and that we are building prisons for our students.

Mr. Speaker, I would like the Minister to state clearly whether or not he is abandoning

the concept of building facilities that could very well form part of the rehabilitation and remediation that he speaks of and what is he going to replace it with?

Rev. THWAITES: You know, Mr. Speaker, in the matter of education, I try to avoid the polemic speech and I wouldn't characterize any sincere effort perhaps in the same vocabulary as just - I think in cautiously related. But if at any time I did, I would want to resile from that. Let it be clear that the weight of professional advice from psychiatrists, psychologists, behaviourists offered to me and documented is that the treatment of severely mal-adaptive teenagers has to be related and cited within the communities that they come from rather than by isolating them in situations when after which they will have to return to communities where their situation is largely unabated and where research shows they normally regress.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, it was similarly advised that it is a mistake to put bad boy with bad boy in the same institution, yes. And thirdly, considerable legal hurdles were advance because it is not possible for the Ministry of Education without parental consent, for example, or without an order of the Court simply to remove children who are considered fractious from their environment to another environment; it involves certain complications. And further, such an intervention, if it can be so called, removes the capacity of social intervention where the problem exists and the measures that I have outlined in answer to the Member's questions precisely relates - it doesn't discount the seriousness of the malfunction, but rather it relates the therapy to the new skills and news capacities...

(Cross talk)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) I can hardly follow Rev. Thwaites.

(Cross talk)

The SPEAKER: I don't know where it is coming from. Continue, Rev. Thwaites.

Rev. THWAITES: ...to the new skills and capacities that are being made available in those circumstances. The students who principals find are difficult to maintain in class are now being subject or will now be subject to intense counselling, to intense intermediation by professionals in order that their behaviour may be properly analyzed and corrected where possible. We feel it is very important for them to have a relationship. Most of them are children who do not have a relationship with a father or an acceptable relationship with a father and they must be exposed to mentoring and to the presence, where necessary, to the security forces not in a confrontational manner, but rather in one in which the proper values and reformed attitudes can be inculcated. It is a significant difference of analysis of the problem and it is one that this Minister, this Government, has not taken capriciously but rather on the basis of sound advice and respectfully it has been receiving the support of principals and others.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, the Minister rests his response upon professional advice. Is the Minister aware that the establishment of the facility at Malvern was based on the same set of professionals who

advised us that it was appropriate? And I just want the Minister to response to that, because the same set of professionals advised us. And can the Minister state after the Government has gone and expended considerable resources on the facility what is the facility being used for now?

Rev. THWAITES: Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, I don't know which professionals - the same professionals the Member refers to and I would be very happy to share the advice that I was given by the -

Mr. HOLNESS: I told you the advice we got, is there any difference?

Rev. THWAITES: Well, you know, doctors differ and patients die, but we have to do something.

(Laughter)

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Holness)

(DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. KEITH ANTHONY WALFORD, (PNP), St. Ann, South Western, entered and took his seat.)

Rev. THWAITES: Well, you know, what I am persuaded of, Mr. Speaker, is the logic, is the logic that has been advanced to me and the reasoning that has been given in this regard. And in respect to the use of the facility, I am pleased to inform this House that the facility is now being operated by the Munro College and is providing - because it is in closeness to its curtilage - a very valuable and useful addition to its excellent opportunities there. (Applause)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, is the Minister aware of a particular practice where, when a student's behaviour reaches a particular point and the school is unable to control the behaviour, but at the same time, not able to have the student expelled, that sometimes the parent is called in and asked to remove the child from the school? And can the Minister say whether or not that practice still pertains within the education system?

Rev. THWAITES: Mr. Speaker, I believe it does. And in some cases it's entirely salutary, in other cases it is not and it needs to be - when there is an objection to it close interest is paid to the circumstances to determine what is best for the child.

Mr. Speaker, this situation largely obtains because there is a very cumbersome and difficult set of regulations under the Education Act, 1980, and this prevents the easy movement of students and other educational personnel between schools to suit their better situation.

Where, for example, a girl gets pregnant, she may well be asked to - her parents - to suggest and to take a different school when she returns after her confinement. The same is true in terms of fractious behaviour, or where there is some abnormality perhaps relating to the fact that the child has to travel inordinate distances to get from school, a situation which I believe the good constituency of South Manchester knows very well, Mr. Speaker, yes. And in those circumstances we deal with it on an individual specific circumstance. And where parents and the school can come to an understanding of what is the best environment

for a child who finds himself or herself, for whatever reason, inappropriately .placed, why then, we should consider this to be an asset.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, I am very glad that the Minister has admitted that there are some students who cannot be rehabilitated in their environment, and that there may very well be need for a change of environment. I am very happy that the Minister acknowledges that it is not so easy to move students, but if parents do agree, they can be moved. And, therefore, the obstacles that he presented as being obstacles to the proper utilization of the facility in Malvern, are really no obstacles at all, and that there has just been a really trivial change in policy, which I believe the doctors differ and some of our patients may very well die.

Rev. THWAITES: You know, Mr. Speaker, I read the book of Nehemiah closely, and we need more Nehemiahs and less sand ballasts in this nation, especially with respect to education.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Rev. THWAITES: And what I am really hoping is that we can have committee...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

(The Speaker gavels)

Rev. THWAITES: ...we can have committee in this House regarding how we use the limited facilities we have to achieve the best advantage of student attainment.

I have no points to score on the change of policy here. It was done with the best advice, and whenever it is necessary for us to take other measures we will be happy to consider those.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Hear! Hear!

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, I have a few more questions - and thanks for your indulgence.

Mr. Speaker, we had a problem in 2007/2008 with cell phones and the possession of cellular phones, and we implemented a policy regarding the management of cell phones in school, and it was very effective. In fact, when I examined the report, there are very few reports of issues pertaining to safety and security because of cell phones, so it is clear that effective policies can work.

One policy that I have a concern on, Minister, which I am not certain that it is being implemented and enforced, is the policy on search. Can the Minister say whether or not this is still a priority for the Ministry of Education, and whether or not schools have been provided with metal detecting wands to assist them in identifying weapons coming into schools?

Rev. THWAITES: No, Mr. Speaker. To my knowledge there aren't any of these wands or other implements. But it remains within the purview of any and every school to search a student appropriately, and the levels of appropriateness are very carefully and correctly set out in the Security and Safety Policy Guidelines which were instituted during the Member's tenure in the Ministry of Education. And I give credit. Good Lord, we can't - Mr. Speaker, we can't stay in this House and use a gallon of words to decide who is Jew and who is Gentile, you know, sir,

we have to get along with the task we have, in the short time we have.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to complete the answer. It is the responsibility and it is the right of any school official to appropriately search a student. And I, for one, encourage principals and Deans of Discipline and security personnel in the schools to carry out regular searches in order that we can forestall once and for all the carriage of dangerous weapons or any other kind of contraband in the school. School is no place for ganja, for tobacco, for liquor, for knife, let alone for gun.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, I am very happy that the Minister has taken a similar position to the one I took when I was the Minister, regarding the administrative authority of the school to search. It is critically important for the school to maintain control over its domain, and that is an authority which I think that we both agree the school should have. But, Minister, that authority will only be in the quantum of words - as you have stated - if we don't give them the tools to execute.

And I am encouraging you, Minister, to take a second look at the provision of metal detecting wands, because that will enhance the ability of the school to control the situation.

Mr. Speaker, final question.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HOLNESS: I am certain you all are enjoying this interface.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Holness! Mr. Holness, don't get distracted.

Mr. HOLNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen recently - well, not recently, this is something that is ongoing, it's part of the current generation, the use of technology, where certain kinds of video tapings have been made, some of them not directly in the school, but some of them are, and some of them related to schools.

Can the Minister state for the benefit of the nation, what the Ministry is doing? And I know the limitations there, but at least what the Ministry is doing, certainly in terms of moral suasion and maybe other areas to help to educate our young people out of that sort of action?

Rev. THWAITES: You know, Mr. Speaker, the Member is completely correct. The schools are very much reflective and affected by the prevailing culture...

(HON. NOEL GEORGE DELANO ARSCOTT, (PNP), Clarendon, South Western, Minister of Local Government and Community Development, entered and took his seat.)

...as well as the schools ought to be influential to the existing culture. And the fact is that our young people, many of them have access with the common telephone that they carry to video - photography and video techniques, and many of them use this in ways that are detrimental to the reputation and character of others and to themselves, too.

The Member from East Central, St. Andrew gave me a phrase sometime ago. A community of care needs to be developed around each school, where we invite not just

principals and teachers, but alumni, parent/teachers, parents, church, service clubs, lodge, everyone of goodwill, to engage in the life of the school nearest to them or to which they are attached. If we have that, then some of the "a-no-me", some of the desperation, some of the loneliness, some of the ruthlessness of our students can be allayed.

The Ministry of Education has for its part refined and intensified the programme of Civics and of Health and Family Life in wholesome ways and in focused ways, which should lead generations of students towards more positive behaviour, the inculcation of better values and attitudes.

But, Mr. Speaker, let us make no mistake. If on the pages of our newspaper, if on the channels of the cable or of local television we provide examples of leggo-beast behaviour and expect that our children are not going to copy that and model it, it is very difficult, it is impossible for that to be assured. And the few hours that they spend in school after they have been exposed on the bus to the lap-up and the lewd music, which inexplicably we will not ban, yes, from those transportation units, then we are facing a very difficult prospect. And it is one which the society as a whole, and I daresay all of the Members of this Honourable House need to be very clear on. We are not being prudish, but we need to recognize that there is poison that is being exposed to our children, and that the school needs help and needs everybody's cooperation if there is going to be effective antidote.

(Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker...

The SPEAKER: I thought that was the last.

(Laughter)

Mr. HOLNESS: I am moved to respond, Mr. Speaker, because what the Minister has said is quite true. But I want to point out to the Minister that there is a step further that you can go other than the quantum of words. It is not merely what the students are exposed to in the society, but what the school allows them to be exposed to within the confines of the school. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

(MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern, entered and took her seat.)

Mr. HOLNESS: So, if the school is having a social event, the school must establish - and I encourage you, Minister, to set the standards that the schools must follow regarding the social events that the principal permits to happen in the school, whether or not it is for the school and the students or they are allowing their facilities to be used, but the schools must establish standards. (Applause)

MOTIONS THAT MAY BE MADE AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF. PUBLIC BUSINESS REQUIRING NOTICE

The SPEAKER: Dr. Wheatley.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, I am sure...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Minister Thwaites - me soon finish wid you, Minister. I am a Member of Parliament, which is more important than being a spokesman.

(Inaudible comment from a Government Member)

Mr. McKENZIE: Come, leave de man! You tink a Cuba dis?

Dr. WHEATLEY: Minister, I am sure that you will agree with me that in this age of technological advancement we have to be very mindful of the downside of these technological advancement, Minister.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Luther BUCHANAN: Shut up! Shut up!

Dr. WHEATLEY: And so, Mr. Minister, the whole business of school safety and security go beyond the physical safety of our children.

I am sure Minister, that you will also agree with me that the possibility exists of psychological and developmental harm when students are exposed to certain things, Mr. Minister. In fact, Mr. Minister, the reprehensible videos that were taken of some school girls in Clarendon, and also, Minister, the Ministry's decision to prevent students from being exposed to certain sexual...

(*Sotto voce* comments/Laughter)

An Opposition MEMBER: Sexual involvement.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Anyway, Minister - sexual involvement, Minister, I am sure that you will agree with me that equally disturbing is what took place last Friday at St. Jago High School...

(Applause)

Mr. McKENZIE: Hear! Hear! Condemn that!

Dr. WHEATLEY: ...where an agent, Minister, of a political party or a political organization took steps to distract students from what should be a singular focus on their education.

Minister, to the extent that politics and politicking is reserved for adults, that incident at St. Jago High School is to be seen as no less, an undesirable event that expose pornographic material and physical violence itself. Now, Minister, can you indicate whether you have requested, from the school, a probe or report on what actually took place on Friday?

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I am trying to ascertain the relevance of the question as regards the questions that...

Dr. WHEATLEY: Leader of Government Business, it relates to...

Mr. McKENZIE: School safety, school safety.

Dr. WHEATLEY: ...school safety. School safety is not all about a physical safety of the students, you know, but the psychological safety of a student. So, it is about safety - but we are confining ourselves to just what is physical, but we also need to look at the psychological aspect of this thing.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Wheatley...
(Gavels) ...Mr. Wheatley...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. WHEATLEY: The Minister is aware, the Minister is aware.

Rev. THWAITES: Mr. Speaker, what is reported to have taken place at St. Jago High School where a political meeting was voiced over the school's public address system is completely out of order, and it doesn't require any statement from the Ministry of Education because the matter was handled effectively as reported by the school officials, well within their competence.

A MEMBER: It is not true.

Mr. McKENZIE: How you know it is not true; you were there?

Rev. THWAITES: Why don't we cool this thing down and realize that there are tremendous challenges in our schools, given the numbers, given the many circumstances. But, schools are for learning and the development of proper character. School children must have an interest in political life, but they cannot promote political interests within the school; that is out of order.

Dr. WHEATLEY: But, Minister, you said that the school took the necessary steps to deal with the matter, but can you share with this House what were some of those steps taken by St. Jago High School to address this matter?

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. McKENZIE: That is the pertinent question.

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I really believe that the Minister can have and engage in a private discussion with the Member, but it has no bearing on the question here. So, can we proceed with the Agenda, Mr. Speaker?

The SPEAKER: Mr. Wheatley, remember, the original questions asked by the Leader of the Opposition, you are supposed to ask for clarification on any of those questions. You are not supposed to go into new ground. You understand?

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, I thought that we were able to be allowed to ask supplementary questions.

The SPEAKER: Supplementary to the…. yes, but not new questions.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance will lead off this afternoon with Public Business, with the order proposed earlier under Notices Given Orally, after which we will return to Private Members' Motions, and I will indicate who the Speakers are at that time. So, the Minister of Finance will commence at this stage, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Minister Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I move suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take the motion, notice of which I gave earlier.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the suspension of the Standing Orders to allow the Minister to take the motion, notice of which was given earlier.

Put to the House and agreed.

The SPEAKER: Minister.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, the issue raised in this Resolution is the seeking of the affirmative vote of the House of Representatives as required under 12(6) of the Bauxite (Production Levy) Act, to withdraw an amount, not up to, but not exceeding, $1,540,200,000 from the Capital Development Fund during the fiscal year 2013/14. This is for the following purposes, Mr. Speaker: for payment into the Consolidated Fund of $1,376 Billion and payment to the Jamaica Bauxite Institute of $163.58 Million.

The One point One Billion Five Hundred and Forty Million, proposed for withdrawal during 2013/14, was determined on the basis of the balance available in the Fund as of April 1, 2013, and the estimated inflows of levy on interest for the period ending March 31, 2014. That is to say, what we are seeking is authorization for withdrawal to cover the fiscal year of 2013/2014 which ends March 31, coming.

The opening balance in the CDF - in the Capital Development Fund, as at April first was $374,273,000, approximately. The position as at December, and the anticipated inflows - as of December there was, between April and December, an additional $868,000,000 was entered - was placed in the Fund. Interest earned was some $21,367 Million, less tax deducted of $5.3 Million dollars. So, total receipts would have been $884,263. And the value of the Fund as at December 31, 2013 was $1,258 Billion.

(HON. COLIN ALFRED A. FAGAN, (PNP), St. Catherine, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, entered and took his seat.)

We estimate inflows, Mr. Speaker, of $388.7 Million between January 2014 and March 2014, less withholding tax of $2,391 Million so that the total projected inflows are some $1,654 Billion. Withdrawals within the ceiling approved by the House will be made as the value of the Fund permits, and the Ministry of Finance will be responsible for managing the request for disbursements.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable House of Representatives is being asked to approve the Order in accordance with the provisions of the Bauxite (Production Levy) Act.

It is the case, Mr. Speaker, that what is being sought at the end of the fiscal year is the approval of the withdrawal, and for the future, what we will also be doing is really seeking the House's approval to withdraw up to a limit prescribed so that the withdrawals can be made, rather than having a separate withdrawal at each point in time. As I said, this amount is for both the support of the Jamaica Bauxite Institute - the smaller portion - and for the payments into the Consolidated Fund as has usually been the case.

With those remarks, Mr. Speaker, I move for approval of the Resolution.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Holness.

Mr. HOLNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Opposition poses no objection to this, as we normally would not have done. It is a

necessary part of the fiscal management of the Government's accounts. But, Mr. Speaker, I am certain Members will agree with me that each time we do this, the question is asked: are we using the resources as they should have been used for the development of communities, for the development of research in the bauxite industry? But I do have some additional concerns. The bauxite industry has a limit to it. It has a life span to it, and the experts estimate that it could have as much as 50 more years.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. HOLNESS: Yes, so we are now shifting into the rare earth minerals. But there is another industry, Minister, which I think that we should be using some of this Fund to transition into, which is the limestone industry. And I was wondering, Minister, what is the Government's position on the development of limestone industry to eventually run concurrently, and if not, replace the bauxite industry.

Mr. Speaker, as we are on bauxite, I was seeing where the Minister in charge of Mining made certain comments which would seem to be giving RUSAL an ultimatum, that if they don't move speedily to reopen Alpart and WINDALCO, that their mining licence could be revoked. I find it very interesting because the Minister was very confident a few months ago that they - that these plants would reopen. It would be very interesting to hear the response of the Minister of Finance as to when will this happen, if it is even likely to happen.

Mr. Speaker, I am speaking here on a finance matter, but you would know, Mr. Speaker, that we have reinstated our Spokesperson on Finance, and he has asked me to ask the Minister...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HOLNESS: ...he has asked me to ask the Minister.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. HOLNESS: He's off on a Parliamentary matter.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: *Im gaan palaav.*

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Where.

Mr. HOLNESS: The PAC... the PAC in Trinidad.

Mr. Speaker, the Spokesperson asked me to ask you what of the allocations which were made for his constituency - which, by the way, is part of those constituencies that would normally benefit from the Fund.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. HOLNESS: It is a parochial matter so... I believe $2 Million, Minister, was allocated. And I am sure there are other Members here who had similar allocations, who have not had the benefit of the allocation as yet, and they are wondering when will those allocations be used.

Now, while I am at it Mr. Speaker, there are some constituencies like West Central, St. Andrew, which...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Oh, yes.

Mr. HOLNESS: ...a part of Jamaica, and should benefit.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Holness, you are gone way off the mark now.

(Applause/Laughter)

Mr. HOLNESS: I know you would say that Mr. Speaker, because your constituency is fortunate enough to benefit. But I must ask, is there ever going to be a consideration - and I am sure the Member from South East St. Andrew would agree...

Mr. ROBINSON: I want some too. I want some too.

Mr. HOLNESS: ….constituencies that are not part of the bauxite...

Mr. Minister, those are just a few considerations which I think would enhance the approval and debate.

Mr. SAMUDA: Minister, for years this matter has been coming to this Honourable House, and for years, not only myself, but other Members have been asking the question: why do we, every year, come here and go through this charade of withdrawing from the Consolidated Fund? Why aren't these funds simply allocated to the Consolidated Fund, in the first place, and brought into the Budget, so that we don't have to go through this, because it really is going in with the left hand and being taken out with the right hand, mainly for support - budget support. Why not just simply initiate the appropriate requirements to make sure that it goes in one time, and you don't have to come to the Parliament every time.

A MEMBER: Transparency.

Mr. SAMUDA: It is not a matter of transparency because when he goes to the Finance Committee of the House, he has to account for all that is in your budget. So, just bring it in on that basis.

Mr. SAMUDA: And in terms of what the Leader of the Opposition has said, the Minister of Mining made an interesting observation that all of the required ore is available for the Kirkvine works and Ewarton.

But, you know, I can recall, Minister, when - and this is something that is related directly to this - when it was stated that we are now suffering from a depletion of the resources to serve Kirkvine economically and because of yellow bauxite. Have we - obviously, we can't overcome that problem. Has that - is that a part of what the Institute will be considering as a strategy to make Kirkvine a more viable plant than it is today?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank Members opposite for their...

Mr. CHARLES: Minister, you're not closing?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Yes, I'm closing, but....

Mr. CHARLES: Before you close, can I just ask you to add two points?

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that many of the Members of Parliament from areas where mining has taken place or is now being carried on will agree with me, that the Governments of Jamaica over the past many years have not seen to it that the bauxite companies honour clause in the contracts for reclamation of the people of Jamaica's land. We are being left sinkholes from St. Ann to Clarendon to Manchester. If you fly over Jamaica, if you fly over Jamaica, you wouldn't know any - you are looking in just sinkholes.

It was brought to my attention years ago,

that the bauxite companies and the Government were required to reclaim the lands. Some of the companies have gone. And I said in this House, on the record already, that if a goat slips on one edge of some of those holes, cannot be alive when it reaches the bottom. Minister, I would like you to take a look and speak to your Minister of Mining to initiate, speed up.

I know that a little is going on in the Mocho area. I asked the Minister once, why can't we allocate some of the bauxite money to replant some trees? No rain don't fall in these areas anymore, because is one grand sinkhole.

The Minister did indicate that there is going to be a tree-planting programme. We can use some of the bauxite money to even replant. It is going to be time and time and it's going to bring laughter when I ask again. The people in Mocho, Mocho which was a Garden of Eden, used to supply food to three or four parishes throughout Jamaica, now is one grand sinkhole in those areas, and they don't have any water. Seventeen schools all have flush toilets, and only five or six of the schools have running water. At 10.00 o'clock when the black tank is finished, school is finished. Minister, an allocation to this area, I put it on record, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth….

(Laughter)

Mr. CHARLES: ....do something for us in that area.

Thank you very much.

The SPEAKER: Divine intervention.

(Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker....

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Holness)

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...You know, every time we come to debate a withdrawal from the Capital Development Fund, the same points are raised over and over.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Holness)

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, I didn't say that the same points.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Holness)

Dr. PHILLIPS: That's why I said I didn't say the same speakers.

And quite frankly, quite frankly, to get to the serious issues raised, and by that I exclude the one for West Central, St. Andrew, though I would say, if it had a chance of success, I would join East Central, St. Andrew in it.

(Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: 'Cyaan mek' the case.

Mr. HOLNESS: Oh, you made the case?

Dr. PHILLIPS: I make the case, I have made the case, that many of my constituents represent displaced persons...

A MEMBER: What area?

Dr. PHILLIPS: ….from bauxite areas and so are deserving....

A MEMBER: Oh! Oh! Oh!

Dr. PHILLIPS: ....of support. But, put that to one side, the fact of the matter is - and you raised it about the utilization of the Fund at the very outset - the fact of the matter is that this Capital Development Fund, which is one of the earlier examples of what has become known as Sovereign Wealth Funds more recently, is an example of our collective

failure to manage our affairs, such that we could use this Fund for the purposes for which it was originally intended to provide the investment - it's a Capital Development Fund - to provide the investment that would preserve the country's capacity to grow and its economic dynamism when the bauxite resource had been depleted. And at minimum, which is why I wouldn't go the route though, what you say has a lot to recommend it - I wouldn't go the route of just simply incorporating the levy into general revenue. It's only so that we can remind ourselves each time of the need to...

Mr. SAMUDA: Reminding you a long time.

(Mr. M. Phillips chuckles)

Dr. PHILLIPS: …of the need, yes, of the need to try to reach that point, because the resource is not yet depleted, where we can - where the debt and the claim of the debt is not absorbing so much of all our other revenues, and we would be able to devote these resources to the purposes for which it was originally - for which they were originally designed.

Now, at a later point this year in the not too distant future, the Minister with responsibility for Mining will speak more extensively on the state of the bauxite industry generally and the exciting prospects which face the country in this regard.

Mr. SAMUDA: ….call exciting?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Exciting prospects.

Mr. SAMUDA: You would say that.

Dr. PHILLIPS: I would say that, and I wouldn't say it if it were not so.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Samuda)

(Laughter)

Mr. HOLNESS: If the Minister would yield a minute, just for clarification. Is it that the exciting prospects which were brought to the House a few months ago, have those prospects dissipated and been replaced by new prospects?

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, no, you will get greater detail on the excitement awaiting those prospects.

(THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, entered and took her seat.)

Dr. PHILLIPS: But, suffice it to say, in relation to the Alpart question - and I won't speak specifically - just to say that it is the policy of the Government that reserves need to be used, if you don't use it, you lose it. And that's the overall principle on which we operate, because there are reserves available for the people of Jamaica.

And I don't know, I wouldn't characterize the Minister's statement as an ultimatum - not that I heard them - but I know he's not in the habit of giving ultimatums, but he is in the habit of following the policy of the Government, which is that the reserves need to be utilized, especially in the context of a more buoyant market environment and in the specific circumstances of our own….

Mr. HOLNESS: ….movements.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ....economic needs.

I would say also, Mr. Speaker, as far as the reforestation and other questions raised regularly by - and correctly - by the Member from North Central Clarendon, that the projects that you put together for support can include, for your area, such projects; reforestation, small water projects and other things that can be supported from the resources made available through the Jamaica Bauxite Institute for the bauxite communities, right.

And I take the general point that there is need for reforestation. And indeed, I think that there is some important work being done in that regard as part of JEEP and other things for preservation of the environment.

Mr. Speaker, the general point though is that we need the approval of the House for these resources to be utilized. We'll be coming less frequently, but to at least meet the concerns of the Member from North Central St. Andrew and Opposition spokesman more closely, but we are not yet at the point of totally abolishing. What we are doing is coming once a year to set the limits and then to enable the Minister of Finance to withdraw, to the extent that there are resources in the Fund.

But it is my hope, Mr. Speaker, in moving this Resolution, that we will, in the not too distant future, be able to get to the point where the greater share of the resources in the Capital Development Fund are spent for capital development, so that we can build upon the general economic capacity of the country.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that the Resolution be adopted.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable us to take Private Member's Motions.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the suspension of the Standing Orders to allow us to take Private Member's Motion?

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we will continue debate on the motion from the Member from North East St. Ann, Motion No. 10. And this afternoon we have two responses from the Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, and the Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism, in that order.

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, good afternoon. I seek permission to speak from a seat other than my own.

The SPEAKER: You may proceed.

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: Thank you. I rise to address, Mr. Speaker, the motion brought by the Member from North Eastern St. Ann on the craft industry in Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise that the government is already engaged in a joined-up approach with respect to the craft industry involving the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment and the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce through its agency of JIPO, JAMPRO and JBDC. This is for the creative industries in general and in particular for the craft industry as well. We are

developing and protecting and promoting the craft industry in Jamaica with respect to branding and design.

Mr. Speaker, it is a fact from a study of the World Intellectual Property Organization commissioned by the Jamaica Intellectual Property Office, JIPO, in 2007 showing that 4.8 per cent of GDP is contributed by the creative industries as a whole, in Jamaica. JlPO, in recognizing the importance of the role of the creative industries also known as the Copyright Base Industries to Jamaica economic development in creating jobs in the MSME and SME sectors has been working with its creative sector to realize the economic potential and wealth creation from their intellectual property. One such area of focus for the office was in designs, statistics showed that 90 per cent, Mr. Speaker, of applications filed in JIPO to protect designs have been filed by Jamaicans in various categories by small enterprises and also by young entrepreneurs.

Against this background, the Authentic Jamaica Design Competition was launched by JIPO as a partnership with other public sector entities.

Mr. Speaker, the Authentic Jamaica Design Competition is a part of the creative industries initiatives being led by the Jamaica Intellectual Property Office. The collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment and in partnership with the Edna Manley College for the Visual and Performing Arts and sponsors of the Tourism Enhancement Fund, TEF, EX-IM Bank, the Gleaner Company Limited, IRIE FM and PBCJ allowed for a nationwide campaign for intellectual property protection, particularly designs, Mr. Speaker, within the context of the revision of the national craft policy by the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment.

The craft policy is to include the use of the Authentic Jamaica mark as a certification of quality Jamaican made products in craft markets and in stores islandwide. Brand Jamaica, Mr. Speaker, is being developed through this medium, with respect to THINGS Jamaican at JBDC.

The craft sector, properly positioned, will have a direct impact on the lives and livelihood of more than 1,500 craft traders, artisans and producers of various art forms and generic positive economic spin-offs in many rural communities. This proper positioning of the industry requires an aligned approach of initiatives and policies. This competition, successfully attracting 118 entries, was an example of the effect of having one message and one vision shared amongst numerous entities both private and public sector. With plans to extend the longevity of the competition's benefits, through further IPM incubation training, the impact on the entrance will have a ripple effect on the affiliated creative industries and the economy on a whole. Furthermore, Ministry of Tourism and Industry will be developing a craft catalogue to place on airplanes, cruise ships and in hotels, giving entrance and winners the opportunity to have their works featured.

The competition, Mr. Speaker, was a forerunner to the regional conference on intellectual property and creative industries

being hosted by JIPO and World Intellectual Property Organizations be held at UWI Regional Headquarters, Mona next week from February 10 to February 12, 2014. This is a very important conference and the third of its kind in the world. So Jamaica is again leader in this respect.

(Applause)

The regional conference, Mr. Speaker, will be held over three days with local and international experts presenting on various topical issues affecting the creative sector, such as IP, evaluation and collateralization global issues in creative industries, creative entrepreneurships, the protection of reggae, media and intellectual property, creative industries as a factor for economic growth and legal infrastructure. All panels and presentations will be streamed live on the Internet and will include interactive elements to allow for greater participation by the public.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, Jamaica must return to the value of production with our hands. The more we work with our hands, the more creation of wealth will be in Jamaica. And we must remember the proverb that says, **"The hand of the diligent maketh rich".**

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This is our contribution.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Crawford.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, I want to congratulate the Member from North East, St. Ann for her contribution on the motion. We also from the Ministry of Tourism endorsed the presentation that has been made by the Member from Montego Bay, West Central St James. And seek now, Mr. Chairman, to make our own contribution on behalf of the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment.

It is important, Mr. Speaker that we put the conversation in the context in which the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment has continued and will continue to move forward and that is within the context of tourism for all.

Being, Mr. Speaker, consistently we have spoken to the concept of diversification and more and more we have heard about the diversification of our markets, the diversification of our products, but to an unfortunate less extent the diversification of our beneficiaries. This indeed is the area in which craft falls most likely as it relates to the diversification of the beneficiaries of tourism for which craft is an area that investment and entrepreneurship from what you call the small man is most likely.

To this extent, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment and the government has on this side, finds that craft is of utmost importance. Indeed, when one looks at the motive for travel, when it speaks to Maslow five motives: If one travels for physiological needs such as food, he is known as a nomad. If one travels for the need for safety, he is known as a refugee, therefore only the higher order needs has for a person to be considered as a tourist. The first social need, the second, the esteem need, and the third, self-actualization, all of which craft is of utmost importance, it serves as gifts for

friends, for social needs, it serves as proof for esteem needs, and it serves as a reminder for self-actualization.

To this extent, Mr. Speaker, we think that craft has great potential and the opportunity to move forward in the development of the tourism industry and the development of the people in general. However, upon many, many interactions with the craft vendors over the last two years, including the president and the vendors themselves, we have found a multiplicity of issues that plagued the craft sector one of which is the diversity available for craft and also the quality of craft products. We have already started, or embarked on an improvement of such, as highlighted by our Minister of State in the Ministry of Investment and Commerce, where she spoke to the partnership between the Ministry of Tourism and JIPO to have the authentic Jamaica brand.

This authentic Jamaica brand, Mr. Speaker, is one that will only be available in the craft market; never before has this been done to improve the competitiveness of the craft market. At current, the vendor is selling the same or identical products as that which is available in the hotel or in the in-bond stores for which they are a competitive disadvantage, either by proximity or by the capacity to promote. And so the authentic Jamaica brand which has been already certified by the government would be one for which only the craft market will be capable of distribution.

Not only this Mr. Speaker, we also went further to engage our craft vendors to ensure that they also will have funds available for the purchase and distribution of such craft items. We go further in our craft strategy by looking at how we could have improved the registration process, so a craft vendor can be identified in its own right as a individual who is willing to participate and continue in whatever area that is necessary.

Mr. Speaker, we on this side want to see the day when that craft that is sold in main are not imported and this unfortunately is the reality that we currently face. In fact, many of the craft are imported from Indonesia, *et cetera* where the relevance of the craft is not captured and by extension, the demand for the craft does not exist.

We find, for example, a prevalence of giraffes, elephants and lions, none of which represent the Jamaican culture. To that extent, we have embarked with the Ministry of Investment and Commerce to have those who are craft producers be more engaged to ensure that in the short term, that we will be able to replace the need for importation with the locally produced craft.

Mr. Speaker, in the Ministry of Tourism, we have long started with a craft strategy and for the last two years, we have had meetings informing the craft vendors of what the strategy could or may include, some of which they have contributed to by saying yeah, others for which they have contributed to by saying nay. It is unfortunate that each year it is almost certain that craft vendors would demonstrate for want of better services or want of better opportunities, and this fix will not be found in any single activity, for which many will claim more marketing or prettier markets, but indeed, will be found from a

multiplicity of activities and that is dwelled or found in the multiplicity of ministries.

To this extent we were not in support of any concept that there should be any singular ministry for the craft industry, but as the Minister of the Entertainment and Tourism highlighted that there could be a single authority which seeks to actually bring together all the activities from all the ministries that are necessary for this diversified craft industry.

Mr. Speaker, to this extent, the Ministry of Tourism has long embarked on the conversation and the implementation - on the conversation of a craft commission or a craft authority that will look at the joining together of the necessary committee, the necessary institutions, and the necessary ministries to move the craft industry forward.

We are also looking at training necessary to improve the craft output and by extension, improve craft demand. We feel that it is highly probable for craft to be seen as a four to five billion dollar industry if these strategies are put forward.

That being the case Mr. Speaker, we find that the motion as moved did not satisfy - we were not satisfied with the motion as moved and therefore intend to present - to delete the first and second prayer and substitute therefore, the following:

> Be it Resolved that this Honourable House debate the state of the craft industry, and in light of the industry, great potential to contribute to the national development that the government continue on its path to establish a craft strategy that aims to facilitate even greater integration and synergies between the tourism sector and the craft industry.
>
> And Be it Further Resolved that the aforementioned strategy continues to embrace a unified approach to craft governance while recognizing the multifaceted nature of the craft industry and by extension, the need for a joined-up approach across different ministries and entities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I have been notified that the Leader of the Opposition would like to participate in this debate, but he will make his contribution next week. So, I am therefore moving for the suspension of the debate to enable the Leader of the Opposition to participate next week.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the debate be suspended until next week to allow the Leader of Opposition to participate.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Member for South Central, St. Catherine earlier tabled the Report of the Committee, of the PAAC Committee and we will now allow him to take the Report at this stage.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Wheatley.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I now move for the suspension, Mr. Speaker, of the Standing Orders to enable me to take the motion, notice of which I gave earlier, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Member be allowed to take the motion as put earlier.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the second motion be approved.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the second motion be approved.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we now return to Private Members' Motions, and the Member from West Kingston will now deal with his motion dealing with the Fire Brigade Services.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. McKENZIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this Motion speaks to a very serious shortfall in our Disaster Prevention Policy. This Motion looks at the state of the Jamaica Fire Service and questions whether or not the country is satisfied with the state of our fire service.

This House will recall, Mr. Speaker, that this Motion was tabled in September 2012, and during that period, the country experienced a large number of fires which affected not just the Corporate Area but right across Jamaica. The fires, Mr. Speaker, were actually more pronounced during the dry period and it is cause for concern because most times, Mr. Speaker, these fires affect, especially inner-city communities, especially in the Corporate Area, and it affects a large area of derelict and old buildings.

As a Member of this Honourable House, Mr. Speaker, whose constituency has suffered significantly from fires over the years, I have personally raised concerns, Mr. Speaker, and I will continue to do so. Because as a developing country we cannot, Mr. Speaker, we cannot afford not to have the ability to fight fire and fight it to the best of our ability.

The Government, Mr. Speaker, has to look at the question of fire both in the social and economic context and to bear in mind that even when fire is put out the social and the economic burden of families and communities may have just begun. I spoke about my own constituency, Mr. Speaker. And even now, Mr. Speaker, there are more than 400 persons within the constituency of West Kingston who are still suffering because of fire, Mr. Speaker.

I want to use the opportunity to commend the Minister of Labour and Social Security, and I am one politician who gives credit where it is due, Mr. Speaker, the response from the Minister of Labour and Social Security to the constituency in regards to its needs, has been tremendous, and I want to thank him publicly for the support.

(Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: When was your birthday?

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, it is important that we look at what is taking place in Jamaica. Fires have left dozens of children homeless, Mr. Speaker. It has affected their school life. It has affected the elderly. It has created problems in the workplace. A lot of people have lost their jobs because they are unable to attend work. It also breaks up family life, Mr. Speaker, and it has a serious effect on social problems.

The threat of fire to any community is one issue. There is also the threat to the Jamaican economy. And it is quite evident how it has affected the economy, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the recent fire at the New Kingston hotel which has caused some 400 jobs, Mr. Speaker, and has severely restricted the country's ability to generate foreign exchange. Over 400 Jamaicans were unemployed from 2012, and there is no indication when this hotel will be reopened, millions of dollars is lost in foreign exchange and possibly reinvestment in several acres of tourism property in the heart of the Corporate Area because of a fire which was started in the kitchen, Mr. Speaker, and spread to other areas of the hotel. It took seven units drawn from sections of the Corporate Area to bring the fire under control. And again, Mr. Speaker, I want to use the opportunity to commend the men and women of the Jamaica Fire Brigade who fought that fire under severe constraints, Mr. Speaker. And I want to say publicly, I want to congratulate them for a job well done. (Applause)

But it also brings into focus, Mr. Speaker, the limitations of the service, because if we had to pull fire units from at least four stations within the Corporate Area, what would have been the outcome, Mr. Speaker, there was another fire of the same magnitude elsewhere in the Corporate Area? The fact is that despite the best efforts of my friend, the Minister, to give a positive outlook to the fire service, the Minister will agree with me that it is badly in need of resources if it is to perform its duties. And, Mr. Speaker, we must remember, we must remember that fire, fire, Mr. Speaker, is not affiliated to any political party. It is not affiliated to any colour or any constituency. It is a form of disaster, Mr. Speaker that has the Jamaican people.

But let us look at what the Fire Brigade has to work with, Mr. Speaker. They need at least 100 working units to make them effective. Presently, they are operating with about 60 units, Mr. Speaker, and out of that sixty-odd, Mr. Speaker, 10 of those units is either parked or for repairs or something is wrong with the units, Mr. Speaker. When you look at the question of the fireboats, there are no fireboats, Mr. Speaker. And I have said before during my first presentation in the Sectoral Debate, and I want the Minister of Tourism to listen because perhaps out of the Tourism Enhancement Fund they can support the efforts of the Ministry of Local Government in providing some of those funding, Mr. Speaker, to purchase at least two fireboats. Because one of the requirements, Mr. Speaker, for cruise ship coming into any port is that we must be in a position to respond, Mr. Speaker. And it is sad to say that at this point in time, our capability to respond to fire on the sea, Mr. Speaker, is very, very limited. And I hope, Minister of Tourism, you are sandwiched by two beautiful ladies, but I want you to listen to me, Minister McNeill. I am begging you again to provide some resources out of the Tourism Enhancement Fund for the purchase of two fireboats, Minister. It is in the interest of your Ministry

and in the interest of the country that some consideration be given by the Tourism Enhancement Fund to work with the Ministry of Local Government to provide the units.

Mr. Speaker, not only that there is a shortage of units, Mr. Speaker, but the Jamaica Fire Brigade has been operating with serious deficiencies, Mr. Speaker. Approximately 250 officers, Mr. Speaker, the service loses about 250 to 300 men and women almost every year. They are losing some because of retirement. And one of the reasons that is put forward, Mr. Speaker, is lack of proper working conditions. Everybody knows that what is paid to these men and women really leaves much to be desired.

I know that in the latter part of last year discussions were being held with the Fire Department to look at improving the benefits that are offered, Mr. Speaker. One of the ways to attract people in the Department, Mr. Speaker, is to improve the living conditions. The conditions that these men and women have to live in leave much to be desired, Mr. Speaker. And some of the conditions there is not fit, Mr. Speaker, and you can't ask these people who leave their homes, the comfort of their homes to go out to perform their duties, Mr. Speaker, and to live in conditions that are not conducive.

You know, Mr. Speaker, as far back as 2002 when I first entered the Upper House, the Senate, I raised the issue of the state of the Fire Service. And you know, Mr. Speaker, I have to put a jab at the Government, because for a Government who speaks about caring and taking its job seriously....

Government MEMBER: Very good observation.

(Cross talk)

Mr. McKENZIE: It can't be good all along.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, as I said before, I tabled some questions in the Senate way back in 2002 and the Leader of Government Business in Senate at the time said, Senator Burchell Whiteman, responded.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: You showed Montague that letter?

Mr. McKENZIE: Uhh?

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: You showed Montague that letter?

Mr. McKENZIE: Just easy. Just relax.

This is the headlines of the *Gleaner* March 10, 2003. See it there. (Holds up the newspaper clipping)

(Cross talk)

We go back again, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Information made the following pronouncements:

"major upgrade for Fire Brigade"

Government MEMBER: Don't watch the headline.

(Cross talk)

Mr. McKENZIE: See it there.

(Holds up the newspaper clipping)

"Government cite loss of life and inadequacy of the service".

The PRIME MINISTER: What's the date on that?

Mr. McKENZIE: This one is 12, '03.

A MEMBER: No man, keep going. Keep going.

Mr. McKENZIE: The 17th of 2nd, 2003, Mr. Speaker, Senator McKenzie calls for focus on the fire service.

Government MEMBERS: Ahhhh!

Mr. McKENZIE: At that time I was a Senator.

(Cross talk/Laughter)

But, Mr. Speaker…

Government MEMBER: Reach '07 now, reach '07.

Mr. McKENZIE: I don't reach there so yet.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Him still have '05 to do, you know. '04 and '05.

Mr. McKENZIE: But, Mr. Speaker, in response to the concerns that I raised at that time, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Local Government was the Most Honourable Prime Minister at that time. The Minister of Information made an announcement, he announced plans to construct and rehabilitate fires stations in the 2003/2004 fiscal year.

Government MEMBER: Fiscal.

Mr. McKENZIE: Fiscal year. All right; is okay. There must be a short coming somewhere. (Laughter)

Opposition MEMBER: Dem understand.

Mr. McKENZIE: You understand.

Dr. WHEATLEY: We are sure you understand.

(Cross talk)

Mr. McKENZIE: I know you understand. (Laughter) Slip of the tongue. Is okay.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Raymond understood.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, two stations were mentioned by the Minister.

A MEMBER: Who was the Minister?

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Denham Town Police... lock yuh up?

Mr. McKENZIE: Wasn't made for dogs, my boy.

A MEMBER: Ouch!

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Is that what you are?

Mr. McKENZIE: If you say so.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister at that time responded by saying that the Government will provide funding for the construction of two new fire stations, Montego Bay and Port Maria. That was from 2003, Mr. Speaker. I want to advise this Honourable House, when the Jamaica Labour party formed the Government in 2007 lands were purchased in Montego Bay, grounds were broken, Mr. Speaker, for the construction of a new fire station in St. James.

A MEMBER: When was that?

Mr. McKENZIE: Well, events came and government change.

Mr. ROBINSON: No man, where is your scrapbook, where is your scrapbook?

(Cross talk)

Mr. McKENZIE: We are still waiting, Mr. Speaker, from 2003.

Mr. ROBINSON: Where's your scrapbook?

Mr. McKENZIE: We're still waiting, Mr. Speaker. Members of the Fire Department, Mr. Speaker, are operating out of rented premises in Montego Bay.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: And the world

stood still between 2003 and 2013.

Mr. McKENZIE: There is no facility, Mr. Speaker, to house our firefighters in Port Maria.

Opposition MEMBER: Is a shame.

Mr. McKENZIE: I'm not making an issue out of it, Mr. Speaker, I am just saying...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: But you are.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...Mr. Speaker, that we have been giving lip service, lip service, Mr. Speaker, for many years and I think the time has come when we need to move away from just talking and demonstrate our commitment in providing these essential services, Mr. Speaker, to the people of Jamaica who deserve better from us Members of Parliament, in providing service such as, improving our ability to fight fire. It is quite clear that for eighteen years.

Government MEMBER: Ohhh!

Mr. McKENZIE: Hold on, uh. But it can, eighteen years including time we were there. Why oonu getting so bummy?

(Cross talk)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Insecurities.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, outside of the lack of providing proper equipment, the Fire Brigade has been operating for over twenty years without a proper headquarters, Mr. Speaker. They've been operating without a proper headquarters. We are getting when, soon? The current headquarters is inadequate. It does not lend itself to the kind of arrangement necessary for the fire service to be stationed there. And I am urging the Minister, not in your response today, because I don't want a response from you that is only going to put on a band-aid to the problem. I am hoping, Minister, that when you speak in the budget presentation later on this year, you will be in a better position to say to the country what are the plans of the Government.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Yuh can hear it now.

Government MEMBER: Yuh nuh waan hear it now?

Mr. McKENZIE: Oh, yuh ready. All right.

Government MEMBERS: Ready all the while.

Mr. McKENZIE: So, Mr. Speaker, I had words with the Minister before I made the presentation. The Minister and myself are at one as it relates to the resolution. It is not controversial, but I want to make the point again, Mr. Speaker. I want to make the point that we cannot afford not to spend money to improve our fire services. Some $223 Million was allocated to the Fire Service; $138 Million of that was to purchase three new trucks. Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what three trucks can do...

Government MEMBER: Better than nothing.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...to a sector that is short of almost forty trucks. I listened…

Government MEMBER: How many you bought?

Mr. McKENZIE: How we bought? You ask the Minister to tell you, because the Minister of State stood up in this House and talk about - what you said, the trucks lost a sea? Lost a sea?

(Cross talk)

You said that, not me. You ask him. The trucks came and they were commissioned. The

trucks that were bought by the Jamaica Labour Party came and they were put in commission.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: The Labour Party neva buy one.

(Cross talk)

Mr. McKENZIE: Anyhow, Mr. Speaker.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Check the records, check the records, check the records.

(Cross talk)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, $138 Million of that, as I said before, is to purchase three new fully equipped fire engines which has been promised from not last year, from the year before, because this resolution was tabled in 2012.

Already, Mr. Speaker, that money has been gone because if you take $138 Million and there is another $56 Million that is to be spent, leaving a balance of $82 Million. I heard the Minister speaking about the plight of the people living in the Papine area. It is one of the most populated centres in Jamaica, especially in the corporate area and the closest firefighting response to Papine would be the Rollington Town…

Government MEMBER: Halfway Tree is further than...

Mr. McKENZIE: ...Rollington Town.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Is that true, Minister Fagan? Is that true?

Mr. McKENZIE: No, no, Rollington Town would be the nearest response to Papine. But whether it is Rollington Town or Half-Way Tree is neither here nor there.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Place burn down long time, place burn down long time.

Mr. McKENZIE: The fact is that I heard the Minister speaking about putting in a temporary solution in Papine. I would suggest, Minister that this should not be a temporary measure. What should be done is that the Government should find lands to build a new fire station in the Papine area to respond to that large section of the Corporate Area. Two major universities, the University Hospital and other facilities are situated in that area, Mr. Speaker, and the Opposition lends its support to that initiative, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Yuh head go and come, you know.

Dr. WHEATLEY: You don't have any head at all. Headless.

Mr. McKENZIE: There is also one important component in fighting fire in Jamaica and that is the responsibility of fire hydrants across the country. Nobody want to own, nobody want to take responsibility for fire hydrants. When I was Mayor, I use to have interactions with the National Water Commission and the Fire Brigade, to see how best to maintain and repair these hydrants, Mr. Speaker, because I tell you, right now, I know that the Minister spoke about survey - an audit that was to be done on the state of fire hydrants across the country. And I'm hoping that the Minister will be able to elaborate - to speak a little bit more on it, Mr. Speaker, but I can tell you that I don't hold much as far as the survey is concerned because it is quite evident that many of the failures of the Fire Department to respond in a positive way is lack of water.

A MEMBER: True.

Mr. McKENZIE: And in many instances it is because the hydrants, Mr. Speaker are not working. So it has to be a comprehensive package. It has to be a comprehensive package, Mr. Speaker, that addresses the state of fire hydrants while we try to bring together, Mr. Speaker - you know the figures are frightening.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. McKENZIE: The National Water Commission has stated that there is close to 5,000 or 40 per cent of the 13,000 fire hydrants across the country that are out of commission. It is estimated that there is 13,000 fire hydrants…

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Fagan)

Mr. McKENZIE: No man, mi have something better than that fi come in the presentation.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Remember, you don't have any responsibility as Minister, you know. You just be quiet, you be quiet.

Mr. McKENZIE: And it is said, Mr. Speaker, that 5,000...

Mr. FAGAN: ....not talking to you.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...of the 13,000 Mr. Speaker, are not working. By the end of March 2013, when the inspection was done, only 1,885 hydrants were serviced out of that, Mr. Speaker, and there was about a hundred or a hundred or more that needed repair and provisions were being made to purchase some new hydrants.

Not only, Mr. Speaker, are hydrants of concern, but you must also remember that these fire fighters not only fight fire, they respond to accidents, *et cetera*, rescue missions, Mr. Speaker, and again, they have done a good job despite the limitations. And I hope that the Minister will find it possible to strengthen their ability to respond in a positive way.

Last year, Mr. Speaker, the Fire Department responded to 15,281 emergency calls, 15,281 emergency calls; 11,834 of those calls were genuine calls, Mr. Speaker. The bogus calls accounted for 1,487. There is a section which they call Special Service Calls, which was about 1,500. 467 fires, Mr. Speaker, were put out before the arrival of the fire brigade, 467. These fires, Mr. Speaker, have created a whole lot of damage.

Death related to fire in the year just concluded, Mr. Speaker, 19 persons lost their lives. Fire-related injuries, Mr. Speaker, accounted for 70. Death as a result of other emergencies reported to the Fire Brigade was 50, while injuries associated with those emergencies were 380. One of the most frightening figures, Mr. Speaker, total number of persons made homeless by fire, 1,830; 1,232 were adults and 598 were children. What this is saying Mr. - right across, right across, Mr. Speaker. What this is saying, Mr. Speaker is frightening. And this does not capture what really took place in many remote parts of Jamaica, because you have fires in some sections of the country that are not even reported, so it is not captured in this data, Mr. Speaker.

But the reality is that there is need, urgent need, Mr. Speaker, for us to spend some money on our Fire Service, spend some

money, Mr. Speaker. (Applause) If the IMF Agreement calls for constraint on spending - if the country bums down, Mr. Speaker, we will not be able to comply to any dictates of the IMF.

Mr. Luther BUCHANAN: You and the Minister never talk when you were government!

Mr. McKENZIE: So, Mr. Speaker, we must be mindful, Mr. Speaker...

Mr. Luther BUCHANAN: You were in malice?

Mr. McKENZIE: ...we must be mindful of the importance, Mr. Speaker, of making sure all that is required to put the Fire Service in good working condition...

Mr. Luther BUCHANAN: Yes, Christopher Columbus! Just discovered! (Laughter)

Mr. McKENZIE: All that is required, Mr. Speaker, is about Ten Million US Dollars (US$10M), about Ten Million US Dollars, Mr. Speaker.

(Mr. Luther Buchanan heckles)

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. McKENZIE: I am suggesting, Mr. Speaker...

(Heckling) (The Deputy Speaker Gavels) I am suggesting, Mr. Speaker…

Dr. WHEATLEY: We soon lick him back, we soon lick him, man! You see whey day when de cow truck bruk dung!

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gaveled) Mr...

Mr. McKENZIE: I am suggesting, Mr. Speaker - you know, I really don't understand why we are behaving like this, you know, because both sides of this House, Mr. Speaker, should be standing up, standing beside each other, supporting the call.

You know, I want to remind this Honourable House that the present Prime Minister, who was Minister of Local Government, took a stand...

Mr. Luther BUCHANAN: And did something!

Mr. McKENZIE: ...took a stand!

Mr. Luther BUCHANAN: And did something!

Mr. McKENZIE: Took a stand, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Luther BUCHANAN: And did something!

Mr. McKENZIE: So I don't understand why the Member from Westmoreland is behaving like that!

Mr. Luther BUCHANAN: I said and did something! But you were there and did nothing!

Mr. McKENZIE: Eh, I don't understand!

Mr. Luther BUCHANAN: You should be ashamed of yourself!

Mr. McKENZIE: I don't understand the Member!

Dr. WHEATLEY: You know, being a bushman, you should know more by now!

Mr. McKENZIE: So, Mr. Speaker, I was saying Ten Million, Mr. Speaker, US, (US$10M), that is just over a Billion or more Jamaican (J$1B)...

Mr. Luther BUCHANAN: Audley should order some trucks like how him order de bus dem!

Mr. McKENZIE: ...could go a far way in improving the Fire Service. And the country

would welcome it. It would applaud the Government, it would show that the Government is thinking about the people and not just meeting the requirements of the IMF. Let us, Mr. Speaker, acquire some more trucks.

I want to make a suggestion to the Minister, which I hope he will take to Cabinet. Out of the JEEP money, out of the JEEP money...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. McKENZIE: ...we could use - I am recommending, I am recommending that we use some of the JEEP money to repair fire hydrants across the country. (Applause) I am making that suggestion, that we use some of the JEEP money to repair fire hydrants across the country.

A Government MEMBER: Use your own! (Laughter)

Mr. McKENZIE: In closing, Mr. Speaker, in closing, we cannot condemn half the population to a situation where there is no chance of surviving a fire. And remember, a proper fire service is much more than outing fire. They need to provide a number of other services for people.

I would be willing, Mr. Speaker, to have the motion amended, as suggested by the Honourable Minister, and if needs be, I am prepared to have the motion go to a Select Committee for further deliberations.

Mr. Speaker, I am a victim of what fire can do - my constituency. I am worried because we are entering the dry season again. And the figures show that most fires occur during the dry period, especially in the Corporate Area.

I also believe it is clear - and the Minister has asked me to look at amending the section of the resolution that would have required the Fire Brigade to table its Report here. The Minister has made a suggestion, and I will go along, Minister, with your suggestion.

But I want to ask this Honourable House to consider the arguments that I have put forward in ensuring that the country is provided with proper fire response capabilities.

(Applause)

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Minister with Responsibility for Local Government will be responding next week.

So, I therefore move for the suspension of the debate on this motion at this time.

Mr. Luther BUCHANAN: You know you are very disrespectful of rural people!

Dr. WHEATLEY: Yu a bush man! Dat is different from rural!

The Deputy SPEAKER: (gavels) Mr. McKenzie, with respect to the amendment…

Mr. Luther BUCHANAN: Si dung! Si dung!

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. House Leader, go ahead.

The question is that the debate be suspended.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we intend also, for next week, to conclude Private

Members' Motion Number 1. The Minister Without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance will respond then.

And, Mr. Speaker, I had indicated some weeks ago that in planning the House's Agenda, I would have given early indication of some very important matters as they are determined.

So I wanted just to alert the House that we intend this year to table the Estimates of Expenditure, along with the Opening of Parliament, on the 3rd of April, that we will have Standing Finance Committee from the 8th of April to the 10th of April. And then the debate will commence with the Minister of Finance's presentation on the 17th of April; this will be followed by a presentation from the Government side and the Opposition on the 23rd of April, but before that, the Opposition Spokesperson on Finance on the 22nd of April will give a response on behalf of the Opposition. The 23rd I mentioned, a Government Member and Opposition Member; on the 24th the Leader of the Opposition will give his presentation, and on the 29th of April the Prime Minister will make her contribution, and the debate will close on the 30th of April.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we are trying now to arrange - and the Leader of Opposition Business and myself will be meeting shortly to deal with the Sectoral Debates, because we agree that we have to reform substantially those debates this year. And we are going to be meeting shortly to come up with a structure that can be far more relevant to the Jamaican people and to enable greater interest being shown in those debates. So we are trying to ensure that we have a timeline that is certain, that people can plan the rest of the year on and all in all to make Parliament far more worker friendly.

Mr. Derrick SMITH: Mr. Speaker...

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Smith.

Mr. Derrick SMITH: The House Leader had previously indicated that he would.... (Inaudible/microphone off)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. House Leader, could you reiterate?

Mr. PRYCE: Mr. Speaker, while the House Leader checks his notes to respond to the Leader of Opposition Business, and while I thank him for the updates he has just given us in terms of the dates for the important issues after the Opening of Parliament, perhaps at a future sitting, but prior to the close of this session, the House will get an update as to a motion which had passed in the Lower House and was referred to the Cabinet which is pertinent to our arrangements going forward at the Opening of the Parliamentary Year.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Point taken, Mr. Pryce.

Mr. PAULWELL: Yes. And we will ensure that with the dates I have just tabled that the motion which speaks to the re-naming of the Throne Speech, that that will be dealt with in time to accommodate the change that the Parliament has already approved. I thought you were going to mention the other motion, but….

(Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, I will ensure that it is submitted to the Members. It is going to be this month. I remember I had indicated the dates, I just can't find them on my computer now.

Mr. Speaker, it is not intended to do any further business today. Next week will be a very packed week, so we are asking Members to be present. We intend to do the Suppression of Criminal Organization Act, these are the gang-related Bills, and we intend to get them through Parliament next week, among other things.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PAULWELL: So, I therefore move for the adjournment of the Parliament until next week Tuesday, February 11, at 2:00 p.m.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that this Honourable House adjourn until next Tuesday.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: This Honourable House now stands adjourned.

The Honourable House of Representatives was adjourned at approximately 4:38 p.m. to resume on Tuesday, February 11, 2014, at 2:00 p.m.

THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SESSION 2013 – 2014

TUESDAY, February 11, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:23 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

MR. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House.

MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing

HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security

HON. DERRICK FLAVIUS KELLIER, (PNP), St. James, Southern, Minister of Labour and Social Security

HON. ROGER HAROLD CLIFFORD CLARKE, CD, (PNP), Westmoreland, Central, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, Northern, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. NATALIE GAYE NEITA-HEADLEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sports and Deputy Leader of the House

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing

HON. COLIN ALFRED A. FAGAN, (PNP), St. Catherine, South Eastern, Minister of

State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development

HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce

HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

OTHER MEMBERS

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern

DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western

MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central

MR. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern

MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, Eastern

MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern

MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western

MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern

MR. DESMOND GREGORY MAIR, (JLP), St. Catherine, North Eastern

MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern

MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central

MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern

MR. DARYL WESLEY PHILLIP VAZ, (JLP), Portland, Western

DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. Daryl Vaz.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

The SPEAKER: Before we get down to today's business, let us welcome 45 students and three teachers from Green Pond High School who are visiting with us today.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: House Leader.

Mr. PAULWELL: Well, Mr. Speaker, I am sure you also would like to welcome back the Member from South St. Andrew, the Minister of Transport, Works and Housing.

(Applause)

We are very happy to have him back in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to have two Statements, one by the Minister of Finance and the other by the Minister for Works.

The SPEAKER: Minister Phillips.

VISIT TO CHINA

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, the House will recall that I led a delegation to the People's Republic of China to engage in discussions with the authorities in that country at both ministerial and other official levels, as well as with private financial institutions and firms involved in overseas investment.

The visit took place between December 13th and 22nd and the team comprised representatives of the Ministry of Finance and Planning of Jamaica, the Bank of Jamaica, Port Authority of Jamaica, the Planning Institute of Jamaica and the Development Bank of Jamaica.

The visit to China came against the background of an earlier visit by a Government of Jamaica Delegation headed by the Most Honourable Prime Minister. Portia Simpson Miller, which yielded tremendous benefit to this country and which paved the way for subsequent visits by myself and other Government of Jamaica Delegations.

(Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: ….at work.

Dr. PHILLIPS: The objective of this visit was to further deepen the financial and investment relationship between Jamaica and China and to explore ways in which China may be of assistance in Jamaica's efforts to address its debt service challenges.

In this regard, the intention of the Government of Jamaica Delegation was to inform the Chinese authorities of the opportunities that exist here for Chinese institutions to purchase Jamaica's sovereign bonds in the primary and secondary markets and to ascertain the prospects for development financing from China and to indicate the numerous investment opportunities that exist here for Chinese companies in Jamaica. In addition, the visit was also used to settle a number of outstanding issues on already identified projects.

During the visit, the delegation met with key entities in the Government of the People's Republic of China, large private financial institutions and several firms involved in international investment, a number of which are already strategic or perspective partners with the Government of Jamaica in key infrastructure projects and in sectors such as construction, agriculture, tourism and port development.

The institutions visited include, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Commerce, the Export/Import Bank of China, China Development Bank, the People's Bank of China that is to say the Central Bank, China Investment Corporation, Industrial Commercial Bank of China, ICBC, which is in fact the largest private Bank in the world. China International Capital Corporation, Complant Limited, China Communication and Construction Company (CCCC), China Harbour Engineering Company, China Gezhouba Group Corporation, Tebian Electric Apparatus Stock Company Limited Sinohydro

Company and China Zhenjiang International Economic & Technical Cooperation Corporation.

Dr. DAVIES: You must have been there for three months.

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, one week.

Dr. DAVIES: Okay.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Hard at work. Hard at work.

(Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: You hear that, Audley.

Dr. DAVIES: Audley would have seen two people in that time.

(Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: To put the discussions in context, the Government of Jamaica Delegation outlined the main components of the Economic Reform Programme and the achievements that have been met in that regard. The delegation also informed about the progress made under the Extended Fund Facility negotiated with the International Monetary Fund. There was support for the Economic Reform Programme being undertaken by Jamaica to reduce its debt to GDP levels and to facilitate long term growth.

The Government of Jamaica Delegation noted that the current debt profile of Jamaica imposes limitations on the ability of the country to access the current arrangements for Chinese assistance for project development, given the usual requirement for Chinese firms to obtain a Government guarantee.

In that context, the Government of Jamaica expressed the view that a way forward was for Chinese firms to increase their equity investment in Jamaica. Notwithstanding, the Government of Jamaica emphasize and still intends to continue this line of discussions in the future. And to emphasize the fact that an alternative form of support from Chinese authorities could and should include direct budgetary support.

With regard to participation in Jamaica's sovereign debt issues, the general message is that there was not sufficient knowledge of the Jamaican sovereign, or to say the status of the Jamaican economy in Asia and, therefore, effort needs to be made to sensitize the potential investor based in China and the wider Asian markets on the Jamaican risk profile.

There was a consensus that a non-deal road show by the Jamaican authorities would help provide the necessary sensitization of the Asian market. There is strong interest in and support for the strategic investment phase into which the relationship between China and Jamaica is evolving.

In that regard, there is support for the current direct investments in Jamaica and for increasing the range of commercial arrangements between the two countries.

Notably, there was an offer from the ICBC, Industrial Commercial Bank of China, one of the largest in fact, the largest private financial institution in the world, to create linkages between their client-base and Jamaican institutions with regard to investment opportunities.

There was acknowledgement of the

strategic importance of Jamaica's - a place from which Chinese firms can access the large and growing markets of the hemisphere, in this western hemisphere with over eight hundred million potential consumers, given the island's location on the east-west and north-south shipping routes.

With respect to specific outcomes, Mr. Speaker, the following objectives were achieved. With respect to infrastructure, arrangements were finalized with respect to the conditions precedent for, in relation to the major investment Development Project loan from the China EX-IM Bank. This will enable a drawdown of US$400 Million and US$50 Million of which is earmarked for the JEEP Programme. (Applause)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Indeed, I believe already this term you will be a beneficiary of the JEEP Programme.

Dr. DAVIES: He wants more.

Mr. HOLNESS: Like everybody.

(Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: With respect to Harmony Cove, there was specific discussion which advanced the negotiations with respect to the Harmony Cove Development.

As a consequence, a high level delegation of officials from Sinohydro will visit Kingston later this month to conclude, we hope, negotiations for the financing of this project and for the equity investment to be undertaken by that Corporation.

I need to indicate, Mr. Speaker, that the Government of Jamaica indicated to the parties involved in the transaction that the Government of Jamaica was not prepared to wait beyond this year for the conclusion of arrangements with potential Chinese partners to move this project forward.

Discussions took place with the China Harbour Engineering Company in which they confirmed their interest in what we know as the Goat Islands potential development. Tentative timelines for the conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding and a framework agreement and final contracts were discussed subject to the completion of environmental and other appropriate studies. The Honourable Minister of Transport, Works and Housing will speak to the House on this matter on another occasion.

Discussions indicated with Complant - that Complant was proceeding with its sugar projects and plans to complete the modernization of their sugar factories. They were also keen to move on to the next phase of developments, including other possible investments in sugar and other sectors in the economy. A number of other companies also including CZICC (Antidia), one of the largest manufacturers of electronic components and energy solutions, also indicated their interest in investments in Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, discussions were initiated between the Development Bank of Jamaica and China EX-IM Bank for a line of credit at very concessional terms for on-lending to the SME sector. And discussions were also conducted between DBJ and the China Development Bank with respect to our lines of credit for other productive activities.

(HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture, entered and took her seat.)

(MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, CD, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

MR. PAUL LENNOX BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Andrew, West Rural, entered and took his seat.)

(REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston Central, Minister of Education, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, West Central, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western, entered and took his seat.)

These will require no government guarantee since these loans will be supported by the DBJ's own balance sheet and those discussions are continuing. The People's Bank of China and the Bank of Jamaica initiated and are continuing discussions regarding the establishment of the currency swap lines (Inaudible) and Jamaica dollar lines to facilitate the expansion of investment and trade between Jamaica and China. And as I indicated earlier, Mr. Speaker, plans are underway following discussions that were held with a number of private banking interests in China and also their investment with their sovereign wealth fund, who indicated to us their support which they will provide in tangible ways for a non-deal road show in the general Asian market areas, including for Chinese potential investors in Jamaica, Government of Jamaica paper.

Mr. Speaker, I have provided this update in response to a specific request made in this House for some update regarding that specific visit.

Thank you.

(Applause)

(Mr. Shaw standing)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Audley, you were not the spokesperson then...

Mr. WARMINGTON: Why won't you keep quiet? Have some manners.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, the Minister has correctly noted that I requested two weeks ago a report on the outcome of his visit to China. I take note of the outcomes that have been listed by the Minister but at the same time, I cannot help but observe that there are no confirmed agreements in place. A good statement of intention and with due diligence

it is hoped that we will have confirmed agreements in place as soon as possible.

In fact I take note Mr. Speaker, that the Minister notes in his Statement the general understanding that must be had by our major partners, especially China, the limitations that the Government has in relation to the assumption of additional debts or the provision of additional guarantees for loans. Indeed, it would not be inappropriate for me to remind the Minister and this Honourable House that the project that is now underway for the completion of the North-South Highway at a cost of over US$700 Million, inclusive, Mr. Speaker, of a pay back over an extended period of time of the initial US$120 Million that had been extended by the Government of Jamaica on the Mount Rosser section of the highway that, in fact, is to be paid back to the Government from this deal. And I want to put it in context to say that when I visited China in 2011

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Dalley)

Mr. SHAW: No, it was earlier in May. In May of 2011 in my meeting then with the Minister of Finance...

Dr. GREEN: Why you just reporting.

Mr. SHAW: I've reported before. In my meeting then with the Minister of Finance of China, I made that very point in relation to the need for the funds for the highway, but that those funds for the highway would have to come by way of equity investment rather than by way of either a loan to the Government of Jamaica, as was the case with JDIP funds, or by way of any government guarantee. That point was accepted by the Ministry of Finance and subsequently has resulted in the road now commencing and is well underway. Indeed, that therefore, Mr. Speaker has to serve as the template on which future major projects are pursued with the Government of China through its many agencies that are involved in investment, especially in the area of infrastructure.

So it is in that context - having set that context, Mr. Speaker, and taken note of the desire of the Minister of Finance to continue along that path, which is the only viable path as far as I am concerned, I'd like to simply ask the Minister a specific question concerning Harmony Cove. Now, while he has indicated that the visit is resulting in a mission due in Jamaica from the Sinohydro Company, I think it would be important if the Minister can really give us a little more understanding of just where we are with that project; because we know that it has dragged on for some considerable time. The House would want to be reminded that this project started in the PNP Government prior to 2007 and we sought to advance it. In fact it was the source of a discussion when I visited China and we are where we are now.

But we are aware, Mr. Speaker, that one of the problems has to do with the inability of the original senior investor who it appears might have been badly affected by the global economic crisis of 2008 and therefore it affected their ability - or so it is reported - for them to be able to invest in a significant way in equity. But the question still remains, because I find the Statement by the Minister is cryptic in that sense that we are not faced with

a sure-footed answer as to whether whatever equity is available from that quarter, the original quarter, whether that equity is now going to be replaced in its entirety by the Sinohydro source. I think that the reason I am pushing this point, Mr. Speaker, and I take note of the fact that the Minister has indicated that he is setting a timeframe for the remainder of this year for completion of this project. And I take note of that because I am not unaware of the existence of additional interest from other sources. And those sources to the extent that there is any stumbling block, the stumbling blocks would be the extent to which we tie up ourselves in long discussions that are going nowhere or take the opportunity of embracing other interests that exist. And I believe that some of those interests that exist would be related to our ability to grant a casino licence as a condition precedent to the investment taking place.

But I am sure that the Minister would want to seek to give us a little bit more comfort as to the likelihood of this project moving forward as quickly as possible because we are all agreed that it has been on the drawing board for a long time and a lot of money has been expended, not just by the original company, who I believe, has expended about US$10M to US$15M, but by the Government of Jamaica and the Development Bank of Jamaica. We have also expended money and we have what is a valuable property that is there languishing for this project to get going. So, I would ask the Minister if he could seek to give us some further and better particulars on a more sure-footed basis in terms of this Harmony Cove Development Project going forward, especially because we know there are other live interests. And I won't mention them at this stage however, I am aware of them in terms of the specific persons or entities that are interested.

And then we take note of the observation that has been made in relation to the Goat Islands, but I think it is absolutely imperative and the Opposition would want to repeat that the discussion of Goat Islands needs to be done within the concept of explicit and clear studies that are carried out that will seek to preserve the integrity of Jamaica's economic environment as well as the other technical features such as the protection of the shorelines in the event of natural disasters and so on. I think it is absolutely important that these due diligence reports are carried out and carried out in very, very detailed way so that all parties, including the lobby groups that have expressed their own concerns, that all of those parties are satisfied of the integrity and the rigidity with which this investigation and study is carried out.

And I will end by simply saying to the Honourable Minister that it is informal and confirmed agreements that we then are able to see the projects going forward in a purposeful and timely fashion. And at the same time, I think the country would want to know the details of the delegation that went on the visit with the Minister as well as the cost of the visit. Those are all the issues now that are always of topical importance and, of course, would relate to the commitment of the

Minister to absolute transparency and accountability.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Dr. DAVIES: Researching how you spend.

Mr. SHAW: Absolutely.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I observed that the Opposition Spokesman on Finance accepts and it is a point which I underscore, because it reflects the possibility of some consensus being developed, that equity investments is the more desirable option as far as Chinese participation in our economy is concerned because of the particular strictures in relation to debt and otherwise inhibit our capacity to simply accept more assistance by way of debt and guarantee, and that the preferable route would be through equitable investment.

And so, I would like to underscore this point of common understanding as it relates to this position. But I would also think it is important and I want to raise it in relation to some of your other comments, that we understand the asymmetries that exist between ourselves and China it is not, in that, I can't tell you that in relation to one economy with one point three billion people and another one, with two million, thereabout, well three, we can argue it, alright.

Dr. DAVIES: Mike - three million in May Pen.

Dr. PHILLIPS: But we need to understand that part of the challenge in that regard, is for us to be able to indicate the value of Jamaica to the long-term economic interest of our partners in the People's Republic of China and in that sense I think one critical dimension and it relates to the Goat Islands. One critical dimension is that it is not the size of our market that is of value, but moreso our proximity to the shipping lanes and our communication linkages which will facilitate a longer term Chinese objective in being able to access other markets in the hemisphere and the globe, in North America and in South American. And in that regard I think we have to recognize that it is that strategic vision of theirs that drives their interest in the port development.

But we are not unique and I think everybody needs to understand that. We have a valuable asset in our location, but we are not unique in that regard. There are other countries in the region who are seeking to offer themselves as viable alternatives to Jamaica, in that regard, and therefore, I think it is clear and as I indicated that some clear time lines exist which were confirmed during my visit about how quickly the negotiation should proceed between the Government of the Jamaica and the Chinese interest who wants to establish this port facility and the economic zone associated with it.

As I said, the Minister of Transport; Works and Housing will speak specifically to this very shortly, in the near future. But we are protecting the environment and we are going to do everything to protect the environment. But the issue should not be posed as it is in some quarters; I am not saying you as being protecting the environment or having an economic asset that provides for the people of Jamaica. What we need to do is to recognize

that it is possible to protect our natural environment and at the same time, manage to secure a viable economic asset which will put thousands, tens of thousands of Jamaican people to work. We need to have both links.

Specifically in relation to - I would point out too that one of the confirmed agreements relating to the - what we call MIDP, the Major Infrastructure Development Project and the Agreement where we have already provided our 15 MIDP commitments to include in the budget our 15 per cent and where the first 50 Million will be utilized in this quarter to satisfy this JEEP Project and we state that point in relation to just the issue of one immediate confirmed benefit, the other of course, being the Goat Island.

Now in relation to Harmony Cove, it is true that Harmony Cove suffered negative effect from the crises of 2008. Subsequent to that, there are Jamaican, private investor interests that have made an equity contribution and there has been an indication of - from Sinohydro of their interest in making an equity investment in the project as well, in addition to participating in other ways on the construction side.

There has also been, and I was able to confirm the active interest of China Development Bank in providing loan financing for the project, but that is contingent upon, not just the commitment of Sinohydro, but the actual investment being made and it is that latter aspect of the issue which the mission that is coming later this month is going to settle.

So….

(*Sotto voce* comments by a Member)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Without guarantee. That, Mr. Speaker leads me to say that the Harmony Cove Project based upon my discussion with both the China Development Bank and with Sinohydro and with subsequent communication with them is very active and I am cautiously optimistic about it.

But as I have indicated here and as I have indicated there, in person, it cannot be an open-ended commitment to - without any clear timelines as to when we need to have this decision made by our potential partners in China. And so, I am expecting, and I know that they know that there is - the door is open but will not remain open forever because we have a valuable asset, we have had commitments made, including commitments of substantial resources by Government of Jamaica entities and that it is a - to the extent that we have made that investment and innocence, it is a diminishing asset, the longer it remains unsatisfied, unfulfilled and to the extent that there also is an increasing level of alternative interests, we need to move forward on this. But I am - I take the positive expressions from the potential Chinese investors including the China Development Bank to be very positive sign that we will be moving forward on this matter.

(Applause)

Mr. HOLNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In the Minister's statement, the Minister pointed out what I think is a very interesting concept that of engaging Chinese investment houses in Jamaica's sovereign debts. Is this a

new policy direction and how will this be done. I understand the need to inform the financial markets in Asia, but are you now saying that you would want to have Chinese or Asian investment houses actively seek to buy out government sovereign bonds?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Well, as the Leader of the Opposition knows we are not now in the actively in the debt market trying to sell Jamaican paper. But at some point we will return to those markets and we think that, given the fact that Asian markets, Asian Capital market are of growing significance To the general global markets, we think that it is in our interest so to speak develop a knowledge of Jamaica in those markets and to see what the appetite may be in those markets.

Now, you can't wait until you have an issue to sell, to begin to foment this interest. So what we would do is to use our debt advisors as we have and to begin to sensitize potential investors to the realities of the Jamaican economy, the circumstances of Jamaican risk, and to see what the market is. There is interest in US dollar denominated debt, China is not now, operate - the Renminbi is not freely convertible so that would not be, if there is such interest as may exist among Chinese investors, investors of who are from the PRC would be probably expressed through to Hong Kong and in fact we were specifically advised that that would be the market, but that arrangements would be made when we were interested to have us meet with these persons who will invest. China is increasingly making arrangements to have the renminbi become a more prominent among world currencies and indeed there was - there is - it is why they have this interest in the currency swop arrangements and other arrangements that would see their currency playing a more prominent role and there is interest expressed in some of their financial institutions following behind and investment in the industrial zone for Chinese interests to - Chinese financial interests to be present.

So generally speaking, I think we have to recognize that if we are going to make this kind of linkage with which we are speaking then there needs to be a complimentary financial dimension to this linkage and that it is, especially, in relation to discussions about international financial centres, *et cetera,* it would be to Jamaica's advantage to begin to build this awareness of our economy and our financial system in those markets.

Mr. HOLNESS: I'm just curious Minister. So is it possible then that when you come to your next major roll over that Asian investors could be invited to participate?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Yes, it is possible.

Mr. HOLNESS: Minister, you mentioned some companies that you visited - that you attended on your visit to China. One of them is a Chinese company COMPLANT which is very active in Jamaica's Agricultural Sector particular sugar, but we have read where - seen where they have been dogged by issues having to do with crimes, they have plagued with issues having to do with crime and other Chinese companies and Chinese visitors here directly from the State have had this problem

where they have been some ways targeted. Was that raised on your trip to China, security concerns about Chinese investments here?

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, it wasn't raised in my trip to China; I would say that it is an issue that we have raised with the Chinese interest here from time to time. From the time we heard that there was this episode in Clarendon, I know the Minister of National Security, the Minister of Agriculture and myself and the Prime Minister too, was in touch with the Chinese authorities at various levels and indicating our concern with that specific incident. And I think generally, we are all - I don't think it's a secret that were we collectively to succeed in reducing the levels of crime it would have a very positive impact on our investment climate and on the rates of growth that we were able to achieve. It's kind of a, you know, chicken and an egg dilemma that you face here.

In other words, one of the reasons why crime is at the level that it is, is because of the absence of economic activity and yet at the same time, crime serves as a depressant to the levels of economic activity, and we have to work through it. We're trying the best we can and the Minister, to provide resources to the Ministry of National Security and the associated agencies, and work through the problems with respect to each of the firms, not only COMPLANT, but other firms, to have things made right and to improve their security environment.

The SPEAKER: Dr. Davies, welcome back.

(Applause)

HURRICANE SANDY

Dr. DAVIES: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to say thanks to all my colleagues here.

I was really heartened by the number of persons and I wouldn't even say on both sides of the House, just my colleagues here who called to, you know, wish me well and all that. It reminds me of the Headmaster in the village who was disliked by everyone and when he announced that he was leaving they put on the biggest send off for him, killed goat and pig and everything. And he cried and said that he had no idea that they loved him so much so he was changing his mind.

(Laughter)

Dr. DAVIES: So I'm back for a long time.

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Dr. DAVIES: Yes.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a short statement on the issue of the damage to roads and infrastructure in St. Mary and Portland and what my Ministry is doing in response.

Mr. Speaker, Members of this Honourable House would've been aware of the major damage to the road network and infrastructure in St. Mary and Portland caused by the heavy rains during the period January 18 to 20 of this year. The parish of St. Mary was badly affected by the torrential rains, which caused blocked drains, fallen trees, flooding, landslides and breakaways, threatening life and property. The parish of Portland was affected but to a lesser extent. Mr. Speaker, approximately 33 main roads across the

parishes of St. Mary and Portland were affected. These include the breakaways in Grants Town and Jacks River in St. Mary.

Mr. Speaker, immediate and urgent action was required on the part of my Ministry to first reopen the roads and second, to conduct permanent restoration works which will restore vehicular and pedestrian movement to the affected areas.

I think all of us would've seen citizens on the TV indicating how badly they've been affected. The National Works Agency was mandated to immediately mobilize its own resources, as well as resources from private contractors to respond to the emergency, ensuring that roads were reopened to at least single lane traffic. Furthermore, action was taken to clear parish council roads, and that was brought to our attention by the parish councils during the emergency restoration works.

As of today, Mr. Speaker, over $6 Million has been spent to clear 32 of the 33 blocked roads in both parishes. The one exception, the relief road in Devon remains unopened as we're awaiting the removal of Jamaica Public Service live wires, which are entangled with trees along the roadway. Mr. Speaker, the total cost for the reopening and restorative work is estimated at approximately $197 Million. As part of the emergency response, and being acutely aware of limited fiscal space, my Ministry has had to find ways to finance the restorative works without seeking additional resources from the Ministry of Finance.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Hear, hear!

Dr. DAVIES: Yes.

Approximately - what is it now? There's no point in reading and...

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Phillips)

(Laughter)

Dr. DAVIES: Yes....approximately $147 Million was identified from the Road Maintenance Contingency Fund. And given the need to minimize any negative effects on the tourism product, I had consultations with my colleague, the Minister of Tourism and Entertainment, regarding assistance for funding. Arising from our discussions, the sum of $50 Million, which has been provided by the Tourism Enhancement Fund to carry out various projects island-wide, has been temporarily reallocated to effect the emergency works. Let me assure those persons with - those MPs who have commitments from the TEF that this sum will be made available for the original projects in the new fiscal year. But in the short term, we need the $200 Million to effect the repairs.

Mr. Speaker, occurrences such as this one are becoming more common not only in Jamaica but worldwide. These are clear examples of the effects of climate change. The abundance of financial resources is no guarantee of any effective, timely response. There are several examples of this from North America and Europe. Mr. Speaker, despite our challenges, our Ministry is developing the capability to respond quickly.

In that regard, Mr. Speaker - and I just want to just place it on record - you will recall that I'd reported to this House previously, the extent of the damage caused by Hurricane Sandy in October 2012, where approximately

2,800 persons suffered major damage to their homes in St. Mary, Portland and St. Thomas. The Ministry took the decision not to seek any additional resources from the Ministry of Finance, but to reallocate resources from the Jamaica Emergency Employment Programme, which we're doing in collaboration with Food for the Poor, in terms of the construction of wooden houses. As a result, Mr. Speaker, within three months 433 houses were constructed; 111 in St. Mary, 181 in Portland, 141 in St. Thomas. (Applause) By using this approach there was no additional call on the budget.

MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker, I can't recall anything in recent years where a response to an emergency has been executed as seamlessly in such a short period of time with the full involvement of members of the political directorate, the churches and the NGOs. We deliberately sought to include, because sometimes I notice this tendency that you will exclude members of the political directorate. We deliberately and we worked closely with all the Members of Parliament in St. Mary, Portland West and East, St. Thomas...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Vaz)

Dr. DAVIES: Right.

(Laughter)

Dr. DAVIES: …and the similar approach is being utilized in dealing with the recent problems. And as I reiterate that there'll be no call on the Ministry of Finance to deal with this.

(Applause)

Works for the permanent restoration and reconstruction of the road network and the infrastructure will begin this week. The major areas for attention are:

- Grants Town
- Jacks River
- Canoe Pond to Hairy Hill and
- Days Mountain, all in the parish of St. Mary.

It's estimated that the permanent restorative works for roads in St. Mary alone will cost approximately $160 Million.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to express sympathy to those persons who've been affected by the recent flood rains in that part of the island. And we want to assure them that the Ministry and its agencies are doing all we can to have these works undertaken and completed at the earliest. We understand the inconvenience they're experiencing and crave their continued patience.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Dr. Chang.

Dr. CHANG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

May I add a personal word of welcome back to the Minister? I gather he has come back more agile than he was before.

(Laughter)

Dr. CHANG: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister. This is a non-contentious presentation and outlines what the Ministry's response is to the situation in St. Mary and Portland. But I'd like to remind the Minister that we had a full discussion on the last hearing in Parliament here on the impact of

climate change with particular reference to this particular area of Jamaica, which has now - where severe weather conditions now become a recurring annual event.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Phillips)

Dr. CHANG: Well, the impact of climate change on St. Mary and Portland right, and it is apparent that this is an annual event now. And while we're aware of the fiscal restraints, m terms of the budget, it would seem to me it is time that we begin to plan to take steps to ensure that adaptive measures are taken in these parishes. For once the event comes on we find money anyway, even if we have to carve from elsewhere without expanding the budget. Given the events since the beginning of this century, in the last decade, it would seem to be appropriate to set aside even a limited amount of money to begin the kind of adaptive planning and changes required for these parishes; that is in terms of the construction of roadways, in terms of settlement plans, in terms of the kind of construction initiated both in public and private dwelling and to ensure there's greater monitoring.

It would - I'd have to ask the Minister, Mr. Speaker, if there's any - what is the level of institutional arrangement now between the Ministry of Works and their department in Transportation and Works and the Climate Change Department and ODPEM, which has done significant work in identifying the areas of risk and the kind of data required to plan preemptively on a matter such as this? It may involve some relocation of personnel. These things have to be planned ahead of time.

We've had some relocation done in Portland, I think; Darlingford, a small relocation was done. In the Manchioneal area, discussion was held on looking at a section of St. Mary. The town of Port Maria itself is obviously having some serious challenges when these events come on stream.

So while one accepts, Mr. Speaker, that the Ministry has responded with some efficiency to the immediate situation, I think the Ministry should give some indication of what is their planning in terms of taking adaptive measures in this area in particular, and I say three parishes: St. Mary, Portland and parts of St. Thomas, where we're having annual recurrence of severe weather conditions.

I don't want to anticipate anything, it is also true that in terms of the issue of earthquakes, and the fault line earthquakes and the fault line structure in the geology of Jamaica, these are the same parishes that are likely to be affected if another event of this takes place in Jamaica. So there need to be some effective planning in terms of dealing with extreme weather conditions and unusual events - natural events in these particular areas.

Can the Minister comment?

Dr. DAVIES: Well, I endorse your suggestion of the increased collaboration. That's already underway. But I want to make two points: one is that any major construction or restorative work which is taking place now will bear those possibilities in mind. But there is an even more basic sort of step which we need to take and tomorrow I'll be making an

announcement about the extent to which some of our own habits and the extent to which we clog waterways with PET bottles, *et cetera,* contributes to some of what we see as acts of God. So there are the technical things which we are going to be doing, but there are simple activities in terms of preventive. But the collaboration between the Minister of Water, Land Environment and Climate Change and my Ministry that work is proceeding.

Dr. CHANG: Just one more question, Minister. You know this question of how we manage our waterways I think is a critical one, I'm not sure may require additional legislation. But in most countries today even the tropical areas; waterways are avenues of attraction and beauty. If we manage them properly they become scenic green areas. We are using them as ways for disposal of waste and it certainly needs to be part of what we're doing planning for the future and to prevent the more severe impact of these kinds of weather conditions in these areas, because once the drains get blocked you get the extreme flooding. So I look forward with anticipation to the announcement but I think you must bear in mind there may need to be additional legislation to ensure proper planning where waterways run through urban centres.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Vaz.

Mr. VAZ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I would just like to raise with the Minister, first of all, to congratulate and thank him and the NWA, both the Minister and the Minister of State, for the quick response. But to highlight very seriously that the Minister spoke about issues dating back from Sandy and now with this recent event. And to say to him that the monies that are being allocated we all know that they are not sufficient and they will reinstate the roads necessarily. What they will do is give it some easement for the residents to be able to traverse the roads but obviously over time the roads will go back to where they were.

The point I want to make is that in programmes going forward, especially for the areas that have been hard hit, dating back from Sandy, which again is the Eastern end of the island: St. Mary, Portland and St. Thomas have some serious challenges as does other parts of the country. But to indicate that the funds that are being allocated are definitely not going to be sufficient to do major reinstatements and repairs to the roads. And to say that even in this recent bout of rain we have had serious problems in terms of even some of the recent JDIP roads that we were done, not necessarily because of faulty – shabby work, but because of the lack of routine maintenance. And that is something that I want to highlight to the Minister going forward in the MDIP programme and the future JEEP programmes, that it does not make sense that we spend this great amount of money in rehabilitation if we don't have the proper maintenance of the roads.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. VAZ: One of my JDIP roads in Portland, Hope Bay to Cooper's Hill already has suffered in this last bout of rain. A road that was just completed the latter part of last

year, it was one of the last projects to be completed and because of the drainage and the lack of maintenance and what Minister mentioned in terms of the problems faced by the residents themselves and the way in which they get rid of their garbage and debris, blocking up the drains, *et cetera, et cetera, et cetera,* causes the water to take the road and no matter how professional or good the engineering is of the road, once that water starts to take the road it is a problem. So just to highlight how grateful I am as one of - the sole Member from that side in this neck of the woods - I'm outnumbered four to one, but I still make my representing.

Mr. D ALLEY: You are the... colour.

Mr. VAZ: No, I'm talking about St. Mary and Portland, five seats.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Davies)

Mr. VAZ: No, I'm not speaking for them today. Just the two parishes that were hit in this last bout of rain. But to say, Minister, that it is something I have raised several times with the NWA and I impressing upon you, sir, that in any future road - major road works coming forward routine maintenance has to be a part of it. If not, we will be back at square - at zero in short time.

Dr. DAVIES: Well, just let me quickly say that I agree the Member from Western Portland and, in fact, that's one of the reasons the Road Maintenance Fund was established. But I would want to jog the memory of the Members especially the Member from Manchester, North East when he put an additional tax on, I believe in December 2009 or 2010, and committed that from this additional tax in the first year 20 per cent of the additional tax would go to the Road Maintenance Fund.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Him don't remember.

Dr. DAVIES: In second year 35 per cent would go to the Road Maintenance Fund. In the third year, 50 per cent would go to the Road Maintenance Fund. But he kept it at 20 per cent. So part of the problem…

Mr. SHAW: That year was the year of your new administration.

Dr. DAVIES: No, it was yours.

(Cross talk)

Part of the problem is…

Dr. PHILLIPS: What about the second?

(Cross talk)

Dr. DAVIES: But we're just - but I agree with you and we will have to seek to rebuild the Road Maintenance Fund such that it will be able to take on the work.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Silvera.

Mr. SILVERA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I personally would like to place on record thanking the Minister and his staff for coming straight out… (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHUCK: ....Parliament is not a cheering gallery, you know.

Mr. McKENZIE: Want popcorn and some....

(Cross talk)

(THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, entered and took her seat.)

(MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. SILVERA: Yes, Mr. Speaker, as I said, I would like to place on record thanking the Minister and the team for responding as quickly as possible. And I can say on behalf of the residents of those affected areas that they are totally appreciative. And on the other hand, I tend to agree with my colleague on the other side that to save this country a lot of money in terms of natural disasters or natural disasters happening, I think the Government on a whole has to go on an educational campaign to teach the people how to deal with the proper disposal of their garbage and other means to ensure that their environment is protected.

Thank you again, Minister.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Minister Thwaites.

ONLINE ACCESS OF CSEC RESULTS

Rev. THWAITES: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. A short Statement.

The Ministry of Education sees education as everyone's responsibility, that is, all interest groups must be engaged in the development of the child through the provision of support to schools where necessary. In this regard, the Members of Parliament are considered important in the process and should, therefore, be aware of the performance as well as challenges facing schools in their constituencies. In light of this, the Ministry is providing each Member of Parliament with pertinent information which can be used to provide support to their schools.

The Ministry has developed a system whereby each Member of Parliament is provided with online access to the last two years' results of the Caribbean Secondary Examination Certificate (CSEC) for the schools in his or her constituency. (Applause) This will facilitate access to performance data on schools with the expectation that the elected representatives will mobilize their communities (churches, parents, political groups and branches and other social organizations) to assist the schools in developing, implementing and monitoring targeted interventions through their School Improvement Plans. All but about 150 of the nearly 1,100 - I'm sorry, about 250 of the 1,100 of the public schools have improvements plans now, Mr. Speaker. And it is hoped that later this year the Ministry will also provide access to other examination/test results, especially Grade 4 and Grade 6 are envisaged so that by a similar medium Members of Parliament can have access. And today each Member of Parliament is being handed or has been handed instructions containing an access code for the appropriate data.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Holness.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, this is a commendable move. It is a continuation of creating an online portal through which members of the public can access relevant,

important information on the performance of the education system, Mr. Speaker, we applaud and we welcome this, but I would like to ask the Minister, what of a general education management system? The Ministry had started significant work on that some time ago; I did some work on that as well. We didn't complete it, but we would certainly want to know where we are with that?

Rev. THWAITES: Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the - I remember the contribution of the former Minister of Education, now the Leader of the Opposition in this regard. The system is helpful in the schools where it has been established, but the overall system has had some technical difficulties which I understand are near resolution and it is anticipated that during the course of this year that particular system or its equivalent will be fully rolled out and I will keep this Honourable House informed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House a copy of the following:

- **Ministry Paper No. 15**
  Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of the Cocoa Industry Board For the year ended September 30, 2009
- **Spectrum Management Authority**
  Annual Reports and Audited Financial Statements for the years 2011-2012 and 2012-2013
- **Jamaica Mortgage Bank**
  Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year ended March 31, 2013
- **Housing Agency of Jamaica Limited**
  Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Fiscal Year 2012/2013 Office of the Political Ombudsman Annual Report for the period January - December 2012

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

The SPEAKER: Mr. Mair.

PORTLAND BIGHT PROTECTED AREA/GOAT ISLAND

Mr. MAIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that I'll move at the next sitting of the House the following motion:

Whereas the Government of China, through China Harbour Engineering Company and our Government are currently negotiating the development of elements of a logistics hub in Jamaica, and the Chairman of the Port Authority of Jamaica has recently confirmed that a port will be built in the vicinity of the Goat Islands in the Portland Bight Protected Area as part of the logistics hub;

And Whereas the Portland Bight Protected Area, which includes the Goat

Islands, the Hellshire Hills and the adjoining coastline was created in 1999 under the *Natural Resources Conservation Authority Act* because of its biological diversity and important functions, including three fish sanctuaries declared under the *Fishing Industry Act,* six game sanctuaries declared under the *Wild Life Protection Act* and two forest reserves declared under the *Forest Act;*

And Whereas there has been no detailed disclosure on the scope of works, the precise location and the consequent environmental impact or economic benefit the operations at the Goat Islands port could have on our country, neither has the Government provided sufficient information to the nation as to the reason why the Goat Islands and its environs would be the best option for a port, and whether or not other sites were considered and rejected;

And Whereas the Environmental Management Scoping Report commissioned by the Government, with the intention of guiding its decision-making is believed to contain flaws and inaccuracies and is therefore an unsatisfactory basis on which to make a pronouncement that is in the best and long term interests of Jamaica, with the concomitant risk of irreversible and devastating ecological impacts if a transshipment port, logistics hub, or any form of massive development were to take place on the Goat Islands and its environs:

Be it Resolved that this matter be referred to the Infrastructure and Physical Development Committee of this Honourable House for it to take the necessary steps to enquire into the benefits and/or losses that our country could incur if any part of the Portland Bight Protected Area were to become part of the logistics hub;

And Be it Further Resolved that the Government of Jamaica put on hold any final agreement with China Harbour Engineering Company for the development of a logistics hub in Jamaica until this Honourable House receives and deliberates on the Report from the Infrastructure and Development Committee.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Opposition MEMBER: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the time being as it is, I move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to allow us to take Questions and Answers outside of the time normally allowed.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the suspension of the Standing Orders to allow Question Time to go beyond its scheduled time.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we will be doing three Questions:

12, 4 and 11, in that order.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Smith.

Mr. Derrick SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of National Security to answer the questions standing in my name on the Question Paper.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Bunting.

Mr. BUNTING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Question 1:

Will the Minister provide an update on its...

All these questions, Mr. Speaker, are with respect to the CSJP, the Citizen Security and Justice Programme.

Question 1:

Will the Minister provide an update on its social intervention efforts as it relates specifically to the CSJP?

Answer:

The Citizen Security and Justice Programme was conceived by the Government of Jamaica in conjunction with the inter-American Development Bank and has been in existence since 2001, September.

The overall goal of the programme is to enhance citizen security and justice in Jamaica, and its primary objectives are to prevent and reduce crime and violence, strengthen crime management capabilities and improve the delivery of judicial services.

CSJP Phase II began in 2009, December. Additional funding was brought in by the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom Government, or DFID, for short, and the second, much larger tranche - the first was in 2011, and the second, much larger tranche in 2012. DFID funding was earmarked for only the Community Action component of the programme.

CSJP Phase II comprises two primary components:

i) Community Action, which involves Community Mobilization and Governance, which emphasizes building capacity of the Community Action Committees; and

ii) Delivery of Violence Prevention Services, including Vocational and pre-Vocational Skills Training, Tuition Support, On-the-Job Training, NGO and non-NGO Educational and Life Skills Programmes, Employment Internships, Psychological Assessment and Counselling; and

iii) the Establishment or refurbishment of Community Multi-Purpose Centres as well as other infrastructure-based initiatives, including Situational Crime-Prevention projects;

iv) development of a Restorative and Community Justice Policy and establishment of Community Justice Centres where facilitators can undertake cases; and

v) Social Marketing and Public Education Campaigns.

The other primary component, Mr. Speaker, had to do with Institutional Strengthening of the Ministry of National Security. Funding is

provided for the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit as well as concluding the elements of the Integrated Management Information System.

Under the Community Action Component, CSJP continues to implement various community-related interventions and delivers a range of violence-prevention services to the 50 participating communities across the KMA, which has 23, Central 13 and Western Regions - Western has 14 communities. And I set out in Appendix I for the Opposition Spokesman, a list of the 50 communities.

Under the Restorative Justice sub-component of the project which falls under the purview of the Ministry of Justice, the programme is being advanced in 11 communities across the three regions. Facilitators are now taking cases and officially conducting Restorative Justice sessions in communities. Over 166 persons have been reached through the work of the facilitators.

Question 2:

Will the Minister indicate the number of CSJP initiatives going on presently, and advise of the communities in which these initiatives are being undertaken?

Answer:

The initiatives are carried under five main areas. They are as follows:

1. Community Mobilization and Governance, which emphasizes building capacities of the Community Action Committees;
2. Delivery of Violence Prevention services;
3. Establishment or Refurbishment of Community Multi-Purpose Centres;
4. Development of a Restorative and Community Justice Policy and Establishment of Community Justice Centres; and
5. The Social Marketing and Public Education Campaign.

Elements of all of these programmes to a greater or lesser extent are being implemented in the 50 communities served by the CSJP. It should be noted that due to the staggered incorporation of communities, the first 9 were in 2001, a further 19 were added in stages between 2001 and 2009, and between 2011 and 2013 a further 22 communities were added. So because of the staggered incorporation of these communities, varying community capacities and identified needs programmes will vary across the 50 communities.

And, Mr. Speaker, in an Appendix I have given a summary listing of all of the various programmes being undertaken by community.

Question 3:

Will the Minister advise the Honourable House of the budget of the CSJP and indicate whether it represents an increase or a decrease over the previous years?

Answer:

The 2013/2014 budget of the CSJP is US One Million One Hundred and Eighty-

Seven Thousand Four Hundred and Fifty-Eight Dollars (US$1,187,458.00). This represents a 7 per cent increase over the 2012/2013 budget of US One point One Million (US$1.1M).

Mr. CRAWFORD: A 7 per cent increase?

Mr. BUNTING: In US dollars.

(Applause)

Mr. CRAWFORD: All right.

Mr. BUNTING:

Question 4:

Will the Minister indicate whether there has been any scaling down of existing CSJP initiatives, and if so, in which communities?

Answer:

The programme is currently focused on completing all projects by March, 2014. This is due to the fact that the CSJP II Programme officially came to an end in December, 2013; as such, these activities could be considered closing-out activities for this phase of the programme. In this regard, no new major programmes are being considered until the expected start-up of the follow-on CSJP III Programme which is expected towards the middle of 2014.

Question 5:

Can the Minister advise the House of any parallel or complementary social intervention efforts to the CSJP?

Answer:

There are many such complementary programmes focused on crime prevention interventions that stretch across a number of State institutions and indeed, civil society organizations. The Cabinet of Jamaica has recognized that this situation can result in inefficient use of resources. Against this background, Cabinet gave a mandate to the Public Order Committee to bring high-level policy coherence and coordination of these programmes nationally. This is a major objective of the recently launched Unite for Change Programme, and a meeting of a Joint Technical Working Group, involving representatives of the major programmes is scheduled for the end of February. This will be coordinated out of the Ministry of National Security, under the leadership of the Permanent Secretary.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Smith.

Mr. Derrick SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, are you satisfied that the intended objective for this programme is being achieved across the board?

Mr. BUNTING: Mr. Speaker, to say that I am satisfied would mean that the programme had achieved all its objectives. While we still have the crime rate at the levels we do, I don't think anyone could be satisfied. I think some components of the project have not delivered all that we expected of it. And if you ask me what are those components I would say those to do with the computerization elements of the Traffic Ticketing System, *et cetera,* did not, to my mind, deliver all that we had anticipated.

However, in terms of the social intervention programme, it has impacted the

lives of thousands of young persons. And, indeed, surveys of - the Crime Victimization Surveys in the communities involved show that there has been a substantial reduction, particularly in violent crime in the targeted communities.

The SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, the Minister is quite aware of concerns that I share, as they relate to this programme. As a Member of Parliament whose constituency is severely affected by a high level of crime, I believe that a lot more can be done and should be done by...

(HON. ROBERT DIXON PICKERSGILL, (PNP) St. Catherine, North Western, Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Control, entered and took his seat.)

...well, I don't - when you say Minister, when you say a lot, I don't know what is a lot.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that the programme is designed by those who are implementing the programme. These programmes, Mr. Speaker, should be predicated on the needs of the area instead of the organizations telling us what to do, Mr. Speaker. I believe, Minister, that the expansion of the programme is needed, but there are areas that should be singled out for special treatment, Mr. Speaker.

And, Minister, I am making a special appeal to you. The impact of CSJP in my constituency is not being felt - the level of crime, especially amongst young people, and the difficulties you run into in getting a positive response from CSJP.

I am also concerned about the role of the... (*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. McKENZIE: I also have concern, Minister - there is a co-relationship between the Peace Management Initiative Committee and CSJP, where CSJP engages the Peace Management Initiative to go into certain areas. I am concerned because again, PMI speaks a lot but delivers little or nothing in West Kingston.

I am making a special case to you, Minister, to ensure that special attention is given to West Kingston for social intervention, it is badly needed. A lot of work is going on that we need to - that can be done to complement the work to enhance the peace efforts. The police must be commended, through the efforts of the Superintendent, for the curfew that was imposed to take children off the street. It's something that is commendable... (Applause) ...and has my support, and I have indicated to the Superintendent our commitment to work with it. But, Minister, the social intervention cannot just be spoken about, it must be seen. And I am pleading a special case for West Kingston as it relates to those social interventions.

Mr. BUNTING: The Member for West Kingston, Mr. Speaker, would know that the design for CSJP, Phase II, would have been concluded in 2009 when that phase of the project started. And therefore, there was limited modification that I could have done in

2012, as we were already in the second half of a project that was already well along in its execution.

So I accept that there may have been shortcomings. I do know I have visited, as you are aware, some of the communities: Fletchers Land, for example, I think I was there on New Year's Day, and the feedback I received was that the interventions were appreciated.

However, I take your point that maybe in light of the scale of what is required it was only a drop in the bucket. We, of course, have a much more significant input, along with our international partners, in the design of CSJP III, which will differ in a number of respects from CSJP II. We are in the final stages of negotiating this phase of the project, which we are targeting US$55 Million over a four to five year period. But so soon as we conclude and our partners have signed off, I will bring a Ministry Paper, or make a Statement to Parliament on the design of CSJP III.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, just to say to the Minister, and just to let the House know that we, in fact, appreciate the efforts that are being made in West Kingston. But, as I said before, Minister, it needs a lot more work, Minister; not that it is not appreciated. We have seen benefits in some areas, but there is a greater need for areas that are seriously challenged by a high level of crime.

The SPEAKER: Miss Grange.

Miss GRANGE: Mr. Speaker, you have recognized me?

The SPEAKER: Yes.

Miss GRANGE: Thank you.

Minister, you inherited a good programme, and the programme continues to be a good programme, and administered in a particular way. (Laughter) But, I think that... if I said the Minister inherited a good programme, nothing is wrong with that.

(Cross talk/Laughter)

Government MEMBER: It started from Member Peter Phillips.

Miss GRANGE: But, it does not mean it is a perfect programme Minister. And this is where I want to express a concern and ask you - I am supporting the Member from West Kingston who says that enough is not being done. I think what is being done is just skimming the surface, and it is important that there is a more joined-up approach when you go into communities. So, I want to ask you Minister, are the CSJP officers, are they told? When you go into a community, you just go in and you introduce the programme without looking at what exists, looking at how you can strengthen what exists, and coordinating and collaborating with the Member of Parliament, or the entities that have programmes going. Because what I find, you are competing with existing programmes, undermining existing programmes, and introducing things that can only skim the surface, and don't really make fundamental changes in those communities. I would like to get from you, Minister, as to what are the officers told? What is the mandate they are given?

Mr. BUNTING: Well, let me just say that we have recognized that there are a number of interventions taking place, both by various

ministries, departments and agencies, as well as by private sector groups, NGOs, sometimes churches...

Miss GRANGE: And Members of Parliament.

Mr. BUNTING: ...and Members of Parliament, through their CDF, *et cetera.* And to have interventions *a, b* and *c* going at the same time, may not be as effective as if you sequence them in a particular order. And I will just use one example. We have - sometimes we may have the Foundation for Life Long Learning, which has an intervention going at the same time as an NGO who has some literacy and numeracy-based programme at the same time as, let's say CSJP might be funding some - a vocational training.

Now, if you were able to sequence it so that before you bring in the vocational training, you ensure that everybody was brought up to a level of literacy and numeracy to ensure that all those beneficiaries would be able to take full advantage, then it makes more sense to sequence it in that way. Sometimes you have two programmes delivering the same things, one is paying a stipend and the other is not, and you find, even though the one started and was underway, when the new programme comes in and offers the stipend, everybody migrates to that programme. And there are these sorts of inefficiencies.

This is why we have introduced the Unite for Change Programme. And part of that - the function of that initiative is to be a coordinating secretariat, but not just what is taking place within the Government because you have interventions from Youth and Culture, interventions from Local Government, Labour and Social Security, Health, Education. I mean, that's just...

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. BUNTING: ...SDC, CDF, in addition to all JSIF, in addition to all the outside ones. So, this is what we are trying to coordinate. What I do find though, that for these 50 communities, CSJP seems to be what they rely on, principally, as a social intervention agency outside of the MP CDF.

And so, we really take the point that coordination, sequencing, perhaps influencing persons to work, not in a competing way, but in a supportive way, all can lead to a better outcome.

Miss GRANGE: Minister, the Unite for Change, what it is doing... it creates a hype. I mean, you are everywhere... (Applause by Government Members) ...you are in Tawes Pen, you are in Central Village... you are everywhere getting publicity. But...

Mr. McKENZIE: You want some shirts and some pom-pom?

Mr. BUNTING: You say that as if it's a bad thing?

Mr. McKENZIE: But, Minister, the point I want to make is this: the **Unite for Change**, you provide funds, you provide gears, and you end up with these football competitions. But what you are doing in the meantime is undermining existing community leagues that can't...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Miss GRANGE: ...hear me, I am telling you what is happening. You may not be aware. Existing community football

competitions or football clubs which cannot afford to buy gears, so you provide gears and you provide funding to do these **Unite for Change** competitions, while the existing clubs in the communities which are made up of these same people who you are trying to get them - move them away from antisocial behaviour, the clubs are suffering because there is no government support to provide them with the gears, while the money is being spent advertising **Unite for Change**, encouraging these competitions which are on the side, and not providing the support for existing programmes in the communities.

Mr. BUNTING: I think you have a... something of a misunderstanding. I had invited you to our National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention; I don't think you were able to participate. But had you come, you would have a better...

Miss GRANGE: I wasn't invited to participate.

Mr. BUNTING: I invited every Member of Parliament.

Miss GRANGE: I was invited to attend.

(*Sotto voce* comments/Laughter)

Miss GRANGE: I am the Spokesperson on Youth.

Mr. BUNTING: Yes.

Miss GRANGE: I should have been invited to participate.

Mr. BUNTING: There was a spokesperson - the Opposition was represented by a younger spokesperson - a younger deputy spokesperson.

Miss GRANGE: On National Security. The Minister of Youth and Culture participated. She was on the programme.

(Cross talk)

So, then, it is not **Unite for Change**.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Miss GRANGE: Unite for Change both sides...

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. BUNTING: The Minister of Youth and Culture played a particular role, moderating a panel of young persons, okay. Well, we didn't need two moderators, but I applaud your enthusiasm to participate, and I will certainly try and facilitate your participation the next time around.

But, I just want to clarify something. The Corner League Programmes, we ran 24 one-day Corner Leagues in various communities across the Corporate Area, St. Catherine, Clarendon and St. James during the holiday season. And it really was a sort of rapid response initiative to the spike in crime we had in the second half of last year. And we combine, not just the Corner Leagues - it was just a one-day thing - we didn't give out any gears or footballs. We may have used some balls for the matches, but we didn't give out any gears to the team - some refreshments.

In some areas we ran workshops for the young people. We had some NGOs who deal with young people who ran workshops, one of them in Tawes Meadows; and we had SISTREN who ran other workshops on various types of violence prevention

initiatives, in combination with the football. And in some areas, we had netball as well.

This was a rapid response initiative to deal with a situation during the holiday season, to really try and cool down the situation in some of these communities. That was always intended to be a short term. But what I will tell you is that since the middle of December our violent crime rate, and particular our murder rate, has been reduced quite significantly because of many things: because of Operations Resilience, because of that Rapid Response programme. Because, you know, these things are always complexly determined; it is not simplistically determined.

But the fact is, we keep trying. And when we see a response we are encouraged. So, that was a short term initiative to deal with an emergency situation. It has had an impact, but now I don't want you to confuse that initiative, and to think that that is what **Unite for Change** is, the sum total of. It is really a much broader initiative.

And in fact, I think it might be important for me to have a separate presentation on **Unite for Change** so that all Members, not just those who were able to attend and participate, but those who may be interested to know what it is really about.

Miss GRANGE: Minister, my last question is this: would you agree that what is being done now is just a band aid approach?

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Miss GRANGE: Minister, I am speaking to you, and you understand what I am saying, if others don't. Minister, we are not really reaching the communities, and the people in the communities who need real assistance, true assistance, the young people. Would you be willing to work more closely with the Opposition? And it is important, the Opposition, for us to really come up with programmes that can make a fundamental difference and fundamental change in these communities. I'll give you an example. JSIF and the Inner City Basic Programme are in Tawes Meadows; your group is in Tawes Meadows; the Inner City Basic Programme came in there to deal with infrastructure development, nothing has been done - came in there to deal with even the sewage plants, faeces all over the place. JSIF is in there; CSJP is in there; SDC is in there. Everybody is in there, walking in the sewage.

Now if we are going to clean up communities, we have to really clean it up so people can feel that they are living in a decent environment. And what you will find is that those who are prone to anti-social behaviour, you'll be able to separate the sheep from the wolves. But you've got to deal with fundamental changes in community, in order to address the problem of crime.

Mr. BUNTING: I agree with you and I welcome any offer, any sincere offer from the Opposition to work with us on this issue. The only thing I would caution, is that, as Minister of National Security, all these challenges that you just described, Solid Waste, sewage disposal, *et cetera,* can't all be addressed primarily from the Ministry of National Security, either through CSJP or otherwise. So it has to be a much broader engagement than just Minister of National Security. And I don't

want to start interfacing with every spokesman or MP; I prefer to have it principally through the Opposition spokesman.

So, I take your point and we stand ready. I mean, I have made the offer to the Member from West Kingston, we have been - we have walked together to deal with some challenges in his constituency. I am happy. Whenever you invite me, we can sit down, either together with the community leadership or individually to see how we can customize something for those communities.

Dr. CHANG: Minister, I have no complaint on the CSJP. I have no complaint on CSJP, because we have had some good work in North West St. James, but I have an issue.

Miss GRANGE: In the past.

Dr. CHANG: What I would like to see the Ministry initiate, and I think my colleague from Central St. James will support me on this, is that there need to be greater collaboration with the sector ministries as you move on, because the idea of CSJP is not to be a permanent institution and a rehabilitative mechanism, it is supposed to initiate activities that intercept the young men who are inclined to get into crime. Once you find them we need to get them, into sustainable activity.

And part of the problem is that the Government agencies are still locked into what is almost a turf battle, everybody wants their piece of the action for themselves and will not collaborate and cooperate.

You speak of unite as the means to do that. Well, I have had to do that. It's not going to happen as a Government programme, I have done that with my constituency office. But, what I would like to see happen now is that - and I raised this for a specific purpose, you know. With the help of CSJP and JCIF and the efforts and planning we get from the community-base, we built an entire training facility for nearly $50 Million, which is now on the border of the constituency.

HEART gave a commitment to provide the staffing and haven't been carrying out that mandate effectively, right. And, you know, you are looking on an institution that can absorb if the community programmes feeding of 200 young men per cohort it was designed - 15 to age 30, age 15 to 30 school dropouts to provide training to Level II and hopefully onto Level III. But the programme - the institution, which is an excellent institution, the other HEART Institute use it as a reference point for exams, but they are not getting the support that is required to move the student body up.

Clearly, in a city like Montego Bay, if we took off 200 troubled young men off the street today, it would have a significant impact on some of our social problems. And, therefore, Minister, the question is, what can you do to ensure that the sector agencies, all of the permanent institutions of Government are brought into the picture, so that they can adopt and carry on the work of CSJP once it is initiated in these inner city communities, and they don't begin to feel that they are just being used again and being given something as a promise, which they will not benefit from in the long run?

Mr. BUNTING: It might… the.... Gender.... Centre of Excellence that you are

referring to me. Well, the Member of Parliament from Central St. James, Deputy Speaker here has written me earlier this month about expressing his concern about that facility and it not being able to fulfill its potential.

My investigation thus far, is that CSJP has actually delivered on its commitment in terms of the refurbishing and whatever it undertook to do and it is HEART/Trust that now needs to come through on their end.

So I'm sorry the Minister of Education is not here, but as you quite rightly pointed out, the CSJP is really a catalyst for a shorter term intervention, shorter term fix, but long term, it has to be taken on by the sector ministries to do the - you know, the perpetual activity.

Dr. CHANG: The CSJP has an extremely valuable programme. I think from an inner city point of view it's maybe one of the best we have had, which is where they have granted scholarships to poor kids from inner city communities that matriculate at a University. Their basic qualification is that they should be members of a community-based organization; Youth Club or other kind of activity. I understand the funding for that got a bit restricted at the end of the last phase. Can you indicate if that programme will be funded in the next phase? Just tell me - it's really....Minister, it's not just that.... Well, I don't think many of us appreciate it - I know one year in 20 - maybe 2010 or '11; there was 1800 students from Downtown Kingston who benefitted.

A MEMBER: Eighteen hundred?

Dr. CHANG: Eighteen hundred, yes. In my own constituency and part of Central there is....

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Dr. CHANG: No, in Kingston. In Montego Bay there is about 250 students and I don't know the figures in other areas, but it is a major impact. The current President, for the Jamaica Medical Students Association hails from the middle of Norwood, a young lady, and you have to walk to go to her house, right. But she's only able to go to University because we brought in this programme. And I think there are many others I can repeat like that, that have this benefit. And I know that colleagues who have now been exposed to it are seeking that kind of benefit and I think is worthy of it, because when you take one young person of that character out of an inner-city community, it does provide hope for many others who are struggling.

I urge that you ensure that there is adequate funding from the new programme to continue this kind of activity. There are many students like that out there who are in need of it.

Miss GRANGE: Minister, if I could just add to it?

Mr. SAMUDA: Before you, before you get up. I'm not going into all the ramifications that we have been subjected to so far....

(Laughter)

....about dropouts and this and that, I want to focus on two priority students in the constituency of North Central St. Andrew.

I spoke here about one, when she first

entered Medical School from Cassava Piece. I have one the following year from Park Lane. They both are doing well in school; they have no way of finishing, unless they get support. The students that I'm talking about I'm trying my best from my CDF.

I benefitted from this programme last year with one of them. I'm asking you now very directly, I'm not talking about no generalities, these two students, can I bring their names and their records to your attention and can you in any way now - I'm being very personal here now. 'A not talking bout no general'. 'You can talk bout all your woodland man dem'. I taking 'bout two brilliant students from poor community, right.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Silvera)

Mr. SAMUDA: 'Plenty a dem dunce'. But they are not alone. They are not alone.

(*Sotto voce* comment by a Mr. Silvera)

Mr. SAMUDA: They are dunce but they are not alone. You'd be surprised to know how close…. Anyway… Can I bring these to your attention for your assistance?

The SPEAKER: Mr. Bartlett.

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Speaker, Minister, the CSJP has really been doing an excellent job in the deep, hard inner city areas, but there are some areas that are at risk. They are not quite defined as hard, inner city areas....

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. BARTLETT: ....with the kind of crime statistics that will engage your officers unduly. But they are at risk. And for some reason they fall outside of the ambit of this kind of intervention programme. My question to you is whether there is any policy intention to embrace those communities? Because I think that your effort must be two-fold. One is preventative and the other, of course, is curative. And whilst we are dealing with the problem of solving the problem at the point when it is active, we also want to be dealing with it on a preventative basis. Is there any policy intention to embrace some of those communities?

Because, the funny thing about it, Minister, is that there is migration taking place from some of these hard inner city areas that you are focusing on into these areas, which in a lot of cases are adjacent.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. BARTLETT: And sometimes even not.

So, I would ask you specifically whether there is any policy intention to embrace those areas as a key component of your own preventative strategy?

Mr. BUNTING: With respect to the Member from North Central St. Andrew, the Minister isn't involved in selecting beneficiaries. If you want to send it to me, I will just put it on to the Project Execution Unit, but you could send it - I would prefer if you send it directly to them. I, I, you know, as Minister, I should not be involved in beneficiary selection.

The point raised by the Member for East Central St. James is a valid one. We have seen - if you look over the last five or six years - the pattern of violent crime in particular, is not as concentrated as it used to be in the traditional 'hot spot' communities.

And a lot of that has to do with the displacement caused by police operations and concentrated attention of one kind or another on those communities. And so you find, for example, if areas of rural St. James, you know, or smaller rural town, Cambridge, Lilliput going...

(*Sotto voce* comment by Opposition Member)

Mr. BUNTING: Sorry? ....Anchovy, going right up to Bethel Town on the border, extending as far - you are finding now we are getting increase incidents of murder, shooting, that sort of thing. And when you do the intelligence or the investigative work, a lot of it is precipitated by displaced persons from Greater Montego Bay, for example.

So we have recognized that fact and we have asked that in this round, the next phase, that we allow, not necessarily - we'll still have activities in those 50 communities, but do not have it as exclusive as it is now and have some interventions that will impact, even communities beyond the 50 identified so far.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Smith, any other question?

Mr. D. SMITH: No.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Hutchinson.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining to answer the question at Number 11.

Mr. PAULWELL:

Question 1:

Will the Minister state when the following areas will be completed with the extension of the supply of electricity?

Answer:

a) Mahogany Hill, Ginger Hill - completed and energized on December 17, 2013
b) Red Hills, Lacovia - this line is not presently under consideration.
c) Poor Piece, Newton - completed and certified on December 17, 2013
d) Jane Land, Elderslie - completed on February 7, 2014
e) Breadfruit Tree, White Hall - projected date of completion June 2014
f) Paisley, Cedar Spring - projected date of completion is May 2014.
g) Johnson Bush, Woodlands - projected date of completion is June 2014.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, there are a number of other areas in my constituency...

Mr. PARCHMENT: You can't get everything one time.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: No, just listen. And I just want to find out if - these are some large stretches of roadways where you have not many houses. I am asking, have you looked at the possibility of solar system being put up on these individual houses which might be cheaper than running these electric lines?

Mr. PAULWELL: The next phase of the REP is just that. There are many - there are some homes that are too far away from the grid for the conventional system to be established, and we are going to be using a combination of wind and solar, mainly solar to

do those. And I will give this House an update on that very soon.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Prime Minister questions tabled more than two months ago, which were due for answers seven days after tabling, but the Prime Minister has agreed to answer today.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Unreasonable question, you can't get an answer.

Mr. WARMINGTON: He is correct. What he is saying is in the Standing Orders. Don't bother with him.

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, in response, let me just indicate to the Leader of the Opposition, when I travel I do not get the information on my travel and the cost. I had to get the information from the office. They had to check for each trip how much. (Applause) I just want you to know. And I am not the only Prime Minister that travelled. And I know that Prime Minister has travelled to some place and had much larger delegation than I had.

Question 1:

Can the Prime Minister reveal the number of trips she has made overseas since January 1, 2012?

Answer:

I undertook 10 official trips in 2012 and 15 official trips in 2013 which include six same-day return trips. While you did not ask it, the total of those 25 trips was approximately $15.15 Million.

Three trips were to attend unplanned events in countries with which we share either longstanding diplomatic ties, economic or historical relationships: the funeral of President Hugo Chavez, the inauguration of his successor, President Maduro, and the memorial service of the former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela.

Two engagements were connected to meetings of Heads of State and Government on the PetroCaribé facility, which is valued at approximately US$300 Million, depending on the price of oil. PetroCaribé is a most important economic arrangement for Jamaica.

Another important 'one-day-return visit' included one in Port of Spain with the President of the People's Republic of China.

Question 2:

Can the Prime Minister indicate the cost of each trip both from local sources and borne by embassies, consulates or missions in the various destinations?

Answer:

The details of the actual cost of overseas travel borne by the Office of the Prime Minister only are provided below. I do not have the details of expenditure by resident ambassadors or consuls in connection with my overseas visits, but it is customary for all of them to give basic support to Prime Ministers in the respective countries in which they serve.

The cost for the security personnel is not included and will be provided by the Ministry of National Security at a later date.

The 23rd Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government

of the Caribbean Community, CARICOM, in Suriname, 8th - 9th of March 2012, was $546,131.50; 6th Summit of the Americas in Colombia, 14th - 15th April, 2012, $1.2 Million.

Meeting with ALCOA, a major investor in the local bauxite and alumina sector; Time 100 most Influential Persons Award in New York and the 118th Penn Relays, Philadelphia, USA, 23rd - 29th April, 2012, $1,062 Million.

The Rio Summit, Brazil, 18th - 24th June 2012, $2.3 Million.

Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community in St. Lucia, 4th - 6th of July 2012, $1.2 Million. And you will get the breakout in terms of the number of the dollars and cents that followed. We have the breakout.

Opening Ceremony for the 30th Olympiad Summer Games, London, UK, 24th - 28th July, 2012, $2.5 Million.

Jamaica Independence Ball hosted by the Jamaica Independence Celebration Foundation, New York, USA, the 17th - 19th of August, 2012, $324,000.

Trinidad and Tobago's 50th Anniversary Independence Celebrations, Port of Spain, Trinidad, 30th of August - 2nd September, 2012, $485,263.25. I am sure you have the figures so you will be able to follow. So I don't have to go through the cents and the... 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, USA, 23rd - 28th September 2012, $1.7 Million.

Official visit to Canada, Ottawa, Toronto, 21st - 26th October, 2012, $2.4 Million.

Official funeral of former President Hugo Chavez. Caracas, Venezuela, $235,000 - same day return and the transportation was provided to take us to Venezuela, for free.

Inauguration of President Maduro. Venezuela, 19th April 2013, same day return, zero, no cost.

23rd - 26th April 2013, same day return, 5th Summit of Heads of State of Governments of the Association of Caribbean States, Haiti, no cost.

Special Anniversary Summit - 50th Anniversary of the Organization of African Unity/African Union, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 22nd - 28th May, $6.5 Million.

Bilateral Meetings with the President of the People's Republic of China in Port of Spain, Trinidad, same day return, $1.4 Million.

8th Summit of Heads of State and Government of PetroCaribé in Nicaragua, June 29, 2013, same day return, $1.2 Million.

34th Regular Meeting of Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, Trinidad and Tobago, 2th - 7th July 2013, $1.6 Million.

Official visit to the People's Republic of China, 17th - 27th of August 2013, $7.2 Million and we brought back J$1.7 Billion as grant. (Investment)

(Applause)

68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, USA, 23rd - 29th September 2013, $1.8 Million.

International Women's Forum World Leadership Conference in Canada, 17th - 19th of October, $2.9 Million.

CONCACAF Sport Summit, Cayman Islands, 21st - 22nd of October, no cost to the Government.

Working visit to Japan, 4th - 8th of November 2013, $7.2 Million. They are all official visits, those with heads, yes.

Annual European Days, Global Forum for Women in Parliaments, Brussels, and 54th Board of Trustees Meeting, United Nations,. Geneva, 25th-28th November, $3.7 Million.

State Memorial Service for former President of South Africa Nelson Mandela, in South Africa, 8th - 12th of December 2013, $3.2 Million.

And I want to bear in mind some of what I am reading, we travelled sometimes for two days going and two days back. It's no pleasure taking those journeys. And when I travel I work very hard.

Government MEMBER: Hard work!

The PRIME MINISTER:

2nd Summit of PetroCaribé, Venezuela, 17th December 2013, same day return, no cost to the Government, they send for me.

And there was one meeting, I think, in Haiti - I am not seeing it reflected - where it was no cost to us because the Mexican President sent his aircraft to take me to that Conference and to take me back home. (Applause)

Question 3:

I just want to refer you for the other questions to tables. I have listed everything in the tables to the questions here. (Showing document) And I just want to say that China, three, but I am referring for them to just - but they are listed on the tables. Do I go through all of these? (Showing document) They have the answers. Details of the composition and roles of members of my delegation are provided in Table 1 and Table 2. So I have everything listed in this document.

I just want to make a comparison, though, that when the former Government went to China there was a delegation of 15 and one private sector person.

Government MEMBER: How many?

Mr. ATKINSON: Fifteen one time!

The PRIME MINISTER: One five plus one private sector person; all right, members of Cabinet, PM, Minister, Minister, Minister, permanent secretaries, President of JAMPRO, Executive Chief Officer for National Works Agency - and I could go on - communications consultant, name it, and I have no problem at all with it.

Question:

Can the Prime Minister indicate the full cost of overseas travel by all Members of her Government since January 1, 2012?

Answer:

Based on information to the Cabinet office from ministries and cost of

overseas ministerial travel by Cabinet Ministers and Ministers of State since 2012, was approximately, up to the time of the 31st of December 2013, One Hundred and Seventeen Million Eight Hundred and Twenty Eight Thousand Nine Hundred and Thirty-three.

Mr. McKENZIE: US or Jamaican?

The PRIME MINISER: You are very provoking.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, let me thank the Prime Minister for the answers provided.

You will appreciate, Mr. Speaker that this is a treasure trove of facts which we would want to peruse in further details. But, Mr. Speaker, so we at a later stage during the process of questioning, Mr. Speaker, we will suspend. But in the interim, we do have some questions.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's response...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. HOLNESS: Just for clarity, the Prime Minister's response to Question No. 1 says that the total cost of the 25 trips which you undertook was Fifteen point One Million Dollars, but the itemized cost that you gave when totaled amount to more than that, I am wondering if you made an error. You may want to take a second look at that.

The PRIME MINISTER: There is one for OPM cost and the other for the entire delegation. That is what I was told - the cost for me, and the other is for the delegation.

Mr. HOLNESS: Prime Minister, the question we wanted to find out, what was the total cost of the twenty...

(Heckling by Members)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. HOLNESS: Prime Minister, we wanted to find out what is the total cost of the 25 trips that you took. It was not provided here, what you provided was a figure which you are now saying would be the cost associated with your travel alone. I am asking you Prime Minister to verify this figure so that we can be clear.

Prime Minister, Prime Minister on your travels, on your travels was there any matter that could be considered a matter of national security, or a matter that would be covered under the Secrecy Act which would prevent you from coming to Parliament and giving a report on the matters discussed?

The PRIME MINISTER: You asked the question and I am just going to ask you to be civil. When I am travelling privately I pay for my visits and my trips.

(Applause)

Government MEMBER: Hear! hear!

(Applause)

The PRIME MINISTER: When I am traveling for Government it is recorded. When I am travelling for Government everybody knows and the record is with the office of the Prime Minister. I get the figures from the Office of the Prime Minister concerning my trips.

Mr. HOLNESS: Prime Minister, let be clear to you, I am not interested in your

personal travels and neither did I ask that question.

My question in trying to get the correct answer out of what was presented was that you presented here a response, Prime Minister, which said that Fifteen Million Dollars was the cost....

(Heckling by Government Members)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) Let me hear the Prime Minister.

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, I indicated, I gave two answers, one relative to my trip and the other to the staff of OPM, the delegation.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Holness, did you look at the back page, the last page there?

Mr. HOLNESS: Yes, but, Mr. Speaker, a written answer is given. And for accuracy in this House I am trying to establish that.

The SPEAKER: Okay, good.

Mr. HOLNESS: So all I said, Mr. Speaker, and I have moved on. I said that the Prime Minister should check. All I have been greeted with is attack that I am asking about her personal trips, when I asked no such thing.

The SPEAKER: That is correct.

(Heckling by Government Members)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker,

(Heckling by Government Members)

Mr. Derrick SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I have reason to bring it to your attention what happens in this House when the Leader of Opposition is on his feet. And, Mr. Speaker, I am expecting you to bring it to the attention of that side of the House...

The SPEAKER: I don't think it is confined to one side, you know.

Mr. Derrick SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to your attention again.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Mr. Smith. Mr. Holness.

Mr. HOLNESS: You know, Mr. Speaker, I have not been in this House as long as the Prime Minister, but I have been in this House now longer than a few persons, in fact, significantly longer than some of those who are making noise in this House.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, no amount of noise and distraction is going to prevent me or all the Members on this side from bringing out the truth about the operations of this Government, so they can make as much noise as they want. (Applause)

I take a stand on this side, Mr. Speaker that when the Prime Minister rises to her feet all my Members here are aware of the stand I take, that the office of the Prime Minister must be respected, I take that stand... (Applause) ....and I am not here begging respect from anyone, Mr. Speaker...

Mr. Luther BUCHANAN: You don't earn it yet.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: You are out of order.

A MEMBER: You are too low. Rude and out of order.

Mr. Luther BUCHANAN: Come put it back down my throat.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: You soon get it down there.

(Mr. Samuda took off his belt) (Laughter)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) Okay, now, let us have some order in the place.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, this is a serious matter and the Jamaican public looking on wants to hear the answers to the questions that were asked and the behaviour on that side is a distraction.

Mr. Speaker, I asked the Prime Minister whether or not any of the matters discussed on your 25 trips were matters of national security or could be covered under the Secrecy Act. I did not hear the answer or I did not get a chance to hear your answer.

The PRIME MINISTER: The discussions I had on all of these trips had to do with the business of Jamaica. And I am sure everyone understands that when Prime Minister travels or Ministers of Government they have bilateral meetings, discuss a number of issues, whether it is investment, whether it is in health, whether things for national security, whatever is raised by the person you are meeting with or the particular Head of Government, and you should know that as former Prime Minister.

Mr. HOLNESS: Madam Prime Minister, I am trying to ascertain whether or not any of the matters discussed could legally be prevented from public disclosure?

The PRIME MINISTER: When heads meet certainly they will discuss issues that will not be for public consumption and that would be kept between the heads until the relevant time for the information to be given to the public.

(Applause)

Mr. Luther BUCHANAN: Hear! hear!

Mr. HOLNESS: So on your 25 trips, were there any matter that could be classified as such?

(Heckling by Government Members)

The PRIME MINISTER: I operated the same way Prime Ministers of Jamaica operated, including Prime Ministers of Jamaica in terms of discussions with other heads.

Mr. HOLNESS: I asked the question, Prime Minister, because I could not figure out, why it is that we have had to ask questions in Parliament to get a comprehensive report on your travels. We on this side, Prime Minister, fail

(Heckling by Mr. Luther Buchanan)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) Could we have some order in the place? (The Speaker gavels) Mr. Buchanan, contain yourself.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Holness.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, given that the Prime Minister has not said that anything that she has discussed is a secret, it could have been a matter of procedure....

Dr. PHILLIPS: She never said that, don't misrepresent.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, it should be a matter of procedure that once the Prime Minister travels or any member of her Cabinet travels a report is tabled in Parliament. My question to the Prime Minister is that after this episode will she institute a protocol on her Government to have all Members who travel report to Parliament as a matter of protocol.

A MEMBER: No.

(Heckling by Government members)

Mr. PRYCE: Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Order.

MEMBERS: Sit down, sit down.

(Heckling)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the practice - it has not been the practice and what I hear from the Leader of the Opposition is that he is recommending, he is recommending it. And, of course, we will exchange views on it with the Leader of Opposition Business. I don't think we need to continue on this road, I think the point has been made.

(Heckling by Members)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, it must be clearly understood that no one begrudges the Prime Minister's travel.

Government MEMBERS: Oh, oh, oh!

Mr. HOLNESS: It must be understood that Prime Ministers must travel, that's part of their duty, they represent their country, they are the first ambassadors. For those who would want to turn the debate on whether or not Prime Ministers should travel or whether or not Prime Ministers are entitled to travel, that is not the issue here. The issue here is that when Prime Ministers travel they must report and they must exercise the entitlement of travel....

(Heckling by Members)

Mr. Speaker, they must exercise the entitlement of travel with discretion and frugality.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister says that she is travelling to restore Jamaica's good name and to create economic opportunities.

(Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. HOLNESS: Of the 25 trips that were undertaken, can the Prime Minister say how many of them were for economic reasons?

Government MEMBER: All a *dem.*

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Jesus!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Look on the list.

(Heckling/Laughter)

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, apart from the funerals, every trip that I've made could yield some benefits to Jamaica, economic and otherwise, every one.

(Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: And it's not just about Prime Minister's travel. Had Minister Roger Clarke not been to the EU and made representation...

Mr. CRAWFORD: Yes, man.

The PRIME MINISTER: ...we would not have been moving now from the barracks our sugar workers. (Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Boundary!

Mr. HOLNESS: Prime Minister that was an inherited programme. That's not a programme that...

(Cross talks)

Mr. HOLNESS: On these trips what was accomplished?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Hello, hello, hello? You just said you didn't interrupt her when she's talking.

Mr. CRAWFORD: No respect!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Fulfill your words.

The PRIME MINISTER: Right now the funny thing is that it started when I was

Prime Minister and it never continued until I became Prime Minister again. (Applause)

Mr. HOLNESS: Not true.

(Cross talks)

(The Speaker gavels)

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, I'm on my feet and I did not yield.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: It started before *yuh.*

Dr. PHILLIPS: A tell *yuh* if *yuh* behave badly yuh *gwine* get... (Inaudible)

(Cross talks)

The PRIME MINISTER: I did not inherit no sugar whatever from nothing.

Mr. HOLNESS: Who started it?

The PRIME MINISTER: It was started by us with the assistance - I've been criticized for attending the conference of female leaders at the invitation of the leader of the EU in Brussels. The EU has made more contribution and more grants to development projects in Jamaica more than any other organizations, (Applause) Any other organizations. Challenge me on that. And they invite you to address a conference of female leaders and to participate, and you're told you're not to go. And I am ashamed that...

(Cross talks)

The PRIME MINISTER: ...I am ashamed that the Leader of the Opposition could make reference to - because yes, I have been restoring the credibility of Jamaica internationally. (Applause) Yes!

(Heckling)

Government MEMBER: Lest you forget. Lest you forget.

(Cross talks)

(The Speaker gavels)

(Heckling)

The PRIME MINISTER: I have not asked to be invited; I have been invited in the interest of my country, in the interest of the Jamaican people, in the interest of the bilateral relations we enjoy with several countries across the globe. I have a responsibility and a duty as Prime Minister of Jamaica to respond to our bilateral partners.

(Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Argument done.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister made an assertion...

(*Sotto voce* remarks)

Mr. HOLNESS: ...the Prime Minister made an assertion that there was no work done under the previous administration under the sugar workers housing programme. I would like to state for the record that that is patently not true. I was a Member of the Cabinet and I participated in the Cabinet in many discussions advancing that programme and the cause of sugar workers. (Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

(Heckling)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister raises...

(Cross talks)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister raises...

(Cross talks)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. HOLNESS: ...Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister raises the sugar workers programme

as a current achievement. It is an achievement from a previous set of travels. I'm interested in the Prime Minister's travels in this Administration. And my question was to the Prime Minister and it still stands how many of the trips undertaken were specifically for economic promotipn reasons?

(*Sotto voce* remarks)

Mr. HOLNESS: And the answer should, I take it, Mr. Speaker, that the answer comes from the Gallery?

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) No, no, the Prime Minister had answered that question you know; yes, she did, man.

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, I provided that response already and I am not going to do it again, I have done it already, I provided the response.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's it.

(Heckling)

The PRIME MINISTER: I am not in here to play politics; I'm in here about the people's business.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: When Audley did a run fi go buy di bus dem..

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Buchanan!

Mr. SHAW: Yuh using all a dem now though. Yuh using all the buses now.

(Cross talks)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, the trip…

(Cross talks/Heckling)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Shaw)

Mr. HOLNESS: But she could answer, the Prime Minister could answer.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker...

(Cross talks)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister lists amongst her 25 trips a trip to Ethiopia.

A MEMBER: Yes.

Mr. HOLNESS: That trip cost the taxpayers of Jamaica approximately Six point...

Mr. SHAW: Seven point Two.

Mr. HOLNESS: Seven point Two - yeah, about Six point Five Million Dollars. Mr. Speaker, could the Prime Minister state what was the economic benefit brought back to Jamaica?

The PRIME MINISTER: You know, Mr. Speaker...

(Heckling)

(The Speaker gavels)

The PRIME MINISTER: ...I'm happy the Leader of the Opposition asked this question.

A MEMBER: Yes.

The PRIME MINISTER: In honour to the memory of my ancestors, having been invited as the only Prime Minister from the Caribbean to attend and to speak at the African Union Conference, country of Marcus Mosiah Garvey...

(Applause)

Mr. CRAWFORD: Yuh a fight 'gainst rasta now.

The PRIME MINISTER: ….country of Bogle and Sam Sharpe…

(Heckling/Cross talks)

(Heckling) (The Speaker gavels)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Prime Minister is speaking.

(Cross talks)

The PRIME MINISTER: We have, Mr. Speaker, gained benefits from Nigeria, from Ghana...

(Heckling/Cross talks)

The PRIME MINISTER: ...and I was invited, and when I got there, outside of former Prime Minister PJ Patterson that was invited to participate in their discussions, I was the only head from the Caribbean region. Fifty years of the African Union...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes.

The PRIME MINISTER: ...and I'm told where my ancestors bones rest, some of them and some in Jamaica. And you know something, Mr. Speaker, let me just say it. Two little girls - never mind the enslavers because there were times when our own would caught us and sell us into slavery, but two little girls were playing by a river, two girls, one was caught and sold into slavery, the other escaped, the one that remained in Africa runs deep in my blood, in my veins.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: Two brothers were playing marbles, one was captured sold into slavery, the other remained in Africa. That could've been my great, great, great grandfather. The African blood runs deep in my veins. And if I am invited to attend a Conference of the African Union, 50 years of the African Union, where Jamaica played a critical role against the apartheid system in South Africa, and what we should be doing - when I went there and met with the African Presidents in bilaterals, all indicated that when we're visiting or any Minister, we were to take private sector - members from the private sector community that we could discuss trade and other things.

That's a very large bloc. Very large bloc you know, Mr. Speaker, if we should ever engage in trade with the continent of Africa, and I am being questioned for attending the African Union. Shame! (Applause)

(*Sotto voce* remarks)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. CRAWFORD: Yuh haffi plant di seed youth and mek it grow. Yuh don't understand?

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, let it be clearly understood...

A MEMBER: Let it be clear that you don't like Africa.

(Cross talks/Heckling)

Mr. HOLNESS: ...let it be clearly understood...

A MEMBER: That you don't like Africa.

Mr. HOLNESS: ...that I made no apology for asking that question. Because the response of the Prime Minister shows distinctly...

Mr. CRAWFORD: Brilliance!

Mr. HOLNESS: ...the difference between this side and that side.

(Applause)

A MEMBER: You are right, you are damn right. You don't like black people, you don't like Africans.

(Cross talks)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, I would've loved to have heard the Prime Minister say - and I appreciate what you say because the African blood runs deep in me as well.

MEMBERS: No! No!

Mr. HOLNESS: The African blood runs deep in me as well, not you alone.

(Cross talks)

Mr. HOLNESS: So it is time that we as black people realize that if we are going to get progress that we must start to use our resources in wise ways.

(Applause) (Heckling)

Mr. HOLNESS: So if we spend Six point Five Million Dollars to go to Africa, the Prime Minister should come here and say yes, I struck an economic deal with Ethiopia, or Nigeria or South Africa, and not come here talking about ancestors.

(*Sotto voce* remarks/Cross talks)

Mr. HOLNESS: Let me tell you something, Mr. Speaker, we are a generation that is liberated. Slavery is 350 years, 150 since free. We must understand that now is the time that we must defend our economic independence and to do that we must strike trade agreements with Africa. (Applause) Don't come here and tell me *'bout* ancestor.

Mr. Speaker, let me say this, that the Six Million Dollars that you spend flying...

Mr. PAULWELL: On a Point of Order, on a Point of Order.

(Heckling)

Mr. HOLNESS: Hold on, hold on!

(Heckling)

Mr. PAULWELL: A Point of Order, a Point of Order.

(Heckling)

Mr. HOLNESS: (Remaining on his feet) No, no, I'm not giving yuh nuh Point of Order.

(Heckling)

(Inaudible comment by the Speaker)

Mr. HOLNESS: I was on my feet making the point and I would like to continue, Mr. Speaker.

(Heckling)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) A Point of Order -

(Heckling)

Mr. HOLNESS: I would to like to continue...

Mr. McKENZIE: Siddung Phillip, Paulwell siddung!

(Heckling)

Mr. HOLNESS: ...and ask the House Leader to allow me.

(Heckling)

I ask the House Leader to allow me. Please allow me, allow me.

(Heckling)

Allow me, House Leader. Let me finish my point.

(Heckling)

I want to finish the point I'm making.

(Heckling)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Take your seat, Mr. Holness.

(Mr. Holness takes his seat)

(Cross talk)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, the Member, the Member, the Member -

(The Speaker gavels)

The Member needs to pay attention to the answers, because if he were at page 45...

(Cross talk)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Rubbish!

Mr. PAULWELL: ...and 49, the outcomes were stated...

(Cross talk)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Rubbish!

Mr. PAULWELL: ...and the Member is misleading the Parliament.

Mr. WARMINGTON: That's rubbish!

Opposition MEMBER: Siddung, siddung!

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, if you look at page 47 to 49.

Opposition MEMBER: Siddung!

Mr. WARMINGTON: No, he has -

The SPEAKER: Hold on, nuh man, hold on.

(Cross talk)

Mr. WARMINGTON: He said that he didn't get time to review. You wouldn't expect him to review all of that already.

Mr. PAULWELL: You need to look at page 47 and 49.

Mr. WARMINGTON: He needs time to review it.

The SPEAKER: Well, you can't criticize it then. What's the basis of...?

Mr. WARMINGTON: Rubbish!

(Cross talk)

Mr. McKENZIE: None of you can't cow we dung over here. You talk to your....

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, as I said, in response to the intervention by the House Leader, if the Prime Minister having had these answers prepared and foresight of them, which I didn't, if the answers are there she could have said it. She could have said it. All I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, to you...

The PRIME MINISTER: You can't take a good (Inaudible), properly.

Mr. HOLNESS: ...is that the $6.5 Million spent on travelling to pay respect to ancestors could have been spent on Pinnacle...

(Interruption)

And that is where you would be paying respect to ancestors.

(Heckling)

Mr. Speaker, if it is that you want to just travel to pay respect to ancestors, you could spend it on Pinnacle.

(Heckling)

You could spend it on Pinnacle. Mr. Speaker, that is how you show respect to ancestors.

(Heckling)

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker -

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. Speaker, our -

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Audley,....

(Cross talk/The Speaker gavels)

You know, Mr. Speaker, this distraction about ancestors -

(Cross talk)

No, it is very disturbing. We must pay respect to our ancestors by showing that what they fought for to give us freedom that we are now using it to get our economic freedom and that is not coming from that Government.

The SPEAKER: Question, question.

Mr. HOLNESS: What we hear is leadership that is harkening back to the past and not to the future.

(Cross talk)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: What is the question? Question, question.

Mr. HOLNESS: Young people don't want to hear that.

The SPEAKER: Question. Question time.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's travel...

The PRIME MINISTER: I'm not going to....

Mr. HOLNESS: ...the twenty-five trips that she listed where the answer provided said $15 Million. We have just totalled it and it is in the region of $45 Million.

Dr. PHILLIPS: But the Prime Minister gave you the answer that's...

Mr. WARMINGTON: No, no!

Opposition MEMBERS: No, nooooo!

The PRIME MINISTER: That's so dishonest, that's so dishonest.

Dr. PHILLIPS: (Raising to his feet) Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker...

(Inaudible comment by the Prime Minister)

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...on a Point of Order.

The SPEAKER: Hold on, hold on. We seem to be speaking and not listening and that means we are going around in circles. Minister Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, for the Leader of the Opposition to misrepresent what the Prime Minister has already told him does not accord with the standards of probity and behaviour we expect of anyone in this House.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Absolutely.

(Cross talk)

Dr. PHILLIPS: The Prime Minister, Prime Minister.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker.

Dr. PHILLIPS: The Prime Minister.

Mr. HOLNESS: On a Point of Order, Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Order, Mr. Speaker.

(Interruptions)

The Member has accused me of not following the -

Dr. PHILLIPS: I am not finished making the point.

Mr. HOLNESS: Please, please. You have accused me of not following the standards of probity.

Dr. PHILLIPS: I am not finished making the point.

Mr. HOLNESS: It is in pursuit of probity that I made a courtesy, Mr. Speaker, to point out to the Prime Minister that the written answer did not seem to accord with what she enumerated but did not total.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: And she answered, and she answered.

(Cross talk)

Mr. HOLNESS: She did not give me an answer. I am now providing the total and it is for the Prime Minister to say, if she wants to consult, whether or not the total I had provided is correct. The total figure is $45 Million. How does that compromise probity?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, it compromises it in this way. The Prime Minister has already indicated that the $15 Million relates to her travel and that the other number relates to the Office of the Prime Minister's general staff. It has been said once; it has been said twice.

(Cross talk)

It has been said three times and the Member either persists out of a deliberate effort to misrepresent or he has not understood.

(Cross talk)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, normally because the Member normally displays an intellectual acumen that I would not assail but today I cannot let him go.

Mr. SHAW: He's being...

Mr. HOLNESS: The Prime Minister's answer is to Question one, I undertook ten official trips in 2012 and fifteen official trips in 2013, which includes six same-day return trips. While you did not ask it, referring to me, the total cost of those twenty-five trips was approximately $15.15 Million.

Mr. SHAW: That is what is misleading,

(Interruptions)

Mr. HOLNESS: What can we infer from that?

(Interruptions)

And when we sum the trips, when we sum, when we sum the twenty-five trips the cost we get is $45 Million. And all the Prime Minister has to say is yes; the total cost of the trips is $45 Million. That's all we want to hear.

(Cross talk)

Opposition MEMBER: Best thing for the Parliament is to fire whoever gave you those answers.

(Cross talk)

The PRIME MINISTER: I'm not going to respond to what I answered before. I just want to clarify something, Mr. Speaker...

(The Speaker gavels)

...in that in the 70s and the 80s when we were getting oil from Nigeria we enjoyed it. It wasn't a problem. And just to say no one should assume and the Leader of the Opposition should not assume that there is no economic benefit from Africa. And as a matter of fact, one of our local companies, Grace Kennedy, is presently operating in Ghana.

(Cross talk)

And I am just saying - Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that I don't want anyone to leave with the impression that I'm just talking about ancestors. There are great economic benefits that can be derived in terms of trade and other areas from the continent of Africa. (Applause) It's a very large bloc with markets that we should be trying to explore and to ensure that we can get engage with governments and people in Africa in terms of trade.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes.

The PRIME MINISTER: When I am talking about Africa, I'm not just frivolous or things about... it's important to me of ancestors but there are other issues right now that we could put on the table. I had meetings with several Heads when I visited Africa and it's not true that when I came back I did not speak to the trip in... China, for example.

Mr. PRYCE: It's not true.

(Cross talk)

The PRIME MINISTER: Not true.

(Cross talk)

And, Mr. Speaker, a number of the trips a report is given to Cabinet and the Minister of Foreign Affairs normally gives a report on the trips overseas by the Prime Minister and I have nothing more to say.

A MEMBER: There is nothing...

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, the total cost of Government travel for the last two years of the Administration is $117 Million.

A MEMBER: So whappen to China?

Mr. HOLNESS: The Prime Minister's trip is $45 Million.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Phillips)

Mr. HOLNESS: Wait, wait, wait, wait! So the Prime Minister's travel account for almost 40 per cent of total travel. That's significant. The, the…

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. HOLNESS: Not for $117 Million?

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: No man, maths wrong.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Warmington)

The SPEAKER: That's on the back page.

(Cross talk)

Mr. HOLNESS: Let's be clear; is it $117 Million? $117 Million, that's all we want to know. Mr. Speaker…

(Cross talk/Laughter)

Mr. SHAW: Don't mek Raymond Pryce throw you off. (Chuckles)

(Cross talk)

Mr. HOLNESS: What! Raymond throw me off. Never! Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker…

(Interruptions)

(The Speaker gavels)

The SPEAKER: This is not a joking matter, you know. Everybody seems to be having a good time now.

(Cross talk)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, Government Ministers and Prime Ministers must travel. They are ambassadors of the country.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADELY: (Sighs) Oh God!

Mr. HOLNESS: When the country is facing fiscal constraints as we are and everyone is being asked to exercise frugality and there is cut back and retrenchment...

Mr. CHARLES: Wage freeze.

Mr. HOLNESS: ....we expect that the leaders of the country, the Prime Minister being the prime leader should show an example. Many of these trips, others could have gone in her stead...

Government MEMBER: What!

(Cross talk)

Mr. HOLNESS: ...which would have meant a smaller delegation.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, the government of which I was a part, when we were going through austerity put in place a rigid approval system for travels of Minister and the Prime Minister, himself, restricted himself.

(Heckling)

I restricted myself as Minister of Education refusing to go on many trips on which I was invited, because we had to say to the public, ban yuh belly; we are banning our belly as well.

Government MEMBER: You're campaigning, you're campaigning.

(Cross talk)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker.

Government MEMBER: First of all IMF neva want yuh.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Shaw)

Mr. HOLNESS: Well, a perfect example, the Minister - former Minister of Finance pointed out that when he travelled to China he took two in his delegation.

(Cross talk)

The current Minister took eleven.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Prime Minister…

Dr. CAMPBELL: Weh him tek back?

(Cross talk)

Mr. SHAW: Bring back the North Coast highway to you, though.

(Cross talk)

Yes, I brought back the North Coast Highway.

(Cross talk)

Mr. HOLNESS: My question to the Prime Minister...

(The Speaker gavels)

...is will she consider implementing tighter controls on the travels of her Minister or Ministers and herself in light of the significant travel budget of $117 Million, which, Mr. Speaker, we will be comparing with administrations before to see whether or not any other administration has racked up such a huge bill in travel?

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for listening and I'm asking, Mr. Speaker, if the suspension could be suspended to give us time to review the document...

(Cross talk)

(The Speaker gavels)

...and return with further questions next week. (Applause)

The SPEAKER: Prime Minister.

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker....

(Cross talk)

...the next time a Head invite me to visit to have bilateral and discussions then I am to send a Minister to meet with the Head.

Mr. HOLNESS: If it's possible.

A Government MEMBER: And it was not possible.

(Cross talk)

The PRIME MINISTER: I am sorry for you. Seriously sorry for you.

(Cross talk)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker.

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Paulwell)

The SPEAKER: I thought the Leader of Opposition…

(Cross talk)

Mr. WARMINGTON: No, I need to…

The SPEAKER: Did you hear what the Leader of the Opposition said?

(Cross talk)

Mr. WARMINGTON: No, no, after I…

(Cross talk)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, it's an important point to be made. When Heads of State invite you…

The SPEAKER: No, you can't - you can't...

(Cross talk)

Mr. HOLNESS: No, No, the Prime Minister made a statement.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker....

(Cross talk)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. Speaker, in my brief time as Prime Minister I was invited by at least two Heads of State, one of which I accepted because it was in the interest of Jamaica that I go and speak on behalf of Jamaica regarding PetroCaribé

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: And you flop. (Laughter)

(Cross talk)

The SPEAKER: Hey, don't joke out this thing, man.

(Cross talk)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, it is not all invitations that have to be accepted. And it is always the prerogative to say, Mr. Head of State, this matter seems to be best in the ballpark of my Foreign Affairs Minister or this other Minister...

(Heckling)

...handling the proposal. It is not every invitation that must be accepted. And the Prime Minister must use her discretion in managing public funds frugally.

(Heckling)

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker...

The SPEAKER: Madam Prime Minister, there was no question in that, you know.

The PRIME MINISTER: ...if I were to accept all the invitations I would never spend any time in Jamaica. I just want to make it quite clear. And it's not my problem if others were not invited and I was invited. (Applause/Heckling)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: I only attend those where I know - and when it is discussed at Cabinet it is said it is important to go to these - can you imagine a Head invite you and you send a Minister! You think the Minister would see the Head - the Head would see that Minister? Come on! Come on! Come on! Come on! Come on! Come on!

(Inaudible comments from Mr. Holness)

The PRIME MINISTER: When you are dealing with the international community - we are not dealing with Government and Opposition in Jamaica...

(Heckling)

Mr. Luthur BUCHANAN: When Obama call yu, send Shaw! If Obama call yu, send Audlev!

(Heckling)

(The Speaker gavels)

The PRIME MINISTER: I have not gone on any trip that would not be beneficial to Jamaica and the interest of the Jamaican people!

(Applause)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker, the bunch of rabble-rousers in this... (Inaudible) ...if they could give me a chance to...

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) No, no, no, get to the question, man!

Mr. WARMINGTON: ...if they can give me a chance to speak.

The SPEAKER: Get to the question!

Mr. WARMINGTON: But if I speak - if they make noise...

The SPEAKER: I said get to the question!

(Heckling)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition asked the Prime Minister five questions.

(Heckling)

Mr. CHARLES: Prime Minister, can you keep them quiet?

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. WARMINGTON: And from what I am hearing - Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition asked the Prime Minister five questions, and from what I have heard from the Prime Minister, she has answered one-and-a-half.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: What!

Mr. WARMINGTON: She has answered Question 1; she has not answered the second part of Question 2 which says:

> "Can the Prime Minister indicate the cost of each trip both from local sources and borne by embassies, consulates or missions in the various destinations?"

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. WARMINGTON: In the various destinations.

Question 3 said:

> "Can the Prime Minister indicate who accompanied her on these trips and their roles?"

The SPEAKER: That is all listed out there.

Mr. WARMINGTON: It's all there?

The SPEAKER: It's all listed here.

Mr. WARMINGTON: I didn't hear it. She didn't say it there.

(Heckling)

I didn't have a copy of that!

The SPEAKER: Mr. Warmington!

Mr. WARMINGTON: I am saying, Mr. Speaker - allow me to finish then you can...

Government MEMBERS: Sidung, sidung!

(Heckling)

Mr. WARMINGTON: I said, I have not heard the Prime Minister answer Questions 3, 4, 4(a) or 5. Is it that the Prime Minister will answer these questions subsequently? I haven't heard you answer them!

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: She did! She did!

Mr. WARMINGTON: She didn't give me a copy of that; don't tell me about what is in that paper!

The SPEAKER: So you need a copy then, sir.

Mr. WARMINGTON: She did not answer Questions 3, 4, 5!

The SPEAKER: So you need a copy.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Did she answer Questions 3, 4, 5?

The SPEAKER: She provided the information, man!

Mr. WARMINGTON: She did not answer them! I am asking, will she answer them subsequently? If they are in written form then you can say they are in written form. They were never answered!

The SPEAKER: They are in written form!

Mr. WARMINGTON: You have a copy, I don't have a copy. She didn't provide the House!

The SPEAKER: Okay. So you need a copy man.

(Heckling)

Mr. WARMINGTON: If the questions are asked it's for the information of the House,

so there cannot be just two or three copies to three selected Members, it ought to be shared with the entire membership of the House. And that's why I am saying. I did not hear 3, 4 or 5 answered. If you are saying it is in writing it ought to be...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Check **Hansard**! Check **Hansard**!

The SPEAKER: We will arrange for you to get a copy.

Mr. WARMINGTON: They were not answered! Don't tell me 'bout **Hansard**!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

The SPEAKER: We will get a copy to you, sir. We will circulate a copy.

Mr. WARMINGTON: You are saying that she has them in writing; you are saying that they are in written form!

The SPEAKER: I say to you, Mr. Warmington...

Mr. WARMINGTON: That they are in written form.

The SPEAKER: ...we will provide you with the written copy.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Written copy, yes, because she never said it on her feet!

Government MEMBERS: Sidung! Sidung!

Mr. Luthur BUCHANAN: Sit down now! Sit down now!

Mr. WARMINGTON: Those indisciplined rabble-rousers! Why don't you go back to the farm and the kitchen and the back butteries! Have some discipline for the House! You are in the House of Parliament!

(Heckling)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. Luthur BUCHANAN: That's why yu Councillor leave you!

Mr. WARMINGTON: I run the Councillor! He was fired long time!

(Heckling)

Rasta man, keep quiet!

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Speaker...

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker...

(Heckling)

The SPEAKER: Dr. Wheatley… (Gavels) Dr. Wheatley, you have a question?

Mr. BARTLETT: There are two follow-up questions which I have for the Prime Minister. We were trying to catch her voice - we were trying to catch her eye from this distance. But would you allow...

(Shouting/Cross talk)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Crawford, hold on man! You are getting out of hand now!

Mr. WARMINGTON: What did you smoke today?

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Speaker...

The SPEAKER: Mr. Bartlett.

Mr. BARTLETT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Madam Prime Minister, these two are less contentious, I am sure. The first is the ECLAC which has just been concluded in Cuba. Would the HPM kindly indicate what the specific outcome of this conference was, and what was the specific value that would accrue to Jamaica from your presence?

(*Sotto voce* comments)

The PRIME MINISTER: I don't know what conference you are asking me about. I never attended an ECLAC Conference...

Mr. BARTLETT: The ECLAC Conference in Cuba, in Cuba.

The PRIME MINISTER: I attended a CELAC Conference.

Government MEMBERS: Oooohh! Ooohhh!

(Applause/Heckling)

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Speaker...

(Shouting) (The Speaker gavelled)

Mr. BARTLETT: It only happens, Mr. Speaker that CELAC embraces ECLAC, because the only two countries of the entire hemisphere that were missing, interestingly, were the United States of America and Canada. And that's significant in terms of the follow-up question, if the Prime Minister would then indicate to the country what were the specific outcomes of that conference which had the Heads of the largest and most important economies in the region, except for the United States and Canada? What were the specific outcomes and what was the benefit that accrued to Jamaica from her presence?

(*Sotto voce* comments)

The PRIME MINISTER: Now that you get it right about CELAC, the conference discussed a number of important issues, and it was a conference of the Caribbean and Latin America. We discussed poverty, hunger, inequality, discussions on climate change - I was very strong on climate change - we discussed a number of issues affecting our region.

And so, I can ensure I get a Report and can table the Report in Parliament. But for me to tell you the discussions that took place you will not leave here until about six o'clock tomorrow morning.

Mr. Luthur BUCHANAN: And him couldn't understand it, either!

(Heckling)

Mr. BARTLETT: Madam Prime Minister, the communique that came from the conference afterwards indicated one specific outcome only. And, indeed, it created some concerns in diplomatic circles.

Mr. PAULWELL: There is a point, Mr. Speaker...

Mr. BARTLETT: No, no...

Mr. PAULWELL: Just listen to the Point of Order.

Mr. Speaker, the questions related to travel up to December 2013. That meeting was in 2014, so it's an inappropriate question as a… (Inaudible)

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. BARTLETT: No, Mr. Speaker, but the Prime Minister is on her feet dealing with matters relating to foreign travel and particularly to critical conferences that were attended on behalf of Jamaica. And, therefore, Mr. Speaker, I think that it is quite in order that especially on a matter...

The SPEAKER: No, Mr. Bartlett.

Mr. BARTLETT: ...of this importance...

The SPEAKER: No, no, Mr. Bartlett! Mr. Bartlett!

Mr. BARTLETT: ...on a matter of this importance...

The SPEAKER: The questions require answers to be prepared. You are asking a question now that was not in the original question.

Mr. BARTLETT: So, the answer...

The SPEAKER: So what you will have to do if you are interested in a proper answer is to table the question.

Mr. BARTLETT: So you are making the point that the Prime Minister is not quite prepared to answer these questions?

The SPEAKER: I am saying you must table the questions, sir. You understand the Standing Orders and I don't have to explain it to you.

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Speaker, we will table these questions for the next sitting of the House.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice at the end of 21 days I will ask the Honourable Minister of Local Government the following questions tabled in my name:

Question 1:

Is the Minister aware of the re-deployment/reassignment of Mr. Christopher Powell, who has been serving as Secretary-Manager in the Manchester Parish Council?

Question 2:

Will the Minister advise of the reasons that have prompted this reassignment?

Question 3:

(a) Will the Minister indicate where the officer has been redeployed to?

(b) Can the Minister confirm whether he has actually taken up the assignment by assuming duties pursuant to the redeployment?

Question 4:

In the event the officer has not actually assumed duties, will the Minister advise of any challenges that may be giving rise to such a situation?

The SPEAKER: Dr. Wheatley.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, even though my - even though twenty-one days have expired, as relates to the questions I had asked before...

(Government Members applaud the Prime Minister as she exits the Chamber)

Mr. Luthur BUCHANAN: Well done! Well done!

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, I must thank my colleagues for those spontaneous applause. It is well appreciated.

(Laughter)

(S*otto voce* comments)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) Dr. Wheatley.

(Heckling)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Don't worry yourself, you won't be back here! You won't be back here!

The SPEAKER: Dr. Wheatley!

Dr. WHEATLEY: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Okay.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, I am still waiting on the Minister to answer the questions that I had posed to him, and today is twenty-one days.

Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, I want to at this time give notice that at the expiration of twenty-one days I will be asking the Honourable Minister of Sciance, Technology, Energy...

Mr. Luthur BUCHANAN: Sciance?

Dr. WHEATLEY: Science, Technology, Energy and Mining the following questions:

Question 1:

Will the Minister provide an update on the initiative to incorporate the use of computer tablets in schools?

Question 2:

In the report from the team comprising representatives of the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining, is the Ministry of Education E-Learning Jamaica Co. Ltd., available to this Honourable House?

Question 3:

Will the Minister indicate what will be the nominal cost to students under the Tablets in Schools Programme?

Question 4:

Can the Minister advise as to what is the cost of enabling schools to become wireless hotspots pursuant to the Tablets in Schools initiative?

Question 5:

Will the Minister outline the procurement procedures that have been employed in acquiring tablets to be used in the pilot phase of the project?

Question 6:

What are the key performance indicators pertaining to the pilot that will inform the full roll-out of the Tablets in Schools Programme?

Question 7:

Will the Minister indicate when we will be in a position to access and analyze information gleaned from the pilot phase of the project?

Question 8:

Can the Minister advise when full roll-out of the programme will be brought on stream?

(Heckling)

That's what yu working!

(Inaudible comment from Mr. Luthur Buchanan)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Oh, shut up! Behave yourself!

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. Derrick SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I just want to ensure, sir, that you recall the request from the Leader of the Opposition to, because of the amount of pages, the volume...

The SPEAKER: The amount of information.

Mr. Derrick SMITH: Pardon me?

The SPEAKER: The amount of information.

Mr. Derrick SMITH: I just want you to recall, sir, that he requested to be able to...

The SPEAKER: Follow-up questions.

Mr. Derrick SMITH: ...report and to ask questions on the issue at a future date.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Granted?

The SPEAKER: I conceded that already.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Granted?

The SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr. WARMINGTON: All right.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we will commence with Government Business, Item 5 this afternoon, the Minister of National Security, notice of which was given on the 4th of this month.

The SPEAKER: Minister Bunting.

(Applause)

THE ANTI-GANG BILL

Mr. BUNTING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have before us in the Honourable House today for consideration and approval, the Report from the Joint Select Committee on the Criminal Justice (Suppression of Criminal Organizations) Bill of 2014, sometimes referred to as the Anti-Gang Bill, and indeed, we have the Bill itself.

Mr. Luthur BUCHANAN: Desmond, you cyaan leave!

Miss HANNA: No, you cyaan leave!

(Heckling)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. Luthur BUCHANAN: Desmond. Anti-gang is you? Yu start run!

Mr. BUNTING: Mr. Speaker, how we propose...

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, how we propose to proceed - how I propose to proceed is to let us have the debate on the Report. We will cover all the matters related to the Bill in the debate on the Report, so that when we conclude the debate on the Report, and it is approved, we could just go immediately into a clause by clause examination of the Bill.

So, Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, on June 5, 2013 and July 2, 2013, respectively the Senate, along with this Honourable House, appointed a Special Select Committee to consider and report on the operation of the Bill. The need to establish this Legislation emanated from the visible manifestations of organized crime and gang activities in Jamaica. These include: the high volumes of murders, shootings, and other forms of assault, arson and property damage, occurring over several decades.

Having regard to murders, statistics from 2013 indicate that 78 per cent of murders are gang related. And just for clarification, that doesn't mean that 78 per cent of murders are of persons involved in gangs because, as we all know, many times when gang members are taking reprisals, or counter reprisals, if *dem cyaan ketch quauku dem ketch im shut.* And therefore, you can have many innocent victims who may be family, friends, or just associates of some form or the other, or it could very well just being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Another manifestation we have, Mr. Speaker, is increased corruption, as organized crime and gangs seek facilitation for their illicit activities, or bribe officials to help conceal their crimes and avoid detection. Frequent gunfights between these armed criminal elements and the police result in over 500 gun attacks on the police per year, and

over 200 fatal shootings of criminal suspects annually.

We also have seen declines in the security, and individual community, and national level, over the last four decades. In many of our communities, social instability is brought on by frequent outbreaks of gang violence, killings and intimidations in communities, as well as in business districts which often disrupt, not just commerce but citizens' ability to enjoy public facilities.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on in the manifestations, but at the end of the day it has a huge economic impact on the country. One estimate said that if we had not had our extraordinarily high levels of crime over the last four decades, our economy should be between three times and ten times the size that it is now. And this, Mr. Speaker, doesn't take into account the cost of the pain and suffering of the victims and their families, and the communities.

In addition to these factors, Mr. Speaker, there is also a need for Jamaica to comply with its international obligations. On September 29, 2003, Jamaica ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and is obliged to adopt such legislative and other measures in fulfillment of its treaty obligations. It is with these factors in mind that the Government has moved to enact strong and comprehensive Legislation to confront organized crime, which will suppress and dismantle criminal organizations and their appendages.

After considerable research and extensive collaboration - and I want to emphasize, Mr. Speaker, this was an initiative started by the previous administration. I think it dates back to 2008 or the 2009, early, when there was a conference. I recall being invited to a conference at the Terra Nova...

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. BUNTING: To attend - to attend a conference at the Terra Nova. But, I considered my listening, participation. And they had - I believe there was somebody from the Gang Prosecution Unit of the Office of the State Attorney in Florida, and I believe there was somebody who also was an expert on the efforts in Europe - in Italy, in particular, against the Mafia.

But we have had much collaboration over a number of years, including agencies, such as the police, the AG's Chambers, the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Legal Reform Unit in the Ministry of Justice, those overseas persons as well as members of civil society.

The Bill before this Honourable House with the amendments recommended in the Report, represents a culmination of these efforts. The process of how this Bill is treated, or of how this Bill has been treated, is an example of the Parliamentary system at work. Through a process of consultation, the Joint Select Committee has recommended a number of amendments to the Bill.

However, many public misconceptions and misunderstandings still exist. I wish to treat with some of these up -front. I want to

emphasize, Mr. Speaker, that the Bill does not create or give to the police any additional powers - no additional powers. (Applause) There have been some persons who have attempted to compare this Bill to the Suppression of Crime Act - nothing of the sort. It gives the police no new additional powers. Not similar in the least. (Applause)

What this Bill does is that it creates a new set of offenses that the police and the Director of Public Prosecutions can use in pursuing criminals. The other thing, there has been a lot of concerns about this Bill, and in fact, there were recent public comments as recent as this morning that suggests that somehow this Bill is going to be targeting street level people in inner-city communities only, and that - nothing can be further from the truth.

The fact of the matter is that the core of this Bill, when you really look at it, is encompassed in Clause 7 which targets the leaders, the directing minds, the financiers and facilitators of criminal organizations. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Yes, yes!

Mr. BUNTING: And, Mr. Speaker, these persons do not live in the inner city. They live in Cherry Gardens, or Jacks Hill, or all these places above.

Mr. BUCHANAN: They live behind some big walls, Minister. You know the big wall? High wall around *dem* house...

(*Sotto voce* comments/Laughter)

Mr. BUNTING: And their children probably go to the best schools. In fact, Mr. Speaker, this piece of Legislation should be similar in its effect to the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act in the US, the RICO Act, which is intended to go after the leaders, the financiers...

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Atkinson)

Mr. BUNTING: ...the RICO Statute - thank you for correcting me. We have a former practitioner in the US system, in the person of the AG.

But I think, Mr. Speaker - and the AG can bear me out - that Statute, the RICO Statute allows the leaders of a syndicate to be tried for the crimes which they ordered others to do, or assisted them in doing, closing a perceived loophole that allowed someone who told a man to, for example, murder another, to be exempt from the trial because he did not actually commit the crime personally, particularly if he is in another jurisdiction. This Bill allows for the prosecution of persons not living in the inner-city, but who lead, direct, and finance the operation of criminal groups.

While this Bill is intended to strengthen our crime control measures and send clear signals of what are acceptable norms in our society, we continue on the other track to implement crime prevention initiatives, such as those we spoke of earlier, under the **Citizen Security and Justice** and the **Unite for Change** programmes. So, there is a balancing of our crime control initiatives with our crime prevention initiatives, and both efforts are necessary and they are not mutually exclusive.

Mr. Speaker, the other matter I want to deal with up-front is Clause 15 which generated considerable interest and debate. And there were strong opinions expressed

from members on both sides of the House in the Joint Select Committee. And this matter, I think, Mr. Speaker, has been addressed satisfactorily after much consultation. And I think it is very important that at the end of the day, this House sends a message that we are united against organized crime. And I am happy that we have been able to come to an agreement on this. (Applause)

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am going to turn to the Bill itself. And the Bill is organized into three parts. Part I which contains the Short Title and Interpretation; Part II which sets out the offenses; and Part III, which contains the enforcement provisions, and deals with Regulations and other matters.

The Bill also contains three Schedules: Schedule 1, which 'lists the serious offences which are covered under this Bill; Schedule II which sets out the penalties which the offences in the Bill carry; and Schedule III which outlines the list of consequential amendments necessary to several other pieces of Legislation, should this Bill be introduced as law.

I'll now turn to the provisions of the Bill.

Part 1:

Clause 1 is the usual provision for the Short Title of Act: the Criminal Justice, (Suppression of Criminal Organization) Act 2014; Clause 2 is the Interpretation section of the Bill which defines the terms used. Of particular note are the terms *criminal organization* and *law enforcement officer,* which were both recommended for amendment by the Joint Select Committee.

The term *criminal organization* in the original Bill sought to capture:

> *"any gang, group, alliance, network combination, or other arrangement among three or more persons, (whether formally or informally affiliated or organized and whether or not operating through one or more bodies corporate or other associations"*

So, the three or more persons that, (a), has as one of its purposes, the commission of one or more serious offences, and (b), in relation to which the persons who are part thereof, or participate therein, individually, jointly, or collectively, sub-Clause (b)(i) have engaged in unlawful activity in order to obtain directly or indirectly financial or other material benefit, or to gain power or influence; or (ii), issue threats, or engage in conduct to create fear or to intimidate, or to exert power or influence in communities, or over other persons.

Mr. Speaker, after considerable deliberation around this definition of criminal organization - some changes were recommended as a substitute. And let me just, for completeness, go through the entire definition.

Criminal organization means any gang, group, alliance, network, combination or other arrangement among three or more persons, again, (whether formally or informally affiliated or organized, or whether or not operating through one or more bodies corporate, or other associations) (a), that has as one of its purposes, the commission of one or more serious offences, or - and I want to

stress here because this is the difference - it is now disjunctive, not conjunctive, or (b), in relation to which the person - the persons who are part thereof or participate therein, individually, jointly, or collectively, issue threats or engage in violent conduct to; (i) create fear, intimidate, exert power, or gain influence in communities or over other persons in furtherance of unlawful activity; or (ii) obtain directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit.

A MEMBER: It should be '*and/or.*'

Mr. BUNTING: No, it's not '*and/or'*. The '*and'* gives a completely different meaning from the '*or'*.

A MEMBER: Yes.

Mr. MAIR: Could it be '*and/or"*? ('*and*','*or*')

Mr. BUNTING: No, it's not '*and/or'*.

Mr. MAIR: Or, '*or*'.

Mr. BUNTING: No, the '*and*' gives it a completely different meaning from the '*or*'. In other words, if we stayed with the '*and*', you would have to prove (a) and (b). Now, by putting '*or*', it's either (a) or (b).

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: English is different from Spanish. (Laughter)

Mr. BUNTING: In defining such a group in the Act, this would better enable law enforcement officers to clearly identify and apprehend the individual or groups being targeted. It would also equip the ODPP with critical modem legislation to successfully prosecute individuals engaged in these crimes.

(The Speaker vacated the Chair at approximately 5:56 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, we have had apprehension and successful prosecution in some cases of individuals who are involved in gangs, but in many, many, many instances this has only had a minimal impact in reducing the gang problem.

Traditional law enforcement techniques have led to frustration overtime. Gangs are still active and dominate many communities. Incarcerated gang members still maintain links with other gang members in their respective communities while in jail or prison. Gang members out on bail are able to pursue intimidation and other criminal activities.

There are perceptions within the community that other gang members and the accused gang member will likely get out or get off the case given the long delays in our justice system, and the fact that this gives opportunities to gang to intimidate witnesses, threaten, even kill them in some instances.

The reality is that this cycle cannot be broken by simply apprehending individuals. Consequently, it is important that law enforcement be given the tools to treat with gangs as a group and criminal organizations more generally as a group.

On the other definitional item, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the term law enforcement officer, the Joint Select Committee recommended that paragraph (g) be amended as there were concerns as to the reason for designating as officers, persons who were not trained in law enforcement. And we made a number of consequential adjustments to that.

Essentially, any person who in the opinion of the Minister has the requisite expertise and is so prescribed by the Minister by Order published in the Gazette would be covered under the definition. And any category of persons so prescribed by the Minister by order published in the Gazette would be so covered.

This latter amendment was recommended in the event that, for example, another crime agency were to be started at some point in the future, that could be incorporated into the definition by a simple Ministerial Order.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to Part II of the Bill, which is the offence creating section of the Bill. The penalties attached to the offences in the Bill are set out in the First Schedule.

Clause 3 seeks to criminalize the formation or establishment of a criminal organization. Any person convicted of this offence will face a period of imprisonment of up to 20 years.

Clause 4 makes it an offence to recruit a child to be a part of a criminal organization.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. BUNTING: Any person who is found guilty of such an offence will face imprisonment of up to 20 years.

(Applause)

And, Mr. Speaker, perhaps at this point, I would just jump and perhaps link Clause 16, which speaks to, in a sense, the aggravating circumstances of recruiting a child on the premises or within 300 meters of a school or any other educational institution, Mr. Speaker. That would provide for the imposition of an additional 10 years on the 20 years.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I think this Parliament has to be resolute in sending the strongest message to criminals and criminal enterprises that our schools and institutions of learning are sacrosanct and….

(Applause)

....and that our children must be left to develop their productive minds in a positive nurturing and safe environment.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, Clause 5 criminalizes the act of recruitment of an adult to a criminal organization. The penalty of which is a term not exceeding 20 years.

Clause 6 (1) and (2) of the Bill criminalizes the membership of, participation in and facilitating the commission of a serious offence by a criminal organization.

Clause 6 (3) of the Bill list the factors that the Court may take into account in determining whether a person is a part of or a participant in a criminal organization.

Some amendments were made to these sub-Clauses, Mr. Speaker, but in particular, 6(3)C in the original Bill was removed, and that was the one that originally read. Among the matters that the Court could in fact take into account was (c):

> *"evidence that the person has been arrested or charged for a criminal offence on more than one occasion in the company of a person or persons known to be part of a criminal organization".*

And it was felt that this perhaps impinged on the constitutional right of freedom of association and that in any event, we felt that it wasn't appropriate that just mere

association, you know, on the occasion was sufficient, so the Committee agreed to delete that. So, we move on now, Mr. Speaker, to Clause 7.

Clause 7 seeks to criminalize the act of leadership, management or directing of a a criminal organization.

And as I said earlier, this is a clause that we expect to be similar in effect to the RICO Statute in the US.

And interestingly Mr. Speaker, the RICO Statute is not one that should be remote to us here in Jamaica, because as recently as the case of the extradition of Christopher Coke, he pled guilty to the following charges under that Statute: Racketeering, conspiracy for trafficking large quantities of marijuana and cocaine, and conspiracy to commit assault in aid of racketeering for his approval of the stabbing attack over a marijuana deal in New York City. So, it shows the power of these types of legislation in terms of reaching to the top and the leadership of criminal organizations.

Paragraph 3 of Clause 7 outlines a number of factors again that the Court should take into account in determining whether a person has committed an offence under this section. And it speaks to evidence of possession of articles or documents of a kind that would give rise to a reasonable inference, whether the person knowingly receive any benefit from the criminal activity or the criminal organization and so on and so forth, Mr. Speaker.

With respect to this section, really the concern of the Committee was that the word 'knowingly' be inserted immediately after the words ''the person'. So it's that, whether the person, for example, knowingly received any benefit. And whether the person gave direction, counsel, instruction or guidance or made a request of any person involved in the criminal organization, whether they would have had to have done so knowingly. Whether they sought direction, counsel, instruction or guidance.

Basically, somebody may get a benefit, but quite innocently and couldn't reasonably have known that where the source of the funds was. So we accepted that and we recommended the amendments to that Clause.

Clause 8 treats with the offence of providing a benefit to or obtaining a benefit from a criminal organization. Again, a person who knowingly obtains a benefit from a criminal organization shall, upon conviction face a penalty of imprisonment of up to 15 years. In the case of a body corporate to a fine of up to $50 Million. And it's similar penalties for those who provide the benefit.

Clause 9, any person who conceals, disposes of or shares in the proceeds of a criminal activity of a criminal organization commits an offence under this section and shall face a penalty of imprisonment for up to 20 years. And in the case of a body corporate, to a fine of up to $50 Million.

Mr. Speaker, this is critical. Oftentimes, gangsters or leaders of criminal organizations often conceal their assets in the name of shell companies, in the name of family members, in the name of the girlfriend, baby mother, some trusted person to them, who may feel that they can just do this as a favour. I think we need

now for people to understand that this is - they need to heed the warning that we're making here today, that any knowing facilitation for criminals or criminal organizations where you conceal, dispose of or share in the proceeds could land you in jail for up to 20 years.

Clause 10 of the Bill makes it an offence. Clause 10(1) of the Bill makes it an offence for any person to knowingly, aid or abet a criminal organization or become an accessory before or, after the fact, the carrying out of a serious offence by a criminal organization. This carries a penalty of up to 20 years imprisonment.

Clause 10(2), any person who harbors or conceals a person knowing that the person is a part of or a participant in a criminal organization commits an offence and shall face a penalty of imprisonment for up to 20 years.

Mr. Speaker, with this provision persons who willfully shelter these criminals will now come under greater scrutiny and will run the risk of being severely punished.

It is worth noting that even in circumstances where no person benefited is derived, that individual will still be called to account for such an illegal conduct.

Clause 10(3) of the Bill, criminalizes the inducement of another person to commit a serious offence or engage in an act to intimidate others, in order to promote or facilitate the criminal organization commits an offence. Again, 20 years.

Any person who insights another to commit a serious offence or engage in an act of violence or an act that serves to hinder or prevent the investigation or prosecution of a criminal organization, again, an offence, imprisonment of up to 20 years.

Clause 10(5) criminalizes the act of concealment, disposition of or the tampering with evidentiary material related to the criminal organization.

Clause 11, any person, who in order to gain an unlawful benefit professes to be a part of or a participant in a criminal organization, whether by telling a person that he's a part of or a participant in a criminal organization or otherwise suggesting to any person that he's a part of or a participant in a criminal organization commits an offence.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is an unusual one. This is the case where the person may not actually be part of a criminal organization, but in a sense, is a sort of a con artist who pretends to be part of a criminal organization in order, in order to get an unlawful benefit. That person will not face the full penalty of that of the other offences but still, we feel that this offence should be discouraged, and that person will face a penalty of imprisonment not exceeding five years.

Clause 12, any person who takes any action to prevent, deter or obstruct a person from ceasing to be a part of or a participant in the activity of a criminal organization, or from ceasing to provide a benefit to a criminal organization commits an offence and shall face a penalty of imprisonment for as long as five years upon conviction in a Resident Magistrate's Court and for a period of up to 20

years upon conviction in a Circuit Court.

And Clause 13 is similar, is that it deals with any person who takes any retaliatory action against another person or any of that other person's relatives, friends, associates or property - because you know burning down the house, for example, or business - on account of that other person refusing to become a part of or a participant in a criminal organization, ceasing to be a part of, or a participant in a criminal organization, giving information to a law enforcement officer in relation to a criminal organization, assisting in an investigation of a criminal organization or giving evidence in the prosecution of any participant in a criminal organization commits an offence. This is critically important because this is what criminal organizations have used over time to compromise the justice system, to intimidate witnesses, even young men who may have joined the gang or the criminal organization before they even agree at what they were doing and want to leave; they cannot leave.

In fact Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks and I have seen it a number of times on the police reports in the morning, persons who have been murdered and their crime or their offence has just been that they either refused to join the organization or having joined it as a young person they are attempting to leave it and they can't. So, this essentially now provides imprisonment of up to 20 years for this offence. (Applause)

Clause 14 makes it an offence to impersonate a law enforcement officer by the willful assumption of dress, name, designation, description or impersonation by a person who is not a law enforcement officer. On conviction of this offence the person shall faces a fine of imprisonment of 20 years or to both such fines and imprisonment. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we have heard a number of times gangsters go to people's house, knock them up in the dead of the night, say police, police, and sometimes even have on uniforms which appear to be police or soldiers as a way of making the potential victims drop their guard and more vulnerable. So this would be an additional 20 years for those persons.

Mr. CHARLES: Mandatory.

Mr. BUNTING: Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to Clause 15. This Clause sought to create an offence to prevent a person from using a common name or identifying signs, symbols, tattoo or other physical marking, colour or style of dress or graffiti, or produce, record or perform songs to promote or facilitate the criminal activity of a criminal organization.

Mr. Speaker, when your Committee looked at the sample they - I think it was something like 106 songs. There were relatively few that would have been captured by the construction as it is now and it was felt that it might have a chilling effect on the music more generally, and it was left too vague and open to interpretation or misinterpretation. And then some of the other factors to do with the tattoos, *et cetera* while it may occur on individual occasions, it's not really a part of our culture or yet a part of our culture that the same way that the Crips and the Bloods in L.A. and those places have

identifying tattoos when they are on the road or in prison.

So, Mr. Speaker, this Clause was deliberated at length by the Committee and it was agreed that this provision should focus on the production, the sale or public performance of songs and materials that promote the killing of any person or categories of persons. It was also agreed that those types of songs should be prohibited from being played in public passenger vehicles and any place of entertainment which is accessible to the public. So the Committee recommended, however, that this provision, including the modifications that were agreed to above, be removed as a substantive provision from the Bill and instead be replaced through the Third Schedule to the Bill as a new provision in the Offences Against the Person Act.

And, Mr. Speaker, there were a number of possibilities. I think that the Opposition gave one useful suggestion that they could have codified the common law incitement to violence. That was one. There was another suggestion that it could have been placed in the Obscene Publication Act because obscenity, as defined within that context, would include this type of violence or promotion of violence. But for various reasons it was thought that the Offences Against the Person Act was the best existing law to amend to include this provision. So the Committee also recommended that the penalty here not be the same as the others that we were talking about which would be participated in by gang members or leaders or persons impersonating gang members or leaders, but should be a much more - should we say - modest penalty so it would be amended to say a fine not exceeding $1 Million or in default of that payment imprisonment to a term up to six months in the Resident Magistrate's Courts. (Applause) and I think we were able to find common ground across the aisle on this one and wherever we started we feel satisfied that it achieves - those of us who were strongly in favour of the original clause, which is to send a message to the society of what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. (Applause) It is part of reshaping the norms.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Clause now proposes for inclusion in the Offence Against the Person Act reads, one:

"A person shall not produce, record, sell, import, perform in public, circulate or play, a recording of an audio visual or audio visual communication that (a) promotes the killing of or other serious act of violence against any other persons or category or group of persons, including a member of the security forces, a person who gives information to the police, the so-called informer, a person who makes a disclosure under the Protective Disclosures Act, so called the Whistleblower, women, children and homosexual persons or (b) seeks to promote, encourage or facilitate the criminal activity of a criminal organization and a person who contravenes subsection (1), as I said earlier, shall be liable - commits an offence and shall be liable on summary conviction in a RM Court to a fine not

exceeding $1 Million or a term not exceeding six months. And I should say or to both such fines and imprisonment".

In this section, Mr. Speaker, audio visual or audio visual communication, and I should have put "*audio visual or audio visual communication*" includes:

"(a) an article, report, advertisement or other thing communicated by means of a newspaper, magazine or other periodical; (b) a programme, report, advertisement or other thing communicated by means of television, radio, internet, or any other form of electronic communication; (c) a picture or visual image; (d) a song or other musical arrangement or (e) any other method of communicating information".

And, of course, the consequential amendments to include in the Offences Against the Person Act the definition of criminal organization would have to be made as well.

So, in light of the recommendation to delete Clause 15 of the Bill, Clauses 16 through 22 are now renumbered to be Clauses 15 through 21 respectively. But Clause 16, the original Clause 16 - so that you can follow the original numbering - this Clause of the Bill which will be renumbered as Clause 15 introduces the offences and penalties of the Act. For ease of reference the offences and penalties have been placed in tabular form in a separate Schedule of the Act. The ready advantage of utilizing this method is that by going to the Second Schedule of the Act at a glance one is able to not only identify the various offences under the Act, but also the accompanying penalties in the various offences. It is a one-stop reference where all the offences, associated penalties are provided for. There were different opinions, Mr. Speaker, during the Committee whether we should draft it like that in a Schedule or in the clause that creates the offence. But I think we eventually acceded to the professionals, the Parliamentary draftspersons who do this all the time and to get some consistency across our laws.

I already spoke to section 16(2) which sends the message that schools and other educational institutions, places of learning are sacrosanct.

And I would only point out one other thing, Mr. Speaker. It is a technique of criminal organizations internationally, not just in Jamaica, to use children and to recruit children for criminal activities. They do this for a number of reasons. One, especially in Third World countries or even in First World countries where you have inner-city communities with poor socio-economic circumstances these youngsters are vulnerable. They oftentimes drop out of school before age 15 and are unattached, oftentimes are fatherless and seeking some sense of belonging and they are very vulnerable to criminal organizations.

The second is, they feel that these youngsters, if caught, will .get softer treatment by law enforcement, first they will be less suspicious of them and if they are even caught, the law enforcement system, including

the judicial system will be softer on them.

The third thing, and we have seen in Jamaica in a sense these youngsters oftentimes can be brainwashed into being the most vicious perpetrators of crime. And we had only last year a young 16-year old arrested in Kingston already wanted for 10 murders at 16. So, Mr. Speaker, it's very important that we treat this thing of recruiting around the schools with the utmost gravity and 30 years quite frankly, is not even enough but I don't know if we want to start going into 100 years and 200 years in terms of penalty, but it's a start.

Clause 17 of the Bill, Mr. Speaker, has recommended to be renumbered Clause 16.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavelled) The Minister's time for speaking has expired.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, we now ask for an extension of the Minister's time of 15 minutes to allow him to complete his presentation.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Minister's time be extended by 15 minutes in order for him to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Minister.

Mr. BUNTING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Clause 17, which will be renumbered as Clause 16, gives the Act extraterritorial effect. Any citizen of Jamaica or person who (is) not a citizen but ordinarily resident in Jamaica who carries out an act or omission outside of Jamaica, which had it been committed in Jamaica would have been an offence under this Act, commits an offence and is liable to be prosecuted as if the offence had been committed in Jamaica.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want you to understand the intent of this section. We oftentimes have leaders of criminal organization in Jamaica who whenever they are out to put hits on their opponents they fly out, they leave the country so that at the time it occurs they have an alibi. I was far away. I was in Canada or I was in England or in some other Caribbean territory. But with modem telecommunications that doesn't hamper them at all.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we are going to reach out and touch them in cases where they are committing these offences. And I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, when you combine this with the cooperation that we get from several of our partner nations through our mutual legal assistance treaties, which in combination is going to strengthen our capacity to tackle the transnational scope of crime and the issue of criminals being outside of a particular jurisdiction, this is going to be critically important in ensuring that criminals answer to their acts of criminality. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to Part III of the Bill. Clause 18 which will be renumbered as Clause 17 and Clause 18 (1) provides that offences will be heard and determine by a judge and shall be without preliminary hearings and committal proceedings.

Member of this Honourable House should understand, and most probably know that it has become a regrettable feature of our justice system that witnesses who give testimony before the Court are often intimidated,

physically harmed and as the Member from North East St. Catherine said, and even murdered by criminal elements. The requirements for the attendance of witnesses to attend preliminary hearings and give direct evidence, prolongs this exposure to inappropriate interference, intimidation, physical harm and peril. Not only are witnesses threatened and intimidated, but sometimes even jurors are also intimidated and threatened by criminal elements.

This threat to the very foundation of the administration of our justice system is very real and must not be allowed to continue to pervert the system, Mr. Speaker. Witnesses must be allowed to discharge their duties free from fear. Clause 18 (1) is therefore cognizant of the above realities and seeks to address them by reducing these threats.

A critical thrust of this proposed legislation is that it targets the leaders, financers, and facilitators of organized crime. Securing witnesses testimony witnesses who can provide direct evidence against the higher echelons of those involved in organized crime will be critical. It is therefore vital that the environment in which such key witnesses provide testimony engenders the confidence of these witnesses not only with regard to their physical safety, but also with to respect of the receiving of their testimonies.

The Committee paid deliberate and careful attention to safeguards which have been instituted to address the above concerns in order to balance both the interest of the administration of justice and constitutional provisions.

It may be noteworthy to mention some of the safeguards which the proposed Act seeks to institute, aimed at protecting the identity of a witness. A particular one I want to speak to, Mr. Speaker, the Court may direct that no particulars of the trial, other than the name of the accused, the offence charged and the verdict and sentence shall be published without the prior approval of the court. Where the court has issued a directive in relation to any of the above measures, a person shall not publish any information in contravention of such direction, and if he does he commits an offence and shall be liable to fine or imprisonment or both fine and imprisonment. This is not unique to this Bill, or not unique to this jurisdiction in extraordinary circumstances courts have being provided with these powers intended to protect the identity from the general public and also to preserved the life and safety of the witnesses. (Applause) And this is a particular feature that is important all over the world where you are dealing with like mafia trials and that sort of thing.

Mr. Speaker, Clause 19 provides that Orders made under this Section are subject to affirmative resolution. Clause 19 (2) empowers the Minister to amend any monetary penalties prescribed by this Act by Order which is also subject of affirmative resolution.

Clause 20, again which would be renumbered as Clause 19, the clause empowers the Minister to make regulation subject to affirmative resolution for the better carrying out of the purposes of this Act. These

regulations may provide for imposition of penalty on summary conviction of a fine not exceeding $1 Million or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months or to both fine and imprisonment.

Clause 21, this Clause provide for the amendments of enactment specified in the Third Schedule these include amendments to the Constabulary Force Act. Clause 21 which will be renumbered as Clause 20. These include amendments to the Constabulary Force Act, the Criminal Justice Administration Act, the Defence Act, the Finger Print Act, the Parole Act, the Unlawful Possession of Property Act, and the Offences Against the Person Act.

Clause 22 which should be renumbered as Clause 21. This Clause allows for a review of the Act to be conducted by a Joint Select Committee, no later than five years after the commencement of the Act. This provision was recommended for amendment. Your committee, Mr. Speaker, felt that they would recommend that the Act be reviewed in three years rather than five, given no later than three years.

And now, Mr. Speaker, I now move to Schedule I as was indicated in Clause 7 Schedule I, the list of offences which are considered to be serious offences under this Act. Other offences not included in that Section but were recommended by the committee for inclusion are, (1) specified offences under the provisions of the Agricultural Produce Act. (2) Specified offences under the Country Fires Act and (3) specified offences under the Praedial Larceny (Prevention) Act. And as you imagine, Senator Norman Grant was very strong in adding these provisions. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, as the son of a farmer myself, and the brother of a farmer who suffers literally monthly, if not weekly from praedial larceny, I can tell you that the idea of somebody stealing a bunch of banana or a few pod of ackee, or a few pounds of fish out of a fish pound that is dated now. Literally praedial larceny now is conducted by organized criminals. They come with a truck; they come with persons armed with assault rifles. If the farmer comes up upon them they don't run, they fire at him. This is now serious, business making serious money, millions of dollars. When they come they don't steal a cow or a heifer, they steal the whole herd, right, or if they come to the farm they dig out all the yam. Now, so we want to recognize that gangs and organized criminal groups are now engaging in diverse forms of illegal activities including things like praedial larceny which at one time we would not associate with organized crime.

Many of these illegal activities themselves constitute serious offences which have egregious effect, not only on individuals, but on our country. Schedule I, while not exhaustive, seeks to capture a substantial list of the prohibited activities, the commission of which are deemed as serious offences under this Bill.

I turn now, Mr. Speaker, to Schedule II. The original Schedule II of the Bill sets out the description of the offences in this Bill in the first column indicates the relevant sections and sets out the corresponding penalty in the

second column. It was, however, recommended by the committee to delete the heading *second column* and substitute therefore, the heading *third column.* And insert immediately above the heading *relevant section,* the heading *second column.* And delete the entries relating to Clause 15. And when we come to the Committee we will go through that in a little more detail.

Schedule III, as was mentioned in Clause 21, renumbered as Clause 20, this schedule specifies the legislation and the relevant provisions in those pieces of legislation which will be amended upon the passing of this legislation, I already outlined them, the Constabulary Force Act *et cetera*.

And finally Mr. Speaker, the Memorandum of Objects of Reasons, I won't read the entire thing, but just the first paragraph of it states; the activities of criminal organizations present a danger to public order and safety and the economic stability in Jamaica. However, the existing laws of Jamaica failed to adequately disrupt, suppress and deal effectively with organized crime and the activities of criminal organizations. Consequently, this Bill seeks to create offences for the disruption and suppression of criminal organizations in order to restore a sense of security in the Jamaican society and strengthen the capacity of law enforcement agencies to deal with crime effectively.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Members of the Joint Select Committee, particularly those who are in this House, who did a lot of work and made some very useful recommendations. And the many concerns which were presented by interested civil society groups, wide cross-sections of NGO's, Norman Manley Law School various interested groups; we thank them for their suggestions. Not all of them we could adopt because I think many of them arose out of a misunderstanding of the Bill and some there were just frankly disagreements but we tried to incorporate all them.

And the - just recently I have been having discussion with the Minister of Justice, the Member from East Rural St. Andrew who stepped out but who interestingly was one of the strongest supporters of the Bill outside of Clause 15. In fact, he thought it needed to be tougher, but to address the concerns about the scraping up, you know a lot of persons felt will this give the police powers to just scrape up, and it doesn't. And I, nonetheless we made a special effort to, and it was recommended by the Member from, I think it was championed by the Member from Central St. Catherine who wanted us to insert a clause which we did, and my staff could help me, but it was in terms of determining membership in a criminal organization. Oh, yes, it is in dealing with Clause 6 and it was to - the concern was that innocent persons, but who may happen to come from crime prone or otherwise vulnerable or volatile communities could be labeled as members of a gang just by virtue of where those individuals live. So we included a new subsection (4) of Clause 6 which reads as follows;

> "*notwithstanding subsection (3), a person's place of residence shall not be the sole factor in detraining whether the*

person is a part of or participant in a criminal organization".

The drafters told us that this would have been assumed, but out of an abundance of caution to ensure that we address the concerns, we included it. (Applause)

And, Mr. Speaker, in the recent discussion with, as I said, the Minister of Justice and the Member from East Rural St. Andrew, we are looking at suggestions of how administratively, not just to address risk under the offences created under this Bill, but for innocent persons being arrested and not being able to get their freedom within the timeframe as prescribed by the law; that we may need to look at some options, perhaps strengthening the Public Defender's staffing, or strengthening the...

Mr. CHUCK: The Public Defender or JP?

(Laughter)

Mr. BUNTING: ...the staffing of the Office of the Public Defender...

Mr. CHUCK: Oh.

Mr. BUNTING: ...or perhaps - so for example, we could use Justice of the Peace. We want to explore other administrative ways that we could assist such persons from not having to languish unnecessarily in police lockups.

Miss GRANGE: Make them.

Mr. BUNTING: And again, a sort of independent check and balance within the system. So we're quite happy to look at that as an administrative safeguard in addition to the clause - the new subsection in the Bill.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the contribution of all the Members and I look forward to us moving forward in a united way in this House and the Senate. And I invite other persons or Members to make their comments on the Bill this evening if they so like, of if not, I intend to close next week Tuesday, Mr. Speaker, so they would have an opportunity between now and then.

Thank you.

(Applause)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Smith.

Mr. D. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, let me just say upfront that the Opposition supports the Bill and very grateful of the - what's taking place in Parliament this evening. Mr. Speaker, I will only make some general comments, seeing that I really didn't have the exposure on the Committee. At the time when I returned to the portfolio I think the Committee was just about - had finished its deliberation. So the Committee Members in this House will go more in length and a lot more detail on the Committee's Report and indeed, aspects of the legislation.

We on this side welcome the progress that has been made over the past few months in terms of reviewing the provisions and moving forward towards its implementation. The fact is that this Bill, like many of the important pieces of legislation being piloted through the House by the present Government, was conceived and first drafted during the 2007 to 2011 Administration of the JLP. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yeah!

Mr. D. SMITH: So it's our baby and we have no intention at any stage to abandon the baby, nor to throw out the baby with the bath water.

Mr. ATKINSON: Another baby abandoned by their parents.

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. SMITH: Mr. Speaker... oonu leave me alone.

(Laughter)

Mr. SMITH: ...Mr. Speaker, I'm not saying this to inflame any rivalry between the two sides of the House as to the ownership of the Bill, I'm only putting things in the proper perspective as I deal with issues and concerns that are still alive.

If you will recall in January 2010, the then Minister of National Security, Mr. Dwight Nelson, in a public statement, described the then impending Anti-Gang Legislation as draconian. However, he did emphasize that the proposed measures were necessary, as organized crime was posing:

> *"The greatest threat to citizen's security in the Caribbean*"**.**

He was addressing a UNDP workshop on citizen security in the Caribbean.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: How many Ministers you people change?

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, the then Minister pointed out that the increase in activities of criminal gangs was having a negative impact on the foreign exchange earnings in the legitimate sectors such as tourism, banking, through their money laundering services and also posed a threat to the regions garnering foreign exchange aid as well as negatively affecting our diplomatic relations with other countries. Mr. Speaker, I don't have to explain to you or this House, how serious these threats were to the stability of the nation, and why this developing situation forced us to draft this kind of legislation as a solution to that threat. Our planned response was to target, infiltrate and dismantle those gangs, and identify and arrest their members in the process.

On August 17, 2011, less than four months before the General Election, the *Gleaner* reported under the headline, '*Anti-gang, DNA Bills days away from Parliament'*.

Mr. BUNTING: August 29?

Mr. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, the article went on to state:

> *"Two critical pieces of proposed law were currently being examined by the Legislative Committee of Cabinet. The Committee was combing through the proposed statutes clause by clause before Cabinet gives the green light for them to be sent to Parliament***'.**

Now, Mr. Speaker, let us fasttrack to February 2012, when the current Administration was only two months in office. The JLP was forced to issue a statement describing an impression that was being given by the new Minister of National Security that the former Government failed to implement a crime policy drafted in 2007. And our comment was that statement was utter rubbish.

Mr. Speaker, according to a release by then Opposition Spokesman on National Security, the current Member for North East St. Andrew, he said the National Security

Policy of 2007, outlined by Minister - former Minister Peter Phillips, had eight primary objectives all of which were not only implemented, but improved on by the Jamaica Labour Party. Mr. Chuck also argued that the former JLP Government outlined new strategies, which include improving the management and capabilities of the police force; enacting appropriate legislation and improving community safety and security as a crime fighting tool.

Mr. Speaker, I say this just to ensure that the records will state that the then Government, now Opposition, at no time took its eye off the ball as far as national security is concerned.

I've taken note of the Government's effort to review the Bill since it took office in January 2012, and I noted that attempts were made by this Administration to do several things:

- Some, eliminating the distinction and separation between criminal gangs and organized criminal groups and instead utilizing the single all encompassing term of criminal organization.
- Another one, revising according to the definition of criminal organization and associate offences and penalties.
- Three, ensuring that the proposed penalties for offences related to the criminal organization include the penalties previously recommended in relation to both organized criminal groups and criminal gangs to provide the Court with a full range of sentencing options. There are others.

However, Mr. Speaker, it is evident that these were the very provisions of the Bill, which have delayed its passage through Parliament up to now. And therefore, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the Government has delayed this Bill for two years for no good reason. Mr. Speaker - and I'd really like the Minister, when he comes to close the debate, to tell the House and indeed the nations, what was the real reason why the delay lasted for two years.

Mr. Speaker, Bills like these...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Bunting)

Mr. D. SMITH: ...Mr. Speaker, Bills like these are not something to play around with against the background of criminals, gunmen otherwise running loose around the country, because too many lives are at stake while we continue to dilly dally with the provisions. And I wouldn't like to think that it was just an effort to claim paternity while all of this was happening.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Lord Jesus! Oh Lord!

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I raised these points because I've heard it suggested that the Opposition has been stalling the Bill, a statement which obviously is totally untrue. In fact, we've given support; strong support on virtually every section of the Bill, except for those clauses which we feel would threaten the human rights of our citizens. Mr. Speaker, the Bill is primarily aimed at dismantling of criminal gangs in Jamaica, with a view to

curtailing the high incidence of crime and violence. And that is exactly why we try to introduce from 2011, and we've continue to support the efforts since January 2012.

Mr. Speaker, we're happy that we were on the same page as the Civil Society Bodies and the representatives of the Norman Manley Law School in terms of our concerns about how the provisions would sit with the Constitution and the Charter of Rights. Mr. Speaker, we're happy that we're at a stage where the police finally will have a Bill, which can assist them in tackling the scourge of criminal organizations operating in our country with more authority. However, Mr. Speaker, Government needs to understand that simply passing the Bill is not the remedy for reducing crime and violence in Jamaica; it is only another step in the right direction.

I hope the Minister takes note of the data provided by the Jamaica Constabulary Force which showed that between 1999 and 2012 the security forces seized over 12,000 firearms and nearly 170,000 rounds of live ammunition from criminal elements.

Mr. Speaker, considering that this massive amount of weapons and ammunition is only the total of what was seized, we must seriously consider how we are going to plug the loopholes through which weapons and ammunitions are flooding our country and are so readily available to criminals. This must be a matter of serious concern because we are not producing either weapons or ammunitions in Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, this might be a convenient point in my presentation to bring to the attention of the House certain bits of correspondence, letters, copy letters which have been passed onto me, and I'd like to read them, Mr. Speaker, with your permission. The first one was dated the 18th of December and it was written to Dr. Kenroy Wedderburn, Chief Executive Officer, Firearm Licensing Authority at Worthington Terrace and it says:

"Dear Mr. Wedderburn,

Re: Ammunition Reloading Machine.

As I read the article printed on December 8, 2013 on the front page of the Observer, I became overly concerned, as it seems to be referring to the reloading machine at the Jamaica Rifle Association. The membership has raised the question time and time again on the legality of the machine and has made repeated requests for documentary evidence on its legality, licensing and guidelines of operation.

These requests, however, seemed to have been ignored by the managing committee. This machine was being operated in an unsecure area, even by schoolchildren, with no obvious sign of accountability and this was done with the knowledge of the then President, Retired Colonel Audlev Carter, Vice President, Errol Lee, Dennis Lee and other members of the managing committee.

I understand how important it is that equipment with these capabilities should carry high levels of responsibility, security and accountability, as falling into the wrong hands could result in more chaos and gun crimes in our society.

I hope that bringing this to your attention will urge you to conduct a thorough investigation of this machine and ensure that all requirements and guidelines"

(Cross talk)

Mr. PRYCE: Mr. Speaker, a point of order. A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. Speaker…

The Deputy SPEAKER: Just a moment...

Mr. D. SMITH: Am I being interrupted, sir?

The Deputy SPEAKER: Well, there is a Point of order, Mr. Smith.

Mr. PRYCE: Mr. Speaker, the reason why I rise on a point of order and requesting for permission to speak from a seat other than my own.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Permission granted.

Mr. PRYCE: I wonder if the subject about which that letter is written is similar to one where I heard, I believe it was, the Commissioner of Police, certainly somebody of high rank on the Constabulary, indicating to the media that the information similar to what is being read had been provided to them and was the subject of a high level investigation. I wonder if we might be running the risk of compromising the effectiveness of that investigation by reading into public record assertions about individuals who have not been given an opportunity to defend themselves. I'm suggesting that natural justice would at the very least be brought into a state compromise were we to continue in this regard. I humbly ask for your jurisdiction on whether or not we should continue.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Smith, I would ask based on the Point of order that you desist from...

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, as far as I am concerned there is no accusation being levied here.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, there is.

Mr. BUNTING: Yes ...accusation of children having access to weapons.

Mr. D. SMITH: There is no accusation being levied here. Mr. Speaker, what is in this letter is already in public domain. It has been in the newspaper, the *Observer* newspaper; I read it in the *Observer* newspaper, Mr. Speaker. In fact, there is a second letter. Mr. Speaker, because of lack of action, there is a second letter dated the 28th of January written to the Commissioner -

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Smith, having given due consideration, Mr. Smith, I will have to ask that you do not read the letter into the record based on the point of order.

Mr. D. SMITH: Okay, Mr. Speaker, a letter was written on the 28th of December to the Commissioner highlighting major concerns about what persons consider to be manufacturing of illegal small arms, based on what was identified as an ammunition making machine. I spoke to this, Mr. Speaker, at the time when I brought to the House's attention the fact that 170,000 rounds of illegal ammunition have been identified by the police. And, in fact, Mr. Speaker, this year so far 1,029 of illegal ammunition have been seized by the police. So I make the point only,

Mr. Speaker, calling on the Minister to - when he's closing the debate to update the House and, indeed, the nation on the status of this investigation, which the Opposition considers very serious because this second letter was also copied to the Minister of National Security and the Minister of Justice. So I repeat myself by asking the Minister when he's closing the debate, he updates the House on the status of the investigation, because this…

(Cross talk)

Mr. PRYCE: Mr. Speaker.

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Smith is still on the floor, please.

(Cross talk)

Continue, Mr. Smith.

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, we can't have question being asked on an issue of this nature and there are persons who are prepared to find reasons to cover it up or don't want to bring it in the public domain. It's already in the public domain.

Mr. ATKINSON: He's in charge of policy not operations.

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, so I will leave it with the Minister at this stage. It might be mischief, but then the Minister needs to assure the nation that, indeed, it is mischief. If it is not, then he needs to tell us what is the state of the investigation.

Mr. Speaker, the police have also provided data to show that they made 22,000 arrests over the same period for gun-related crimes. The question is how many of these cases have been tried and concluded and have led to punishment for those convicted? We need to take a serious look at the same time at the court system and how effective it is in dealing with these cases as quickly as possible so that witnesses and even the police themselves can move on their lives and their duties with some urgency.

Mr. Speaker, we also need to look at the issue of overcrowded prisons where we hope to detain the guilty ones. How many more prisoners can we pack into Tower Street and St. Catherine Correctional Centres?

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Natalie, is a long time him don't talk. (Inaudible)

Mr. D. SMITH: I also note that in their submission the police raised the issue of "the scavenging of public infrastructure by these gangs". It is obvious that the scavenging of public infrastructure can be for one sole purpose and that is for the scrap metal trade. The Minister needs to have this inference investigated and let us know whether resumption of the scrap metal trade export trade is still leading to the loss of our public infrastructure. We cannot overlook the results of this level of crime which has serious implications for the economy.

Mr. Speaker, when this Bill is passed, Mr. Speaker, I think we all accept that it won't be a panacea for crime, but I think we all recognize that it will place tremendous responsibility on the shoulders of all us, in particular the Constabulary Force because it is felt in some quarters that what this Bill is doing is giving a *carte blanche,* a blank cheque, so to speak, to the security forces to return to the period of the Suppression of

Crime Act between 1974 until it was repealed, I think it was 1994, some twenty years after.

Mr. Speaker, I have already said we support this. This was our baby. But there are certain pitfalls that we need to be concerned about, because this can win or lose it, it can lead to a total breakdown between the security forces and primarily the inner city communities throughout the country.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Boy, Derrick, you throw weh the baby wid the bath water, you set the baby a sea.

Mr. D. SMITH: However, Mr. Speaker in closing, as I said the other Members who served on the Committee…

(Cross talk)

As I said, Mr. Speaker, the Members who served on the Committee will give some in-depth - more in-depth analysis of the Report and, indeed, the legislation. However, we must thank the Joint Select Committee which studied the Bill and the Minister - I would like to thank the Minister who chaired the Committee particular for the willingness to embrace so many of the points raised by the various stakeholders and agreeing to make the necessary amendments. I believe that we have a Bill here that can form the basis of a more effective attack on crime and violence in the society, but we need to understand that it is not one of those events that we can take our eyes off the ball after scoring the first goal.

Mr. Speaker, as the police pointed out in their submission, the current level of crime in the country has done severe damage to our economy as well as our international image in which we are now seen as *'the violent, lawless and insecure country".* One in which visitors might be at risk, reducing both citizens and investor confidence in our country. This is certainly not a platform on which we can build a country that is seen as the place of choice to live, to work, to raise families and enjoy ourselves.

Mr. Speaker, these are brief comments on it and I'd like again to reinforce that is it is our baby and we support the Bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, whilst we made the request for the Member to have desist - from the letter, which he introduced, I would want to further ask that the Leader of Opposition, that the portion of the letter that he read prior to our request be struck from the records to protect those persons who were named into the record at this time.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Smith.

Mr. D. SMITH: Yes, sir.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The House Leader Acting has made a specific request of you.

Mr. D. SMITH: I didn't hear that, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The section of the letter that read that it be withdrawn in order to protect any person or individuals that may be so affected.

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I am very reluctant to make a decision now. The fact that is continuing ask the House... (Inaudible)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Turn on your microphone. The Members are not hearing you, turn on your microphone.

Mr. D. SMITH: In view of the fact that the debate is continuing until next week, Mr. Speaker, I ask that you give me leave to consult - to see if I'm really inclined or prepared to withdraw.

Opposition MEMBER: Hear, hear! (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am, therefore, asking that we suspend the debate to continue next Tuesday, as other Members have indicated that they would like to contribute to the debate.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the debate be suspended until the next sitting of the House.

Put to the House and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, it is not intended to do any further business today. I, therefore, ask for the adjournment of the House until next Tuesday, February 18, 2014 at 2:00 p.m.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that this Honourable House adjourns until next Tuesday, February 18, 2014 at 2.00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) This Honourable House now stands adjourned.

The House accordingly adjourned at approximately 7:12 p.m.

TUESDAY, February 18, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:22 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

MR. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House.

MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security

HON. ROGER HAROLD CLIFFORD CLARKE, CD, (PNP), Westmoreland, Central, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce

REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education

HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, Northern, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service

HON. NATALIE GAYE NEITA-HEADLEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sports and Deputy Leader of the House

HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, Attorney General, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central

DR. KENNETH LEIGH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, West Central

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern

MR. PAUL LENNOX BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Andrew, West Rural
MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central
MR. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern
DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern
MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western
MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern
MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern
MR. DESMOND GREGORY MAIR, (JLP), St. Catherine, North Eastern
MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western
MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western
MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern
MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern
MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern
MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western
MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western
MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern
MR. DARYL WESLEY PHILLIP VAZ, (JLP), Portland, Western
MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western
DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. Desmond Mair.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

The SPEAKER: Visiting with us today are students and teachers from Titchfield High School, sixty (60) students, (Applause) and twenty-nine (29) students from Meadowbrook High School. (Applause)

Before we get down to today's business, let me just say very briefly that what happened last week in this Chamber is not short of a disgrace and I will be insisting on a greater level of decorum as of today. One of the first measures that will be implemented is that Members will not be allowed to move around from their seats, and we have a classical example, the last person that will do that today. Mr. McKenzie.

(Cross talk/Laughter)

I'm going to ask Members to remain in their seats.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker...

The SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr. WARMINGTON: ...I've consistently raised the issue with you of

members who consistently disrespect the Standing Orders of this House as it relates to the Prayer that's in here. And I have asked you before to instruct the Members who are called upon each week to offer Prayer to read what is here. And we keep on hearing - it says here:

"..the safety, honour and happiness of The Queen... "

Not happiness and.... of the Leader of this Land.

A MEMBER: I agree with you, I agree with you.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Until the Standing Orders are rewritten to state that, we must respect what is here.

A MEMBER: First time.

Mr. WARMINGTON: And if we are the leaders of this country and we fail to respect the very laws that we make and what we set down to guide ourselves, how do we expect the country to follow us? And I keep on raising this with you, Mr. Speaker, we need to follow and you need to instruct Members and if they ignore your instructions then you take action. But you need to read what is here.

The SPEAKER: I think the solution to the problem is that the Marshal will, in offering Members the opportunity to say the Prayer that they agree to stick to what is written.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Otherwise, they don't read it.

The SPEAKER: Otherwise, we move on to somebody else.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Right, I've been saying that all along.

The SPEAKER: And if there is general consensus that we need to revise the Prayer then we take the necessary steps to do so.

(Applause)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Until then.

(MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, Eastern, entered and took her seat.)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I should advise the Members that there is a proposed draft of a new Prayer and we intend to have an early meeting of the Standing Orders Committee to deal with that, but until then we will abide by what is written.

(Cross talk)

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Tourism will be making a Statement at a later time today.

(Cross talk)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House, a copy of the following:

- **Ministry Paper No. 16**
  Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Commission for the Financial Year 2011/2012
- **Green Paper No. 1**
  on a Dolphin Policy for Jamaica

- White Paper on a Policy towards Orchid Conservation in Jamaica
- **Aeronautical Telecommunications Limited (AEROTEL)**
  Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements For the Financial Year 2012/2013
- **National Housing Trust**
  Annual Report and Financial Statements for the period April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012
- **The Anti-Dumping and Subsidies Commission**
  Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for the Financial Year 2009/2010
- **Factories Corporation of Jamaica Limited**
  Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for the Financial Year 2012/2013
- **Jamaica Ultimate Tyre**
  Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for the Financial Year 2012/2013
- **Green Paper No. 2**
  Entitled
  "Towards A National Community Tourism Policy and Strategy 2014"

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

Mr. CHUCK: Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Chuck.

Mr. CHUCK: I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move the following motion:

Whereas it was anticipated that the Electoral Commission would be responsible for the National Registration and Identification of all citizens; and

Whereas the Electoral Commissioners, the Returning Officers and electoral offices are not fully employed outside the election periods and are presently underutilized;

Be it Resolved that the Government bring the relevant legislation to start and complete the National Registration and Identification System to Parliament urgently: and

Be it Further Resolved that the Electoral Commission be renamed as the National Registration Commission to register every Jamaican citizen from birth or naturalization; and

Be it Further Resolved that the Electoral Commission (renamed the National Registration Commission) continue its work to oversee and conduct national elections.

(Applause)

(MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern entered and took her seat.)

(HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western, entered and took his seat.)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance will answer Question 8 and I will do Question 10.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Mair.

Mr. MAIR: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Finance and Planning be kind enough to answer Question No. 8 tabled in my name.

(MR. KEITH ANTHONY WALFORD, (PNP), St. Ann, South Western, entered and took his seat.)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker.

Question:

Can the Minister advise when the FINSAC Commission of Enquiry report will be tabled in Parliament.

Answer:

The FINSAC Commission of Enquiry since its inception in June 2010 - there's a typo here - has incurred expenses amounting to $111,440,180.19. But to date a report is yet to be submitted by the FINSAC Commission of Enquiry, and I am unable to tell you when the Commissioners will provide such a report.

Mr. MAIR: Through you, Mr. Speaker. Minister, would you agree that the reason why the Commissioners - although the Commission of Enquiry has been completed – why the Commissioners have not been able to put together the Report and present it to the Governor-General is due to a lack of funding and, if so, in what amount?

Dr. PHILLPS: No, I would not so agree.

(MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition, entered and took his seat.)
(MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. MAIR: But in your closing remarks of the Budget Debate of 2012 and 2013, you mentioned this matter of the Commission of Enquiry into the financial meltdown, and you said that the Ministry of Finance is prepared to honour the invoices for work done specifically to writing of the Final Report.

So, are you saying that the reason why the Report has not been completed is not due to a lack of willingness of the Ministry of Finance in providing the funds to complete the Report?

Dr. PHILLIPS: We provided resources in the calendar year just - I think Five Million Dollars ($5M) in the current fiscal year, and we provided rental costs and other things. We had indicated that we would provide costs that would cover any stenographic work, but there is no Report that has been forthcoming to be typed and prepared. We would cover those costs whenever it comes forward.

Mr. MAIR: Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, the Commission of Enquiry Act, Clause 13 - and if I may read Clause 13, and I quote:

> *"The Governor-General may direct what remuneration, if any, shall be paid to any Commissioners acting under this Act and to their secretary, and to any other persons employed in or about any such Commission, and may direct payment of any other expenses attendant upon the carrying out of any such Commission or upon any proceedings for any penalty under this Act, such sum so directed to be paid shall be paid by the Accountant-General out of the ordinary cash balance in the Treasury".*

(DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western, entered and took his seat.)

Wouldn't I be correct to say, Minister, that you are - based on the Westminster System, you are duty-bound to provide those funds so that the Commission can complete its Report that has been commissioned by the Governor-General?

Dr. PHILLIPS: You are asking me matters of law, and quite frankly, I would need legal advice from the Attorney General. But my understanding is, quite frankly, that the Governor-General cannot of his own volition impose his will upon the Parliament, which is the only authority that can authorize withdrawal from the Consolidated Fund.

Mr. MAIR: Through you, Mr. Speaker. You are correct, Minister, and in one of the letters... (Laughter/*Sotto voce* comments) ...you are correct. And if I might read from a letter written by the Governor-General to one of the members of the FINSACed Community, it says clearly here that his Privy Council advised him, and I quote - his, as in the Governor-General's, and I quote:

> *"The Accountant General makes payments in respect of a Commission of Enquiry from the Consolidated Fund. In practice, these payments are made on the Warrant of the Minister of Finance".*

Therefore, Minister, am I right to say that you, and only you, have the final say if such funds are going to be released for this Report to be completed? And what I would like to bring to your attention, Minister, so much money has been spent already on this Enquiry...

(*Sotto voce* comments from a Member)

Mr. MAIR: Only four - but they need the funds to complete it, it would take six months to complete the Report. And I am saying, you are running the risk, Minister, of the perception being taken that you are using your position from stopping this Report from being produced and tabled. And it is a very important Report, as it looked into the financial meltdown of the 1990s. And I think you are duty-bound, Minister, to provide these funds for the Commission so they can complete their Report. So, what are you telling me? We will not have funds for any other Commission of Enquiry, going into the future?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I must say I am not quite certain what question the Member is asking.

Mr. MAIR: The ques - you want me to ask the question? The question is, there might be a perception that there is a conflict of interest, because you are a member of the Cabinet of the Government that was in government when we had the financial meltdown. And I am just saying since this was such a critical phase in our country where you had a massive financial meltdown, so many businesses went bankrupt, and I think you should feel compelled to have this Report completed so that we can discuss all that went wrong so as a people we do not make the same mistakes.

(HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, entered and took her seat.)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, we are doing nothing to prevent the Report being provided. The Commissioners - and the cost of the exercise thus far is a Hundred and Eleven Million Dollars ($111M). We have been asking many other areas of the government to hold strain, we have been asking our public sector workers to hold strain, we have been doing all - we have been cutting Capital Budget. Indeed, it is the case, as the Member might well know, that the previous Minister of Finance and Planning, having considered a request of the said Commissioners, approved a budget allocation of Fifteen Million ($15M) additional, requested by the Commission, and instructed that the Final Report be submitted no later than November 30, 2011, and he did so in October of that year.

I believe, quite frankly, that at some point any responsible Minister - and I think he was responsible at the time - would take the position that you could not allow an entity which had been given successive extensions, simply by virtue of not completing the work which they had undertaken, to command the resources, the hard-earned resources of the country *ad infinitum.* (Applause) We don't think that that is to be done.

Mr. MAIR: Therefore...

Dr. PHILLIPS: But, I can indicate that whenever the said Commissioners are prepared to write a Report, we will undertake to have that Report prepared appropriately and circulated to the House. And I invite them so to do.

(THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, entered and took her seat.)

Mr. MAIR: Therefore, Minister, what you are saying is that you will not provide the Fourteen Million Dollars ($14M) to complete the Report? Or is it that you are saying you do not have the funds at this time to give to the Commissioners?

Dr. PHILLIPS: I think my comments earlier were that we will provide the stenographic services and all other support arrangements, but we are not prepared to pay

more for work that should have been done already for the amount that has been paid.

(Applause)

(MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP), St. Thomas, Western, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. MAIR: Just for clarification, Mr. Speaker, the Minister had mentioned that the cost to date has been a Hundred and...?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Eleven Million.

Mr. MAIR: …Eleven Million. Are you aware that out of that a Hundred and Eleven how much has been paid to the Commissioners - Twelve Million ($12M). It's not that they have been the ones who have absorbed the bulk of it, it's only about 10 per cent of the monies expended so far. So I think it's unfair to kind of give the impression that it is the Commissioners and probably due to their excessive requests why the Report has not been tabled.

I find it unfortunate, Minister, but I think you should make it your business to get - if you would be able and you would be willing to provide this House with a breakdown of what are the costs that are required from the Commissioners, the breakdown of the costs, and to find out why is it that we cannot provide the funds to finish this Report.

The SPEAKER: Thank you. Dr. Wheatley, you have a question for the Minister? Dr. Hutchinson?

Mr. WARMINGTON: No, no, not Hutchinson. Mr. Shaw.

The SPEAKER: You mean in continuing this? FINSAC?

Mr. SHAW: Yes.

The SPEAKER: Okay.

Mr. SHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, a follow-up question to the Honourable Minister who has indicated that...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SHAW: You made reference to an instruction in October of 2011, in which the Minister - the then Minister sought to put a cap on the expenditure by allocating another - at the time, by allocating a further Fifteen Million Dollars ($15M). My first question is, what portion of that Fifteen Million Dollars ($15M) was in fact expended?

(HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture, entered and took her seat.)

Dr. PHILLIPS: I would need to specifically check that fact, but I believe that all of it was provided in the period that was provided. All the funds that had been voted by the Parliament were provided; we have put no restriction on the funds that were previously provided. And, indeed, since that time we have provided funds each year for rental and for the stenographic services and others that were there.

(HON. LUTHUR BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. SHAW: I would ask the Minister to clear up that particular piece of information, Mr. Speaker, because that relates to apparently a Ministerial commitment to provide these additional resources.

(MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

But the House needs to be told what portion of that Fifteen Million Dollars ($15M) was spent. Now, in addition to that, the Minister has indicated that some Five Million Dollars ($5M)...

Dr. PHILLIPS: If I may?

Mr. SHAW: Yes.

Dr. PHILLIPS: I am advised that the additional budget that was approved for the Commission was for the period up to December 31, 2011, so as to allow for winding-up operations. The Commission advised that a precise date could not be given for the extension, owing to the volume of documents that had to be reviewed to accommodate their work. A timeframe of early April for the preparation of Phase 1 of the Report and August for Phase 2 was proposed.

The Financial Secretary suspended all payments, except for the space provided by the PIOJ for the accommodation of FINSAC for the months January and February, 2012 at a cost of One Thirty Thousand Dollars ($130,000) a month.

Mr. SHAW: I am grateful for that additional information which would then have put it under your tenure, in terms of the communication and the dates of April and August.

My question, therefore, still stands. That original extended figure of Fifteen Million Dollars ($15M), I need to know whether any portion of that money was expended or whether all of it was expended.

And I must agree with the Member from North East, St. Catherine, in which he has asked for a detailed breakdown of the expenditure so far.

What I would like to know is whether the Five Million Dollars ($5M) that you just mentioned, whether that Five Million Dollars Minister is a part of the aggregate sum of One Hundred and Eleven point Four Million Dollars ($111.4M)?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Yes, it is.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Minister, in my other follow-up question I simply want to ask - it is clear that despite the then instruction of the then Minister, there was a response - which you have just made reference to - in which you have indicated that the Commissioners were indicating their inability to wrap-up the Report in accordance with the requirements or the instruction of the then Minister, and it is clear that they had issues. And we have subsequently learned - and I believe the Member from North East, St. Catherine has put a figure on it of Fourteen Million Dollars ($14M); my information is that the figure needed to complete the Enquiry is somewhere between Ten and Fifteen Million ($10-15M), Ten Million ($10M) being the low and Fifteen Million ($15M) being the high, and that a

major part of the cost of that completion figure would involve technical work that is beyond the competence of the normal stenographic requirement.

And my question therefore is whether the Minister is not seized of the importance of a final report, replete with the technical construction that is required, and which was requested by the Commissioners; whether the Minister wouldn't consider that an event of such catastrophic proportions that took place in the 1990s, that led to the collapse of the financial sector, led to the closure of over 40 financial institutions...

Mr. D. SMITH: What!

Mr. SHAW: ...led to the assumption of debt which contributed to the explosion of the national debt by about 40 per cent, with the assumption by the Government and people of Jamaica of a debt of $140 Billion at the time...

Mr. CHARLES: What!

Mr. D. SMITH: Where is Omar? He should be here.

Mr. SHAW: ...which not only devastated the financial sector. In consequence, we saw interest rates averaging 53 per cent over 10 years on commercial bank lending rates. And we saw the devastation...

The SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw, where is the question?

(HON. DR. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, CD, (PNP), St. Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. SHAW: The question is coming, Minister, but the background is important.

The SPEAKER: No, no, we are all familiar with the background.

Mr. SHAW: We saw, Mr. Speaker...

Dr. BAUGH: It's an informed question.

Mr. SHAW: ...the devastation of the manufacturing and productive sectors, of the economy, broken homes, broken families, broken dreams; and a couple in Mandeville, only recently, committed suicide and blamed it on FINSAC.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw, Mr. Shaw...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Where is the question?

The SPEAKER: No, Mr. Shaw. You must come to the question man.

Mr. SHAW: And my question therefore, Mr. Speaker, is, in circumstances where this matter is of such importance to this country that an enquiry which has been carried out for which $111 Million of taxpayers' money has already been expended, and in circumstances where a paltry - a Member of that side would say, *chicken feed* - less than chicken feed...

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. L. Buchanan!

Mr. SHAW: ...of $10 Million is needed, Mr. Speaker, to complete this Report, my question is, in these circumstances where foreign travel, so far, is close to $200 Million, whether the Minister would dare to block that Report from being presented in this Parliament.

Mr. BUCHANAN: You never talk enough down St. Ann the other night?

Mr. WARMINGTON: He is speaking here; he is speaking here...

(Inaudible comments pursue)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, we have no intention to block any Report. We have not received a Report, but, just so that the Member can put it all in perspective. We agree that this is a matter worth enquiring into. Quite frankly, the mechanism chosen by the Member opposite, when he had responsibility, could not provide that enquiry. It properly needs to be done, but it also needs, sincerely, to be done. The Member knew that the Commission, as the Courts found, had been improperly appointed. Its composition was flawed. (Applause) It was appointed in the face of protest which told them that the composition was flawed, and yet they went ahead. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Disgrace!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. PHILLIPS: As a consequence of that, millions of dollars were wasted.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Embarrassment!

Mr. WARMINGTON: You are the embarrassment.

Dr. PHILLIPS: No counsel was afforded FINSAC itself by deliberate decision of the then Administration.

Government MEMBERS: Shame!

Mr. CHUCK: Luther, Luther, you are not on the bus right now.

Dr. PHILLIPS: It was not intended to give any finding. The taxpayers of Jamaica had been called upon already to make too great a contribution. Those who were appointed and supposed to provide the Report must so provide it, and we will circulate it.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Shaw.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker... Mr. Speaker... Mr. Speaker...

The SPEAKER: Hold on a minute; hold on a minute. I notice Mr. Vaz crossed the floor. Could you... (Applause)

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Vaz get back to your seat.

Mr. DALLEY: Friendship must be maintained, you know, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SHAW: I am glad that's your position of crossing the floor, especially in these circumstances, Mr. Speaker.

I rise again because, prior to my question, the Honourable Minister did not mention the sum issues that he had just raised. And I think the Honourable House will want to know whether these are the issues that are now the reasons why he is failing to provide the additional funds for the completion of the Commission. It would be important to understand that, because that has never been previously stated by the Minister as a reason why the Report must not be closed, and be brought to this House. It is not my understanding that there is any question, Mr. Speaker, as to the credibility or the integrity, of the present membership of the Commissioners. I want to hear from the Minister on that.

(MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition, entered and took his seat.)

Dr. PHILLIPS: The operative word is 'present'. And there is much that could be

said, but Mr. Speaker, let me just say this, I have nothing to add to what I have said. If a Report is provided, we will support its preparation and its printing, as far as the appropriate secretarial services are concerned. The Commissioners are free to bring a Report. I raised what I raised in an effort to speak to the *bona fides* of those who took the decision to establish an Enquiry in this political form. In the form that they did it, it was clearly of malicious intent.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, hear, hear! (Applause)

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker... Mr. Speaker...

The SPEAKER: Remember the genesis of this. It is a question that was asked by Mr. Mair.

Mr. SHAW: Yes, but in the answers - each time the Minister answers, he is raising issues...

The SPEAKER: Yes, but we are not debating those issues today, you know.

Mr. SHAW: ...that needs to be clarified, Mr. Speaker.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Dr. Phillips)

Mr. SHAW: Because my question to you now is that in view of what you have just said, is it the issue of money, or is it the issue that you are now challenging the legitimacy of a Commission that had been appointed by the Governor-General of Jamaica?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, let me repeat, perhaps for the fourth, or fifth, or sixth time. Whenever the Commissioners provide a Report, we will ensure it is brought to the Parliament in the appropriate form.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Warmington)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, let me say it again. We will provide no more funds, unless Parliament votes those funds, for anything other than the support services and administrative services to provide the Report. I cannot help the Member further with his understanding.

The SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr. Jackson….

Mr. SHAW: Cover up? That is what it is; absolute cover up.

(HON. DR. KENNETH WYKEHAM MCNEILL, (PNP), Westmoreland, Western, Minister of Tourism and Entertainment, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. JACKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Dr. Phillips)

The SPEAKER: Gentlemen, gentlemen...

Mr. JACKSON: Mr. Speaker, my question was in part, answered by the Minister. Fully, what I wanted to be clear on, when the Commission was established, was a budget provided, in keeping with its Terms of Reference?

Mr. CHARLES: You giving a speech or asking a question?

Mr. JACKSON: I am asking a question. Maybe you are not hearing me well.

Mr. CHARLES: I am not only hearing you, I am seeing you.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Jackson, proceed.

Mr. JACKSON: I think you are more seeing me.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to be clear, based on the response provided by the Minister, if when the Commission was established with its Terms of Reference, was the budget provided then, in keeping with what the established Terms of Reference was, then?

And secondly, the Minister indicated that the former Minister had approved a $15 Million additional to...

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Shaw)

Mr. JACKSON: ...and I did understand that he indicated that there was some challenge with the time period for winding up the work, as was requested.

My question is, in providing the $15 Million, additionally, were they instructed to conclude within the budget, or is it to continue indefinitely? Specifically, was the $15 Million given with instructions to conclude the work being done?

And, Mr. Speaker, I asked the question against the background of many reports that we have had in the PAC and the PAAC, of over-run of government's commitments - projects started by government and they are not completed, and extension of funds have been provided. I just want it to be clear in my mind whether or not this represents one of those project over-runs by government.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I am advised that the Commission was initially projected to last for six months when it was established, effective January 12, 2009. A budget was calculated, estimated on hearings for sixty-man-days, and estimated to cost US$888,000 or J$79.9.

Mr. WARMINGTON: What is 79.9?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Million dollars. When the extension was given in October - the instruction was in October of 2011. The instruction was given that the additional budget, that the Report - the final Report was to be submitted no later than November 30, 2011. There was a particular urgency that seemed to have developed at that time. And the budget for the Commission was approved for a period up to, and ending on December 31, 2011, so as to allow for the winding-up of operations.

(DR. OMAR DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing, entered and took his seat.)

The budget was exceeded. The original $79 Million was exceeded, and it went up to $106 Million. We had provided additional resources for rental, and for the stenographic services, but they have had nothing to do because there was no Report forthcoming.

(MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central, entered and took her seat.)

And so, Mr. Speaker, the Parliament, I think, in its wisdom - considerable wisdom - has determined that no more money should be spent on this.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Enough is enough.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Mr. Hutchinson, you have a question for the Minister?

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, if you will permit me to ask the Minister. Minister, I am curious; what will then happen to the $111 Million already spent?

Dr. PHILLIPS: I would say that it is - my urging would be for the Commissioners to prepare something that can be submitted to the Parliament, so that it would not go to waste.

A MEMBER: Exactly.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Hutchinson.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Can I ask the Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining Question 10, standing in my name?

(DR. DONALD KEITH DUNCAN, (PNP), Hanover, Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. LESTER MICHAEL HENRY, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, Central, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the question: Will the Minister state when the new...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. PAULWELL: You know the answer.

Mr. CHARLES: Is a one line you carry?

Mr. PAULWELL: Yes, yes.

Question:

Will the Minister state when the newly constructed building at Ginger Hill will be opened as a postal agency?

Answer:

The Postal Agency at Ginger Hill should be opened within four weeks from today.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Minister, I would like to thank you very much for the urgency….

Government MEMBERS: Aaahhhh! (Applause)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: ...for the urgency in which you have worked on this since I tabled the question. I know that it will be opened presently.

Thank you, sir.

The SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker at the end of 21 days I'd like to ask the Minister of Local Government the following questions tabled in my name.

Question 1:

Would the Minister please state whether or not his Ministry and/or the local authorities are engaged in an audit of street lights islandwide?

Question 2:

If the answer to Part 1 is in the affirmative, would the Minister please state:

i) Who is conducting the audit?
ii) When the audit commenced?
iii) Whether or not the audit has been concluded?

iv) Whether he will provide copies of the audit to the Parliament?

Question 3:

Does the Minister recall that in announcing the increases in property taxes in 2013, the Government assured the country that funds would be allocated to improve and/or maintain a proper street lighting system across Jamaica?

Question 4:

Does the Minister think that this commitment has been met, and if not, why not?

Question 5:

Would the Minister give this House a full update on the street lighting situation, and what steps are being taken to ensure that the public gets value for their property tax payments in terms of its expenditure on street lights?

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move for the recommittal of Item, Statements by Ministers.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the recommittal of Item, Statements by Ministers?

Put to the House and agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS (Recommitted)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Tourism will now make a statement.

Dr. McNEILL: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I will now give a Statement on Measures to Regularize the Personal Watercrafts, otherwise known as Jet Ski operations.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable House will recall that following two accidents involving Personal Watercrafts Jet Skis on August 17th and 21st of last year, where one child died and another person was severely injured in Ocho Rios and Negril respectively, that Cabinet approved the implementation of short term measures for a six month duration effective October 15, 2013. These measures were:

i) The imposition of a six-month suspension on the importation of all Personal Watercrafts for commercial purposes.
ii) More effective enforcement from all regulatory agencies to clamp down on illegal operators.
iii) The application and monitoring of safety rules in Harbours and Bays by the Maritime Authority of Jamaica.
iv) The strengthening of the enforcement capacity of the Marine Police Outposts in the North East Region, that is Ocho Rios, Falmouth, Montego Bay and Negril.

Mr. Speaker, during this period of implementation while there has been some positive steps taken towards compliance primarily at the Urban Development Corporation (UDC) beach in Ocho Rios, for the most part, there has been limited success elsewhere. This limited success was subsequently evidenced by another accident in which an American visitor was killed by a Jet Ski while swimming in Negril on January 20, 2014.

The impact of these incidents has been far-reaching, Mr. Speaker, and has triggered negative public commentary both locally and internationally, particularly from Jamaica's largest source markets in the United States of America (USA).

Mr. Speaker, the current situation is at present that there are only eight (8) licensed Jet Ski, Personal Watercraft operators in Jamaica at this time. Six of them are operating in the Ocho Rios beach - in Ocho Rios at the UDC beach. And there are two licensed operators in Negril. Those two are - the information, is not currently in operation.

So, Mr. Speaker, there are no licensed Watercraft commercially in Mammee Bay, none in Falmouth, none in Montego Bay, none in Black River, none in Port Antonio, none in Montego Bay.

Mr. Speaker, as well as that, while we have seen deficiencies in commercial operations, the regulatory framework that governs Private Personal Watercrafts is also insufficient. So we are seeing a looseness both in the commercial and in the private Jet Ski operations.

We have also found in our consultation with the operators that one of the outcomes of the moratorium imposed on licensing of new commercial operators in 1997, that moratorium, Mr. Speaker, was in 1997 - we indicated that in Ocho Rios, Negril and Black River no new commercial operators would be licensed. And subsequently, that moratorium was extended islandwide in 2004 - that since that moratorium there has been a prolific expansion of persons operating illegally, especially in the resort areas. Mr. Speaker, this has occurred since no new operators could legally come on board.

The fact that the PWC, the Personal Watercraft Operations can be a lucrative business and many persons see it as an important source of livelihood, has also contributed to the proliferation of illegal commercial operators.

Interestingly, Mr. Speaker, what we have found is that the licensed operators have often tended to comply with the Jamaica Tourist Board licensing requirements.

Mr. Speaker, based on the accident that happened and the consultations that have taken place since October the 15th, further to the measures that were effected on October the 15th, Cabinet on February the 10th of 2014 tabled the following additional measures:

Effective Immediately

1) There will be a ban on the importation of all Personal Watercrafts, all Jet Skis for a further six months. However, this ban will be on all PWCs and not just commercial ones. The first ban was on Personal Watercraft, but the importation of the ban was not on Private Craft. Now it is both private and commercial.
2) There will be a temporary suspension of the operations of all Personal Water Crafts across the island.
3) Cabinet has approved the lifting of the moratorium on licensing new commercial operators in order to allow for the regularization of commercial operations.

4) The Maritime Authority of Jamaica (MAJ) will take steps to register all Personal Water Crafts in the island. Upon registration, PWC operators will be issued with registration certificates and decals. The Decals will be provided in two colours, one for commercial and one for private use. And these are expected to be available by the end of this week.

Other measures approved by Cabinet were:

1. The issuing of drafting instructions to the Chief Parliamentary Counsel for the amendment of:
    a) The Tourist Board Act, to allow fines to be increased from the maximum of $20,000 now to $500,000 for breaches of the Act.
    b) The Tourist Board Regulations will be amended:
        i) to give the Crown the power to dispose of water sports vessels seized; '
        ii) to prohibit a child under 17 years of age from operating commercial jet skis without an accompanying adult.
2. Support for the formation of a Task Force from the relevant Ministries and their agencies to effect the changes. This Task Force includes members of the Jamaica Constabulary Force, Customs, the JDF, the Tourist Board, Maritime Authority of Jamaica, the Ministry of Tourism, NEPA, Port Authority and TPDCo.

Given the urgency of the concerns at hand, Mr. Speaker, and the impact on the tourism industry and the livelihoods of many, the Ministry and Task Force will actively proceed with the implementation of the critical measures needed to streamline both private and commercial PWC operations across the island as quickly as possible.

It is intended that guided by the Task Force, the suspension on the operations will be lifted in each area as the relevant measures identified and the regulations put in place are implemented and persons become compliant. For example, based on the state of readiness of the Ocho Rios Bay, the UDC Beach, they should be able to come on stream as soon as they re-apply and obtain their decals from the Maritime Authority of Jamaica. But, Mr. Speaker, this process can only move as quickly as persons in the industry conform and comply with the requirements.

Mr. Speaker, the next steps will be: The Task Force will provide information on the requirements for licensing for all persons presently operating. However, amongst the measures being implemented to bring these locations on stream will be the enforcement of a number of regulations. These will include but are not limited to:

i) The identification of specific launch zones determined by the Task Force. It will not be permitted going forward that Jet Skis can operate from any and everywhere, there will be specific launch zones.

ii) the inability of PWCs to operate within 200 meters of shore. The operations of the Jet Skis must be beyond the 200 meters.
iii) there will be adherence to no wake zones within 200 meters. That is, there are going to be channels to allow the Jet Skis in-and-out of the 200 meter zone. And what will be required is in those areas, they will have to operate at a speed, which does not create turbulence, a no-wake-zone, so that they only operate at the high speeds outside of the 200 meter mark.
iv) All PWCs will have to be licensed and each one will have a decal. As I said before, both commercial and private.
v) All commercial operators will be required to undergo training; and
vi) all commercial operators will provide minimum training or a minimum amount of training to persons accessing their services.

Mr. Speaker, whilst we have stopped the importation of these Jet Skis, these PWCs, we are asking TPDCo and the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA) to formalize the carrying capacity requirements, particularly in the resort areas where the motorized water sports activity is more prevalent. A team of specialized persons will be put in place under aegis of TPDCo to assist with the monitoring and evaluation and also to assist with the enforcement of these regulations.

Mr. Speaker, I am just saying that, very much like how the Island Traffic Authority regulates all motor vehicles, we are going to ask the Maritime Authority to register all PWCs in Jamaica. All Jet Skis must be registered, must have their decals and they must all operate within the regulations that will be set down. And we are going to bring some order to the sector while at the same time, allowing the persons who are involved in the industry to also be able to become regularized, so that they can earn a living.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

(Applause)

(HON. ROBERT DIXON PICKERSGILL, (PNP), St. Catherine, North Western, Minister of Water, Land Environment and Climate Change, entered and took his seat.)

Mrs. ROBINSON: Mr. Speaker, I believe that all well-thinking Jamaicans appreciate the concerns as it relates to incidence related to Jet Skis and the loss of life, and the Opposition would like to put on record their own regret at the loss of life of a visitor recently in Negril. And I believe that it is incumbent on all of us to develop policies and take decisions that will preserve the viability of the sector and to jealously guard this important aspect of our national economy. So the Opposition is as concerned as the Minister is about the operation of Jet Skis.

However, Minister, you recently implemented a six-months ban and I just want to know if that ban - what did that ban achieve? In other words, how effective has the

ban been in effectively addressing the problems besetting the industry? Did it in any way address some of the problems?

Dr. McNEILL: Thank you. Thank you. I want to thank the Opposition spokesperson.

Dr. DAVIES: I think they should make Warmington the….

(Inaudible comment follows)

(Laughter)

Dr. McNEILL: Yes, the problem with the ban is this. What we had done is impose a ban on the importation of Jet Skis for commercial purposes. Now, what we have found is that there has been a problem because a number of the Jet Skis that are operating, for you to determine whether they are operating on a private capacity or for commercial capacity has been difficult.

What we have decided this time and we recognize that we have not been able to bring it under control and that is why we are now imposing these further measures, because we intend to get it under control. But what we are doing now is we are imposing this suspension on the importation on both commercial and private jet skis until we are able to license each and every jet ski in Jamaica.

I think something that is very interesting is that, and really a tragic issue, is the fact that the person who was killed by a jet ski in Negril, unfortunately I went down to Negril and I was touring with the Superintendent of Police and we saw the jet ski, but the person riding the jet ski is still on the run, they are searching for the person. But there is a difficulty; because in the absence of us having every jet ski licensed to somebody and us having full regulations of it, often you don't know who has what and what they are doing. You don't know if they have insurance, if they have all the necessary things to operate a business. So those are part of what we are putting in place now as the additional measures.

Mrs. ROBINSON: But Minister, what did you really achieve in the six-month ban that is what I asked. And Minister, further to ask you what do you hope to achieve during this ban that you have now imposed?

Dr. McNEILL: Sorry, I misunderstood you, saying in the six-month ban now. As I said, there were a number of things that we did the first time. We imposed a six-month ban on the importation of commercial jet skis, there was increased enforcement of the regulations that were in place, there was a clamp down on some of the illegal operators and we put some things in place to work with the Maritime police and the others to strengthen their capacity to regulate the industry. So those things were done, but it was a series of things. What we found is in some areas we had fairly good success. For example, in Ocho Rios the UDC Bay, a number of the persons there put together, work together they put the things in place to licence themselves, they now have rescue boat in place, they have done the training, they have done the necessary things. So in cases like that we have succeeded fairly well. But the truth is that for the rest of the island we really have no legal persons operating and you cannot enforce something that is unenforceable. So what we are going to do is

to open the window to regulate everybody, have everybody reapply, have everybody re-register, put the decals on the boat so that we can better enforce it going forward.

Mrs. ROBINSON: Thank you. Minister, you conceded that the current regulatory framework is inadequate. What degree of focus has the Ministry been given to approaches taken or adopted elsewhere? Because there are cases of best practices as it relates - in other destinations, as it relates to the operations of the PWCs. So, you know, and PWCs are a key - some of them in some destination is a key offering. So I want to know if you have looked at the best practices, in other destinations where this has worked?

Dr. McNEILL: Yes, we have. As a matter of fact, some of the things that we are now putting in place are in effect elsewhere. But let me just say something I think that is important. There have been a number of regulations in place, but the problem is, where you have a system where the majority of the persons who are operating commercially are operating outside of the framework of the formal system, it is very difficult to monitor it, and very difficult to ensure that things are done in the proper manner. So what we are doing is to ensure that we bring all the persons under a formal framework. And the regulations, we have - some are in place, there are some new ones. As I explained to you, we are now going to enforce them outside the 200 meters; they won't be inside the immediate swim zones at any public beach, a whole series of those things. The 'no wake' zone is important even if they are coming in and out they have to do it at a certain speed, the training of the persons utilizing it, both those who are renting it and those who are operating it. So these are all a number of things that we are putting in place. Some of them we have in place already, some we have accepted some of the best practices from other jurisdictions.

Mrs. ROBINSON: Thank you. Minister, the fines to be increased from the present 20,000 to 500,000 have we know - and we understand what you are trying to do, but in the real world it seems draconian, a bit draconian to say the least from 20,000 to 500,000. Would there be any reconsideration to lowering the fine?

Mr. WARMINGTON: To a realistic fine.

Dr. McNEILL: Let me say this. One of the difficulties we have now, this is a recommendation that has been made to us from the technical people, and one of the problems you have it is a maximum fine. At present, the maximum fine I think is 20,000 and what has been happening is that in January, a whole series of jet skis came in and those jet skis that came in and went to court and a lot of them were getting fines of $3,000 and $5,000. So there is an element in there and there is a - the justices have - the Judges have some latitude. What we are looking at is the maximum and in these cases, it would certainly be where persons are doing things that really require that sort of punitive action. So it is only a maximum that we are increasing to that.

Mrs. ROBINSON: Minister, I want to know how will communities deal with the

economic and social fallout from the imposition of this ban, because the real world we live in is a very harsh world and there are many persons who earn a living from jet skis, we know that they are unlicensed but it is what has obtained and they have children to send to school, they have bills to pay, what plans do you have to deal with that?

Dr. McNEILL: Thank you. It is something that we have thought long and hard about. We are very sensitive to it. I have had a lot of discussions with my Members on this side and it is something we have raised. As a matter of fact, these measures went to Cabinet last week, but we went through a process talking to all the agencies and most of them are here now, those agencies, we met with them, they had a series of meetings at the ministry and what I indicated to them is that we wanted to ensure that what was necessary to be put in place, that we put it in place before we even announced it. So, for example, the decals that we want, those have already been ordered from last week and should be arriving at the end of this week. The regulatory framework, they have sat down and gone through a number of these things. We are trying to cut the time as short as possible, but there two things we need to understand. We, or the agencies can put those things in place to make it happen but there is a responsibility to the operators who are going to have to comply with the laws and the licensing requirements that are in place. We are going to regularize it. I think for both themselves and for the tourism sector and Jamaica in general, we can all benefit more; we can earn a better living if we do it in a structured, organized society, and we intend to bring organization and order to that sector. (Applause)

Mrs. ROBINSON: Minister, should you have full compliance - the ban is for another six months - but should you have full compliance from all owners and operators of jet skis within three months, would you be minded to reopen the activity?

Dr. McNEILL: No, just to clarify. The activity of using the jet skis is locked down now, but will reopen as time passes as persons are registered, become compliant in each area, all of that will happen. What we are doing is for six months, the importation of jet skis is going to be locked down, the importation is locked down. And so what we are going to do, we have already started, we have discussions, the issues such as carrying capacities, how the sectors, how many jet skis, we don't even know how many jet skis there are in each area. All of these things we are going to put in place and then at the end of six months we will be better able to say how we will go forward with this industry.

Mrs. ROBINSON: Thanks Minister. And finally, Minister, will there be a public education awareness programme because you know, the last time we had a ban, two days after I was not here, I was somewhere else, jet skis were operating and this ban now includes, not just commercial ones but personal ones, private ones. So will there be a public education awareness programme to bring everybody up to scratch?

Dr. McNEILL: Thank you. I think it is very useful, for example, just to let you know,

it is something we have been working on. We are making the announcement now but it is a process that we have been working on. For example, this press release issued by the Maritime Authority on February the 12th which is calling for a deadline for private jet skis to register at the Maritime Authority. We already have already started the process of registering the private jet skis, we will be moving to determine with the personal jet skis. As a matter of fact, the private - the commercial operators who are licensed, the head of TPDCo went and met with them himself over the weekend. There has been a process of consultation. In terms of the commercial who are not licensed there is a whole process now, they will be going out and having discussions with them. But I think at the end of the day, we want to bring this sector under control and bring order to the sector.

Mrs. ROBINSON: Minister, sorry. Just to be clear, what I was asking about is a Public Education Awareness Programme, so that if someone were to come to somewhere on the North Coast they would know now that they ought not to be renting jet skis that is all I want to know, if the nation at large, for those who are not watching now to hear, will they know that there is a ban, currently that there is a ban on jet skis, a public education awareness programme?

Dr. McNEILL: Yes, that will be put in place.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Speaker...

(Heckling by Members)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Bartlett, proceed.

Mr. BARTLETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, just...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

Mr. BARTLETT: I don't know why it so hard to listen to me.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister, I think has good support on this side for the measures as indicated by the spokesperson a while ago in her series of questions.

The issue before us, in fact, however, is whether or not the ban which is being imposed now relates to every area in Jamaica, or is it only to designated resort areas. This is very important because...

Mr. PICKERSGILL: You weren't listening.

Mr. BARTLETT: No, no this important because the issues are not as sharp with a private owner who goes to Lime Cay, or goes to Booby Cay or goes to Goat Island as is the case with those who are operating in Negril and those who are operating in Ocho Rios, and those who are operating commercially elsewhere. And all that we wanted clarity on, because the intention cannot be to prevent the individual, the private individual who wants to have the pleasure of using this motorized craft not on a commercial basis, not in a highly populated beach community to prevent him from being able to do so. I am sure that is not the....

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Now I see why you lose the work.

Mr. BARTLETT: Your time will come, you know, your time will come. This is why it was difficult to detect certain things in Portland when they don't fall necessarily within the resort areas. But Minister...

(Mr. Shaw crossed the floor to speak with Dr. Davies)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Shaw, no, no. No man, we are not accommodating that. No man, go back over there. Hold on Mr. Bartlett, let Mr. Shaw finish first.

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Speaker, the House has descended into a noisy, noisy hub.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

The SPEAKER: We are not entertaining that.

Mr. BARTLETT: Minister, would you indicate whether this is an all island ban.

Mr. SHAW: You are restricting communication across the floor.

Dr. McNEILL: Mr. Speaker, for a moment there I thought that the Opposition spokesperson was going to get up and ask me about the foreign policy with regard to jet skis. But, Member, let me just say this. You have asked a question. At the start it will be an all-island ban. And what is going to be required for both personnel, private PWCs and for commercial, what will happen is everyone will get their registration, everyone will have to get their decals, once they get those they will go out. But there is a second part.

You made the point about Lime Cay. One of the things that has to be done, and I have indicated to Maritime Authority, is that persons must know exactly what the rules and regulations are. Because while we are looking at the resort areas, we are also in danger if we don't have proper rules and regulations in place; therefore if the rule is that you cannot operate within 200 meters at a certain speed off any beach it will be for them as well. So what is going to happen is that all areas are going to come on stream as the Maritime Authority and the Task Force that was put in place with TPDCo and others, they are also going to define all the rules and regulations that apply for them as they go forward.

Mr. BARTLETT: Just one point of support to what you are dealing with, because we recognize the problems and we know what it has caused in terms of the impact on brand Jamaica in the last few weeks.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Bunting)

Mr. BARTLETT: You know why security not working, because you don't listen. That's why you don't learn.

The need for the streamlining of the private motorized craft activity not just as a recreational activity, but rather as an attraction is where I really would want to have seen us go, because this is an area of huge economic value and is a critical part of the experience that the visitor has when they visit our destination. And so it is more than just regulations, it's more than just dealing with establishing fines. It is about developing a product, a product which will be streamlined for which individuals can…

(*Sotto voce* remarks by a Government Member)

Mr. BARTLETT: We are trying to help you, you know, Minister. Because when we travel to other countries water sports is a

major product that brings millions of dollars into the destination. And therefore it can't be treated as a side activity, it has to be structured. And I would have liked to hear the Minister say that an appropriate study was completed during that period from 2013 October to now and that that study has unearthed the need for the development of the water sports industry and therefore this is how we are going to approach it. So what I would love to see you come back here, Minister, is a policy, a full policy on the development of water sports subsector of the tourism industry.

Dr. McNEILL: I don't think that we are different in approach. I don't think there is much difference. It is what we are working on. And quite frankly, as you would know, it is something that has been....

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Should know!

Dr. McNEILL: ….different administrations have been working on for a long time, but we intend to ensure that we get it done.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. McKenzie)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: What happen to you?

The SPEAKER: Mr. Smith.

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, prior to this ban there was a six-month suspension. Minister, is it a situation where you and your team underestimated the depth of the problem while after six months you had time to correct it, analyze it…

Government MEMBER: Correct it.

Mr. D. SMITH: ….correct it then six months after you come with a ban?

Dr. DAVIES: It's a question?

Mr. D. SMITH: It's a question about FINSAC.

Dr. DAVIES: You weren't in it.

Mr. D. SMITH: Thank God.

Dr. McNEILL: Well, as I indicated before, we had a six-month suspension on the importation of commercial jet skis. We have extended that now to both commercial and private and, yes, one of the reasons why we are putting further measures is that we have found that while we have had limited success in some areas we have not had it across the island and that further measures were needed, and we have put those further measures in place now.

Mr. D. SMITH: The answer is yes?

Dr. McNEILL: Yes.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Mair.

Mr. MAIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, Minister, in the registration process have you considered requesting that the applicants provide public liability insurance, like you have the Motor Vehicles Insurance (Third-Party Risks) Act?

Dr. McNEILL: Thank you. That's an excellent question. Right now one of the difficulties we have is we have almost no information when we ask how many, even private PWCs there are in Kingston; we can estimate it but don't know. And in terms of the commercial what we have found is that the 12 or so jet skis or 20 jet skis that have licensed owners have insurance, but the others, for the most part, do not. It is the intention that every single commercial Jet Ski user will have public liability insurance and

there is a debate - a discussion going on now as to what will be required for the personal jet skis. But just to let you know that the personal jet skis are just as dangerous and the commercial jet skis. And the fact is the rules and regulations we put in for commercial are going to have to largely extend for the private personal Jet Ski users as well.

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker...

The SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Smith.

Mr. D. SMITH: Minister, you did mention that the operator of the Jet Ski, the police is still trying to find the individual. Did they ascertain where he was operating from, what was the base he was using to operate from?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yes.

Dr. McNEILL: No, it would not be appropriate. What I can tell you is that we do have - I was told and I saw a jet ski purported to be the one and that there are persons they are searching for. Other than that I don't have any other information.

Mr. D. SMITH: You are saying, Minister, that they don't know who they are looking for?

The SPEAKER: No, no, that's not what he said.

Mr. D. SMITH: I am asking. You will answer after. They don't know who they are looking for nor do they know where this individual is operating from, where he used as his operating base?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yes.

Dr. McNEILL: No. The nuance of that is, I say I don't know. I am certain if you ask the security forces they may be able to give you more information. But certainly, what I was informed of is that the Jet Ski is there and they are in pursuit of somebody. I got the impression that they know who they were looking for.

Mr. SHAW: Hot pursuit?

Dr. McNEILL: I am not certain, some sort of pursuit. That's the information that I have.

Mr. D. SMITH: Minister, what I find strange is that this thing happened a couple of weeks ago and you don't try to find out who was operating what base, this illegal...

Mr. HAYLES: That's a police matter.

Mr. D. SMITH: It is a police matter. But the Minister would have a right to ask the police what they would have achieved in their investigation, and that is the question I am asking.

Mr. ATKINSON: You are compromising the investigation.

Dr. McNEILL: I am not quite certain what the question is that you are asking, though.

Mr. D. SMITH: The question I am asking is, my understanding - I am not an expert on it - but my understanding is that these legal and illegal operators operate from a location, a base where they leave the jet ski when they are not using it, where they repair it, *et cetera, et cetera.* And I would believe that as Minister you would be concerned about who was operating the jet ski, number one, but also the base that they have been using to be involved in this illegal activity.

Dr. McNEILL: What I would say to you, I indicated that they have the Jet Ski and they

are in pursuit of somebody. One of the problems we have is that persons operate from across the entire - certainly in a place like Negril the entire beach, there are persons who will have a certain location, yes, but it is part of the problem we have in an unregulated industry, and that is why we are putting regulations in place just to ensure that a situation like this does not occur again. In terms of who they are pursuing, I am not at liberty to say, Mr. Speaker. I am sure that with your contacts in the security forces that you will be able to...

(HON. DERRICK FLAVIUS KELLIER, (PNP), St. James, Southern, Minister of Labour and Social Security, entered and took his seat.)

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we will continue with Item 5 under Government Business. This afternoon we are seeking to complete the work and to enable the Minister to put the motion along with the Bill through all its stages. We have, I am told, seven speakers, five from the Opposition and two, including the Minister, from this side. And we will start, Mr. Speaker, with the Member from North East St. Andrew, I gather.

The SPEAKER: So we start off with Mr. Chuck. (Applause)

THE ANTI-GANG BILL

Mr. CHUCK: Mr. Speaker, in what I hope will be a short presentation, I will breakdown my presentation in two parts. Firstly, to defend the integrity of this Bill and secondly, to emphasize that the criminal gangs in this country have to be dismantled, and to give some indication as to how the criminal gangs can be dismantled; but it will involve the participation of all the political representatives, of all the stakeholders in these communities that gangs operate, and also the support must be given to the police so that these gangs can be dismantled.

Mr. Speaker, I start out firstly by saying that the Committee had very good meetings and I was a Member of the Committee. Regrettably, my signature is not there because at the time it was being signed I was away, but I support everything that is in the Report. (Applause)

I say, Mr. Speaker, that a number of concerns have been raised by a number of organizations who not only appeared before the Committee but also have made comments in the mess which suggests that this Bill entitled, *"The Criminal Justice (Suppression of Criminal Organizations) Act, 2013"* that this Bill, Mr. Speaker, they feel that the Bill or the - when executed cannot work or that it will create problems within these inner-city communities.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill is long in coming. There is no doubt that it started quite a few years ago and I had the opportunity of chairing a subcommittee, a legislative Committee, where a similar Bill with minor changes were in fact, approved. And, indeed, Mr. Speaker, the previous Cabinet of the Jamaica Labour Party did approve a Bill and

there have been minor changes. When the Bill came before us, Mr. Speaker, a number of objections were raised and some of these objections have been responded to and changes have been made, which have improved the Bill.

Mr. Speaker, the first point to note is that a number of civil organizations have argued that the Bill will unnecessarily create prejudice against young men who are pranksters, persons who are not engaged in criminal activity, but that like the Suppression of Crime Act the police may deal with them when they are quite innocent. Mr. Speaker, there should be no reason to fear that because we have ensured that criminal organizations are properly defined and only if the police go outside the rule of law will any prejudice be cause to these young people.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the provisions and we define a criminal organization, it is not that we are asking with this Bill that every youngster or group of youngsters in a community should be picked up by the police and labelled criminal gangs. The police must be sure that they're engaged in some criminal activity and the Bill made it very plain, Mr. Speaker, made it very plain that a criminal organization is one that is engaged in criminal conduct, not a group of youngsters engaged in playing dominoes, playing football, engaged in gambling on the corner - not even gambling, which might even be illegal on the corner. What the definition says Mr. Speaker, is that these gangs must have as one of its purposes the commission of one or more serious offences, purposes. And these offences, Mr. Speaker, have been placed in the appendix and they have to be serious offences, not the minor offences.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we were able to strengthen it by saying these persons, where these persons issue threat or engage in violent conduct to create fear, intimidate, exert power or gain influence in communities or over other persons in furtherance of unlawful activity or obtain directly or indirectly a financial or other material benefit then that is how that criminal is being defined. So, Mr. Speaker, what we're saying and we must emphasize is that these gangs must not only be working and acting in the communities, but they must be engaged in activities, such as, the pursuit of serious criminal offences or secondly, using fear, threat and terrorism, if you want to add, Mr. Speaker, to extract money from citizens within their communities as is alleged in recent times, and if these things occur, Mr. Speaker, the police is empowered to arrest these gangsters and charge them under this legislation.

So, Mr. Speaker, where now gangs threaten communities and extort from citizens, extort from residents, extort from business people and that is their main activity, this Bill allows the police to arrest them as a gang, as a part of a criminal organization and even if they are not themselves doing it the gang leader has directed them to do it that gang leader can be arrested and charged under this Bill. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, this is an important piece of legislation to send the signal that in these communities where you have a gang leader sending out youngsters to

go and extort from taxi drivers, from business people from residents generally, that this piece of legislation will capture them and ensure that they are put away for long periods.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yes.

Mr. CHUCK: Because, Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt, as we have seen over the past few days or weeks, that there are gangs operating in communities who are terrorizing citizens not only with threats but with violence and extorting and that must stop. This country, Mr. Speaker, can never make any progress if we have groups of youngsters who can take control of a community and extort, threaten and keep them as in the citizens, the decent law abiding citizens, as if they are prisoners. (Applause)

So, Mr. Speaker, let the word go out and I hope the Minister, when the Act has passed, send it to every community that this Bill will ensure that those who engage in gang activity, and when they are found guilty after due process, they will be put away for long periods. And let the mothers and sisters and girlfriends, if they don't want to visit them in the jailhouses take them away from these gang activities. Because, Mr. Minister, I hope that when this is put in operation we ensure, after a little period of public education, to let people in these communities know that this Act is going to put away some gangsters for long periods, that it's not just legislation it is being acted on.

At the same time, Mr. President, the police must be careful that they don't use this Act to just scrape up groups of boys to check them out. This, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, is what happened under the Suppression of Crime Act, there was not enough intelligence work to discover whether these youngsters are engaged in criminal activity, as a matter they just did it by scraping up whatever number of youngsters in sense, Mr. Speaker, instead of spearfishing finding the real culprits, they engaged in net fishing, they just take up all the youngsters in the inner-city communities lock them up, check them out and after 12 hours, 18 hours, they release them. They create tension in the community, they create dislike and distrust of the police and that must be done, Mr. Speaker. This Act, if it is going to be effective, it must be policed and executed in a professional manner because when a person is found guilty he's going to be put away for a long period. And, therefore, we must be very careful that when we do the intelligence work we ensure that the persons that are charged that the evidence support the charge.

Mr. Speaker, the organizations that came before us felt that the Act was not necessary. They took the view that community policing, social interventions were the avenues that should be used. They did put it to me, Mr. Speaker, that I used community policing in Grants Pen and we dismantled the gang and with your permission, I can give some indication it was done and how it was done. And there doubt, Mr. Speaker that this is something that we all should bear in mind that it can be done.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that there is a place for social intervention. There is a place for divine intervention.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHUCK: There is a place for community policing. But let me say this, Mr. Speaker, crime is not a national security problem alone. As the Minister quite rightly said, it is not a police and JDF problem alone. With respect, it is not a government problem alone. Mr. Speaker, it is Jamaica's problem. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

A MEMBER: Well said, well said.

(Cross talk)

Mr. CHUCK: Both sides.

(Cross talk)

Both sides, but we need to say it. Both sides have worked...

Mr. McKENZIE: Dem neva used to sey that.

Mr. CHUCK: ...assiduously, Mr. Speaker. When we were in power we tried hard, we put in place legislation and we did bring down crime significantly whatever reason is given behind the reduction of crime.

(Cross talk)

What is important, Mr. Speaker, we here as Jamaicans...

Mr. SHAW: ....problems... Tivoli Gardens.

Opposition MEMBER: Yes!

Mr. McKENZIE: All of it was Tivoli.

A MEMBER: Maybe it was all over.

Mr. CHUCK: Mr. Speaker, we here as Jamaicans must understand that every single one of us, especially we here in Parliament, we have a duty and a responsibility to assist in the maintenance of peace and the reduction of crime in our communities.

A MEMBER: Yes.

Mr. CHUCK: Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that gangs are a serious problem in many communities. There are many persons in the society, Mr. Speaker, who will argue that gangs were created by us the politicians. Nothing, with due respect, can be further from the truth.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Hear, hear!

In reality, Mr. Speaker, gangs are a worldwide phenomenon. If you check the cities of the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia, South America, there are gangs operating in most inner-city communities of these cities. Just to say that the gangs here in Jamaica were created by politics does not really fit into the theory where gangs operate in many other cities. And in truth, Mr. Speaker, many theories have been put forward why gangs develop and how they operate, and many books have been written on how gangs evolved and how they are sustained within their communities.

Mr. Speaker, even though I would argue and continue to argue that the gangs in Jamaica were not created by politics, I must admit politics can do something to stop it.

There is no doubt, Mr. Speaker that many of these gangs are operating from garrisons. Many of these gangs are operating from communities that are dilapidated, depraved…

Opposition MEMBER: Deprived.

Mr. CHUCK: ...deprived, physically run-down and deteriorating and regrettably, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately we have too many pockets of these communities, too many streets, too many areas that are politically

coloured; they're either orange or they're green. And, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, at election time the tension between these communities create a certain level of stress and frustration and you see orange flags in one area, green flags in another area and that when you see who come out of these communities, Mr. Speaker, it is the corner crews and it is these corner crews, regrettably, that oftentimes run behind us the politicians and I must say, Mr. Speaker, sadly...

Mr. McKENZIE: Lock we up. Lock we up too.

Mr. CHUCK: ...many of these corner crews are the same gangs that operate in between elections.

And we have to be careful, as politicians? how we foster any support of these corner crews, because they are the same ones who come back after the election to demand of us, and it is very difficult for us to say, go about your business, fine.

The point, Mr. Speaker, is that in this Parliament some of us - all of us will have to be prepared to give up some political capital to dismantle some of these garrisons. We have to, Mr. Speaker, dismantle the pockets of garrisons that exist in our country if we are intent on dismantling the gangs.

I think, Mr. Speaker that we are never going to fully dismantle the gangs until we agree between us all, both sides and all politicians, that we must free the minds of the members in our communities that they must respect how others exercise their vote. In other words, Mr. Speaker, I find it utterly amazing that you can have communities, large communities that vote only green or only orange. And it may well be that they freely, voluntarily do so. But, Mr. Speaker, having been in pockets of green and orange in my community, and telling them, you must respect the right of everyone to vote whichever way they want to vote, I know, Mr. Speaker, that I have benefitted, in the sense that I am able to move into any community in my constituency because I say you are free to vote for whoever you want to vote for, and there is no fear, or prejudice or favour granted to anyone.

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask Members in this Parliament, are we prepared to sacrifice some of the political capital to ensure that the garrisons are dismantled, which could go a far way to dismantle the gangs, and I think it is necessary.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt - there is no doubt that those of us who win elections don't really need the support of the corner crews. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Oooh!

Mr. CHUCK: There is no doubt that if we really put our best foot forward we would still be here. And we must do so, but we must send that message out that we are not going to support those corner crews at election time, which oftentimes are the feeding grounds for many of the gangs that operate later on.

Mr. Speaker, the gangs can be dismantled, and it can be done. And I say, Mr. Speaker, when I went to North East St. Andrew there were about twelve gangs operating, you know, and I was determined that they were going to be dismantled.

Mr. CLARKE: How many are there now?

Mr. CHUCK: None. Not one.

Mr. CLARKE: One Don!

Mr. CHUCK: One Don. One Don there, and it is the MP. (Laughter)

Mr. SILVERA: So yu tink!

Mr. CHUCK: And, Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that the dismantling started with community policing. ,

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. CHUCK: We were able to attract all the Ministers' Fraternal, Ministers, the other stakeholders and the police, to work together.

But, Mr. Speaker, this MP suffered badly, his reputation was tarnished, because I made it well known that I sat with the gunmen. I sat with the dons, but I sat with them in the company of pastors and police. To get them, Mr. Speaker, to get them talking to one another was the most difficult challenge of my political career, because they don't want to see one another eye-to-eye.

Mr. Speaker, I had to be travelling between Ford Pen Lane, Castle Heights and Birdsucker, which is just a stone's throw across a gully. I had to be travelling between Grants Pen Avenue, Andrews Pen Lane, which is just across Barbican Road. I had to be travelling from Morgan Lane to Shortwood Lane, from Top Gully, Bottom Gully and Grants Pen Drive.

Mr. Speaker, when I went there, Four Roads, which is the intersection of Shortwood Road and Grants Pen Road, Shortwood Lane and Grants Pen Road, and Drumblair, by New Day School, these were war zones, no week passed without somebody not being killed in one of these intersections.

And, Mr. Speaker, with the help of the Ministers' Fraternal, the police, the other stakeholders, AMCHAM, the Kingston Restoration that came in and participated, we were able, Mr. Speaker, to bring the gangs together. We met...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

A Government MEMBER: One gang now!

(Laughter)

Mr. CHUCK: We met, Mr. Speaker, on the gully bank, we met in the church vestries, and we met on the football field!

(Heckling)

The Prime Minister came to the third football competition.

Mr. CLARKE: One order!

Mr. CHARLES: You guys find laughing in that? You find something to laugh about? Get serious!

Mr. CHUCK: Mr. Speaker...

(Heckling)

...when we brought these young men together the Governor-General started the football competition, followed by the then Prime Minister, the Honourable P.J. Patterson, then the Minister of Sport, our present Prime Minister, followed by the Chief Justice, business leaders and the Leader of the Opposition, Edward Seaga. We had a series of football competition where all the gangs had to go to church first, and meet me in church, and from church we went to the football field and played.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHUCK: And, Mr. Speaker, what evolved out of this was the Grants Pen Community Police Management Group. That group was registered as a company, it has been operating for the past twelve or more years, and that management group has been monitoring everything that happens within the community.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's not that there is peace, every now and then you have a violent incident, but that community police management group get together, bring the participants together, we meet in the church hall or we meet at the police station to ensure that the tension eases away.

And I say, Mr. Speaker, we speak of community policing, but it is not just police walking in community, it is not just the community having meetings. All the members of the community, the stakeholders, have to be committed and to meet regularly to be proactive to anticipate when problems are likely to arise, to anticipate if there is conflict between groups of boys, and every now and then the political representative is called in and we meet with them.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I know that these gangs can be dismantled, but the political representatives, the police, the Ministers' Fraternal, the Justices of the Peace, the other stakeholders, the governmental and non-governmental organizations must participate to ensure that peace is maintained in these communities.

And, Mr. Speaker, it can be done. And I urge us, the parliamentarians, where you have gangs operating; I am willing to come with you to talk with these gangs. We can say, you know, it's a police problem. But unless you are prepared to meet them and let them meet one another, you are not going to stop the gang problem. So, we want to dismantle them and we are prepared to meet them, let them face one another - difficult, they don't want to see one another, but if they can really sit around and really sort out the problems there could be a lot of peace and harmony in these communities. (Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Get back to the Bill!

Mr. CHUCK: So, Mr. Speaker, this Bill I fully support. (Applause) It will be reviewed in three years' time, but I urge Members, especially within those communities, give it the support and ensure that we can have a peaceful and better Jamaica.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Miss Grange.

Miss GRANGE: First, Mr. Speaker, let me say I am extremely grateful to the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of Opposition Business in the House, and my colleagues who supported my appointment to this Committee, giving me an opportunity to speak on behalf of the so-called Volatile communities which some of us represent in this House, as well as the rest of the inner city and the often economically and socially-challenged youths who reside in these communities.

I must also add how pleased I was with the atmosphere in which the Committee dealt with the various issues which arose during our deliberations. We found the Chairman quite

willing to accommodate the issues and the points that were raised.

(Applause)

Some MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Mr. SHAW: Who was that?

Miss GRANGE: My colleague sitting over there. And I believe members were quite tolerant of each...

(Inaudible comment from a Member)

(Laughter)

Miss GRANGE: The members were quite tolerant of each other's views, Mr. Speaker, although, as should be expected, there were times when we stridently disagreed.

The most burning issues for me had to do with Clause 2, the definition of the clause, and the contentious Clause 15(1) and Clause 6(3). We have strong opposition to Clause 15(1). And I should point out that when I speak of "we", Mr. Speaker, I am not only referring to this side alone. The Member from East Rural St. Andrew, who is not here today, shared my concerns about the provision of this clause, to the extent that one newspaper columnist actually commented sarcastically, and I quote:

> *"Olivia 'Babsy Grange and Damion Crawford put aside their political swords to high-five each other, as it were, as they rallied to the oppressed, marginalized and class- profile dancelhall artistes set upon by the middle-class bigots who like to fight against poor ghetto people".*

The columnist, Mr. Speaker, went on to suggest that we may have been competing to see who could be more outlandish.

However, the Opposition's position, as well as that of other dissidents - or dissenters, not dissidents - was that the clause was in direct conflict with Clause 13(3) of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, in terms of the right to freedom of thought, freedom of expression, freedom of beliefs and freedom from discrimination. The fact is that it is already a criminal offence at common law to incite others to commit a crime, whether by way of a statement, which is oral, written or included in a song. The offence is committed even when the lyrics do not target a particular individual to commit a crime.

The danger posed by this clause was that it was limited to inciting the activities of criminal gangs and not persons generally, and it targeted songs and not the other forms by which incitement takes place. And it in fact, stigmatizes the music industry and a genre that has been at the centre of Brand Jamaica. So, we are happy that Clause 15 was deleted from the Bill after strong feelings of expression and disagreement.

And in light of that, Appendix II of this Report should not be treated as a Minority Report from the Opposition, but should be seen as an attachment, just for information.

Music, as well as other art forms will mirror the best and the worst in society, and will be provocative. And the intent should be to bar criminal conduct, only - which is what already happens under common law - and not to create censorship of the arts with Judges determining whether or not a song promotes or facilitates criminal activities.

And so, the fact that this will be treated in another piece of Legislation which is the Offenses Against the Person Act where it will treat with everybody. It will treat with incitement against the informers; incitement against the police; incitement against homosexuals and politicians, because nobody speaks about all the negative things that are said about politicians, or the songs that are sung against politicians. We are people too. (Applause)

Now, Mr. Speaker, in terms of Clause 2, we agreed with civil society groups that the definition of criminal organization needed to be amended in order for the Bill to be sensitive to the fact that a gang might not necessarily be a criminal organization.

The fact is that there is no consensus on the definition of *gang.* There is no consensus. And there was the possibility that corner crews, friends, and neighbours on the sidewalks, not having the luxury of a living room or a yard space, could be mistaken for criminal groups.

Mr. CLARKE: They call us gangs.

Miss GRANGE: In fact, the gangs of Gordon House.

A MEMBER: They might say we are a criminal organization.

Mr. Speaker, like INDECOM, we also had problems with section 6(3)(b) and (c), and section 6(3) and (b). Section 6(b) made it possible for a person who is not in a gang to be labeled, to be charged and convicted of being in a gang. The Clause suggested that if someone is deemed to be associating with someone who is involved in a criminal organization, that person could be criminally convicted.

So, let me cite an example. A mother who associates with her son, who is deemed to be in a gang, or any of his friends, could open herself to be recognized as a criminal. Subsection (c) was no better. A shopkeeper in a community, who serves a gang member, could be deemed to be providing a benefit to a criminal organization under the original provisions.

Mr. Speaker, in one of my many strident moments of advocacy on behalf of my constituents and other such communities, where it will impact most, the Committee, my Parliamentary colleagues, agreed to insert a new clause - Clause 6(4) in the Bill to address concerns expressed, regarding the treatment of young men who live in certain communities that are associated with gangs. We felt that Clause 6 included draconian measures, reminiscent of the Suppression of Crimes Act in 1974 and the Gun Court Act in 1976.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Miss GRANGE: Who feels it knows it - neither of which produced any lasting results.

(Laughter/*Sotto voce* comment)

Miss GRANGE: Who feels it knows it. Mr. Speaker, we cannot fight crime by simply targeting boys who hang out on the corner, who do not have access to legal representation, and who will, time and time again, become victims.

Our society will further alienate them, and eventually the things from which we seek to keep them - from which we seek to keep them away from, will continue to be the source to

which they turn to for solace and approval. We cannot continue, Mr. Speaker, to sit in our ivory towers and try to solve crime this way, without addressing the real issues, and providing opportunities for young people.

We were also fully in agreement with the amendment for the Regulations to be subject to Parliamentary oversight, as well as the reduction of the period for review from five years to three years, and the proposal for a public education programme to enlighten the public on the provisions of the Bill.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I felt that before we even had signed off on the Bill, that we should have gone into communities - the inner-city communities, and get their feedback and let them understand what this Bill is about. So, we welcome the amendments that were finally proposed by the Committee in this Report.

But, Mr. Speaker, there are other social ills which we must deal with if this Bill is to be effective. This Bill, by itself, cannot solve problems - the problem of crime. My concern, Mr. Speaker, continues be the fact that there is nothing in the Bill which refers to the fact that in Jamaica, women and children continue to be among the main targets of criminal gunmen.

The recent developments in East Kingston and Mountain View Avenue are ghastly reminders of what happens when we fail to ensure that ant-crime legislation makes special provisions for the protection of the most vulnerable, including women, children and the elderly.

Mr. Speaker, the brutality of the crimes being committed against women, children, elderly people, and even the disabled is frightening. Take, for example, Mr. Speaker, the woman who was recently beheaded in Mountain View Avenue over the weekend. This is not violence attributable to gangsters. This is a case of domestic violence. This woman had six children, four of whom were for this man, but because she had left him she became a victim of his threats of violence which, I understand, was reported to the police but nothing was done to protect her. Eventually, Mr. Speaker, she was beheaded by this man because, as I am told, she had become pregnant for another man. My question is, where is the mechanism to protect our women from this kind of obsession, and where is the real support they can turn to when they need help?

Mr. Speaker, I would like the Minister to explain if any consideration is being given to the Resolution moved by Opposition Member, Senator Kamina Johnson-Smith in 2013, pointing out the situation facing women, children, the elderly and disabled in these situations.

In that motion, Senator Johnson-Smith raised the issue of the need to amend the Child Care and Protection Act, the Offences Against the Person Act, and the Sexual Offences Act, to deal with acts of violence against women, children, and the disabled. This Motion was passed unanimously by the Senate. The last time I heard, a Joint Select Committee should have been formed to consider making changes to legislation geared to giving greater protection to these most vulnerable groups of persons. So, I would like to know what has

happened since, or what is the Government's thinking on this issue?

Mr. Speaker, the rape of women and children has been growing steadily - steadily, over the last several years. In fact, according to Children's Advocate, Betty Ann Blaine, the fastest growing crimes in Jamaica, at the moment, are rape and incest. Statistics show that the cases of sexual abuse have increased rapidly since 2007, moving from 121 cases in that year to 2,671 reported cases in 2011. And interestingly enough, experts see eye-to-eye on this, that the figure is actually much higher since there is an estimated high percentage of under-reporting.

Not only are rape and incest increasing, but the ages of the victims keep getting lower and lower. In 2012, Dr. Sandra Knight shared some of the horrifying stories of cases presented to her at the Bustamante Hospital for Children, some of which involved babies as young as 18 months old, who had been sexually assaulted and otherwise physically abused.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. McKenzie)

Miss GRANGE: As the sexual crimes against women and children by heterosexuals escalate, so too, Mr. Speaker, do those being committed by homosexuals. I don't need to go back any further than the front page article in the Sunday Observer on February 16, to highlight what is happening to some of our boys in public and private care.

The brutality of the crimes is astounding, Mr. Speaker, as our culture seemed to have normalized sexual violence. There is no doubt that there is serious cause for concern as there is a, sort of a thriving rape culture in Jamaica, and we need to deal with that urgently too, Mr. Minister. You hearing me, Mr. Minister?

Mr. BUNTING: I am hearing you.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Miss GRANGE: So, I support this Bill with the reported amendments, and I seek the Minister's more active attention to crimes being committed against women, children, and persons with disability.

And I want to just close by highlighting the fact that when the National Intelligence Bureau is going to come up with a list of songs and use those songs to justify putting in the Anti-Gang Legislation, a clause to stigmatize and criminalize artistes, and especially dance hall artistes, then it shows that they really don't understand what the problems are, and how we are going to have to deal with them.

And, one of the other things that I had to be very strident about was the fact that the police tend to go into communities and just pick up the young men, and cart them off to the station, photograph them, fingerprint them, bake them over the weekend - because they call it, you bake them, you keep them there.

A MEMBER: Even schoolers.

Miss GRANGE: Some of them, decent young men - most of them, decent young men. And then you hear a release on the radio that says that "*the police today entered x community and picked up x number of members of x gang",* when most of these youngsters don't even know what a gang is about.

And so, I was able to get Clause 6(4) inserted in the Legislation. And it reads, Mr. Speaker - and you can call this one the Babsy clause: "*A person's place of residence shall not be the sole factor in determining whether the person is a part of or a participant in a criminal organization".* And that Clause means a lot to the people who live in an inner city, to the decent young men who are not a part of criminal activities or criminal gangs.

So, I support this Bill, Mr. Speaker. The Bill was initiated under the JLP Administration of which I was a Cabinet Minister. I know that just putting this Legislation forward is not going to solve all the problems, but it certainly will be an indication to those who are into gang activities, that they will have to answer if they don't ensure that they move from a life of anti-social behavior to a decent life.

Thank you ladies and gentlemen. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, I just have a few words of support and a few words of concern that I wish to express at this time, but I want to make it absolutely clear. I have no gangs in my constituency that I know of.

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. CHARLES: I request no support from any gang in my Constituency.

Miss HANNA: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHARLES: And I propose to give no support to any gang in my constituency.

Miss HANNA: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHARLES: And if we publicly declare, I don't want to be in Parliament supporting or representing any gang. I don't want you to vote for me either. And I'm not going to vote for you.

Miss HANNA: Again.

(Laughter)

Mr. CHARLES: Let me make my position absolutely clear.

Miss HANNA: Again.

(Laughter)

Mr. CHARLES: Two of the points that I want to bring to the Minister. My father was a policeman for about 41 years and he started as a District Constable. Minister, the District Constable was the stabilizing force in the community. Somebody came along and turn the District Constable into an ordinary police man to go to police station, to write up books and to watch this. The District Constable was actually nearly elected by the community. He was respected. Every man would go and complain to the District Constable. He was a man who settled disputes.

Miss HANNA: True! True!

Mr. CHARLES: He knows every bad man.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHARLES: And, I'll tell you this and I think I should put it on record. A shop was broken in my community and the owner of the shop accused my father of not hurrying to arrest the man he said broke his shop, because he was working for my father. So he went to the police station and advised the Supervisor there that my father wasn't carrying out his duties. They came from the police station and arrested the man whom the shopkeeper said he knew broke his shop. And

the police Superintendent or Corporal stopped at the home to ask my father why he failed to carry out the arrest.

My father said, "Sir, did you find any exhibit?" "Him sey no, but de man say is him". My father asked him, "Where, what part a de shop dem break?" "Him say they tek haf de window". "Him sey sir, there are two men who break shops here, that man break shop from the roof....

(Laughter)

....not from the window. You have de wrong man".

(Laughter)

A MEMBER: So how the man know dat?

Mr. CHARLES: So, the police sey, "how you know?" Him sey, "But, how do you know that is the right man, you find any exhibit?' "No!"

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHARLES: And, so said so done, the DCs in these community know the people so well that they can tell you who is what. Finally, when they went, he was right.

But, Minister, my concern might be a little controversial, because this Bill should have been here four years ago when in my opinion....

Mr. BUNTING: Four (4) years ago?

Mr. CHARLES: Yes! When we were in office, there was a Bill that could not pass.

Mr. BUNTING: This Bill?

Mr. CHARLES: You know, you were one of those who help causes some problem.

(Laughter)

Mr. CHARLES: Yeah!

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Bunting)

Mr. CHARLES: All right, hold on likkle bit, let's not complain, it's here now.

(Laughter)

Minister, Minister, two concerns, two other concerns, one is for young men. I think there was about 140 gangs now in the country?

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Bunting)

Mr. CHARLES: A hundred and forty. If you multiply that by ten or twelve, is a whole heap a people. And as being pointed out by some of our colleagues on this side, some of these gangsters don't even know what they are in. Some are hungry! Some are graduates who can't find a job. Some are innocent and some are criminals, long time! I don't see anything here that is going to examine the state of the minds of these young people and what are we going to be able to do for some of them. Because, Minister, I have been here long time, it's not the first we are carrying Resolutions to Parliament to get rid of these gangs or to do this. "It don't work"!

Minister, I am not going to say that it didn't stop some murders and some I am not going to say it, because I don't know what would happen, but it continues, it increases every year.

So I think that - we come with social interventions, short term it stops. We have some young people who are graduates: six, seven subjects in CXC, can't find a job, have student loan to pay back from University, can't find a job. Sit down under the breadfruit tree, smoking a spliff, they are going to get involved! Let us not fool ourselves! If you are ambitious and you have six children at you

yard, wife a complain sey she hungry, you are going to find food! You have to.

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. CHARLES: Now, we need to look at that group with some sympathy and find a way how we are going to help them to keep them out of organized gang way of getting food.

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. CHARLES: That is what is lacking at this time.

The Member from St. Andrew with his organization up there probably didn't get into - what he did socially to bring food and clothing to some. I hear you laugh when he said he got them together. And what, what, what - it's not a laughing matter. To get Gang A to sit with Gang B and look at dem face without shooting at each other was a major, major success in his situation. So, Minister, I think that we again have to look, what can be done.

The Member from East Kingston who is under severe pressure at this time knows what I'm talking about, some decent young people involved. My God, whose responsibility is it to do something for them to keep them out of the night call, 'Hey buoy, waa guaan', we hav fe go do a ting, yu no, yu no hungry'?

(Laughter)

That's part of the problem.

Then my next concern is, we are going to give this piece of legislation to the police - a gwine put something else on record - that's a problem, you know. We hear about the police kill hundreds of civilians. Every time I hear it, it runs through me like a sword, 'civilians'. Is not all a dem. Sometime the police kill in protection of himself, kill murderers, kill criminals. They are described by some organizations as the police kill civilians. Nobody is talking - apart from the Attorney General who got up to say how many police have been killed. When we give the police this piece of legislation, what other protection are we putting in place for those men and women who protect us while we are in our beds at night, sitting down, watching TV, enjoying ourselves round drinks and they are outside answering, 'Control, car 24, where are you?' "Molynes Road". 'Proceed to X street, there is a shout of murder, murder', calling for help. "On my way, Control".

(Laughter)

Yes, on my way, Control (Chuckles) and he has a wife and children at home. And when he gets to the place he saw two young guys jumping over a gully - they were running from a man yard, you know, not really them - something happened and the next morning, we remove the police from frontline, we take him off duty, we disgrace the whole Police Force, we sey 'de police'.

Now, I am not an idiot. I know that in the Church, we have some bad churchmen.

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. CHARLES: In politics, we have some bad politicians.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHARLES: And in the Police Force, we have some bad police, I'm aware of that, but to brand the whole Policy Force that some of them will tell you, 'if I was a policeman I not drawing my gun simply for that, because if

you mek a mistake, if a man go fe him waist and don't have anything and you go fe him and catch him before you, you gaan a prison'. So, Minister, you need to look at something for the policemen who you are going to put this in their hands to go and administer. Don't fool yourself, they are Jamaicans with family and we can't make the one or two bad ones in there destroy the image of the rest of them.

And so, those are the few points I want to make. I want to make another plea. Minister, I don't want to - let me make my position clear. I'm in full support of the Bill. It's better to be late than never. We hope that with the politicians and the Church and the communities, working with the police and the gang members and if possible, those who will get into gangs, because that's where the danger is. More people are available because they are now educated, they are unemployed, they are sitting on the street, they are hungry, they have no jobs, they will always be attracted to something that can do better for them. And I beg you, look at those elements.

Minister, I'm going to close by again begging. I'm probably the only voice in this House who is aware of this District Constable business I'm talking about. I'm going to spend one minute of your time. The District Constable in a district, a respected person, man or woman. It was always a man then - but the District Constable was the man who solve disputes. The District Constable - when the police comes to an area, he tells the District Constable to go and look for Arnold. The District Constable sends to Arnold and sey, "come to me", and Arnold come.

(Laughter)

No police cyaan call him. The District Constable call him, him come. And I'm saying that I think the Commissioner of Police and the Minister should reconsider the District Constable in communities, not those who have been elevated and put in uniform and given a gun and sent to police station, the community leader that - both gangsters, churchmen, school children, everybody love - and who nobody afraid to go and complain to. Even the gang-man respect, Mr. Brown.

Mr. SHAW: Make sure the DC is not a gangster himself.

(Laughter)

Mr. CHARLES: (Laughter) And we know that it is like - probably we should elevate him. Probably the community should name the person who they have the greatest of respect for, because some time there is a problem down a Georges Grove, you know who dem sen for? Maas Charles to come listen. And him like a Judge, him settle it. The DC used to settle disputes. We elevate him, put him in uniform, give him a gun and send him go write up ting a police station. And he's now identified as a bad man or a police, they shoot him too. When he was a DC of my time, my time, he was not a target to gunmen or anybody, because he was the person in the community that people loved. So, a beg you, look into it and see whether or not we can't revise that and proceed.

Mr. Speaker, I know that these are serious times and I know that we all in this House as legislators must advise the country, the gang leaders, the gangsters, innocent people that we

are serious, we are saddened, we are one in this approach that we cannot go around seeing eight year old girls lose their heads, ten year old raped and thrown in bushes to be disposed of by hogs and dogs, we cannot live in a country like that, I am not comfortable even reading it. And I know that all of us inside here, not PNP and JLP MP, the Members of Parliament in this House must be solid on this matter, that we cannot continue this way and we want to see it solved.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Dr. Chang.

Dr. CHANG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to say a few words on this piece of legislation. I make a few comments. I represent a tough inner-city community with a very high rate of violence and violent crimes.

The most offensive part of this - well this legislation actually bridges administration. The concept started when we were in government and therefore, there is no objection to the type of legislation. But it does represent a continuation of a policy that the country has become enraptured in that tough policing is the solution to the crime problem, and it is not. It is a necessary part of the operation yes, and it is necessary that as legislators, we provide the country with an effective legislative framework for the police to fight crime, and no apologies for that it must be there.

In this particular legislation there are a couple of sections which were offensive, Section 15 has been modified we commend the Select Committee on that and the reception. We have seen an attempt to define 'criminal organization'. It is not entirely comfortable, but without any apology, I say not all gangs are criminal organizations given the definition of gangs in any community, or criminal organizations. And criminal organizations - organized criminal organizations require the kind of police action and the kind of police powers that are not necessarily in the interest of a group of...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. Bunting)

Dr. CHANG: No, I said not all gangs are organized criminal organizations.

A group of five young men might be in a community who have been caught in the web of poverty and apathy and they commit a crime which makes them part of the criminal network but they are not part of the organized structure that undermines social order and legal system in any country that requires special police powers and investigative activities to deal with it. And we cannot .put them all together. If we do so, we may, in fact, perpetuate the problem which is why I am speaking, Mr. Speaker, on this particular topic because tough policing has been part of the nation's policy since the 60s. And we need to begin to think a little bit out of the box and look at what else is - from the 1860s all the way down.

We need to begin to think a little out of the box and look at what we are doing wrong, why we have to periodically, quite frequently, come to Parliament and look for special legislation that gives greater power to the State to interfere in individual's lives especially young men in the inner-city, who

are finding a life in which they are almost - they are pretty hopeless. When you speak to them as you would have said to us quite frequently, you have young men who walk up to you and say, well Dr. Chang, I cannot live like my grandparents and they find another way because they don't find opportunity in society that is productive and legal. Many of them, as I said are not necessarily people who are inclined to go into organized criminal activity.

Bear in mind that the organization is built around criminal activity, it is a business and therefore what you have to do to deal with them is different from a few youngsters who come together and find camaraderie and fellowship among themselves and then get into some illegal activities. So that is my first concern, while I said, I recognized that attempt is being made to deal with it. I raised the issue because I think part of what we have failed to do as a country, is that we have not approached it in a holistic manner. As legislators there are other legislative changes that need to be done and done urgently in conjunction with what we are doing with the policing legislation.

We have not done much to address the criminal justice system. If there is no justice, if I might paraphrase one of our great artistes, where there is no justice there can be no peace. So all this tough legislation will fail if the justice system is not efficient and perceived as offering justice to all in a fair way. I have not heard much of the Justice Reform Programme, we have a Minister of Justice who speaks pretty effusively and exuberantly about the number of legislations passed, pieces of legislation, but I hear very little about justice reform. And the truth is that part of the perpetuation of violence in communities is that, people in the inner-city feel there is no justice for them. They take justice into their own hands. And the police will tell you the same thing, they arrest a man and it takes them two years to carry a hardcore criminal to court, during that time, witnesses die from natural cause or from criminal effect. The case falls out, sometime longer, many years that need to be changed and we have to find a way to ensure that justice can be attainable, justice, quality justice by all our people quickly. It must not be perceived as it is now, in the inner-city that you have big money to find justice. We have to change that, if you do not change that we will be coming here in three years time to look at how we can toughen the law and we keep going and going until we get into anarchic situations.

It is fear and others have spoken, the character of violent activity in our society today is horrendous, it is frightening, pregnant women, children, mothers and something have to be done. But we as leaders have to look at the total situation because we are coming, we have reached the stage despite of many pieces of tough legislation, many Ministers of National Security because when the thing gets too hard he takes the blame and we have dozens of them; and they each gave tougher comments whether it is spraying or shooting them without seeing the eyeball it is the same thing. We have to find a way to put together the required legislative framework that will

give a sense of justice to our people and begin to arrest this spiral of violence that is really overwhelming in our society. And this is particularly true when we deal with our inner-city people.

I have to comment on the third component of what I see as a necessary approach to correcting this problem, and I think we can do it, you know, Mr. Speaker. We have to come under the IMF Agreement and we have passed several pieces, maybe over a dozen of very far-reaching financial legislation because somebody is holding a big stick over our head called the IMF. We ought to have passed that stage; we have been independent now over fifty years. We need to examine what we need as a country to ensure justice, peace and quiet in our community and economic growth and provide, as parliamentarians, the required legislative framework.

So, I don't think it is overwhelming to the Parliamentary Counsel and the civil servants to bring the necessary legislative framework for the police to work in and at the same time effect the necessary reform in the criminal justice system to ensure that our people feel that justice is available and they do not need to always resort to violent action to solve their problems or their disputes.

Thirdly, when I said not all gangs are necessarily organized criminal institutions, because we also need to look at our entire education and social structures, to look at how we can intercept the young men who fall out. And I have had this discussion elsewhere and on many occasions. I say it again, when I did the social survey in my constituency nearly ten years ago, and I didn't do it with my political organization. I had professionals from the University of the West Indies and the Social Development Commission. We are faced with a dropout rate of 70 per cent of young men under 15 not getting beyond Grade 9 that is a pool from which you draw criminals. They are functioning illiterate, non-numerate and feeling a sense of hopelessness and neglect. So in dealing with this problem, we need to ensure that the other sector agencies, not only justice, education, social services, begin to examine what programmes they can do and how they can collaborate with each other because Labour and Social Security will have some funding, CSJP have some funding. Ministry of Youth have some funding, the problem is whatever little it is, if it is even a dollar each person go off in their own direction. If we combine them we may find that we have just enough to make a difference and begin to crack the problem.

We have condemned too many of our young people to poverty and crime, not in any way to disrespect the Member from a particular constituency, but the term was used, I don't know if I am using it out of context. But the fact is that we have made several of our - hundreds of our young men irredeemable. And I don't think it is their fault, it is because the social structures we have put in place and the way we have treated them.

The education system itself is a starter and there we have too many shifts. An attempt was made through CAP, I don't know if it was misunderstood or not to try and provide an

alternative route for some of the young men who are falling out at nine. Way back earlier on, another Minister went further. I recalled, a Minister in the 80s thought to give a common curriculum up to Grade 9 which made a lot of sense, because you could then ensure the quality and standard of education reaching everyone who was there. I don't know why it was abandoned, because now you end up teaching kids who cannot read and write fourteen subjects in Grade 8, it is an absolute ridiculous thing. And I don't know who thought the person who teaches them how to read and write. You take an illiterate person and you give them a list of course and tell their parents to buy books almost sixteen subjects. Rather than ensuring that the basic core curriculum that should carry them to Grade 9 allows them to be functional literate and numerate and other basic subjects that we can - that the educators can define that makes the person a numerate and literature person, then they take on the specialized courses or they can branch out into technical courses and all the courses. And then there is enough time to provide social values in the curriculum rather than having kids chasing around the classes and the teacher chasing after each other to do all kinds of things that nobody is listening to.

We need to look at the education system from day one and you perceive to those who fall out there has to be a second chance. This country gives no one, absolutely no one, young person a second chance alternative course.

You get a call of the GSAT Programme to a traditional high school and you have a chance to go through to CXC and A'level and University. If you miss that ride you are down the drain and the majority of our kids are faced with that problem and we kind of take it for granted and we write big articles about who is performing well and who is not performing. It is a ridiculous system, Mr. Speaker. And unless we can begin to address these other components simultaneously; we are providing the necessary legislative framework for our police officers. We need a criminal justice system that works, we need the reform immediately. The tough legislation is a short term fix; it can bring short term correction and give you some time to do the other things. If you don't do the other things you will not solve the problem, the next cycle will be worse than the last one.

Similarly, we have to look at our social services in particular education and training and do it in a way that will offer our young people alternatives.

I conclude with my own experience, you know, Mr. Speaker. When I took the constituency of North-West, St. James - I am completely different from my colleague behind me. It was - we had pockets of serious violence and gang warfare. And I said, when I tried to get some programme of interception working, maybe seven years ago, at that time you would get warring fraction in one community over here that is controlled by the police then it goes to the next community and the next community, so one time there is

Flankers and then Norwood, then Glendevon, then Rose Height, then Granville, five years of that cycle again.

And I said without any social study that at some point we are going to reach where all of them erupts simultaneously, which is where we are now, because we did not deal with the root-cause of the problem. And I think every urban constituency - every Member of Parliament, from urban constituencies with tough inner-city areas can attest to that kind of activity in their constituencies. Young men who feel neglected, their value of life is minimal and they struggle for immediate gratification, satisfaction and if they die young it doesn't matter. Our programme must begin to address the issue in a holistic manner, Mr. Speaker.

So while one will give support to this piece of legislation, which I think has, in fact, excluded the most offensive parts and I agree that the police require tough legislation, I urge the Minister to speak with his colleagues in Cabinet to ensure that coming to grips with this epidemic, the epidemic of criminal activity and violence that has become endemic in our society, we approach it with the same level of urgency that we approach our economic problems, and I can guarantee you the full support of all colleagues in the House.

(Applause)

Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Atkinson.

Mr. ATKINSON: May it please you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise to support this Bill and would just make three points. While it is understandable that civil society and persons are concerned about their individual rights, we must bear in mind that this piece of legislation will not exist in isolation but is legislation that will be subject to the supremacy of the Constitution, it will be subject to the supervision of the Courts and indeed, when the police act under it they still have to go to Court to and to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the allegations against the particular person they take before the Court are proven.

Without doubt, Mr. Speaker, the disruption of and suppression of criminal organizations is fundamental to solving Jamaica's violent problem. If we do not do it we are lost as a people. This Bill does not grant the police new powers, and I respectfully disagree with the Member from North-West St. James, it does not encourage tough policing. What it does is create a new class of conspiracies to which are attached much more serious penalties.

Mr. Speaker, this society is tired of gangsters. And when we say gangs in Jamaica we do not mean a group of youngsters who are a corner crew. When a parent comes to us and says my son has gone into that gang, we know what that means. It is not any informal group of young persons, it is this criminal organization and the Bill quite clearly defines what it means. It prohibits criminal organizations which includes gangs which are assembled for the purpose of committing serious violent crimes and intimidating communities.

(*Sotto voce* remarks from Government Member)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Not social clubs.

Mr. ATKINSON: Definitely not social clubs.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is nothing to fear. The police - and I hear it quite often said that the police will go into communities and pick up individuals. But if we stop and think about it, the police does not use a crystal ball before they go and arrest somebody. They operate on intelligence and information and that intelligence and information, more of than not, comes from inside the very community where they go. And believe it or not, sometimes some of the persons we see on the Prime Time News protesting might be some of the very persons who have given information.

I was heartened, Member from Kingston Western, when a few weeks ago I saw that residents there had indicated their tiredness of gangs and organized crimes and by writing on the walls that we don't want no more gangs here. And that is how many in the societies feel. I would encourage us not just as Members, but as a nation to give the police the support they need to fight these criminal organizations.

May it please you.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, I too rise in support of this legislation. My colleagues have echoed the sentiments as it relates to the problems affecting the constituencies that they represent. I too represent, Mr. Speaker, a constituency which has had its fair share of serious criminal activities. Any move by Government, Mr. Speaker, that will make the lives of the people living in my constituency and the adjoining communities better is a welcomed move. But you know, Mr. Speaker, I am really concerned because we have gone this road before in terms of legislation. I could go back to when the first major bit of legislation to deal with gun violence came in, that was in the 70s, the early 70s with the introduction of the then famous Gun Court.

We have seen many other legislation being brought to the floor of this Parliament that have been tried. I am hoping, Mr. Speaker, that this new legislation in some way will significantly reduce the level of criminal activities in the country. And I want the Minister in closing this debate to probably address two important issues that are of concern to me - as a matter of fact, three important issues that are of concern to me. The country is not sending strong enough signals to the criminal elements.

There are many vicious crimes being committed against the people of this country, including our children. The death penalty, Mr. Speaker, is under question. Gun crimes, a criminal can get bail easily, Mr. Speaker, and continues to walk the streets. We continue to see a country that has no gun factory. We have no poppy field in Jamaica where we grow the product to produce cocaine but yet cocaine is easily accessible in the country.

Guns and ammunitions, Mr. Speaker - I see where the police state that over some 600 guns have been recovered over a period. But then the question must be asked, how many illegal guns have come into the country after

the police have recovered over 600, Mr. Speaker? And I want the Minister to seriously look at the question of how we are going to deal with the continued importation of illegal guns into the country, Mr. Speaker, because that is the major source of the problems in Jamaica. While the gangs are there, Mr. Speaker, if the gangs don't have the guns…

Government MEMBER: Slingshot.

Mr. McKENZIE: Well, the slingshot might not be as brutal as the guns.

But the guns, Mr. Speaker, is a serious cause for concern. And not only a serious cause for concern, Mr. Speaker, but I am also hoping that the Minister, the Honourable Minister of Youth, will also look at a new trend in criminal activities in Jamaica where the criminals, those who are committing the more serious crimes are young men: 12, 13, 14, 15 - they are the new 'shottas' and they shoot without mercy. And I believe the time has come that there has to be a serious look at that aspect of the law. I can only ask the Minister again and as the Government likes to speak about joined-up approach to governance, I would like to see a much more joined-up approach as we look at the social intervention. And we can't just talk about it and say that there are social interventions taking place. As I said before when the Minister spoke, sometimes, a couple weeks ago on questions posed by the Opposition spokesperson on Security on the CSJP situation, I don't believe, Mr. Speaker, that as a country that is facing the level of crime and violence that we as a nation is facing that there is enough social intervention.

The Member from North-Central Clarendon spoke about the magnitude of young people graduating and can't find employment. These are contributing factors to the growing trend of young people that is being attracted to these criminal organizations. And I am only hoping for the sake of Jamaica, for the future of Jamaica, that for once we will be able to get it right. And let us not fool ourselves, you know, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of Jamaicans out there who believe that this Bill will solve the problems in Jamaica. We can never eradicate crime and violence in this country, nowhere in the world. But let us, Mr. Speaker, try in the best way possible to minimize the effects that it is having. It is hurting the economy; it is hurting the moral of the Jamaican people. And as I said before, I welcome the Bill.

I support it, Mr. Speaker, but I'd like to ask the Minister, in closing, if the Minister could speak to what is the Government's position, what are the latest moves that the Government will be making to minimize the influx of illegal guns and drugs that are coming into the country that is a contributing factor to the high level of crime and violence. I support the Bill, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Pryce.

Mr. PRYCE: Mr. Speaker, Members, a Bill such as this one that we have been debating now for the better part of two weeks, properly invokes wide participation with a depth of support across both sides that is uncommon in this House for one reason or the other. It is very difficult to fault anything that

has been said before and, in fact, most of it ought properly to be endorsed.

I want to associate myself with some of the context that was presented by the Member from Central St. Catherine, because I, too, like many others became somewhat concerned when it appeared, certainly the discussion in the media and across the society that this Bill, among other things, would have had an impact on the cultural expressions of our creative persons. While it is true, as she puts it, not at quote but paraphrasing, that arts reflect or mirrors the best and the worse of society. And, in fact, some of the persons that many have sought to demean who are participants in promoting brand Jamaica are, if anything, following the fine example of persons such as Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber who described former First Lady of Argentina in the following way that: "Her only good parts are between her thighs and she should stare at the ceiling and let her legs reach for the skies", as his pejorative of describing Eva Peron as no more than - well, a call girl.

Certainly, our own brand of lyricists will also have been followed in the footstep of Sir William Shakespeare who promised to unsheathe his sword and to cut off one's maidenhead, which was the standard metaphor for taking a young lady's virginity.

But those aside, Mr. Speaker, we can't deny mirror as art is that some of what the mirror has been reflecting is quite inimical to any society that considers itself on a path by 2030 to be the place of choice to live.

When in January I contacted the Member from Central Manchester in his capacity as the Minister of National Security when we had heard of the murder of two teenaged students in my own constituency not taking tales out of schools, but I recall him checking whether or not he was, in fact, speaking with me, because he had never before received a call from me, as Member of Parliament, about my constituency to report anything that was so horrific. I, coming out of that situation and seeing the total decline in the spirits and the morale of members of the community who witness the retrieval of the bodies of those teenagers, I am even far more acutely aware of the impact the level of crime and violence has on our society not just the direct victims.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think we would have been remiss if we had only discussed in this debate the actual Bill that has been placed before us without taking into consideration the change in the nature and the anatomy of the kind of violent crimes and other crimes that are committed against Jamaicans by Jamaicans in Jamaica. And certainly, I think that this piece of legislation adds to an important tool box that is growing that deals with the new types of crimes by which we are faced. The review of the Cybercrime Act recently concluded at the Committee level, for example, the recent passage in this House of what is popularly known as the anti-scamming or the anti-lotto Act.

The other nuances and amendments to some existing legislation certainly gives the authorities a greater - well, or should I say more approaches in resolving some of the kinds of crimes that have beset the society. But certainly those Members who have

confirmed that legislation alone won't do it need also to be supported and certainly part of the regime that will cure the epidemic by which we suffer has to do with some of the social interventions which all of us as Members of Parliament are called upon to provide in our respective constituencies and elsewhere. And in that regard, I think it is also important, I don't it has come before the House yet, it might not be in the records formally but it is also important to speak to the recent launch at the Jamaica Conference Centre of an initiative which includes many of the packages about which we're speaking for social intervention, that being the **Unite for Change**. And it is easy, as other members have pointed out, for us to blame one National Security Minister or the other or in fact blame all of them in series. For every time there is a crime of passion or other crime that leads to the murder of a Jamaican. But it is also important as we criticize them and as they become accustomed to those criticisms to also acknowledge when steps have been taken in an appropriate direction to make it more difficult for criminals to engage in their criminal activity, and to escape the laws that are put in place to protect innocent citizens from the brands of crimes which are evolving every day more as we speak.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I'd also like to point out the fact that the concern that is raised that this legislation gives other powers to the police force that we should also be aware that criminals: formal gangs, organized crimes, criminal organizations however, we want to describe them they, too, are becoming increasingly sophisticated, they, too, are increasing the tools that are in their own tool box and they, too, are having discussion in places where they meet to determine how they are going to find new approaches to either extort or to instill fear, or to execute their promises of threats of violence to keep their clutches a reticent group of young men mostly who are themselves on many occasions, afraid of leaving the organizations or afraid of standing their ground and resisting to carry out the ill wills of those who would instruct them. And while I agree that no legislation is going to be sufficient in achieving all that we need to achieve, I certainly believe that it is inspiring to me as a new Member of Parliament to see this level of civility, this level of unanimity on an issue, which I believe all of us are equally potential victims of.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, like all of the others who have contributed before me, I would like to solidly state my public endorsement of the legislation that is before us, brought by the Minister of National Security and call on all Jamaicans, indeed, to unite to achieve the change that we all desire in making Jamaica, land we love a land that we actually continue to love.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Buchanan.

Mr. Paul BUCHANAN: Mr. Speaker, studies have shown, Mr. Speaker, that over 75 per cent, in fact some studies speak to about 83 per cent of our crime is committed by repeat offenders.

With that in mind, I rise, Mr. Speaker, not to detract from the Minister's purpose in

reducing crime, but hopefully to direct our debate towards the important inclusion of a rehabilitation path for convicts and ex-convicts. Because we have to define who these gangs are, what is the makeup of these gangs, so we not only must be punitive in our legislation but it might mean companion legislation to give more meaning to that which we consider today. So there is an overwhelming need, Mr. Speaker, to cut off the source of recruitment to the many gangs that litter our inner-city landscape. This can only be done by fashioning a rehabilitation path or alternative to the ex-convicts who either lead or constitute the membership of gangs. Mr. Speaker, when they leave - these people who constitute the gangs, when they leave our prisons, they come out perhaps with a recommendation letter and perhaps a Bible. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, they're coming back in the main to a community which is ripe for them to go back to ply their trade and to set up more gangs.

The Correctional Services, Mr. Speaker, they train inmates but outside when they return to civilian life there is no captive market, there is no hope of employment on their release. I think we have to be very pointed here. And I dare say, Mr. Speaker, whilst some of us are on the trail of being punitive, I want to just bring a different perspective, briefly so, in saying that where possible our Government and the private sector, perhaps with assurances from the Government, should provide an element - well, I would say job quotas to those coming from the or recommended by the Correctional Services. Further training and educational opportunities on release should also be recommended here. We noticed too, Mr. Speaker, certainly in my constituency I have sought to engage the police that they should be online with the Correctional Services where when an inmate is being released, the police, it is known to the police in real-time so that they can welcome that inmate with flowers or some appropriate welcoming platform. But they can't just slip back into the areas to continue where they left off. But even more profound than all of this, Mr. Speaker, we must go back to the environment that has bred thee criminals. What is that environment? That environment is beset by in the main two hybrid economic phenomenon. One which is so immediate, it's before our very eyes and it speaks to both the solution and the problem. The first one I would call the high unemployment high consumption paradox where despite the prevailing high employment in these inner-city areas, you can notice the high propensity to consume - the high level of consumption you see at round-robin, you see it at funerals. It is there. Where does that end up?

The other paradox is the paradox of thrift which is even more dangerous, because our people save, whether Rollington Town or Jones Town, or Lacey in West Rural St. Andrew, Rocky Valley, they say they are unable to access funds from our financial sector and we are talking now the breeding ground of criminal activities in a number of these areas without specifying any. So we cannot go to conclusion without understanding

the world in which we are dealing with; the world of criminal activity.

In the United States of America, Mr. Speaker, how do they handle this problem? They have what is called the Community Reinvestment Act of America, and if you research it you will find what they are saying is that the banks cannot take all of these deposits, aggregate deposits from our inner-city, whether from remittances - when you go to Cross Roads the Western Union is filled with the people from the inner-city. Remittances, cash pot, church offerings, robberies, government contracts, all those flows they go one way, eventually out. So there is a net disinvestment effect taking place in our inner cities. The money go straight into the formal financial sector or ultimately so, but nothing is coming back in. They are classified as high-risk areas and it gives more latitude to the perpetrators of gang formation. The sense of hopelessness that pervades these areas.

In fact, a Sociologist, Carolyn Shaw Bell, an American Sociologist, she speaks of the invisible ghetto wall, as if inside our inner cities is a different world that when you come out you are on one side of Jamaica, and inside there is a different world inside, different socio-economic variables at play.

And, as I said, we cannot come to finality on this legislation without exhausting the environment that breeds this kind of formation that we call gangs. And when you look at the sections of the legislation that was brought to the House earlier, it pushes those people into the formal financial sector. That informal economy that operates there, they can no longer trade in cash anymore, they have to go into a banking sector - a financial sector that is both unwelcoming, uncomfortable and unwilling to assist with the reflows and the capitalization that is necessary to make - to give hope to those areas, and to give alternatives to these people that will form these gangs.

Mr. Speaker, we not only have to ventilate our ghettos, our inner-city areas, we have to do better than that. And I would ask the Minister and would ask this Parliament to look at the companion legislation not so much to detract from the punitive measures that are required to deter gang formation, but those social intervention measures without just speaking about them, to look at the specifics that are required to provide these alternatives. We have to engage our family units, we have to strengthen and engage them, time disallows all of that.

And I would pray and I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that men and women of goodwill and the Members here, will in the days to come think about some of the interventions that will give more meaning to this legislation, because left alone as a punitive measure, it will not work. (Applause) Left alone as a punitive measure, it will not work. What are we going to do with them; we are going to throw them into the sea? We have to give them an alternative - that is the proper course.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would hope, as I said, and I would pray that we consider such measures.

I thank you. (Applause)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Minister Bunting.

Mr. BUNTING: Mr. Speaker, I am heartened at the unanimity which this Honourable House has displayed in the many Members who have made contributions between last week and this week, and to a Member, they have all spoken in support of it. And I would really point many of those skeptics who have been commenting for some time in media, in public *fora*, and invariably criticizing in one way or another this Bill. And there are very few things - very few issues which we have complete unanimity on in this House or in this Parliament, and the fact that this is one such issue, I think should cause those critics to go and have a closer look at not only the Bill that was tabled in June last year, but look at the amended version that we will pass this evening in the House.

And one of the processes of this Bill, from its tabling through the initial comments in public through the submissions - the formal submissions to the Joint Select Committee and now to the actual debate in the House, is, I think, a very interesting one to observe.

First - a number of observations I would like to make. The first is that many, many of the initial commentators did so without the benefit of reading the Bill, and it perhaps led to a lot of confusion. And even persons who made submissions, I find, Mr. Speaker, people come with so much cynicism that they do not even bother to listen to what the other party is saying in the conversation, they have come prepared to make their points and they are going to make them regardless of what information they get before.

So, one example of that, Mr. Speaker - and I am sure the Member from North-East St. Andrew was as frustrated as I was many times - is, many groups kept coming and complaining about the additional police powers that this Bill was creating, and they kept comparing it to the Suppression of Crime Act. And outside of the fact that it has the word "suppression" in the name, in the Criminal Justice (Suppression of Criminal Organizations) Act, there really was very little objective basis to compare it to any Suppression of Crime Act. As the Attorney-General has said this afternoon, it creates absolutely no new powers. No new police powers, no new powers to arrest, no new powers to detain, no new powers to search premises or seize property. So what it does is create a new set of offences.

And what is encouraging, even though it was frustrating at the start, what is encouraging is that during the process of deliberations and discussions on the Bill, notwithstanding the stridency and the passion and the - what should I say - sometimes emotive ways in which advocates of one position or another made their contribution, what I think the final outcome shows is where persons who are concerned primarily with the good of the country, can find common ground that we all can live with and go forward on.

(Applause)

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to some of the specific concerns that were raised by

various Members. And I would like to start with some of the concerns raised by the - or the points raised by the Opposition spokesman…

A MEMBER: Which one is that?

Mr. BUNTING: The one who spoke first...

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Who dat?

Mr. BUNTING: ...last week.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Derrick, a you dat?

Mr. BUNTING: Mr. Speaker, one of the concerns he raised was what he called the two-year delay - the two-year delay for the passage of this Bill in Parliament, or for the tabling of the Bill in Parliament. And, in fact, it wasn't a two-year delay, I mean, we came into office in January, 2012, the Bill was tabled in June, 2013, since then it has been going though the parliamentary process. But a number of adjustments have been made to the Bill and some of them you might think are more or less material.

But when we came in I thought it was our responsibility to have a review of the draft that was there, to seek the input from the various stakeholder groups, the police, the Attorney-General's Department, the Legal Reform Unit, the various stakeholders, a number of NGOs, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. And what we found was that their comments on the draft that we found were in essence saying that nobody found it satisfactory, and in fact, you found people coming at it from two opposite ends. Some felt it was too draconian, it was infringing on our constitutional rights, others felt it was too weak and it would not have the intended effect of suppressing the activities of criminal organizations. But, nevertheless, we had to try and reconcile all of these issues because we don't have, Mr. Speaker, in this Parliament, the luxury that the critics have, where they can criticize anything that's put on the table and don't have to do anything, they don't have to put any substitute, they don't have to take any responsibility for what is happening every day. This Parliament does not have the luxury of doing nothing. This Parliament does not have the luxury of resigning ourselves to the cynicism which dominates our media and our comments in public. (Applause) We have to do the hard work that it takes to find a balance between all the competing interests and between all the competing concerns.

And some people say, but everything has been tried before, legislation has been tried before, social intervention has been tried before, everything has been tried before and crime still keeps growing at unacceptable levels.

Mr. Speaker, we don't have the luxury of giving up. We have to keep working at it, we have to keep trying until we find a solution.

(Applause)

A MEMBER: Work! Work! Work!

Mr. BUNTING: Mr. Speaker, so we are not saying that this Bill is a panacea, but we think it will take us forward, it will be a significant step forward.

And we looked at some of the objections made during this period when you felt there was a - when the Opposition spokesman felt there was a delay. And what were we doing

then? We were looking at the distinction, for example, in the previous version of the Bill where it had two separate categories, it spoke to - in the definition, it spoke to criminal gangs, and secondly, it spoke to organized criminal groups.

And upon examining this, Mr. Speaker, our advisors and indeed, the Minister of Justice and myself felt that the difference between these two terms used in the Bill were so close that in effect, only the word "organized" was the critical distinction between the two definitions. That in fact, it would make it difficult in some respects to identify who exactly the legislation was targeting. It would put an extra burden on the Prosecution, in terms of proving that element of organization, and, therefore, it would have made it perhaps easier for the Defence, and more difficult to secure successful prosecutions. So we wanted some certainty, and to ensure that the legislation would be able to prove itself. And we felt that we could remove that distinction and replace "criminal gangs" and "criminal groups" with the more omnibus term "criminal organization". And we revised the definitions and associated offences and penalties.

I want to point out here, there were two 3ets of penalties for offences as it would relate to either criminal gangs, or organized criminal groups, one, being softer penalties. But, what we have done, since we have only used one single term now, we have provided for the full range of penalties so that the Court, the Judge in effect, can determine in particular cases, what would be the appropriate penalty to apply.

We have adjusted the trial procedure, similar to cases heard in the Gun Court, and we have also, Mr. Speaker, based on submissions during that interregnum between our coming to office and tabling the Bill in June last year, we have actually added new offenses; concealing the proceeds of the activities of criminal organizations, for example; concealing transporting disposing of or tampering with evidentiary material relating to criminal activity; professing to be a part or a participant in a criminal organization when you are not so; impersonating law enforcement officers as well as the whole area of use of songs to promote or facilitate criminal organizations, which we subsequently amended the approach.

So, Mr. Speaker, we made these amendments after wide consultation, which I believe we had a responsibility to do, coming to office. These were forwarded to the Chief Parliamentary Counsel. And as I had said before, and while Member here in her contribution commented today, it perhaps had to take a backseat depending on the timing of some of the legislation which were benchmark pieces of the Legislation, in order to meet our commitments under the IMF programme. And it is, perhaps unfortunate, but I think we all agree that it is critical that we pass the IMF test.

Mr. DALLEY: Everyone.

Mr. BUNTING: Everyone, I think, will agree with that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would just say - so, the Bill was tabled in June. We had a long series of deliberations, many, many submissions to the Joint Select Committee, and I think we have a better piece of Legislation today than what came in the House with. (Applause) And I don't consider that a delay for no good reason. I think we have improved. It is, in fact, a demonstration of how Parliament should work.

Just to turn to some of the other comments, Mr. Speaker. I note, and I welcome the former Opposition Spokesman on National Security and Justice. I heard him talking today how I wish he had been talking for the previous two years.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Chuck)

Mr. BUNTING: Really, in a very constructive way. Clearly, he has lifted his game.

Mr. DALLEY: Yes, he has changed seat.

Mr. BUNTING: And I hope he is one of those who get back the work. (Laughter)

A MEMBER: We are not so sure about that.

(*Sotto voce* comments/Laughter)

Mr. BUNTING: Because I think the way he is speaking now, that he definitely deserves for that.

(*Sotto voce* comments/Laughter)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: That could be the second time Derrick lose the work.

(*Sotto voce* comments/Laughter)

Mr. BUNTING: And we thank the Member from North-East St. Andrew for sharing his experience in the Grants Pen/Barbican area, and I am sure that he will give the template to his colleagues in Parliament. Because, quite seriously, Mr. Speaker, I don't think it is going to be sufficient for us to win our seats by, whether small margin, or big margin, and be a political leader in a constituency where we have these kinds of heinous crimes being committed by gangs; where we have communities living under constant intimidation, fear; what some people even refer to as modem day slavery. And I think we have to accept the developmental role that an MP has as a. political leader to do something towards addressing the problem of crime, and in particular, violence prevention.

A MEMBER: You hear, Desmond.

Mr. BUNTING: So, to the extent we each have best practice; we can share with each other, I think we should. And I commend that to you, Member, and all of us, because in different ways persons have taken initiatives. And I think if we pool these experiences collectively, we can develop a plan of action that can assist those who perhaps have less experience in dealing with those issues, and even those who are experienced can find new ways to make a positive contribution.

Miss GRANGE: They must have money.

Mr. BUNTING: Dealing with road, light, water, even education by itself, will not be sufficient unless we can change the safety and security environment in the constituencies we represent.

The Member from Central St. Catherine, again, I want to thank her for the kind comments she made about my chairmanship of the proceedings. (Applause) And I think, in

my opening I acknowledged the role that she played. And, in fact, I am quite happy to adopt the - the perhaps colloquial reference to Clause 6(4) as the Babsy Clause.

Mr. DALLEY: It is a tit for tat thing.

Mr. BUNTING: I have no problem with that.

You made a comment about women and children being the main target of gangs, and I think, while it is a cause for concern, I don't think it is quite true to say they are the main targets.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Miss Grange)

Mr. BUNTING: No, no, I am very concerned about violence against women and children. But, just statistically speaking, there is still a relatively small minority in the sense of the quantity, the numbers of victims, but it is cause for concern. But, out of 1,197 - for example, last year, murders if we just use the category *murders,* 1,070 men, 127 women, and between male and female, within those - sorry, I should say 1,070 male, 127 female, and within those categories there were 41 children. So, way too many, even though still a minority, in terms of the percentages.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Miss Grange)

Mr. BUNTING: I think the bigger point that you were making, though, is that there is a certain callousness in terms of how, as a society, and how as men, we are dealing with women and children. When I was growing up, I know, even as a young man, if I even looked hard at my sister, my father would grab me by the scruff. You wouldn't even think of any physical assault; you wouldn't even think about it because you would be so - you know your parents would be so horrified at it. But now, not only do we murder, rape, assault women but even children - even infants. This society has reached the level.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Miss Hanna)

Mr. BUNTING: Yes, I acknowledged the - well, you acknowledged the amendments we made to 6 - I think it was section - yes, 6(4) which we spoke about. Sorry, you were saying the...

(*Sotto voce* comment by Miss Hanna)

Mr. BUNTING: Okay, the Child Care and Protection Act, you had suggested that we look at amending it to re-examine the offenses and the penalties *et cetera.* I am advised by...

Miss GRANGE: Consultations.

Mr. BUNTING: ...the Minister of Youth and Culture who, as you know that Act falls under that portfolio, that work has commenced on a review of that.

The Member from North-Central made some comments on DCs. The Member from North-West St. James spoke to the whole issue of justice reform. And that, of course, is a critical point.

And, you know what was interesting, Mr. Speaker, last year I had a opportunity to visit Colombia, and did a study of the successes that they have had - very dramatic successes, over the last decade or so, in reducing their levels of homicide, in taking back vast areas of their countries from Narco traffickers and paramilitaries. And they did a number of things, but one of the most important interventions they did, was in terms of

reforming their justice system. And they were able to reduce the time of their average court process - and that means from the time that the person is charged to the time it is disposed of in the Court of first instance - from 567 days to sixty-odd days. They were able to reduce it from 567 days to sixty-something days.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. BUNTING: As a result - before, when it was 567 days, their conviction rate for serious crime - and I am talking this is for serious crimes - their conviction rate for serious crime was something like three per cent. After they reduced it to sixty-odd days, the conviction rate went up to 60 per cent.

Now, we would welcome just bringing our average Court process time to 567 days which is where they started, because as you know in very, very few cases of serious crimes, murders in particular, we would meet that target of disposing, it is three to five years we would be looking at. So, we would be talking well between 1,500 and 2,000 days. So, we are not even where they were when they started their reform process. And I think that just speaks to the urgency with which we need to embark upon that justice reform.

The Member from West Kingston spoke about the - well, he asked a question about the latest moves to minimize the influx of drugs and guns. And, What I am going to commit is to bring a Ministry Paper, and we have a full discussion on that, because I don't think we could treat with it, all the various strategies that we are undertaking just as on a side to this discussion. So, I am undertaking to, either by way of, whether you want to bring it as a motion, whether you want me to bring a Ministry Paper and we have a discussion on it, or in the course of one of the debates. But we are doing a number of things, but I think it warrants a separate debate of fulsome treatment on its own.

I want to thank the Member from North East St. Elizabeth, unaccustomed as he is to having four murders in your constituency in one evening. I think that was a shock for him as well as it was a shock for me, because that police area had not appeared on my blotter - on the radar before.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. BUNTING: And finally, the Member from West Rural St. Andrew spoke to two strong points: the importance of having a rehabilitation path for ex-convicts, and the importance of companion measures on the social intervention side. And the - part of that, because not all of those measures will be legislative - part of that is really what we are talking about when we talk about the Unite for Change initiative. And our participation here today, I think, bodes well for uniting for change against violence prevention.

(Applause)

But this will not be the end. There is a whole series of social interventions under CSJP III, under other social intervention programmes, both public and private sector. And we are also seeing very encouraging participation from our faith-based institutions and other community organizations. And again, separately, I think that warrants its own

treatment, and perhaps a Ministry Paper will come to Parliament within a few weeks, speaking to developments in that area.

So, Mr. Speaker, in closing, in concluding^ the debate, I want to thank all the Members for their important contributions and I would ask first that the House approve the Report and then I would invite you to ask the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House to consider the Bill clause by clause.

Thank you.

(Applause)

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Report be approved?

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: This Honourable House will now resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House to consider the Bill clause by clause.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Derrick, you have any amendments?

Mr. D. SMITH: The one I asked him last week.

COMMITTEE STAGE

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister.

Mr. BUNTING: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would ask - Mr. Chairman, sorry, I would ask that Members refer to the Appendix 3 in the Report, which has the amendments proposed by the Joint Select Committee of Parliament. And there is only one correction to those proposed amendments and I circulated a single sheet there and that only refers to the First Schedule, and when we get to that I will do that.

So I would suggest that Members, in terms of the amendments, just refer to their - to Appendix 3 of the Report to guide the amendments. There are quite a few amendments.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, Appendix 3 is page 26 for those who have not found it yet.

Mr. CHUCK: Perhaps, Chairman, perhaps the Minister would just go clause by clause and then you refer to the amendment as soon as you go. In other words, when you put Clause 1, you say...

The CHAIRMAN: Right.

Mr. CHUCK: ....Appendix 3, Clause 1, can we.... and we basically move for the adoption.

Mr. BUNTING: Yeah, we'll certainly go clause by clause.

The CHAIRMAN: I'll be so guided.

Mr. CHUCK: So, if we go, Mr. Chairman, clause by clause and then when we reach say Clause 2, we just look at the amendment and adopt what is there.

Mr. BUNTING: There are a lot of amendments to per clause....

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chuck.

I put Clause 1. There is a change, Minister, in the....

Mr. BUNTING: Not to Clause 1, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: No.

Mr. BUNTING: I'm not sure if we have to change the 2013.

The CHAIRMAN: We have to change the year.

Mr. BUNTING: The year?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr. BUNTING: Okay. So we would amend - we would replace 2013....

The CHAIRMAN: It is not an amendment, it's just...

Mr. BUNTING: Okay.

The CHAIRMAN: …editorial.

Mr. BUNTING: Just due to the passage of time.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr. BUNTING: Okay. So, we are in favour of Clause 1, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: Those in favour of Clause 1.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

I put Clause 2.

Mr. BUNTING: Yes, Mr. Chairman. In Clause 2....

Mr. CHUCK: Look at.

Mr. BUNTING: ...I refer to the amendment where the Report recommended that we delete the definition of 'criminal organization' and substitute therefor the words outlined in the Report. Do I need to read them?

Mr. CHUCK: No, no, I would just say we adopt it.

Mr. BUNTING: Just adopt the words in the Report for the amendments to Clause 2.

Mr. CHUCK: So, Chairman, if we just say we adopt the...

Mr. BUNTING: Proposed Clause in 2.

Mr. CHUCK: Right.

Mr. BUNTING: We adopt the amendments proposed by the....

Mr. CHUCK: In Clause 2 of the amendment.

Mr. BUNTING: ...Joint Select Committee.

Mr. CHUCK: So, if you put it, Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: But there are other amendments in Clause 2.

Mr. CHUCK: No, no, we are dealing...

Mr. BUNTING: There is Clause 2(1) and Clause 2(2). So there's the amendments with respect to the definition of 'criminal organization' and with respect to the definition 'of law enforcement'. There are two amendments.

The CHAIRMAN: So, I'm going to go in and put the first amendment.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

The Second Amendment put to the Committee and agreed to.

The Third Amendment put to the Committee and agreed to.

The Fourth Amendment put to the Committee and agreed to.

Mr. BUNTING: But, we are amending definition notice of criminal, that's three.

The CHAIRMAN: Is just three? Okay.

(Laughter)

Mr. CHUCK: What's happening here!

(Laughter)

Mr. BUNTING: Well, we are amending the definitions of 'criminal organization' and the definition of 'law enforcement'.

Mr. CHUCK: Right. So that's three.

The CHAIRMAN: Okay. All right.

Mr. CHUCK: So that's Clause 2, put the Clause 2 as modified.

The CHAIRMAN: I put Clause 2 as amended.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put the First Schedule?

Mr. BUNTING: No, no, no!

Mr. CHUCK: No, no, Clause 3.

Mr. BUNTING: (Laughter)

The CHAIRMAN: I put Clause 3.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

Clause 4 put to the Committee and agreed to.

Clause 5 put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put Clause 6....

Mr. BUNTING: Mr. Chairman, I once again ask that we adopt the amendments as set out in the Report for Clause 6? That's specifically deleting subsection (3) and substituting therefor the new subsections (3) and (4).

The CHAIRMAN: I put the first amendment?

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

The second amendment put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I now put Clause 6 as amended?

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put Clause 7?

Mr. BUNTING: Clause 7, Mr. Chairman, in subsection (3)C1, insert immediately after the words, '*the person'*, the word, *'knowingly'*, as set out in the Report.

Mr. CHUCK: So put the amendment, Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: I put the amendment to Clause 7.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

Clause 7 as amended put to the Committee and agreed to.

Clause 8 put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put Clause 9.

Mr. CHUCK: No, one amendment.

Mr. BUNTING: Similarly, Mr. Chairman, in Clause 9, in subsection (1) insert immediately after the words, '*a person shall not*' the word, '*knowingly*' as recommended in the Report.

Mr. CHUCK: Put the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: I put the amendment to Clause 9.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

Clause 9 as amended put to the Committee and agreed to.

Clauses 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put Clause 15.

Mr. BUNTING: No, Mr. Chairman. As in the Report, Mr. Chairman, we are proposing to delete Clause 15....

The CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Mr. BUNTING: …and that would require that we renumber Clauses 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22 as 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 respectively.

Mr. CHUCK: So, Chairman, put the proposal that we delete Clause 15 first, so we

approve the deletion of Clause 15.

The CHAIRMAN: I put the deletion as amended.

Mr. CHUCK: Deletion of Clause 15.

Mr. BUNTING: Just the deletion?

Mr. CHUCK: You put the deletion of Clause 15.

(The Clerk instructed the Chairman)

The CHAIRMAN: I put the amendment to Clause 15 as amended?

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

Mr. BUNTING: And now the renumbering, Mr. Chairman. So we can speak to the new Clause 15 as renumbered.

Mr. CHUCK: Exactly.

Mr. BUNTING: You want to put the renumbering.

(The Clerk instructed the Chairman)

The CHAIRMAN: I put Clause 15 as renumbered.

Mr. BUNTING: No, hold on, Mr. Chairman. Clause 15 as renumbered was the previous Clause 16.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr. BUNTING: And we, we need to delete subsection (1) and substitute the following as subsection (1). And it's set out in the Report.

Mr. CHUCK: Put the amendment to - two amendments, the new Clause 16....

Mr. BUNTING: New Clause 15.

Mr. CHUCK: Fifteen.

Mr. BUNTING: (Chuckles) The previous Clause 16 would now become - be renumbered as Clause 15, that's the first amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: I put the amendment to Clause 1.

Mr. BUNTING: Clause 15, subsection (1)?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, it's subsection (1)?

Mr. BUNTING: To the new… to the renumbered Clause.

The CHAIRMAN: I put the amendment of subsection (1)

Mr. BUNTING: Of the renumbered Clause....

The CHAIRMAN: …to be Clause 15 as amended.

Mr. CHUCK: That's correct.

The CHAIRMAN: As renumbered.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put Clause 16 as… Oh, there's another amendment?

Mr. BUNTING: I just want....

The CHAIRMAN: I put the amendment to Clause 16 as renumbered?

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

Mr. BUNTING: Mr. Chairman, just for - out of an abundance of caution, I just want to.... We have done the renumbering, we have passed the renumbering of Clauses 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22 as 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, or we are doing it as - one by one? We're doing it individually?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr. BUNTING: Okay.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr. BUNTING: So we're now on Clause 16.

The CHAIRMAN: I put the amendment to Clause 16 as renumbered?

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put the new Clause 16 as amended?

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put… There's an amendment to Clause 17?

MEMBERS: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: I put the amendment to Clause 17 as renumbered?

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put Clause 18? No!

Mr. CHUCK: No, 17 as amended.

Mr. BUNTING: Seventeen (17) as amended.

(Advised by the Clerk)

The CHAIRMAN: I put the Second Amendment to Clause 17 as amended - as renumbered?

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

(Advised by the Clerk)

The CHAIRMAN: Okay, we have two consequential amendments in Clause 3 - subsection (3) as renumbered. And (3) to be deleted and substituted by (2).

Mr. BUNTING: You're in the renumbered Clause 17?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

And in subsection (4), where there is (4) we'll substitute it with (3). You have those, Mr. Chuck.

Mr. CHUCK: Put the amendment, Chairman.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Too many instructions.

The CHAIRMAN: I put the new Clause 17 as amended?

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

Mr. BUNTING: Put the new Clause 18.

The CHAIRMAN: I put Clause 18 as renumbered.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put Clause 19 as renumbered.

Mr. CHUCK: No, no, two amendments.

The CHAIRMAN: There was an amendment?

Mr. BUNTING: Yes. Delete subsection (1) and substitute the following subsection (1) as outlined in the Report.

Mr. CHUCK: Put the amendment, Chairman.

Mr. BUNTING: So, put the amendment to Clause....

The CHAIRMAN: I put the amendment to the new Clause 19.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

(Advised by the Clerk)

The CHAIRMAN: I put the new Clause 19 as amended.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put Clause 20 as renumbered.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put Clause 21.

Mr. CHUCK: Amendment.

Mr. BUNTING: There's an amendment there, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr. BUNTING: Deleting the word, '*five*' and substituting therefor, the word, '*three*'.

(Discussion between the Clerk and the Chairman)

The CHAIRMAN: . I put the amendment to the new Clause 21.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: Clause 21 as amended put to the Committee and agreed to.

Mr. BUNTING: So, Mr. Chairman, the First Schedule.

The CHAIRMAN: I put the First Schedule...

Mr. BUNTING: There is an amendment here. There is an amendment in the - recommended in the Report, Mr. Chairman, and there is a further amendment which I circulated on this single sheet.

The CHAIRMAN: It is an editorial, I am told and not an amendment.

Mr. BUNTING: It is an editorial amendment.

Mr. CHUCK: So, may I suggest, Chairman, that you put the amendment to Schedule 1 as outlined in the Report firstly; and then secondly, the editorial afterwards. Is that okay?

The CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Mr. BUNTING: I am fine with that.

The first amendment to the First Schedule put to the Committee and agreed to.

The second amendment to the First Schedule put to the Committee and agreed to.

The First Schedule as amended put to the Committee and agreed to.

Mr. CHUCK: And I suggest, Chairman, you do the same with the Second and Third Schedule.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister and Mr. Chuck, I gather that there are three amendments, there is another amendment. Can you so advise? On page 19, a new paragraph, rather 31, on page 19, Mr. Chuck.

Mr. BUNTING: Mr. Chairman that was covered in the recommendations from the Report...

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr. BUNTING: ...that was what I thought was part of what you put.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr. BUNTING: It is three amendments so you still need - so we have dealt with amendment one. So the second one we would now be dealing with then would be insert immediately between paragraph 2 as renumbered.

The CHAIRMAN: There is a new 31, Minister, a new paragraph.

Mr. BUNTING: Insert next after paragraph 30 has renumbered the following as paragraph 31.

Mr. CHUCK: But I thought we were just putting as amended in the Report, everything?

Mr. BUNTING: That is what I thought as well.

The CHAIRMAN: That is what I am doing.

The third amendment to the First Schedule put to the Committee and agreed to.

The First Schedule as amended put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put the Second Schedule..

Mr. BUNTING: Mr. Speaker, with the amendments recommended from the Report,

in terms of adjusting the columns and also the entries relating to Clause 15.

The CHAIRMAN: Okay, I am advised, Minister that the first one is an editorial and the second one will be a deletion.

Mr. CHUCK: So could we just put them as suggested?

The CHAIRMAN: Which clause again. (Laughter)

The amendment to the Second Schedule put to the Committee and agreed to.

The Second Schedule as amended put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put the Third Schedule...

Mr. BUNTING: I move that we adopt the amendments suggested in the report, Mr. Speaker, to the Third Schedule.

The first amendment to the First Schedule put to the Committee and agreed to.

The second amendment to the Third Schedule put to the Committee and agreed to.

The third amendment to the Third Schedule put to the Committee and agreed to.

The fourth amendment to the Third Schedule put to the Committee and agreed to.

The Third Schedule as amended put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: Please note that there is an editorial amendment, it is editorial..

Mr. BUNTING: And the Memorandum of Objects and Reasons, Mr. Speaker, we are going to delete the original and substitute therefore the one recommended in the Report.

The CHAIRMAN: Okay, that is being noted as an editorial, not as an amendment.

Mr. BUNTING: As an editorial, okay.

The Title and the Enacting Clause put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that I do report the Bill as having passed Committee Stage with twenty-two (22) amendments.

Motion put to the Committee and agreed to.

RESUMPTION

The Deputy SPEAKER: I do report the Bill as having passed Committee Stage with twenty-two (22) amendments.

Mr. BUNTING: Mr. Speaker, I now ask that the Bill be read a third time.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Bill be read a third time.

Motion put to the House and agreed to.

Bill entitled:

"AN ACT to make provision for the disruption and suppression of criminal organizations and for related matters"

read a third time and passed.

(Applause)

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, it is not intended to do any further business today, I therefore ask for the adjournment of the House until next Tuesday, 25th February at 2:00 p.m.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that this Honourable House adjourns until next Tuesday, February 25, 2014.

Motion put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The Honourable House now stands adjourned. (Gavels)

The House accordingly adjourns its sitting at 6:31 p.m. until Tuesday, February 25, 2014 at 2:00 p.m.

THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SESSION 2013 – 2014

TUESDAY, February 25, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:30 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

MR. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House.

MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing

HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security

HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce

HON. ROGER HAROLD CLIFFORD CLARKE, CD, (PNP), Westmoreland, Central, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture

HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, Northern, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, Attorney General, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister

HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

OTHER MEMBERS

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern

MR. HUGH CARL BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Western

DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western

DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western

MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, OD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central

HON. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern

MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central

MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western

MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern

MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern

MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western

MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern

MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP), St. Thomas, Western

MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern

MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central

MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern

MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern

MR. DARYL WESLEY PHILLIP VAZ, (JLP), Portland, Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. Daryl Vaz.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

The SPEAKER: Before we get down to today's business, let us welcome some visitors we have here. We have 27 students and their teachers from Porus High School; North West Manchester Youth Clubbites, 15, and St. Andrew High School for Girls, 42 students and their teachers.

(Applause)

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

The SPEAKER: House Leader.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport and Works will make a Statement.

The SPEAKER: Minister Davies. .

THE PORTLAND BIGHT – GOAT ISLAND PROJECT

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker, today I am providing an update on the Portland Bight Goat Islands Project. Members may recall that when I addressed this Honourable House on October 29 last year, I presented the results of an environmental management scoping project, which was commissioned by the Port Authority of Jamaica to identify the legal and regulatory environment, the natural heritage resources, the industrial and commercial interest, as well as the principal bio-physical and socio-cultural characteristics of the Portland Bight Protected Area. I indicated at that time that the scoping study was a preliminary study geared to provide information on the present situation in the area of interest, and that it would serve as a useful guide in determining the appropriate issues to be addressed in an environmental impact assessment.

Mr. Speaker, I emphasized then and I emphasize once more that the scoping study was not an environmental impact assessment nor was it a substitute for one. The study concluded that the Portland Bight Protected Area is a multi-used national park which hosts important natural heritage resources as well as a number of industrial, commercial, residential and agricultural activities. Therefore it was not an exclusive environmental conservatory. It further concluded that experience with such a mixed indicated that it is possible to satisfactorily address or compensate for the environmental impact of the proposed project.

The findings of the study were posted on the PAJ website and the PAJ conducted a series of consultations with a wide cross-section of key stakeholders and interest groups. What became evident from those initial consultations was that whilst there were objections from some environmental groups, there was also significant enthusiasm and anticipation regarding the proposed project, particularly given its potential impact on employment and Jamaica's overall development. The Port Authority continued its discussions with China Harbour Engineering Company, which we call CHEC, and has now arrived at an initial framework agreement that provides the general terms and conditions under which the discussions will continue.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to outline the basic scope of the proposed project. The project as envisaged is a large greenfield project, which means you are building from scratch which will be implemented in phases. The proposal from CHEC is that the scope of the first phase of the project would include the following elements:

1. The development of an industrial park which will carry on the operations

associated with storage, assembling and package of goods in light industries; heavy industrial manufacturing, information technology and skills training;

2. the laying and development of infrastructure facilities to include bridges, roads, drives within the project area, pipelines and water storage facilities, sewer lines and sewer treatment facilities, electricity transmission lines and electricity generation facilities, cable transmission lines and similar services and facilities contemplated for the project;
3. dredging and land reclamation activities to create the port and suitable access channel to the port;
4. construction and development of a container terminal with modern fittings, technology and services;
5. construction and development of berth of sufficient width, length and depth to accommodate super post panamax vessels.

This, Mr. Speaker, refers to the huge new ships which are being built and commissioned in international trade.

6. the layout, construction and development of the port site logistics zone in the immediate proximity to the port to include warehouses and such other commercial buildings or facilities as may be necessary;
7. and finally, construction of a coal-fired electricity generation plant for the supply of electricity to the facilities comprising the project.

Mr. Speaker, let me now turn to the feasibility and the environmental impact assessment studies. CHEC, with assistance from the Port Authority, has applied to NEPA for a Beach Control Licence in order to begin their geotechnical investigations and engineering survey which are necessary to determine the feasibility of the project. The Urban Development Corporation and Agro Investments Corporation, the owners of most of the properties which are under consideration, have agreed for CHEC to enter their properties for the purpose of conducting investigations.

Mr. Speaker, the technical feasibility study is expected to be completed by the end of April 2014. The preliminary designs for the first phase of the project will begin immediately thereafter and they will be expected to be completed by the end of June 2014. At this stage it is anticipated that the project will be sufficiently defined to allow CHEC to make a presentation to NEPA to seek the requisite Terms of Reference for the environmental impact assessment of the project; that is the EIA. And, Mr. Speaker, I must emphasize that it's only after the completion of the EIA will the project be ready to be submitted to Cabinet for a decision. We are going through all the stages, Mr. Speaker. They are now at present seeking to gather the scientific data and when they are ready they will make a presentation to NEPA

to seek the requisite Terms of Reference. NEPA defines the Terms of Reference for the EIA.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of issues which will need to be addressed prior to signing a binding and definitive framework agreement. This is, we do not yet have a signed binding framework agreement. These include the following: land issues. There is the question of acquiring lands currently owned by the UDC and the Ministry of Agriculture through Agro-Invest and Innswood Estate; taxes and incentives. Mr. Speaker, we are very cognizant of the imminent repeal of the Free Zone Act, which is scheduled for 2015, and pending decisions regarding the treatment of commercial economic zones; so any of the proposals going forward will take cognizance of these changes.

Citizenship - and, Mr. Speaker, I am putting this on the table because these are real issues and the real issues have to be considered within the context of what obtains internationally. We will have to review the applicable laws, policy and procedure in light of possible requests for citizenship from investors within the project area. Mr. Speaker, this is not anything new, Canada Australia, Singapore, a host of countries have such a facility.

Mr. SAMUDA: Most countries.

Dr. DAVIES: Now, Mr. Speaker, there is a question of the present high cost of electricity. CHEC has indicated unambiguously that there is no manufacturing activity of any size which can take place with the electricity rates at the present level, and they have, in mind, the construction of their own coal-fired generating plant to provide lower cost electricity for the project. These are the proposals from CHEC.

There are certain issues of concern, Mr. Speaker, and I want to raise them because they are in the popular discussion and one of things I've learnt is that you have no control over whatever people may concoct, but I feel obliged to put them on the table and respond to them.

The first is that the Government - the GOJ and the Port Authority are seeking to bypass environmental regulations. This is absolutely not true. Since my last address, there have been several town hall meetings with constituents in the Old Harbour Area, as well as meetings with major stakeholders including the environmental protection groups.

(HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce entered and took her seat.)

Secondly, CHEC, with the assistance of PAJ, has applied for permission to do bore-holes on the proposed site as a part of their technical study. As soon as CHEC has presented the preliminary designs, the Port Authority will facilitate meetings with NEPA with a view to initiating the Environment Impact Assessment process. So we are adhering to all the regulations which have been laid down to protect the environment.

The second charge is that it will be low-

level employment which will be generated. Mr. Speaker, the expectations are that there will be 2,000 jobs to be created during construction and 10,000 jobs when the project is in full operation. Mr. Speaker, let me indicate that the GOJ will negotiate the minimum ratio of Jamaicans to foreigners for the project. This is not new, Mr. Speaker. Such a ratio is part of the Agreement for the construction of the North/South link of the Highway 2000 built into that Agreement already is at ratio. But I wish to point out that we have never approached the cap implied in the Agreement.

Mr. Speaker, a training complex will be constructed in Phase I of the project to ensure that Jamaicans with the requisite training and exposure are available for employment under the project. Furthermore, training will be developed in collaboration with our tertiary institutions: with the Caribbean Maritime Institute and with the HEART Academy. The objective is to ensure that there are adequate Jamaicans trained and who are equipped to assume employment at all levels of the organization that will make up the industrial complex.

(MR. LESTER MICHAEL HENRY, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, Central, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, entered and took his seat.)

There is also the charge that the project will be an enclave development. Mr. Speaker, the majority of the complex will be on the mainland where the industrial operations will be located to take advantage of our labour force. It will have link roads to the North Coast Highway, the South Coast Highway and to Portmore. Mr. Speaker, a very important point which has escaped many of those who have comment about the influx of Chinese is that the cost of labour in China is rising rapidly and when you combine the cost of paying imported Chinese labour plus paying them for living in Jamaica, it's becoming increasingly more attractive whatever the initial inclinations were for the Company to use skilled Jamaicans wherever possible.

Mr. Speaker, there has been an issue about the competition of this proposed development with the KCT privatization, the Kingston Container Terminal, the transshipment port, and I'm going to give a report on the progress where we are with that privatization effort. But let me first deal with the issue of this going to be a conflicting development.

Mr. Speaker, the CHEC project is first and foremost an industrial complex with an associated port to support the activities of the zone. The port will be a mixed-use facility. It is proposed that it will house the assembly plant for cranes and other port-related equipment. It will also serve as the home-base for CHEC's dredging and harbour building equipment, for use in projects throughout the hemisphere. CHEC is currently expanding rapidly in Central America, in South America, and through the Caribbean. They are doing

work in Trinidad, Grenada, in Guyana and in Suriname. The port is not expected to be engaged in transshipment activities in the initial stages. It will require time for technical development, after the signing of the implementation and concession agreements prior to the start of construction, and then there will be another period for construction.

Mr. Speaker, let us assume that the Agreements will be concluded about a year from now, the port will not be in operation for approximately four years, even if you get the full go ahead. On the other hand, whoever wins the concession to operate the Kingston Container Terminal will be acquiring a going concern with excess capacity at present and with the ability for that capacity to be expanded within a short time frame by changes to the equipment at the Terminal. The lead time prior to the start-up of the CHEC Terminal is more than sufficient for the company which wins the concession to establish the necessary volumes and to entrench itself in the regional maritime trading arrangements.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make another point and it's imperative that everybody gives thought to this, even if Jamaica does not pursue this proposal, please understand that CHEC is likely to implement the project elsewhere in the region. There are many countries willing to accept an offer from CHEC to develop the industrial complex and the port in their country. Put another way, Mr. Speaker, it's not that CHEC is begging us to be here. We're not the only game in town or in the Caribbean and it will be surprising to know from whence the competition comes.

Mr. Speaker, the global pattern is for major shipping lines and, in particular, the integrated arrangements among the major carriers whereby the top three lines have committed to cooperate. It is not usual to have more than two of the top lines being managed out of a single terminal. The fact that Jamaica may have two terminals would serve us in good stead in establishing ourselves as the major transshipment terminal in the region.

Mr. Speaker, let me just summarize some of the benefits of the project to Jamaica. It is anticipated that the project will benefit Jamaica by becoming a major transport and logistics hub. It will result in:

1. increased generation of primary revenue streams from transport and related facilities and services;
2. increased contribution of transport services to Jamaica's GDP and employment;
3. opportunities for development of related economic activities throughout the logistics value chain;
4. provision of an ideal platform for global competitiveness for domestic producers and exporters; and
5. increased opportunities for employment, technical and skills training and knowledge transfer.

(MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern, entered and took her seat.)

Mr. Speaker, a friend of mine who has some experience in this matter has pointed out to me that if you consider just the provision of basic services to a facility of this size - plumbing services, whatever, that in itself provides you with a fillip to your economic growth and expansion of employment opportunities.

Let me say something about the Port Authority - the role of the Port Authority. It's the agency charged with the responsibility for the development and implementation of this project. The Port Authority Act already mandates the Port Authority to regulate the use of all port facilities in the island to provide and operate such port facilities and other services as the Minister may require; and to carry out such activities as they appear to be advantageous or necessary in connection with the discharge of its duties.

Mr. Speaker, we have been fortunate to have had the smooth transition in leadership at the Port Authority from the Hon. Noel Hylton to the new CEO, Professor Gordon Shirley. Professor Shirley has also been appointed by Cabinet to chair the National Logistics Initiative Council to provide the necessary coordination, facilitation and technical advice and oversight which will be required to achieve the strategic goal of positioning Jamaica as a global integrated logistics hub.

The Port Authority has been given the responsibility to execute a Framework Agreement and subsequent Agreements on behalf of the Government for this project. Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise that this project, if approved, will be designated as a strategic investment. It would qualify as a strategic investment under the Government's Policy Framework and Procedures Manual for the privatization of Government assets, having met a number of the requisite conditions:

1. strong policy coherence with the Government's strategic direction and priorities;
2. alignment with maritime sector and national development plans; and,
3. clear long term benefits to Jamaica's sustained growth.

Furthermore, it will capitalize on global and regional market positioning; and would respond to changes in the external environment that are highly time sensitive. In addition, it requires action within a limited time frame to maximize the economic opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, as Jamaica proceeds with its plans for positioning the country as a global logistics player, there is an urgency to implement investment-ready feasible projects such as this. There is an urgency that we act. (Applause)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Hear, hear!

(HON. DR. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, (PNP), St. Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

Dr. DAVIES: The country must be ready to take advantage of the opportunities to be derived from the expansion of the Panama

Canal and other developments in the world maritime industry. Mr. Speaker, we also need to be mindful of potential competition from other regional players. I've said this before, I say it again that there are other regional players who act expeditiously.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, at the same time, I would like to take the opportunity to update this Honourable House on the privatization of the Kingston Container Terminal. Three large global terminal operators - no dibby-dibby firm, have been pre-qualified

(Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Dr. DAVIES: The Port of Singapore; Terminal Link Consortium which is CMA CGM, which is a French firm and its stevedoring arm Terminal Link, China Harbour in terms of construction; and China Merchant Holding International - they are part of the consortium and Dubai Ports World, which is another major player in the Middle East.

(MR. KEITH ANTHONY WALFORD, (PNP), St. Ann, South Western, entered and took his seat.)

The request for proposal and Confidential Information Memorandum were issued in mid-January and relevant data placed in a virtual data room which signals the commencement of the bidding stage of the privatization process. Mr. Speaker, this is not futuristic. Even as we speak senior officials from the Port of Singapore are currently in the island meeting with the management of KCT and conducting their site visits of the facilities. I met with them this morning. The Port Authority of Singapore team will return on March 10 to begin a detailed technical assessment of the KCT facilities. Similar visits are scheduled for the other bidders. Dubai Port World is scheduled for March 17 to 18, and the CMA CGM Consortium is scheduled for March 19 to 21. Three of the major firms, world operators, have been shortlisted, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

The draft Concession Agreement outlining the terms and conditions under which the Port will be privatized has been prepared and provided to bidders. The draft Concession Agreement will be discussed and issues clarified during the various site visits. The bids are to be returned on May 22, 2014, and evaluation completed by June 20, after which a provisional bidder will be selected by the commencement of negotiations of the Concession Agreement. We expect to conclude these negotiations by the end of September 2014.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have deliberately indicated that we are running on two tracks simultaneously, we are proceeding with the privatization.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Shaw)

Dr. DAVIES: How about ships?

Dr. PHILLIPS: This train is bound for glory!

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker, I have sought to provide information on the projects on a timely basis. We have followed due process

and we have done everything that we have set out to do, and we will continue to do that.

(Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Dr. DAVIES: However, Mr. Speaker, I feel obliged to speak about the circulation of false information which is sometimes accepted as fact. I therefore ask commentators to seek clarification on issues before going public. The most recent example of this misinformation was the assertion that the UDC had concluded the sale of the Goat Islands to China Harbour. This morning someone called me, praying, hoping that it wasn't so.

(Inaudible comment from Mr. Shaw)

Dr. DAVIES: The misinformation went further. They detailed a selling price, Three Hundred and Fifty Million ($350M), the Committee which approved the sale, the Chairman of the Committee, as well as the date and time on which the Committee met. So they weren't leaving anything to chance. But I say from whence does this come? Let me just publicly indicate there is no truth to this.

Dr. PHILLIPS: From whence does it come?

(Laughter/*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker, we can't respond to every rumour, every utterance. And we have sought to limit our public utterances to those times when there is a specific new development on which to report. Yesterday I reported to Cabinet and today I report to the Parliament of the land.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Dr. Chang.

Dr. CHANG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, let me thank you for this Statement which has sought to answer quite a number of the questions surrounding this major project outlined.

I notice you have, of course, changed the nomenclature a bit from - you have avoided quite clearly the multimodal- approach to the global integrated logistics hub. They are pretty much the same thing as was enunciated by...

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: They are not. (Inaudible)

Dr. CHANG: The Minister's... (Inaudible) We are not arguing on that point, Mr. Hylton, I am going to speak to the Minister's Statement.

Minister, I think one of the first questions I would like you to look at is to give us a clear indication of the capacity TEU of the new facility to be constructed at Goat Islands. That, in fact, will determine more effectively to what extent it will compete with the KCT operation. If you are going to have the same volume - or can have the same volume I suspect that China Harbour with its international connections could very well out-compete the Kingston Harbour.

Secondly...

(*Sotto voce* comment from Mr. Anthony Hylton)

Dr. CHANG: That's true. But KCT, as you are aware, has established quite a network of international ports across the globe, and which is what makes them a marked investor in Jamaica, and one has to take concern of

that. Because the original concept for the Kingston Harbour being maybe the primary node for the logistics - the shipping section of the logistics operation is of significance, not only in terms of the new operator that you are seeking to get there, but the idea in my understanding - my appreciation about what's happened then is that that increased activity at the Kingston port would set the foundation for the redevelopment of the entire Downtown area.

And let us face reality, the concept outlined here, if fully implemented, will not only lead to major employment if it's properly implemented, it can lead to significant redevelopment of the entire South-East Coast. And therefore, one would like to see some more of that so outlined to us in your next Statement. Because while you have indicated by agreement you will avoid an enclave in the Goat Islands, I still would like to see some more on that aspect of it. Because I see the industrial hub comes at number 7 on your presentation, the portside logistics zone, and one has to be careful, still has to take care that the agreement and the investment as outlined avoid Goat Islands, as I said, becoming an enclave so far ahead of the rest of the activity at some point we forget that there is supposed to be a zone on the mainland.

(MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition, entered and took his seat.)

In fact, one of the arguments used initially, was that we would not have enough land space throughout the Corporate Area.

Dr. DAVIES: What?

Dr. CHANG: We would not have enough land space around the Kingston Harbour. Well, Caymanas is almost the same distance from both ports for all technical purposes. It's not any major difference to go from Goat Islands on shore to Bushy Park into the Caymanas Zone. And I am not having any hesitation that if you get the project efficiently implemented, giving up sugar in Bernard Lodge is not an issue because you have a much different or some of it, anyway, a much more modem intensive development. Well, this is some of the space out there, the whole St. Catherine plains if properly implemented then you would get to the kind of volume that Singapore is at. I think Singapore at the last check was operating at Thirty Million TEU. If we get to even half that the spin-off from that would not only require Vernamfield, it would require the whole of Bernard Lodge.

Now, I am not going - I am just suggesting that we need to explore in the eyes of the country, the entire potential and possibilities. So when we discuss the potential damage to any aspect of the environment we know what we are giving up, the country understands what it is giving up to get what, because that's really what we are discussing, in terms of the environmental aspect.

Secondly, I think I would like to have seen some discussions on - in the environmental sector of the possible relocation of some of the specie. Because let's face reality, again, if we reach the level of development that we are talking about, while

they are not of significant economic value, it's part of the environmental concerns and important to the country's development to protect its endemic species. It would seem to me, part of what you need to look at is alternative locations in Jamaica where you can relocate some of those. Because try as you may, as I said, my own picture of what a genuine global integrated logistics hub is, will require significant land space not in the short term but in the medium term. If it succeeds - and given Jamaica's appropriate location, if managed well, we would end up using much of the land around there. And, therefore, it's good reason not just to say we will protect a particular area, we maybe need to relocate elements to other dry limestone forests in Jamaica. Now, that's really what the argument is about. Much of the dry limestone areas in Goat Islands is being argued about, and of course the wetlands as well, and there are other wetlands in Jamaica that can be utilized for environmental purposes.

So there's - I said some question has to - some of those things should be looked at and give us a clearer picture of where we are going. No mention was made, of course, that was alluded to in our original concept of the use of air - the role of air transport in the logistics operation. It was outlined at the seminar, I know, that where Vernamfield would come in and therefore the connection to Vernamfield I think is still important to bear in mind and tell the country to appreciate that that is still a part of what you are looking at. Because clearly, where we are located in this part of the world it does offer us the opportunity to access and provide a base for both air and sea transport, which would allow for even further development in the Jamaican context.

Our concern, therefore, Minister, is not so much - is not to oppose but to explore the concept and to see that the Government is not only carrying out this in a timely manner but in an efficient and transparent manner. And to that extent we observe and we watch and therefore be alert to the activities with the concept we are in support of, it originated with this government. Much work was done, more work has been done. Like any major project you evolve a concept, it takes time as different experts get in, as people buy into it and the stakeholders get in and people realize you are serious.

So, we are not here to knock down, nobody is fighting that. It started - with all fairness, however you may look at it - with the former Minister of Transport and Works and we expect to see it move on.

(HON. COLIN ALFRED A. FAGAN, (PNP), St. Catherine, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, entered and took his seat.)

The other thing that I think in there I would like to - well, you have stated it but I would like to reaffirm that the Port Authority is the group that is driving this development. Because there has been concern that there is no one body that is entirely concerned with this development, and that is an important part

of a development of this size and nature. When you are talking to Marquee investors and major investors, they cannot be asked to go from here to there and five different places to talk to different people and maybe getting different answers - maybe not different answers but just nuances in presentation. That turns off individuals. If the Port Authority is the coordinating agency of government it should be stated clearly and we know that the Port Authority is it. You referred to him being Chairman of another Committee, and I am hoping that is not tohave another agency and some other agencies.

Certainly, it is important that at the local level there is some coordination between NEPA, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, which is critical in many ways, and all the other agencies involved, but there has to be one Authority. There has to be one person who can speak authoritatively on behalf of their government and the Minister to the investors, because the investors don't wait around for days and hours to hear what everybody has to say.

Those were some of my initial comments, Minister. We recognize that if it is to be implemented, too, placing it under what you call strategic investment, which again is something without trying to go back in history the current Leader of the Opposition suggested as part of the process to ensure large investors don't end up being run through the bureaucratic mill and getting waned down. It makes a lot of sense, and to the extent that it's implemented again with transparency and efficiency, you will have our support. But we would like to see some more on how this is being done. It is certainly part of what should be involved in the process of implementing a project as large as the global integrated logistics hub for Jamaica.

I will go back again to what I referred to earlier, Minister, that maybe at another point in time but early, we look at the total picture. This has outlined the action being taken by the Ministry in relation to Goat Islands and the surrounding area for development, the actions being put in place to divest KCT's facilities, which is a necessary part of what we have to do, and we encourage that.

But I think as we discussed the environmental impact, at some point, in addition to the seminar you did - and a couple seminars have been done - we need to at one point outline to this House and to the country what will be the impact of a global integrated logistics hub in a broader sense, and what is required to implement it efficiently, and what the government is putting in place, so we can support that and ensure that it is done in the interest of the country. Because part of the debate is that many people don't fully appreciate what the impact could be on our economy and the country.

Goat Islands, you suggested 2,000 jobs/10,000 jobs in debating the issue, but the wider implication of the logistics hub, efficiently implemented, with the economic zone - something that was championed heavily by my colleague to my right - would mean, as I said, major impact to our country. It will take some time, so I am not afraid to give you the support. It started with that

Minister, it may end up with another Minister and from a different side, that's not the issue. The project is of national significance, requires national support, and therefore, the country needs to understand the full implications of what a successful global integrated logistics hub could be. I am not being critical, I am saying you should consider doing this in a short course - a short time, that all of us and the entire country could fully appreciate what it is. And, therefore, if you have to give up some aspects of the South Coast environmental area you know what you are giving it up for, and put in place alternatives and so forth.

We treasure our environment, but without in any way being dismissive or disrespectful of our environmental advocates who are important parts of the governance structure, the greatest damage to our environment is poverty. (Applause) That is what causes the greatest challenge to our environment, poverty. And an integrated development programme that could bring significant relief to our people needs to be followed.

And in closing, I say this as an example. We were somewhere in the early sixties, at the same level of development as Singapore - it is said Singapore came to look at what we were doing. Our per capita income at the time was very similar to Singapore.

(*Sotto voce* comment from Mr. Dalley)

Dr. CHANG: Today, without blaming anybody, Mr. Dalley, when I look across at you, without blaming any one, the *per capita* income of Jamaica is stagnant at below Five Thousand US (US$5,000) *per capita*.

The last time I checked, Singapore - and I think my colleague from Clarendon will give you more details, it was over US$50,000 *per capita.*

Dr. PHILLIPS: Sixty.

Dr. CHANG: Sixty, plus reminded the Minister of Finance. Therefore, what we are looking to - if we can look at programmes that can be able to move us in that direction, it certainly needs national support and development.

(HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, entered and took his seat.)

And that's why I am saying to you, Minister, in addition to answering my few questions as to capacity, implementation programme and status, please I think we also need at some point to outline to the country more, the minimum levels because we have a transshipment port but the potential is if we do it right. I think that is necessary to get the buy in of the entire country at this point in time.

Thank you.

Mr. HENRY: Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Henry.

Mr. HENRY: My apologies for being late for the totality of this Statement which I wasn't aware of. I have a couple of questions at this point in time. And the main question I have for the Minister is, where in this Report is he stating to protect the country from an enclave investment? And how is it going to be

linked into the central development of the country? In my quick glance through here, I see he mentioned the North-South link which we signed when we were in Government and which tended to deal with the labour content of employment. Correspondingly, in the Report he hinted at the cost of labour and other developmental aspects. I am making those points to link them to what I consider to be the real threat to the country of this being an enclave investment. Because that's very important and the number of jobs being related to here, again I apologize, I think I saw two thousand six hundred jobs.

(HON. NOEL GEORGE DELANO ARSCOTT, (PNP), Clarendon, South Western, Minister of Local Government and Community Development, entered and took his seat.)

I am also questioning how can we become a logistics hub to the world if we don't have an air connection within the development process. And if we are not linking road and rail with that development it will continue to remain an enclave when we are now going to be building roads to connect back to the centre of the country if that is what I am seeing here. So, the first question - I will have other questions to come back to the House when I have read this document - is to ask what is being done to ensure - just like Freeport became an enclave investment that didn't help the Bahamas development - I would like to be clear what is being done to ensure that this is not an enclave investment, isolated from the economic growth of the country because the concept when this was planned at one stage meant also to utilize the roads that .are made available to China Harbour on the North-South link.

(MR. PAUL LENNOX BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Andrew, West Rural, entered and took his seat.)

That's why roads were tied into that development to ensure that the development is not isolated in only one part of the country but will be able to be spread across the country overall.

(DR. KENNETH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, West Central, entered and took his seat.)

And, if the Minister could tell me that is being looked at, be ensured I would have more to say and more questions in relation to this presentation.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Charles.

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Minister, a few weeks ago, I advised this House that I was informed that the previous government, when I was Minister, the previous government had worked out an arrangement with China Harbour for ratio of employment, Jamaica and Chinese.

Mr. CHARLES: I was told it is not true.

Dr. DAVIES: You were told it's what?

Mr. CHARLES: I was told it's not true. You have announced it today that, either you have given, will be giving, or negotiating

employment on a ratio basis between Jamaica and China. I would like to know if that is so, and two, if all categories of work, including unskilled labour, will fall under that heading of announcement?

The SPEAKER: Dr. Wheatley.

Dr. WHEATLEY: I saw in your presentation that you mentioned coal-fired energy production. I just want to know, Minister, is this a new policy of the Government to utilize coal for energy? And also, Minister, we know that there are discussions out there for and against the use of coal. If CHEC is going in that direction, is it a part of their policy to engage key stakeholders, especially environmentalists as it relates to the utilization of coal as a source of energy?

The SPEAKER: Dr. Davies.

Dr. DAVIES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have listened carefully to the four presentations/set of questions and I found it - I am going to respond, but I would lead off by quoting two persons from disparate periods - from different eras. NW Manlev said, in Jamaica there was no shortage of ideas just a shortage of fixity of purpose. And then John Lennon said: Life is what is passing by as you are busy making plans. (Laughter) Now, in listening to the presentation, Mr. Speaker, I deliberately spoke to one issue, the issue of the framework agreement which has been presented to the Government and to the Cabinet and with all due respect to the Opposition Spokesman for construction, whilst I could engage in the broader discussion, this was not the objective of my presentation. I sought to bring a specific issue to the Parliament and discuss it. I will gladly engage in the broader issue at the appropriate time, but I was hoping to that we would focus on the framework agreement.

(MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, Eastern, entered and took her seat.)

In October of last year, I indicated that I expected from China Harbour a draft framework agreement toward the end of January, the beginning of February. And that's what we brought here, nothing more nothing less. But, not that the issues raised are not ones worthy of the debate, but I wanted to focus on that.

And I spoke about fixity of purpose, because that is where our discussions with China Harbour, although informed by the broader issues will have to get down to line by line, you are going to do this, your question, what is the ratio you want to impose. It won't be a dissertation on employment generation in vacuum. It won't be discussions about the world shipping industry. It will be a discussion about a specific project which they are seeking to engage us, in terms of employment. So, I would like to, perhaps, narrow the focus in that regard.

Now, in terms of the concern about the new port and its capacity and its potential for providing unwanted competition for the KCT, please understand, colleagues, that they have no obligation to come here. So, we could pitter patter along with KCT and move up

from one point eight to two and two point two. This is not .competing. They aren't looking for Zim and Maersk. They are seeking shipping to fit in with their projected development of the economic zone. So, we always lock our heads into this thing, what will happen if this occurs. This is not necessarily competing for the same pie, but sharing in the larger world pie which is there. And it is only the brave who will participate in that one. (Applause)

So, Mr. Speaker, what I am seeking to do - and I am willing to engage in the broader discussion - but today, what I presented was the framework, and it is an agreement which we are going to negotiate in good faith and hopefully sign within the next six weeks, which will move us to the next stage. So, this discussion is...

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Dr. DAVIES: Yes, but it is a specific step in this process. And so, Mr. Speaker, within that context, yes we will obviously deal with the environmental matters, and we have clear ideas and any ideas which you have in that regard, in terms of how we can actually turn the Portland Bight Area into a protected zone - right now it is free-for-all - man burning coal; man doing everything. If we can actually, through this, make a big difference.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Dr. DAVIES: The Port Authority in the lead agency. I said it in the paper and I repeat it. So, Mr. Speaker, the creation of the new business which we didn't project, the agreement - the MOU was initially proposed with the previous Administration to look at Fort Augusta, and it was simply some additional berths to those which now exist at the KCT. Out of - when they examined - and to be frank, they saw potential which we didn't see when we engaged with them to deal with Fort Augusta. And it is within that context which I would like this Ministry Paper or this Statement to be judged.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me respond to the issue which reflected by the Member from Clarendon Central. And he, in a sense, is voicing one of the issues which have occupied the minds of a lot of Jamaicans, some because of real honest concern, and some may not be such honest concern. In this case, I know it is honest concern.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Dr. DAVIES: Absolutely. In this case - yes, if you had raised it, I would have sought a different description.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Dr. DAVIES: No, I am saying the most honest concern if he had raised it. But, Mr. Speaker, it is an issue which we know worries a lot of people. And, in fact, yesterday in Cabinet - PM, may I - May I?

The PRIME MINISTER: Yes.

Dr. DAVIES: Yesterday in Cabinet, we spent a long time discussing what are the measures which would have to be taken from the point of view of national security, from the point of view of health, from all of the different issues, to ensure that this does not develop as an enclave. And we are aware of the concerns but we are also concerned that this will not be allowed. This is also part of the reason we are looking at the ratio of Jamaican workers to foreign workers. They all

don't have to be Chinese nationals. There are certain instances they are seeking skill sets which are not available here, but may not be brought from China. So, these are issues which we appreciate. And, let me just speak unambiguously; this will not be an enclave arrangement or economic zone. (Applause) To the Member from North Central, Clarendon, that is, I would like to engage you further, in terms of, from your very long history, in the Trade Union Movement - very, very long history in the Trade Union Movement.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. DAVIES: Very long history; very long and outstanding.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Dr. DAVIES: In terms of - in all seriousness, what you consider to be - what would be a reasonable proposal. You have spent a lifetime bargaining and you know that the other side, you don't push them to a point where they find it unacceptable. So, I would really - I would like to benefit from your advice in terms of what we should be looking at.

On the North-South link, the ratio which is built into the Agreement is one-to-one. We have never reached that figure. We have never reached that figure. I anticipated that question and I can tell you of the over 1000 persons working on the North-South link, over 600 are Jamaicans at varying levels, engineers, whatever, as well as ordinary workers.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Vaz)

Dr. DAVIES: So I appreciate that point and I will ensure that we should do that.

In terms of the comment made by the Member of Parliament from South Central St. Catherine about, is there a change in policy? They have simply put one generic problem and their specific proposal for a solution. They have indicated that there is no manufacturing, new manufacturing activity they could attract to Jamaica at 40 cents per kilowatt hour. That is a fact. What they are saying is - so I said to them, "What would be feasible to you"? And they say "Anything between eight and fifteen cents they could live with". And I said, "What would lead to that"? And they indicated, that "the coal-fired plant".

If we were able to offer them power at an appropriate price range, I don't think they would set about building a plant, but, they are saying, that they are unable to attract investors into manufacture, if we are going to be selling, offering them....

Mr. HOLNESS: May I?

Dr. DAVIES: Yes.

Mr. HOLNESS: Thank you, Minister for yielding.

It's a simple question I wanted to ask you based upon your observation that the Chinese would not be able to attract investors into the economic - well, you said not an economic zone, but into the production area. Wouldn't the new power plant that is being considered by the Government reduce power rates to the level that would be attractive to investors?

(HON. DR. KENNETH WYKEHAM MCNEILL, (PNP), Westmoreland, Western, Minister of Tourism and Entertainment, entered and took his seat.)

Dr. DAVIES: No, not.... The reduction which will result from the Minister is significant, but it's significant because of

where it is, not in terms of where it should be and what a competitive industry would wish.

And again, again, Mr. Speaker, one of the - I'm not talking about this discussion here, but much of what I've heard in terms of discussing this proposed project, what is portrayed is that, here we have the special price and that there are 50 people beating down the door wanting to enter, so it is our right to determine the conditions under which we'll open that door. I'm not suggesting that we are just going to say anything holds, but what I'm saying and I can speak with absolute knowledge, that there are other countries which are offering them opportunity to come in, but there are certain specific positives about Jamaica, which would attract them here, but it is not unlimited. And, therefore, within that context, what I'm asking is that the Parliament reviews the outline of the framework Agreement. We're going to be refining it based on some of the comments here and hopefully, hopefully, we'll come to an agreement, which will enable us to sign a Framework Agreement. A Framework Agreement isn't the end-contract, which would then lead us to the next stages and I've outlined it here.

Dr. CHANG: Just two short questions, Minister, really. One, on the training section, will the investors be contributing to it? And I noticed that you have confined training to the Caribbean Maritime Institute and HEART Academy. These are like middle-level operators.

Dr. DAVIES: No, I'm not.

Dr. CHANG: Well, I would hope not then, because that's what in the Statement, "Training will be developed in collaboration with the Jamaica... – oh, tertiary institutions camp". Fair enough.

Can you indicate here some of these areas, because engineering is a critical part of that process and unfortunately, Jamaica still hasn't got a full-fledged engineering school at this point in time. And I noticed that the University of Technology went off into Medicine and Law in addition to the University of the West Indies. Engineering is in - we are in need of a greater number of engineers to be trained if we are going to participate in the international economy, as we ought to. And I think some - even if not in the framework affecting the investor, the Government ought to give us some idea how that's going on.

Secondly, Minister, just to - I think you have misunderstood my comment as to specific size of the capacity of the Port. You would not be just competing with the KCT if we intend to have a Logistics Hub. KCT is a miniscule operation in the international globe now, 1.5 or 2.5 Million TU, so, it's a major facility in the Caribbean. But, if we are going to get to the level we are talking about - as I said, Singapore is at 30. I think Shanghai is about 40 and….

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Davies)

Dr. CHANG: No, well not many.

Dr. DAVIES: Not in our lifetime.

Dr. CHANG: Exactly, but we certainly will be looking at capacity in the region of 5

to 10, I'd expect, to start the ball a rolling in a reasonable time. And that's why I asked what were the capacity or they just going to set up something to take from KCT, I want to be assured of that, because the two should be complimentary and expanding.

There was also - I will not go into the questions of KCT, because there are some comments made on KCT, which I think we need answers for, about its ability to hold the deeper ships and so forth. But, the capacity is important and to also determine to what extent the shoreside logistics development will carry the import that we have suggested here that you'll have enough shipping to have enough light or near market assembled activity on the shoreside. That's why I am enquiring into the capacity of the event and want some specific answers in time.

I am not going to be critical if it's not forthcoming this evening, but I'd like you to bear that in mind when you return to this House to have that kind of answer for us, because it's important in deciding to what - well, in ensuring that the country can buy into this entire operation.

The - fear you sought to answer, and my colleague asked the question is that you've got an enclave of 9000 acre cut off like a mini Hong Kong on the south coast is important and we appreciate the steps being taken, but we have to monitor that situation very well, because certainly, if conditions are not right, it could deteriorate into an enclave.

You have mentioned one of the challenges already, energy, and certainly, it may be said that may be only coal can provide the price, energy that we require. If that is so, then we examine how best we can protect the environment and proceed. That's the kind of specific answers, Minister that I think we need to have in going forward.

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Minister, very quickly. Minister, could you - you said that the feasibility assessment should be defined by June?

Dr. DAVIES: Yes.

Mr. SAMUDA: And from there you would then go to the NEPA for the Environment Assessment Study, have you got a timeframe on that Study, number one? And number two, would you care to share with us the strategies that you plan to explore in dealing with the status, the freezone status that is due to expire in 2015?

Dr. DAVIES: As regards the timeframe for the EIA, a lot depends on the initial work, which is being carried out, done, insofar as how much of the factual scientific data is available when they make their request for Terms of Reference for NEPA.

We have our own, we have our own idea as to how long this will be, but I'm not yet ready to share it, because within the next six weeks, they would have completed some of the preliminary scientific analysis, which will then provide NEPA with the basis of defining precisely the Terms of Reference.

In terms of the freezone status. Yesterday, Cabinet, in recognizing that these things are going to be changed indicated that there are several aspects in going forward where there is need for - I was about to say multimodal – multi-ministerial input in terms of the

Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, the Ministry of Finance and us in terms of structuring a proposal to which they will be able to respond positively to. Because, the present structure of the freezone, *et cetera*, that will be phased out next year, but we are not - we are cognizant that we still need to compete and it is the manner in which both sides can agree on what sort of arrangements will provide them with the incentive to invest. It's something which I - given your long term interest in the matter, I'd be - we would appreciate getting your views in there.

But I'm appealing, I genuinely mean this. That - the Member from North Central spoke about the labour issues - we would benefit from his advice in terms of what can be done. We'd also benefit from your advice in terms of how do we attract, but it doesn't make sense we abolish all incentives when everybody including our neighbour to the north... (Chuckles) ...is proceeding in a different direction.

Mr. Speaker, I gather from these interventions that there is nothing but support from all Members of the House for this Project. What we need to do is to work together to ensure that the best interests of Jamaica are protected in bringing the framework agreement to finality and then moving forward.

But we have, Mr. Speaker, we have stuck to our timetable, we have not cut any corners and I ask for the support of Members of the House as we move forward?

(Applause)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House a copy of the following:

- **Ministry Paper No. 17**
  Cabinet Agenda Issues dated 3rd February, 2014
- **Ministry Paper No. 18**
  Highlights of students performance in the 2013 Caribbean Secondary Certificate and the Caribbean Advance Proficiency Examination
- Kingston Container Terminal Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for the Financial Year 2012/2013
- Special Report of Investigation conducted into allegation regarding contracts awarded to contractors allegedly selected by the Honourable Derrick Kellier, MP
- Special Report of Investigation conducted into allegation regarding the contract, termination and award practices at the National Solid Waste Management Authority
- First Supplementary Estimates for the Financial Year 2013/2014
  and the
- Supplementary Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure Public Bodies 2013/2014.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

The SPEAKER: Dr. Phillips.

FIRST SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House, I will move the following:

Be it Resolved that the First Supplementary Estimates of Expenditure for the Financial Year ending March 31, 2014 and the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of Public Bodies 2013 Supplementary Estimates, which were laid on the Table of the House on the 25th day of February, 2014, be referred to the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives for consideration and report.

Mr. Speaker, I further beg to give notice that at a later stage today, I will move for the suspension of Standing Orders to enable me to take this Motion.

The SPEAKER: Dr. Bloomfield.

Dr. BLOOMFIELD: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move:

Whereas non-communicable and lifestyle diseases comprise the leading cause of major diseases and death worldwide;

And Whereas obesity is an important factor in the genesis of the major non-communicable diseases including hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and cancer;

And Whereas obesity constitutes an ever alarming and increasing epidemic worldwide and specifically in Jamaica where it engenders an unbearable economic burden and social challenge as obesity impacts numerous areas of community and social life:

Be it Resolved that the House of Representatives debate the concept of obesity and its relevance in light of its growing importance as a public health concern and its great social and economic implications:

Be it Further Resolved that this issue of obesity be referred to the Human Resource and Social Development Committee for its deliberations in terms of the national obesity profile and its implications, the usefulness of creating a national public awareness campaign framework, the inclusion of obesity as a nosologic entity within the national health management structure and subject to the National Health Fund and the Jamaica Drugs for the Elderly Programme and other such programmes, the institution of regulations by the respective government ministries and agencies as they relate to diet and exercise requirement in government facilities such as in health and education, the establishment of guidelines for publication of nutritional values of food offered for public consumption, the establishment of guidelines for the publication of calorie value content for food offered to the public by food outlets and general therapeutic strategies and related matters to address the problem of obesity.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the time being what it is I move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable us to take Questions and Answers after the time normally allotted.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the suspension of the Standing Orders to allow Questions and Answers to Questions to go beyond the designated time.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we will take Questions 13 and 9, in that order.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Science Technology, Energy and Mining...

The SPEAKER: Thirteen first. Mr. Hutchinson.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker, I am asking the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries to answer Question 13 standing in my name.

The SPEAKER: Minister Clarke.

Mr. CLARKE:

Question 1:

Will the Minister state what are the functions of the Agro-Invest Corporation?

Answer

The Agro-Invest Corporation is a new entity in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries arising from the merger of the Agricultural Marketing Corporation, AMC, the Agricultural Development Corporation, ADC, and the Agricultural Support Services Productive Projects Fund Limited. Cabinet in October 2008 gave approval *via* Cabinet Decision #3608 for the merger. The Corporation commenced operations in April 2009. Its functions are summarized in the mission and vision strategic objectives and mandate set out below.

The vision is to enhance and sustain the competitiveness of the agricultural sector in the domestic and global market in an effort to achieve the food security goals.

The mission - it is the mission of Agro-Invest to be the arm of the Ministry that will mobilize, finance and facilitate investment in the agricultural sector while undertaking agricultural development for the enhancement of the economic well-being of the Jamaican people.

The mandate of the AIC is to function as the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries business facilitation arm with overall responsibility for investment promotion and facilitation. Project and market development: AIC services cover the investment chain from the identification of opportunities through feasibility studies, due diligence and business planning to fundraising, project management, long-term business performance monitoring and technical support.

Question 2

Will the Minister state what the management structure of these farms is and the organizational chart is there.

Mr. SHAW: Where is the chart? I don't see it. You have it over there. Let us see it.

Mr. CLARKE:

Board of Directors, CEO, Company Secretary, *et cetera, et cetera*, the whole gamut.

Dr. WHEATLEY: It's a business.

Mr. CLARKE:

Like any proper business. Operations of the Agro-Park: The Agro Programme is being operationalized by the Agro-Investment Corporation. The AIC has the responsibility to select investors and execute leases; farmers are selected competitively.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Shaw)

Mr. CLARKE:

Agro-Invest is responsible for the infrastructure and facilities of the parks; AIC will provide park managers and dedicated extension specialists; the Corporation will also coordinate the provision of services to the parks through government agencies and departments, irrigation facilities handed over to NIC and RADA as Government's principal extension agent provides technical advisory services as required.

Question 3

Will the Minister state if there are any plans to construct buildings and, if so, what is the timeframe?

Answer:

There will be construction and refurbishing of buildings as outlined in the table below. And this is for now. At Yallahs there is none yet, at Amity Hall, none yet; Hill Run, packing facility will be there; Ebony Park, none is there yet; Spring Plain refurbishing of existing packing and storage facility; New Forest/Duff House packing facility and Maylors Field refurbishing of factory space.

Question 4:

Will the Minister state what the status of the recovery programme is for the farmers at Plantain Garden River?

Answer

Current status to date: 38 acres have been planted under the interim plan, some 20 acres of pumpkin, some two acres of potato, some six point nine acres of scotch bonnet; forty acres of land are at various stages of completion.

Question 5:

Will the Minister state if any consultants or specialists have been hired for these projects?

Answer

Project engineering specialist, a marketing specialist and an onion specialist.

Question 6:

Will the Minister state if there is any debt relief being considered for the farmers at the Plantain Garden River?

Answer

With the failure of the first onion crop the

Ministry decided to provide resources to the farmers. The resources were channelled through the Credit Union in order to assist the farmers to produce another crop of onion in order to earn enough to discharge their debt obligation to the Credit Union. A total of $7.5 Million was provided to the Credit Union in October 2013 to provide inputs for the production of onions and another 60 acres in the spring season of 2014. In the interim resources were also provided within the $7.5 Million to grow other cash crops immediately until it was time to plant the spring onion crop. These crops include pumpkins, hot pepper, scallion and callaloo. It should be noted that the Ministry of Agriculture secured markets for all the interim crops on behalf of the farmers in addition to the upcoming spring crop of onions. It was therefore not the intention to write off or pay off the loan but rather to work with the Credit Union and farmers to grow new additional crops in order to pay the loan and to maintain a cash flow. This, we believe, is a more sustainable path to recovery and so far $5.5 Million has been spent on the programme.

Mr. SHAW: You saw the cartoon today - the debt relief?

Mr. CLARKE: I saw it. You look like me.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker, before I ask the question regarding this, I would like to - I see some time ago you had said that you were going to go back to the original concept of the agro-parks. I would like to find out what is the original concept that you referred to as far as the agro-parks are concerned?

Mr. CLARKE: I don't get the gist of what you are saying.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. L. Buchanan)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: You don't say anything, be careful.

(Cross talk)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Minister, some time ago I saw come out in the paper her that the original agro-park concept will now be adhered to at this facility. And I am asking…

(*Sotto voce* by Mr. Clarke)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Yes, from the paper here. No, no, from the paper here. After all the agro-parks failed and in particular the one at "Plantain River" ...

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Government Member)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: It is not misleading…. especially the one at Plantain Garden which failed, you said that you are going to go back to the original concept. So I am asking what is the original concept of the agro parks? Simple thing.

Mr. CLARKE: The fact of the matter is that the Plantain Garden, the Plantain Garden Agro-Park was not...

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Dr. Davies)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. CLARKE: The Plantain Garden Agro-Park was not done on the original

concept. The original concept was to put in basic infrastructure and invite investors to come in. In this instant case we helped these small farmers who had been on the land in a very *ad hoc* kind of way to bring them into the fold, because they were not ones who had the kind of investments to come in as has been happening on the other agro-parks.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if the Minister quite understands the original concept of the agro-parks. The original concept of the agro-parks is not where we are looking to go into agricultural production and this is what - I asked what buildings are being put up because the original concept of the agro-parks, and I am stating it quite clearly here, is one whereby it is supposed to be assisting farmers getting off their products into an agricultural complex where you have grading, packaging and procession. And the agro-park is one which included buildings whereby the farmers would carry their produce to that centre...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: You only wanted to park agriculture.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Oh shut up!

Mr. McKENZIE: Mickey Mouse.

(Cross talk)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker, you know one of the things we must understand is that we all must remember that we must have respect for each other. I am not going to dignify that one with an answer.

(Applause)

Mr. McKENZIE: Hear, hear!

(Cross talk)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: But we all understand we must respect each other in here and we must respect the leaders and those who work here also.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes.

A Government MEMBER: And visitors.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: And this is where we need to set an example for the children.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: And there is an obligation to talk sensibly.

Mr. McKENZIE: But what wrong yuh.

(Inaudible comment follows)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Don't mek them take yuh off your stride.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: No, they not taking me off mi stride.

(The Speaker gavels)

But you know when someone gets we must…

The SPEAKER: Mr. Hutchinson, get back to the question.

(Cross talk)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker, you know this is why agriculture can never grow under their Government. They have no vision. (Applause) You know I want to, Mr. Speaker, let me get back to where it I was.

The SPEAKER: Right, right.

(Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Yes.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yeahhh!

(Cross talk)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: In his contribution, this was in May 28, 2008....

A Government MEMBER: Tufton gave you...

(Cross talk)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: .....Hutchinson spoke of the production...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Quoting yourself...

Mr. CLARKE: Point of Order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: ...that's what you spoke about. (Laughter)

A Government MEMBER: Hutchie!

(Cross talk)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: ...and may I say…

A Government MEMBER: Hutchie!

Mr. CLARKE: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

(Cross talk)

The SPEAKER: Point of Order.

(Cross talk)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Sit down and tek the question, man. You're big enough to take the question.

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I understand the subject we're on at this point in time Questions and Answers to Questions.

The SPEAKER: Correct.

Dr. WHEATLEY: ...the Minister, you can't determine that. Answer the question.

Mr. CLARKE: I am at sea really to understand what is happening right now.

(Cross talk)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Hutchinson.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker, let me explain...

(Cross talk)

...I am saying I ask him about agro-parks…

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: And he answered you.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: He has not answered me.

Mr. McKENZIE: Madam Chairman...

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I asked him what was the original concept of agro-parks...

(Cross talk)

...and he has not given me the original concept.

(Cross talk)

...ask - and I am laying it out and if you will listen, Mr. Speaker.

(Cross talk)

The SPEAKER: No, but Mr. Hutchinson if the Minister states what is his understanding of the original concept, I don't understand where we go from here.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: The Minister - that is what I'm trying to explain. This agro-park concept…

The SPEAKER: That is his understanding of it, you know.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: His understanding of it is totally wrong.

The SPEAKER: Well, well, okay.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: That is what I am saying.

The SPEAKER: Well, that's where he is.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: So I am saying that I - (Laughter) let me say, Mr. Speaker...

A Government MEMBER: You can't ask questions of yourself, you can't ask the...

Mr. HUTCHINSON: ...there was a project - can I ask, are you aware of a project document…

Mr. DALLEY: Man siddung now, siddung!

(Laughter)

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, why is this... what is wrong with you.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: A project document that came out in November 20, 2011 concerning agro-parks...

(Cross talk)

...and with that...

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, let me put it another way, there is a document that came out, published November 20, 2011 outlining the concept of agro-parks.

Mr. SILVERA: So it's just a concept for change.

Dr. WHEATLEY: It was flawed.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: And that concept was developed whereby it was to provide an agricultural which included buildings where you would do processing: wholesale and so forth. It was one where all farmers would carry their produce to this centre.

(Cross talk/Laughter)

A MEMBER: That's Coronation Market. Coronation Market that.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: It would then be graded, packaged and processed. You would also have moving from there the hotels and wholesalers who would come and carry their produce off. This is the concept of agro-parks. It had nothing to do with land in the first instance.

The SPEAKER: Okay, okay. So the question you want to ask now?

(Cross talk)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: The question…

Mr. McKENZIE: Everybody de pon top a di man. Relax man, relax.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Hutchinson, let's get to the question specifically.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Yes, that is…

The SPEAKER: We're not going into the history today. We can't debate the history today.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: No, no, we're not going into any history, Mr. Speaker. This agro-park is one of the plans for the development of agriculture in this country and if it is not understood like it's not understood now, it will fail.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Is a car park yuh a buy?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: And we are talking about moving the whole structure of agriculture and if we don't understand it.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Ask the question, Hutchie. Hutchie, ask the question, please.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Shaw)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I asked the question and he has not answered the question as far as the original concept was concerned.

(Cross talk)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Him don't know the answer, him don't know. Him can't answer the question...

(Cross talk)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) Move on, Mr. Hutchinson, move on.

(Cross talk)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: May I now ask, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. CLARKE: (To Dr. Wheatley) Stop talk - stop talk nonsense.

(Cross talk)

How many—

(The Speaker gavels)

Question 1(a)...

Mr. CHARLES: Can the Government side keep quiet.

(Cross talk)

A Government MEMBER: You wake up.

Mr. CHARLES: You're Government.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Can you say how many of these - I see you have here as far as buildings are concerned packaging and sorting facility one, two - it really isn't anything going on at all, but as far as the onions at...

Mr. McKENZIE: Nothing JC.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Nothing at all happening.

Mr. McKENZIE: Not a thing!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: You know it's really difficult, but let me ask, Mr. Speaker...

(Cross talk)

...at Plantain River Garden, you said you had onions planted, where are - is there a -

Mr. CRAWFORD: Onion bits.

Mr. McKENZIE: Executive Rasta, keep the peace.

(Laughter)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Is there a joint facility - you know, Mr. Speaker, I -

The SPEAKER: Come now, Mr. Hutchinson, get on with the question now man.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Sometimes - all right, is there a joint facility and storage? Number one.

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. CHARLES: No man wait until him finish now man.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Is there a joint facility and storing facility for these onions. Onions definitely regardless what happens it needs... What about security for the onion project? Onions are one of the things that are easily stolen. I would also like to find out, Mr. Speaker, it has here the farmers - how many of them now at Plantain River Garden are there that are now going to be getting assistance as far as the recovery programme is concerned?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Stop there and mek him answer those questions.

Mr. CLARKE: No man, mek him tell me some more.

(Cross talk)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Yes, I am going through. Has soil tests been done as far as the growing of these crops are concerned? And, has it been found that these crops that you have been growing on these different parks are they the right crops? Spring Plain, Amity Hall, can you give some ideas as to how many acres and the crops, if any, are Spring Plain and Amity Hall? Those questions first.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: First?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: First, yes.

Mr. CLARKE: It would be good if you asked the substantive questions first and then you could use these as follow up because...

(Cross talk)

...you didn't ask about acreages and all that. We have them and we can find them—but let's get back to basics. You asked about Agro Invest and let me say this coming out of 2008 and this is what Agro Invest [Corporation] says, coming from your Government...

A MEMBER: That's right.

Mr. CLARKE:

"The vision is to enhance and sustain the competiveness of the agricultural sector in the domestic and global market in an effort to achieve food security goals. The mission of Agro Invest Corporation is to be the arm of the Ministry..."

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker...

Mr. CLARKE:

"...that will mobilize finance…"

Mr. HUTCHINSON: ...that isn't the question that I asked him a little while…

The SPEAKER: Hold on.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: No!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Point of Order.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: It can't work so.

The SPEAKER: Hold on. Mr. Hutchinson. Hold on, hold on. You have asked a number of questions and he is answering them.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: No.

The SPEAKER: What he is stating now is an answer.

Mr. CHARLES: The Member should sit when somebody stands on a Point of Order.

Mr. CLARKE:

"The mission of Agro-Invest [Corporation] is to be the arm of the industry that will be the arm of the ministry that will finance, facilitate investment in the agricultural sector while undertaking agricultural for the enhancement of the economic well-being of the Jamaican people"

And that is about how these agro-parks have been established to really deal with investment in agriculture...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. CLARKE: .....to encourage investment.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes.

Mr. CLARKE: All of that in your own, because we started before, you finalized the amalgamation of these three entities. The EU, the European Union, in dealing with the sugar transforming suggested that we find ways and means for absorbing workers who were made redundant and these agro-parks were established in the sugarcane growing area really to be run so that redundant workers could get employment in these parks. As far as buildings go, you don't have to make packing houses before you plant. We have got Duff House on stream as one of those places we're putting in packing house. There is a facility at Spring Plain which we are refurbishing for drying onions. And as far as security is .concerned farmers have a responsibility to secure their own things to, you know. At Amity Hall they have even gone as far as to engage a private security company to look after their crops. We provide the water. We help with land preparation. We help with drainage.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes.

Mr. CLARKE: We help with extension.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes.

Mr. CLARKE: We even have a farm manager at each one of them. So everything can't be in the hands of the Government. The farmers have been helping themselves.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Partnership, partnership.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker, we understand that the farmers have to help themselves.

Let me ask you then, Mr. Minister, before a Plantain River - before the farmers were asked to plant onions they were planting a number of crops and the yields were wonderful that they couldn't even get market for them. At this point in time these farmers that are there, are they being able to market the crops that they have there?

And also, there are some young persons, have they been trained in whatever crops they are doing? Because look at it now...

Mr. CLARKE: Let me answer you, nuh. Let me answer you.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Wait, nuh. I am coming to you.

Mr. CLARKE: Just let me answer.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Oh, all right.

Mr. CLARKE: When we went to Plantain Gardens the farmers there were occupying probably about 30 or 40 acres of land. They were doing all kinds of things, rearing cattle, doing goat, this, that and the other. The Member of Parliament and the Credit Union came and said let us establish something in St. Thomas because the area is a real...

Mr. DALLEY: Farming area.

Mr. CLARKE: ...farming area and a lot of poor people are there. These are small farmers. We went and we decided that - they wanted more lands. We gave them some more lands and they even demonstrated that they wanted more. From 40 acres they ended up with 290 acres.

(Applause)

A Government MEMBER: What!

Mr. CLARKE: 290 acres!

The onion - all the furor about the onion, they never planted more than probably about 20 acres of onion, never planted more than about 20 acres. The irrigation system was somewhat slow in coming, and therefore they had some difficulties and they lost some of the crops, they even sold some. They are now reaping ginger, substantial amounts of ginger... (Applause) ...it started two weeks ago. They are growing pumpkin, they are doing all kinds of things. And we have not let them go. They were involved to the tune of Twelve Million Dollars ($12M) with the Credit Union, which included pipelines and all that for their irrigation system. That is still there.

When we saw that they failed, we gave them Seven and a half ($7½ M) to help them to get back on their feet.

A Government MEMBER: Den Hutchie neva know dat!

Mr. CLARKE: We have done that. And they have planted and they are now reaping.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. WHEATLEY: The Credit Union hold on to that Seven and a half Million Dollars ($7½M)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker, when he is saying that Seven and a half Million Dollars ($7½M) were given to them, the farmers have not seen that Seven and a half Million Dollars ($7½M). That has gone into

all sorts of things like infrastructure and so forth, with the farmers themselves out there left stranded. Christmas gone they had to be begging money for groceries for their families.

(Government Members heckles)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Is true! Is true!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Some of you don't understand! Some of you don't understand, but it is so! It is so!

(The Speaker gavels)

And I am saying he is saying that the money has gone into the Credit Union...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Rubbish! Rubbish you are talking!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: ...and I need to ask him and the Credit Union, Mr. Speaker...

(Heckling)

(The Speaker gavels)

The Credit Union, Mr. Speaker, is not releasing that money to the farmers so that they can get off the ground. The farmers owe the Credit Union a large amount of money, and it is being held on to by the Credit Union for repayment. So the farmers themselves now - when he talks about ginger is one where the export company is one that has given them the ginger and they are then going to supply them back with the ginger and get the money from them.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker, let me ask the Minister...

The SPEAKER: Wrap up now, wrap up now, Mr. Hutchinson.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: ...why is it - you have here a Marketing Specialist and you have an Onion Specialist, why is it that RADA is not responsible for doing the whole supervision of the project? And within the RADA organization you also have persons who are trained, who can oversee the whole of this, Instead of getting specialists to go and do the same.

Mr. CLARKE: The Marketing Specialist who is in place was employed by you. (Laughter) Employed by you, but obviously you didn't know what was happening there. But that Marketing Specialist was employed by you.

The Onion Specialist is really an Onion Specialist, because we are moving into whole-scale onion growing in that particular area. The farmers did not have the expertise and we secured a specialist to work with them to deal with that. That does not obviate the need for the RADA people because they are also there. But this has been an experienced person in onion growing over many, many moons, and he was there to impart that knowledge to the younger RADA people who were involved in the project. (Applause)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker, you know there are many - Mr. Speaker, there are many times when the Minister does not really carry us along the correct path. Just after the failure of this project - and I am clarifying what he said, he said after support provided for the recovery plan he is going to involve an Onion Specialist, a Marketing Consultant and an Infrastructure Engineer Consultant, along with farmers' field school focusing on technology. This is to be done after they failed.

Mr. Luthur BUCHANNAN: A Tufton tell yu dem sumting deh!

(Laughter)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: And I am asking...

The SPEAKER: Mr...

Mr. HUTCHINSON: You know, Mr. Speaker, I think it's about time that I deal with him.

The SPEAKER: So, Mr. Hutchinson, you are saying that there was not a Marketing Specialist?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: There was none at the time when the Agro-Parks at the Plantain Gardens was there - was going, there was none at the time. It was during the recovery programme that it was announced that he was going to put this in place. And so there was nothing in place before 2012, nothing in place. So it couldn't be anybody on the other...

The SPEAKER: Anyway, let us just move on now.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I just want it to be clarified, Mr. Speaker, because he leads us astray many times.

The SPEAKER: Yes, but you are not making much progress Mr. Hutchinson, you are not making much progress right now.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: All right. Let me yield to my...

The SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, could I just ask the Minister, the report that I am aware of is that some Fifty-three Million Dollars ($53M) is owed by the farmers - the onion farmers - because of the failed crop. And I just want to know if this amount of Seven point Five Million Dollars ($7.5M) has been - of which we are told Five point Five Million ($5.5M) is already expended, I would like to know whether it is anticipated that that Fifty-three Million Dollar ($53M) problem will be solved by this loan or advance?

Mr. DALLEY: Is you mek up dat! You mek it up! 'bout Fift-three Million Dollars ($53M)!

Mr. CLARKE: There is no Fifty-three Million Dollars ($53M).

(*Sotto voce* comments)

The total amount of loan that was given to the farmers was Nine Million Dollars ($9M), Nine Million. There is no fifty - what the farmers were saying was that if everything had gone all right they would have made Sixty Million ($60M). But there is no way you can tell what the end result will be. But the loan extended to the farmers was Nine Million Dollars ($9M), which included the irrigation pipes which are still there on the ground, and it is there as their capital expenditure. We gave them, through the Credit Union, Seven and a half Million Dollars ($7½M) to help them to get back on their feet. There is no Fifty-three Million Dollars ($53M).

Mr. DALLEY: Is him mek it up, man!

Mr. SHAW: No, it was on the news.

Mr. DALLEY: Is you write it! Propaganda!

Mr. SHAW: Shut yu mout'.

The SPEAKER: Dr. Wheatley.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Minister, just two questions, Minister. How many of the current

farmers involved in the Plantain Gardens River Park, Agro-Park were redundant or made redundant, as you spoke...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. WHEATLEY: No. listen, listen and learn. You spoke about the EU Sugar Pro...

(Cross talk)

Mr. McKENZIE: You tink a Montague yu a talk to!

A MEMBER: Withdraw that! Withdraw that!

Dr. WHEATLEY: Minister, you made a Statement earlier, you made a Statement earlier about persons who are doing the farming in the Agro-Parks were previously employed to the sugar companies. So I am just asking you, Minister, how many of these persons currently involved in the Plantain Gardens Agro-Park are from the sugar...

And the second question, Minister, is...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. WHEATLEY: No, I just want to sit, I just want to sit.

Mr. DALLEY: You haven't asked the first one yet. Finish the first question.

Dr. WHEATLEY: That's all right, that's all right. This question is not for you.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

(The Speaker gavels)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Minister, as it relates to the Onion Specialist...

Mr. CLARKE: Yes.

(*Sotto voce* comments from Mr. Dalley)

Dr. WHEATLEY: As it relates to the Onion Specialist...

Mr. McKENZIE: Dalley, what is wrong with you!

Dr. WHEATLEY: ...The Onion Specialist, was that Onion Specialist employed at the outset of the programme in Plantain Gardens? And if there was such a person in place, I would believe Minister that that Specialist would have known to take the necessary precautions to prevent what took place there. So, I want to know, Minister, if a Specialist was in place at that time?

Mr. CLARKE: Two things. As I said before that the Plantain Gardens Agro-Park was not the regular run-of-the-mill one, it was an area where we had some small farmers doing their thing and we decided that we were going to bring them within that concept.

As far as the Onion Specialist is concerned, the failure of that project was caused because of the irrigation system.

Dr. WHEATLEY: But we believe that the Onion Specialist would have informed AIC that you need a proper irrigation system!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. McKENZIE: You put de cart before de horse!

Mr. CLARKE: The Onion Specialist was there from the beginning, the marketing man was there from the beginning. They had a problem with the irrigation system which, even when I went - the second day I went out there I saw the difficulties with the irrigation. It took a little time to be rectified because it was a new system that was being put in place.

Dr. WHEATLEY: But, Minister, I would want to believe that the Onion Specialist would have a certain level of appreciation as to what type of irrigation system that would work there.

Mr. CLARKE: It's not an irrigation specialist, it is an onion specialist.

Dr. WHEATLEY: But an onion specialist - RADA recommended a particular irrigation system, what AIC did or the onion specialist recommended to the farmers or gave the farmers was a totally different thing, and that is why the crop failed.

Mr. CLARKE: You know nothing at all 'bout what... (Inaudible)

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Minister...

Mr. CLARKE: Yes.

Mr. SAMUDA: ...on the question of the Agro Investment Corporation, are you satisfied with the output of the AIC as outlined in its mandate? And if you are, could you indicate what kind of output, in specific terms, have we achieved through the introduction of that particular agency or department?

Mr. CLARKE: You will understand that we had to re-organize the whole Agro Invest Programme, and for the knowledge of this House I am going to prepare a statement to tell you exactly what had to be done to really get this back on track. But, I'll tell you about that - more on that later on.

The fact of the matter is that we have not fully achieved what we set out to achieve, but it is a work in progress. When you look at what has happened - say Amity Hall, so far, we have reaped some 300 acres of sorghum; we have in the ground now, anywhere up to between 400 and 500 acres of sorghum. The farmers at Amity Hall - get out there now and you will see them at work. Go down to Ebony Park, you will see them and they will sing praises of those parks. One small problem we had was that little failing with the little onion out there, and it has become a whole big situation. We are achieving. And if you look, the figures are saying it; the growth is moving on. Agriculture is growing again, even though we had difficulties with Hurricane in 2012. So, we are back on track.

The SPEAKER: Dr. Baugh.

Mr. SAMUDA: Minister...

Dr. PHILLIPS: Is the Speaker said he must talk, you know.

Mr. SAMUDA: No, he wasn't - I was to go.

The SPEAKER: I thought you got the answer you wanted.

Mr. SAMUDA: No, it is a follow-up on that.

Minister, if I may be permitted just one brief preamble. I believe, Minister, that you have an agency called JAMPRO. And I think that JAMPRO is the agency who ought properly to look to the promotion of investment - investment in every sector. The introduction of this particular element of the development of agriculture, in my view, out properly, as the - and if the Minister of Finance would pay attention, he would know that I am promoting the reduction, in any cost to the Government, for this particular aspect of agriculture, and. put it where it rightfully belongs, and should never have been shifted in any way back to JAMPRO where the Minister of Industry is responsible for promoting investments.

So, therefore, Minister, I would recommend that you focus on the

development side and leave the investment promotion side to the agency - the national agency - JAMPRO, that is really - that ought to be responsible.

Mr. CLARKE: That's an advice that you could have given in 2008 too, but you know, time has passed.

(Applause)

Mr. CLARKE: This... this... well, I don't know; I wasn't there. But this is what came out of 2008, and it says here... And again, in October 2008, the Cabinet decision was taken and the Corporation commenced operations in April 2009...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CLARKE: ...and it outlined all of that. It came out of your Government.

The SPEAKER: Dr. Baugh, last question.

Dr. BAUGH: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Through you, Mr. Speaker to the Minister of Agriculture. I have two questions but I will just ask once. In the context of the mandate of Agro Investment Corporation, which I would assume also presides over foreign investors - FDIs that are coming, in terms of agro industry, agriculture and processing. At about the same time that you had this problem with this agro farm, there were two other farms that failed significantly. I believe that they included foreign investment - two shrimp farms - one in Old Harbour and they complained at the time that the cause was the dumping of dunder by a factory, and also praedial larceny.

And there was a second one that closed. And that, in addition to those complaints, also complained of a failure of JAMPRO; they were not happy with how JAMPRO functioned in promoting the investment and giving support, but also said that part of the reason why they failed is the competition coming from the Caribbean imports that were duty free, and yet they had to be importing feed for the shrimps, and other materials for the project, which were now being charged duty, and as a result of that they were no longer competitive.

So, the question of the shrimp farms under Agro-Invest, I would like to know if these matters have been investigated; if we can look forward in the future to more stability and more support for these investments so that we do not lose those jobs, and that we move on to earn foreign exchange, rather than be giving the opportunities to those who invest - who import the final product.

The second question is, for constituencies like mine, Mr. Minister - and I appreciate the agro farms - but for constituencies like mine where we do not have any agro farms but we have a lot of farmers, a lot of lands, and they are idle because of the want of some minor inputs such as infrastructure, especially water supply, and such as capital, which is not available to these farmers, what arrangements is the Ministry of Agriculture making to broaden the scope of the promotion of agriculture to include farmers in poor communities and poor constituencies like mine?

Thank you, sir.

Mr. CLARKE: As far as the two farms which failed are concerned, one was the shrimp farm in Brompton, and the other one was the shrimp farm in Logwood - in Vere. The major problem with Vere was praedial larceny - major, major, major. The one at Brompton, they had some disease problems with the shrimp and they fought it off, but every time it kept on repeating. It is obvious that because they have been growing the shrimps there for such a long time, the disease continues. But, the fact is that as we speak, interest is being displayed at the one at Logwood because it is a very, very big complex.

As far as the feed goes, in consultation with the Minister of Finance, not just shrimp but regular aquaculture, as it is now, there is no duty now on imported feed, because one of the difficulties the fish farmers had was that the quality of the feed they were using in Jamaica was not up to standard. The feed that we import floats and it causes the fish to eat while the feed is floating. The local feed goes down to the ground and they have to rummage in it, actually, which causes problem, both with taste and with growth, so that has been rectified.

As far as finance is concerned, the PC banks, Development Bank of Jamaica, they have been doing some work, but it is an area that we need to address. I don't know how much more we can do, but an area that we are lacking on is the fact that many of the farmers do not have registered title. They are working on that now through the LAMP Programme with the help of the Koreans. If that can be accelerated our farmers would be able to have titles and give them a greater access to agricultural loan funding.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Hutchinson, take the last question.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Minister, can you say, on these farms, are there any plans to do any construction of grading, packaging, processing houses, and to actually roll out on a wholesale basis, products that come in from farmers, not only those who are there, but farmers throughout the country, and what is the timeframe, if it is so?

Mr. CLARKE: The answer is yes. And it is within a much shorter timeframe than the project that you had at Holland. That one you announced in Holland some 10 years ago, that has not gotten off the ground yet. These are moving a little faster.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: That is the concept that I referred to.

Mr. CLARKE: A still born concept.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clarke. Dr. Wheatley, your question.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Will the Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining answer the following questions, standing in my name at Number 9?

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker...

Question 1:

Is the Minister aware that under the Urban Renewal (Tax Relief) Act, hereinafter referred to as "the Act", the largest telecommunication providers in Jamaica,

Digicel, is an approved developer, pursuant to which the company constructed its Corporate Headquarters in Downtown Kingston, Jamaica?

Answer:

Yes, I am aware that Digicel, (Jamaica) Limited, Digicel, is an approved developer as per the Urban Renewal (Tax Relief) Act.

Digicel was designated and approved pursuant to section 4 of the Urban Renewal Act as an approved developer by the Urban Renewal – approved developer Digicel (Jamaica) Limited Order, 2011, Jamaica Gazetted, dated July 19, 2011.

The said Order was signed by the then Minister of Finance.

Question 2:

Is the Minister aware that the company obtained certain incentives including tax relief under the programme?

Answer:

Yes, I am advised that as an approved developer under the Urban Renewal Act, Digicel would have received all the benefits provided for under the said Act.

Question 3:

Is the Minister aware that since the completion of construction and occupation of the building, the company has been relocating a significant number of its executives outside of Jamaica?

Answer:

I am aware that Digicel has been relocating a significant number of its executives outside of Jamaica.

Question 4:

Can the Minister indicate to the Honourable House if this is part of the company's plan to relocate its global headquarters outside of Jamaica?

Answer:

As indicated in my response to Question 3 above, I am not aware that Digicel has been relocating a significant number of its executives outside of Jamaica. I cannot therefore speak to whether or not it is Digicel's plan to relocate its global headquarters outside of Jamaica.

Question 5:

If the answer to Part IV is in the affirmative, can the Minister indicate whether a relocation of the global headquarters outside of Jamaica could run counter to the Tax Incentive Scheme granted to the company under the Act?

Answer:

Please see response to Question 4 above.

Question 6:

If the answer to Part IV is in the affirmative, will the Minister give an indication as to the possible fiscal and Operational impact such a move would have on Jamaica and the Government's fiscal accounts?

Answer:

Please see response to Question 4 above.

Question 7:

If the answer to Part V is in the affirmative, will the Minister advise of steps the administration has taken, or is contemplating, to either avert this course

of action altogether, or to minimize the likely fall out in the event of any significant scaling down of operations?

Answer:

Please see response to Question 4 above.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Thank you very much, Minister, for taking the time to answer these few questions. (Applause) It is a pity Minister, that you are not aware...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Minister you stated that you are not aware that...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. Dalley)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Dallev... Mr. Dalley... no, don't do that...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Minister, it was reported last year that Digicel relocated quite a number of their senior executives. Now, it was also reported - it was reported in the media that Jamaica will continue to be the location of Digicel's group's regional headquarters. And, Minister, the reason why I ask this question is that, if Jamaica is being downgraded from a global headquarters to a regional headquarters, it is something that, I believe, that we must be very concerned about, because a company does not get up on a wimp to relocate a headquarter like Jamaica, central to the Caribbean. And I am wondering Minister if it is a signal that companies - international companies are losing confidence in the country's future?

Government MEMBERS: Aaahhh!

Dr. WHEATLEY: And, Minister... Minister...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. WHEATLEY: But, Minister, Minister, I know the gallery over that side there...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Minister, are you aware, Minister that the International Rating Agency Moody - Moody's, in rating Digicel's new Senior Unsecured Bond last year, Mr. Minister, said that, while the company continues to have strong diversification, this is mitigated by its exposure to Jamaica, which accounts for 18% of total revenue; which is struggling to revive its economy and experiencing competitive telecom pricing, following the imposition of a new regulatory and tax scheme designed to increase Government revenue.

Minister, I'm sure that you will agree with me that telecom companies must continue to invest in…..

(Inaudible comments by Members)

Dr. WHEATLEY: No it's the concern; I'm coming to the question.

(Inaudible comments by Members)

Dr. WHEATLEY: The question Minister…

Question 1:

Are you concerned that Jamaica may be downgraded to just a regional headquarters for that company.

Question 2:

If that is the case, Minister, is it then that Jamaica might, also, be downgraded as it

relates to capital investment, especially, especially, seeing that we are all in favour of Jamaica being a logistics hub, and we have been seeing over the last couple of years that he NRI, which is the Network Readiness Index, that Jamaica is consistently falling. We move from 73 in 2011, 74 in 2012 and now we are at 84 in 2013, I am wondering where we are going to be when the new index comes out sometime this year?

Now, Minister, it is something I am concerned and I hope that you are also concerned, because, because....

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. Dalley)

Dr. WHEATLEY: ….with the logistics hub, with the logistics hub that's supposed to be coming on stream....

The SPEAKER: Mr. Dalley, Mr. Dalley.

Dr. WHEATLEY: With the logistics hub, Jamaica becoming a logistics hub, ICT will play an integral role in us being able to provide the necessary logistics services. And if we do not have that infrastructural investment, then Minister, it is quite possible that this logistic hub that we have been talking about and pinning our hopes as a nation on, that we might have some shortfalls, and, as a matter of fact, fail as a logistics hub.

The SPEAKER: Oh, Lord.

Mr. PAULWELL: I'm sure the Member will applaud with us that today, Fitch upgrade Jamaica status in its review, in its rate review. Yes, I'm just giving you a bit of breaking news. That Fitch today announced that the Jamaica status has improved.

Dr. WHEATLEY: From?

Mr. PAULWELL: From triple 'CCC' to 'B'.

(Thunderous Applause)

(Disturbance)

(The Speaker gavels)

(Disturbance)

Mr. PAULWELL: From 'CCC' to 'B'. Let me answer, let me answer - can I just answer the question?

Firstly, Mr. Speaker, let me just say that the first accounting period for analyzing the benefits of the incentive *vis-a-vis* the commitments is the 31st of March, and that will be conducted by the Ministry of Finance. And we therefore, have to await that process to make any commence as to whether or not there is a fulfillment of the undertakings that were given in relation to the benefits.

But secondly, Mr. Speaker, let me say that Digicel continues to be a highly successful company in Jamaica. And we are proud of their achievement. They came here as a very small enterprise and now they are a multinational company because of the base here in Jamaica. (Applause) And based on their plans that they have revealed to me, they intend to stay here and to grow even further.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Minister, I agree with you that Digicel has given some level of commitment to Jamaica, and in fact, they started here in Jamaica and they are a very successful company in Jamaica. The point I'm making, Minister is - I think you have jumped around the question.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. WHEATLEY: The question I was asking the question I was asking the Minister is that, are you, Minister, concerned that with…

(Heckling)

A Government MEMBER: Andrew, sit down!

Dr. WHEATLEY: Minister, you have some very, very supportive colleagues I must say. (Chuckles)

The question I'm asking, Minister, are you concerned that the possibility of the infrastructural investment, especially as it relates to the potential for the logistics hub, if we are not overtaxing successful companies that they would want to leave the shores of this country. Not just....

(*Sotto voce* comment by Dr. Phillips)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Just relax. Just relax.

And Minister, I see you shaking your head.

But, Minister, you know, the NRI; I thought you were going to answer the part of the question that relates to the NRI, with Jamaica going down the scale, moving from 73 to now 85. I think that is something that we should all be concerned about.

We are talking about the logistics hub and Jamaica being a logistics hub in the near future, yet we are not cognizant of the fact that ICT plays a critical role in the whole concept of a logistics hub. And it is something, Minister; it is something Minister, you and I know that NRI is an index that, I mean, most investors look at, whenever they want to invest in a country, they would look at the NRI to see how capable and how supportive is that country to the whole ICT component that they will need to survive or to invest. So, Minister, we want you to just shed some more light on that as it relates to your concerns on the matter.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I have no such concerns. The companies - and I should note that the two largest of the wireless companies are doing better now than they did last year.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yeah.

Dr. WHEATLEY: You're sure about that, Minister? Are you sure?

(Heckling)

Mr. PAULWELL: Yes. In terms of the revenues, they definitely are doing better. And I believe that Jamaica, both LIME and Digicel….

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. PAULWELL: Well, I can give you the figures. They are just off the press.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister.

Mr. PAULWELL: And these figures are collected by the OUR, who has regulatory oversight. And I just saw the figures, and I'd be quite happy to share them with you. I'd be quite happy to share them with you. I don't know if the companies want their figures to be broad - to be on the street, but I'll certainly share it with you, so that we can preserve their own confidence in Jamaica.

I have no doubt that Jamaica's telecommunication infrastructure is going to continue as it has been for the past decade or more to enlarge and to be capable of facilitating all aspects of the logistics hub.

(Applause)

Dr. WHEATLEY: So, Minister, you are saying then that Jamaica's fall, as it relates to the NRI, will not impact, it will not....

(*Sotto voce* comment by a Government Member)

Dr. WHEATLEY: You see, you don't know what you're talking about; you don't even know anything about Local Government.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

The SPEAKER: Dr. Wheatley.

Dr. WHEATLEY: So, Minister, you are saying then that the NRI, Jamaica's rating as it relates to NRI, doesn't impact investment, are you saying that, that it doesn't impact investment, I'm just asking you?

Dr. PHILLIPS: You asked that before.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Minister, I know - Minister, I am sure that as a seasoned Minister, you are not going to hide behind that piece of paper.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I am seeking to answer follow-up questions to those posed, and I think we have adequately discharged that responsibility at this time.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Derrick Smith.

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to ask the Minister, can you confirm that the Digicel's structure, Downtown Kingston is in fact the global Headquarters of that organization?

Mr. PAULWELL: As I indicated just now, the assessment period for determining whether or not the undertakings that were given *vis-a-vis* the tax incentives, comes up at March 31. At that time the Ministry of Finance - and this question really ought to have been directed to another Ministry and not mine. At that time, the Ministry will be able to advise us as to whether or not the promises have been fulfilled and the company is operating accordingly.

We have seen documentation, for example, that explain what was meant by this Headquarters, and I think they will be - they will have to rationalize that when the time comes, the end of March this year.

Mr. D. SMITH: So you are saying, Minister, that right now the situation is in limbo, must be. If you are waiting on the company to advise and you are not sure of what the position is.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Paulwell)

Mr. D. SMITH: There is a process as you are saying, so right now it's in limbo. Right now it's unknown.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Paulwell)

Mr. D. SMITH: Well, if you know, give me the answer seeing that it is not unknown.

Mr. PAULWELL: As I said, Mr. Speaker, the process of assessment comes up at the end of March. As far as we are concerned, the company continues to operate based on the undertakings that it gave and that in fact, the Headquarters continue to fulfill its role as a regional Headquarters.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Miss Grange.

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker….

The SPEAKER: Mr. Smith, you stretching it now, you know.

Mr. D. SMITH: I don't know what you mean by that.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Too many questions.

The SPEAKER: Get through the question.

Mr. D. SMITH: The question to the Minister. You see, Mr. Speaker, the Minister is carrying me all over the shop.

The SPEAKER: No Mr. Smith, they are not questions, this is like we are shooting in the dark. Because, we are asking questions on the premise that we have no basis. Dr. Wheatley says he read a Report. You didn't verify the Report.

Mr. D. SMITH: I don't know what you mean about no basis, Mr. Speaker. I'm trying to understand - the Minister says it comes up for assessment, I think, next month, at the end of March?

The SPEAKER: Yes, you wait on that.

Mr. D. SMITH: So, the question is, from where he sits, does he see any impediment to approval....

The SPEAKER: And he said, no.

Mr. D. SMITH: ….at the end of March?

The SPEAKER: He said, no.

Mr. PAULWELL: No.

The SPEAKER: Miss Grange, you have some questions?

Miss GRANGE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the expiration of 21 days, I will ask the Honourable Minister of Youth and Culture the following questions:

Question 1:

Will the Minister say if the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Youth and Culture was recently suspended or otherwise separated from his post?

Question 2:

If the answer to Question 1 is in the affirmative, will the Minister say when he was suspended or otherwise separated and for what period?

Question 3:

Will the Minister say why such action was taken, if any?

Question 4:

In particular, will the Minister say whether he was suspended or otherwise separated due to matters within the remit of any agency of the Ministry of Youth & Culture?

Question 5:

If so, will the Minister indicate the relevant agency or agencies?

Question 6:

Will the Minister say when the matters giving rise to the suspension or other means of separation, came to the attention of the relevant Agency, if any?

Question 7:

Will the Minister say when the matters giving rise to the suspension or other means of separation, came to her attention?

Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the expiration of 21 days, I will ask the Most Honourable Prime Minister the following questions:

Question 1:

Does the Government recognize the fact that the Rastafari community has utilized lands at Pinnacle for over fifty (50) years for their sustainable economic

development and the practice of their religion?

Question 2:

Is the Prime Minister aware that a Notice of Intention to declare Lots 198, 199 and 201 of the site as a National Monument was published in the *Daily Gleaner* of April 23, 2009 and served on the interested parties and that subsequent to the placement of that Notice of Intention, the Jamaica National Heritage Trust further determined that Lots 200 and 294 should also be declared and that these five (5) lots total approximately fifty (50) acres?

Question 3:

Is the Prime Minister also aware that a formal objection was lodged by the Millennium Council of Rastafari, their main objection being that they had been excluded from the process and that the Millennium Council agreed to remove its objection?

Question 4:

Is the Prime Minister aware that the St. Jago Hills Development Company, a subsidiary of Island Homes Limited, in whose name the lots were registered, subsequently indicated its intention to object to the declaration?

Question 5:

Will the Prime Minister say why the Jamaica National Heritage Trust Board took a decision in a meeting in 2013 to proceed to declare only Lot 199 at Pinnacle, a heritage site, and proceeded to serve a new Notice of Intention in June 2013, ignoring the original Notice of Intention?

Question 6:

Will the Prime Minister say why the Government, through the Jamaica National Heritage Trust Board, abandoned the decision of the previous administration to declare Lots 198, 199, 200, 201, and 294 a National Monument?

Question 7:

Is the Prime Minister aware that Former Prime Minister, the Honourable Bruce Golding initiated discussions for the purchase of the sites to be declared for use as a heritage site?

Question 8:

Will the Prime Minister please say why the Government has not pursued the initiative of the previous administration *u* to compulsorily, or through negotiations, acquire these lots?

Question 9:

Having appointed a committee which has referred the Pinnacle land ownership matter to the Ministry of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change, does the Government still hold to its proposal to assign only one lot, Lot 199, on which the ruins of the Great House are located, as a National Heritage Monument?

Question 10:

Is the Government now prepared to purchase a total of six (6) lots which would include access and declare them a National Monument in recognition of its founder, Leonard Howell, and in tribute to Rastafari?

Part 2: Question 1:

Will the Prime Minister please say whether or not the Government will provide funding, through the Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF), to develop the heritage site at Pinnacle, in collaboration with the Rastafari community and other stakeholders, into a world renowned mecca for Rastafari which will attract visitors worldwide?

Question 2:

Will the Prime Minister please say whether or not the Government is willing to also compulsorily acquire an additional one hundred and fifty (150) acres and work with the Rastafari community and other stakeholders to develop a formal Rastafari village with all the necessary infrastructure and amenities, based on the principles of sustainable economic enterprise that were central to the teachings of Leonard Howell, the founder of Rastafari, as a tribute to the movement?

Question 3:

Will the Prime Minister please say whether or not the Government ensured that necessary actions have been taken to protect and determine the treatment of the artifacts on the site, such as the Great House, the Bakery Ruins and the Well Ruins, in relation to their protection and preservation?

Question 4:

Will the Prime Minister please say whether or not she knows if Taino artifacts are located on the Pinnacle lands?

Question 5:

Will the Prime Minister please say whether or not the Government is prepared to undertake a full archaeological study of the sites at Pinnacle to ascertain the tangible and intangible heritage value and to determine the appropriate use of the vast acreage of land?

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance will now take the matter he alluded to earlier.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Dr. Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: I now move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take the motion, notice of which I gave earlier.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the suspension of the Standing Orders to allow the Minister to take the motion, notice of which was given earlier.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Minister.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, this is a straightforward matter. It is a requirement under the fiscal responsibility framework that in matters of the Supplementary Estimates that they be referred to the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee for consideration and the motion that I gave notice of earlier seeks to do this. I understand that the Committee is scheduled to meet on Thursday, and that they will give a

consideration and report back to the House next week, Mr. Speaker. And so with those remarks I move that the House approves the motion to refer the First Supplementary Estimates to the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee for consideration and report.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable us to take Private Members' Motions.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the suspension of the Standing Orders to allow for Private Members' Motions.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we intend to close off this afternoon on two Private Members' Motions that have been with us for sometime: Private Members' Motion No. 10 and Private Members' Motion No. 7. We anticipate that the closing process will be short.

The SPEAKER: Mrs. Robinson.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mrs. Robinson)

The SPEAKER: My apologies. You may proceed, Mr. Smith.

Mr. L. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am most grateful to you for this opportunity to address the issue of the craft industry. As a Member of Parliament that represents most of what is Montego Bay and in which one of the major craft markets is located, I feel impelled to speak briefly on this particular subject. First of all, let me commend the Minister for so far presenting to this Honourable House a raft of programs and policies that I suspect over a period of time will seek to improve the quality of items that is presented to our tourists as well as our locals and, indeed, to create an environment that is friendly - tourism friendly. But there are concerns that still linger, Mr. Speaker that we need to address. First of all, it is my humble opinion that over these many decades craft vendors have been treated like the bastard children of the tourism industry. And this comes out practically every year whereby we see them demonstrating for a variety of some reasons have been very pertinent. I do believe therefore that the attempts that are to be now made to improve their lot must be seriously pursued.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we oftentimes talk about the Jamaica Brand and we have to be very careful that when we speak about the Jamaica Brand we are not just limiting that brand concept to over the specific areas where we have performed very credibly, especially in the international sphere. For example, in the field of track and field with the world's fastest man, Usain Bolt. I say that against the background, Mr. Speaker, because I feel very strongly that our craft industry, which should be seen as part of the overall creative industry, must be seen as part of Brand Jamaica in its entirety and not seen as appendage or on the periphery. Those of us who traverse the Fern Gully very often to come to the Parliament will see some examples of what are not necessarily the best of Jamaica. What I may refer to as penile protuberances that stand for Jamaican craft should not, Mr. Speaker, be

allowed to continue. I do believe that we have...

Mr. SHAW: What is the remedy?

Mr. L. SMITH: Why not have them carve some beautiful Jamaican women in all their splendor? The African culture of which we are a part extols the virtues of femininity in terms of the symbol of fertility with breasts. Why not breast instead of penile protuberances. (Applause)

Mr. McKENZIE: It's chicken breast.

Mr. L. SMITH: I stand corrected.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Talk, you are not breaking the rule today.

Mr. L. SMITH: I am hoping, Mr. Speaker, that the new plans for craft industry will focus a great deal on the quality as well as the variety of what is presented. As the State Minister of Tourism said in his presentation, we do not have eagles and giraffes or elephants in Jamaica, we have mongoose, crocodile, John Crow.

Mr. McKENZIE: Rat bat.

Mr. L. SMITH: We can go on. But seriously, Mr. Speaker, we need to legitimize the craft industry and a part of that legitimacy that has to do with what is presented to visitors. And so I am urging, Mr. Speaker, that area be taken very seriously. Mr. Speaker, I am also concerned about the fact that up to this point in time parish councils in many instances are the bodies that oversea these craft market and I do believe that from the empirical data the parish councils have failed in that regard.

Mr. McKENZIE: Come on, do better than that.

Mr. L. SMITH: I do support therefore the view of the oversight body that is to be set up and to so manage the craft market that they become full-fledge entity in terms of not just in commercial because indeed, Mr. Speaker, it is my view that what we should be looking at is not just craft market but craft villages where you can have not just people selling the craft but tourist can, in fact, see the craft being made, the basket being woven, the sculptors being done. (Applause) We need to encourage master craftsmen out there.

As a country, in terms of our culture, we are losing too many of our artisans who have to go and hustle otherwise because there is not enough opportunity for them. To many made in China artifacts and souvenirs are in our craft shops and that has to stop. (Applause) We are betraying ourselves when we talk about a Jamaica Brand when we allow so many made in China objects.

Mr. McKENZIE: Local made breast.

Mr. L. SMITH: If I am American tourist I want to take back some made in Jamaica.

Mr. McKENZIE: Local made breast.

Mr. L. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, protect me from...

A Government MEMBER: From the penny section.

Mr. L. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I did not intend to be long but I wanted to emphasize the point that we need to take more seriously the craft industry in this country; that we need to elevate our craft vendors to a level of respectability. We need to make them a more viable entity in the scheme of things. As it

now stands, as I said earlier, they are seen as the bastard children.

And I tell you something, Mr. Speaker, many, many reports have shown that one of the greatest points of harassments to tourists is at the craft market. But when you look at the other side of the coin one of the reasons why there is so much harassment is that the tourist who come into the facility, the clientele are not enough to satisfy the overall demand and everybody is going after that one tourist, Mr. Speaker, and that in itself becomes a form of harassment. So we need to bring the tourist back.

One of the concerns I have too, Mrs. Speaker, is that the craft vendors have very limited resources. They do not have the kind of money that the in-bond merchants have and other tourism-related entities that go after the cruise ship passengers and other tourists, and so they are often left behind. Because we know, Mr. Speaker, that money is involved, that a certain amount of bribe is involved whereby taxi-men and bus operators are bribed to take the tourist to specific locations and most of these locations do not include the craft markets. And I have no compunction about saying that because I have had to deal with a lot of the craft vendors in my community. You would be amazed to know how hard these people work. There is one particular woman who sent her two children to universities. One of them now has a PhD, and she did it all and that by selling craft items in Montego Bay Craft Market. We have to find a way to empower our craft vendors. They must be seen as legitimate entity in the tourism industry and we must ensure that they continue to enjoy a livelihood that reflects our tourism, which are told over and over again, tourism is everybody's business. It is time that tourism becomes the craft vendors' business.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Mrs. ROBINSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank all the Members who contributed and supported the motion and I am happy to see that they realize that this is a very important aspect of tourism. And as I when I debated earlier that tourism was started in the beginning with just, the only attractions were craft vendors and taxi operators beside the sun, the sand and the sea. So it is, indeed, an important business. It employs a lot of women, a lot of single women who send their children to school, as the Member alluded to universities, and we can't overemphasize the importance that this micro business plays in the lives of so many people in the constituency I represent and surely in the other constituencies where there are craft markets; and the plight of the craft vendor cannot be overlooked. And I believe now that it is time that we have debated it to really bring them into sharp focus and see how we can make the necessary adjustments to make their lives better and to really make them feel a part of the tourism package that they are a part of.

I had reason to drive passed the Swansea Craft Market this morning and my heart bled for the vendors. About six shops are opened, Mr. Speaker, and they were despondent because they were almost sure that nothing

would happen there, because nothing has been happening there. And since we started this debate there was a big demonstration in Ocho Rios where vendors from the Swansea Craft Market and the Fern Gully Craft Market demonstrated, they went all over the town and down to the pier to make a point, because of all the craft vendors and craft markets they have not been allowed to go to the cruise ship pier on rotation schedule that they have to allow vendors to there for them to get - in their own minds whether they do business or not they would feel more comfortable if they were included.

And for reasons - and I want to say publicly that the Minister of Tourism and the Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism, they have done their part; they have tried. It seems to be beyond them. It is now the technocrats who must come in and make the necessary decision whether it is those at Port Authority of Jamaica or those at the Jamaica Tourist Board. A precedent had been set where these vendors were allowed to go on the pier and for reasons best known to whoever has made the rules they are not allowed. They are restive, they are despondent and I make a special plea for those vendors at Swansea and Fern Gully Craft Markets, because that particular corridor was closed for almost a year because of road construction. So, they suffered from lack of business because nothing was going there and they were patient, they understood. So I'm saying that even if it is on a humanitarian basis that these persons be given special consideration.

It is interesting to note that they were joined by vendors from as far as the Dunn's River Craft Market, the Ocho Rios Craft Market, the Old Craft Market in solidarity with what has been happening to them and the vendors at the Mammee Bay Craft market, they themselves they are having their own challenges and we just want for all of them to be considered. The challenges faced by craft vendors in Ocho Rios are no different than faced in Negril or Montego Bay or wherever a craft market is and the complaints are the same: they do not see enough visitors, the visitor traffic through the markets are sparse and few and sporadic, even with three ships in the harbour in Ocho Rios some days you can count the amount of visitors who really go through the craft market. And maybe for some of the reasons outlined by the Member who just spoke a while ago, we can see why that is happening.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to clear up something, those cravings in Ocho Rios the Minister of State when he spoke he said that for packaging purposes they must be very hard to package, but I want to tell him that I...

Dr. PHILLIPS: You sure you want to...

Mrs. ROBINSON: ...yes, yes. A female visitor was overheard saying that we wished that all men were made like this because you can screw out that part for packaging purposes.

(Laughter)

(Cross talk)

An Opposition MEMBER: You hear that Lloyd B.

Mrs. ROBINSON: So just to relieve the fears and they are bought and used as underwear hangers and kitchen hangers - kitchen cloth hangers. So, people, I don't believe that they would have lasted this long if there was not a demand for it, it's a demand and supply thing and persons take photograph and leave a tip too in Fern Gully. So, you know, I understand some of the concerns, but I don't believe that they are as real as we think they are. A lot of it is imagined. So I just want to ask for this - Minister and I have spoken and we have an amendment. Could I just read the amendment now, Mr. Speaker?

The SPEAKER: Yes.

Mrs. ROBINSON: Yes.

(Cross talk)

Yes. So we're going to delete the first and second prayer and we're going to substitute it for this:

> Be it Resolved that this Honourable House debate the state for the craft industry and in light of the industry's great potential to contribute to national development that the Government establish a craft strategy that aims to facilitate even greater integration and synergies between the tourism sector and the craft industry;
>
> And be it Further Resolved that the aforementioned strategy must recognize that a unified approach to craft's governance is needed while recognizing the multifaceted nature of the industry and by extension the need for joined up approach different ministries and entities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Those in favour of the amendment.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: I put the motion as amended.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Motion carried.

(Applause)

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, permission to speak from a seat other than my own.

The SPEAKER: You may proceed.

(Cross talk)

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, the motion before the House is a resolution to the effect that this Honourable House as an emergency measure requires the Ministry of Finance and Planning to beef up the resources of the JFB urgently and to deal with the shortages of equipment and, if necessary, human resources in order to improve the capacity of the Jamaica Fire Brigade to meet these challenges and requests in the Annual Reports of the JFB to meet the JFB.

Mr. Speaker, the mover of the Motion, Member from Kingston Western, as provided some statistics on the performance of the Jamaica Fire Brigade and has sought to highlight the importance of an effective fire service to the community and in particular, the negative impact of an efficient fire service on the poor, particularly those living in densely populated, low income urban areas and deep rural communities.

Mr. Speaker, a well-equipped and efficiently managed fire service is necessary in any modern society not just to protect the

poor but to preserve life, property and well needed economic investments. I'm sure that all Members of this Honourable House share several of the concerns raised and appreciate the importance of the [Jamaica] Fire Service as expressed in the resolution. Therefore, there is no need for a long debate. This Government, Mr. Speaker, and in particular the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development knows the importance of an effective fire service to Jamaica, especially at this time when we are focused on the growth agenda and sustainable development.

I could tell this Honourable House all the things that are required to enable the Jamaica Fire Brigade to offer an acceptable level of service and I've already shared this information with the Cabinet and the Minister of Finance and Planning. These include:

- repairs and additional fire engines, boats, fire stations and the acquisition of the necessary equipment and apparatus;
- better remuneration and working conditions for our firemen.

However, Mr. Speaker, we will not be able to find all these things all at once. But in spite of the very tight fiscal situation in which the country currently grapples, we are doing all that is possible to address the needs of the fire service.

Mr. Speaker, Cabinet has before it a submission outlining the status of the fire brigade and the actions we need to take to resolve the immediate problems. Let me also inform this Honourable House of the some of the measures that this Administration has taken or is currently in [train] to improve the fire service: one, the renovation of the Santa Cruz Fire Station.

(Applause)

Mr. DALLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. ARSCOTT: Two, the renovation of the Freeport Fire Station in Montego Bay.

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Hear, hear!

Mr. DALLEY: Since you take over.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Three, the construction of a new Fire Station for Port Maria.

(Applause)

Mr. DALLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. ARSCOTT: Four, repairs to the Savanna-la-Mar Fire Station.

(Applause)

Mr. DALLEY: Hear, hear!

Dr. WHEATLEY: In two years?

Mr. ARSCOTT: Five, the construction of two engine bays at the Santa Cruz Fire Station.

(Applause)

Mr. DALLEY: What!

Mr. ARSCOTT: Six, the removal of asbestos and the repairs to the Port Royal and Trench Town Fire Stations.

(Applause)

Mr. DALLEY: Yes, remember that one, remember that one. Where was it again?

Mr. ARSCOTT: Seven, the acquisition of other equipment and apparatus.

(Applause)

Mr. DALLEY: Where was it again? Trench Town.

(Cross talk)

Sterling performance

Mr. ARSCOTT: Currently, Mr. Speaker, an order has been placed for the acquisition of three brand new fire units.

(Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. ARSCOTT: These are expected to arrive in April of this year.

Mr. CLARKE: And a pair of goats for Desmond.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Well done.

A Government MEMBER: Well done.

Mr. ARSCOTT: In fact, the Commissioner of the Jamaica Fire Brigade is scheduled to conduct pre-delivery inspection of these units in the United States by next week.

(Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, the cost approximately $132 for these fully equipped pumpers.

(Cross talk)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

(Cross talk)

Hear, hear!

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, I want this Honourable House to note...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Working Minister.

Mr. ARSCOTT: I want this Honourable House to note, Mr. Speaker that this procurement is the first procurement of fire units since 2006. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: 2006.

Mr. ARSCOTT: A statistics, Mr. Speaker that the Honourable Member has conveniently failed to mention.

A Government MEMBER: Evidence based.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: From 2006.

Mr. ARSCOTT: These units, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you will not be lost at sea.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Wow, From 2006.

(Cross talk)

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, since 2012 the Brigade has acquired - a waan you listen -

Mr. WARMINGTON: That's rubbish.

An Opposition MEMBER: Nothing like that.

A Government MEMBER: None was acquired since 2006, evidence based.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Since 2012, the Brigade has acquired 278 suits of bunker gears at a cost of $37 Million. Another 100 is targeted for the next financial year at a cost of $16.3 Million. The Jamaica Fire Brigade, Mr. Speaker, is currently going through the procurement process. Mr. Speaker, 80 complete sets of self-contained breathing apparatus has recently been procured at a cost of $28 Million. This is in addition to 82 face masks at a cost of $1.6 Million. Mr. Speaker, the entity has now for the first time the ability to detect and measure the amount of hazardous substance in the atmosphere with the acquisition of multiple gas detectors at a cost of $1.6 Million. (Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CLARKE: Plenty work.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Since 2012, Mr. Speaker, 219 new firefighters have been recruited and trained.

Mr. DALLEY: How many?

Mr. ARSCOTT: Two hundred and nineteen.

Mr. DALLEY: What!

Mr. ARSCOTT: We have a shortage, Mr. Speaker; I must admit of somewhere around 230 members. However, to address this shortfall there is a proposal for 125 new recruits to be trained in the new financial year.

(Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Well done.

(Cross talk)

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the annual reports of the Jamaica Fire Brigade and it operations, Mr. Speaker, the report of the JFB on its operation is required to be submitted to the Parliament on an annual basis. Commencing this year 2014, I have tabled the annual reports and audited financial statements for the years '02, '03, '04, '05, '06, '07, '08, '09, 2010, 2011**.**

Mr. DALLEY: They didn't do it.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Those are ready, Mr. Speaker. Tabled this year - ten years.

Mr. DALLEY: Ten years of....

(Applause)

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, the Annual Report for the financial year 2011/2012...

Mr. DALLEY: You've cleaned up the system; you've cleaned up the system.

Mr. ARSCOTT: ...have been - will be reviewed by the Ministry and will be tabled in this Honourable House before the end of this financial year. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the 2012/2013 Annual Report has been completed and we are awaiting the audited financial statement. Mr. Speaker, we will be sure going forward that we will table this report in accordance with the Public Management Act.

In spite of adverse financial conditions commendable efforts have been made and we continue to improve the effectiveness of the Fire Service and the conditions under which the brave and resilient members of the Service continue to persevere.

By any measure, Mr. Speaker, the provision of resources to the Jamaica Fire Brigade has improved, not marginally, but significantly under this Administration.

(Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Mr. ARSCOTT: Admittedly, we are not where we want to go, but Rome was not built in a day. Unless you want to be purely tribal and stubbornly political, don't judge us on where we want to go, but judge us on the solid progress we have made over just two short years.

Government MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Mr. ARSCOTT: Just imagine, Mr. Speaker, what we will do in the next four years.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my Minister of State, the Honourable Colin Fagan, the Chairman and members of the Jamaica Fire Brigade, Commissioner Mr. Mowatt and the patriotic and loyal hardworking men and women of the Jamaica Fire Brigade and the business sector, and I want to salute them on behalf of a grateful nation.

Mr. Speaker, later this year the appropriate announcement, in terms of making life better for the firemen and women, will be announced in this House.

(Applause)

Thank you very much.

The SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, I was anticipating a more positive response from the Minister.

Government MEMBERS: Aaahhh!

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, I was at pains in my presentation to detail and to outline the problems affecting the Fire Service. While I appreciate, Mr. Speaker, the fact that the Government is in a position where financing of certain projects is affected because of a number of factors, I can't and I will not accept, Mr. Speaker, that an important element of the country's survival is made to suffer because -

1. the dictates of the International Monetary Fund; and
2. because of the failure of the Government to adequately collect revenues to meet the demands that are necessary.

Mr. Speaker, let me repeat. The economy, Mr. Speaker, the economy will suffer. Every time there is a fire in Jamaica, Mr. Speaker, it affects the economy of the country.

Mr. DALLEY: Yes, 'Columbus'!

(Laughter)

Mr. McKENZIE: So it is important that whatever we do is to try to minimize as much as possible, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister spoke about the repairs of a number of fire stations.

Mr. DALLEY: That's very commendable!

(Applause)

Mr. McKENZIE: And I want to...

Mr. DALLEY: Commend him! Commend him!

Mr. McKENZIE: ...commend the Minister...

Government MEMBERS: Yeah!

(Applause)

A MEMBER: That's the spirit!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. McKENZIE: I want to commend the Minister. But also, I want to remind the Minister that some of the stations that are being mentioned in 2014 had been promised from way back, as far as 2001.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. McKENZIE: The repairs that you so...

Mr. DALLEY: Glowingly speak about.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...glowingly speak about... (Laughter) ...started under the previous Jamaica Labour Party Government.

(Heckling)

Mr. WARMINGTON: It's a fact!

Mr. McKENZIE: I don't want to, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to...

A MEMBER: He is blowing a horn that is not his!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. McKENZIE: I don't want to bring any political colour to the state of the Fire Service, but it was the Minister who alluded,

and you clapped the desk, you were spontaneous.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. McKENZIE: However, Mr. Speaker, let us get down to some serious matters. While I will appreciate that the Minister will have to speak in the Sectoral Debate, I believe the urgency; the needs of our Fire Service can't wait until the Sectoral Debate. The Minister has treated the Parliament with scant regard, based on his response to the resolution.

I made a number of recommendations, Mr. Speaker, and the Minister has not made a comment on one, Mr. Speaker, the question of the state of the fire hydrants in Jamaica, the audit.

I also made a recommendation to the Minister that funds should be taken out of the Emergency Employment Programme (JEEP), to assist in the rehabilitation of fire hydrants across the country. We don't need a response in the Sectoral Debate for that, Mr. Speaker.

I also suggested to the Minister to engage the Minister of Tourism in, in depth discussions about the state of fire boats in Jamaica. Mr. Speaker, let me repeat what I said earlier on. We are encouraging tourists to come to this country. There are at least four major cruise ship piers in Jamaica, not one of them, Mr. Speaker, has a working fire boat. One of the conditions on the law that requires, Mr. Speaker, that these piers must be equipped, they must be able to respond. And I suggested to the Minister that – the Government speaks about a joined-up approach, let us have a joined-up approach, using funds out of the Tourism Enhancement Department to assist in the purchasing of fire boats to put in the areas that they are badly needed if the Government can't find the money in the Ministry. Mr. Minister...

Mr. DALLEY: Why you didn't buy a fire boat for KSAC and park it down there?

Mr. McKENZIE: (Laughs) Mr. Speaker...

Mr. DALLEY: Or the time you were mayor? All you do is walk around and tear down posters!

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, let me say again, Minister, you mentioned the tabling of the Reports, and that is commendable. (Applause) But it is also, Minister, a poor reflection on the administration of the Fire Service. And you can't blame the present administration and you can't - both administrations, because the Report that he tabled dates back from 2001, okay.

I want to commend you, Minister, and hope that when the Reports are tabled, Minister, we can have some discussions on the tabling of the Report.

Minister, you gave no indication...

(*Sotto voce* comments from Mr. Dalley)

Mr. McKENZIE: Minister Dalley, would you allow the Minister to listen.

Dr. WHEATLEY: You keep chirping, chirping, chirping.

Mr. McKENZIE: Minister, you gave no indication as to when. There must be a timeline, Minister that the Fire Service will be brought up to scratch. Is it six months? One year?

You spoke about the three trucks that are coming, Minister, how many trucks are really

required? I put it to you, Minister, that although you are bringing in three trucks that will be commissioned in April, the three trucks are not adequate, Minister.

A Government MEMBER: Is three more than we had before.

Mr. McKENZIE: Not adequate, Minister.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. McKENZIE: And, Minister, I beg you - you told us about - within the last year that some 290 new recruits entered the Service. Again...

Mr. DALLEY: Commendable.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...commendable. But how many, Minister, have left the Service during the period? How many have left during the period? So while you are recruiting you are still losing, and you will not, Minister, be able to adequately, Minister, deal with the needs that are required in terms of our capability to fight fire.

You have not responded, Minister, to the question of the headquarters of the Fire Brigade. You have not also said anything as it relates, Minister, to...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. DALLEY: You should have remained a mayor, I don't know why you didn't.

Mr. McKENZIE: You all right.

Mr. DALLEY: You should have been mayor at KSAC because you were better off.

Mr. McKENZIE: Yes, Minister, you have not said anything about the headquarters, the training programme, Minister. And most importantly, I heard you, Minister - I am going to beg of you for a survey to be conducted using selected pounds within the country. Because, Minister, you will be aware - as I said earlier on in the debate - that the population has grown. Many of the urban and rural centers, Minister, are in dire need. And I made the point about the Papine area in the Corporate Area, which consideration, Minister, should be given for the erection of a fire station.

Let me say, I will await your presentation...

Mr. DALLEY: Patiently.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...with - I will anticipate your presentation. But I am disappointed, because I would have expected, Minister that you would have said to the House that this is where we are outside of the three trucks that we have been hearing about for over a year.

Mr. CLARKE: You can ask him in the Supplementary… (Inaudible)

Mr. McKENZIE: In that, I can ask him. But Minister, let me say the Jamaica Labour Party will – the Opposition Jamaica Labour Party will work along with the Government to improve the Fire Service. (Applause) We don't want, Minister - as I said, that when fire comes it doesn't come on PNP house and leave JLP house and come on JLP house and leave PNP house, fire affects...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. Dalley)

Mr. McKENZIE: ...unless - and he knows he has my commitment.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Unless he burns down the JLP house, the Brigadista!

Mr. McKENZIE: As the Opposition Spokesman on Local Government, I am committed to work with the Minister of Local Government to improve the quality of the Fire Service.

(Applause)

So, Mr. Speaker - House Leader, is it appropriate for us to just close the debate or to send the motion to the House?

With that, Mr. Speaker, I thank you. And I hope the Minister will consider those recommendations that I made.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Those in favour of the motion?

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, it is not intended to do any further business this afternoon. I therefore move for the adjournment of the Parliament until next Tuesday, March 4, at 2:00 p.m.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the House do adjourn to next Tuesday, March 4 at 2:00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The House stands adjourned.

The Honourable House of Representatives was adjourned at approximately 5:46 p.m. to resume on Tuesday, March 4, 2014, at 2:00 p.m.

THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SESSION 2013 – 2014

TUESDAY, March 4, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:30 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

MR. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House.

MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

HON. ROGER HAROLD CLIFFORD CLARKE, CD, (PNP), Westmoreland, Central, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries

REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education

HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. NATALIE GAYE NEITA-HEADLEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sports and Deputy Leader of the House

MR. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, Attorney General, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce

OTHER MEMBERS

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern

MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central

HON. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern

MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern

MR. LESTER MICHAEL HENRY, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, Central

MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western
MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern
MR. DESMOND GREGORY MAIR, (JLP), St. Catherine, North Eastern
MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western
MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western
MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern
MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern
MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central
MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern
MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western
MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern
MR. DARYL WESLEY PHILLIP VAZ, (JLP), Portland, Western
MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western
DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. Daryl Vaz.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

The SPEAKER: We have some guests with us today from St. Hugh's High School, we have 80 students visiting with us. Let us welcome them.

(Applause)

House Leader.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would just like to at this time on behalf of the Parliament, extend our sincerest condolences to the Minister of Land, Environment and Climate Change, and the Member of Parliament for North West St. Catherine, on the passing of his brother yesterday morning.

May the family find comfort at this time.

The SPEAKER: Thank you. Mr. Smith.

Mr. Derrick SMITH: Mr. Speaker, the Opposition would like to join in extending condolences to the Minister on the loss of his brother.

For those of us who knew the family for quite some decades, we know that the other Mr. Pickersgill was really a gentleman and he served very well over the years that he was active. We are also aware that his wife served the country for many years in the capacity as a Director of Tourism. So all in all, that's a family that served.

So we would like to, as I said, extend our condolences to the family, including brother Robert. And we wish the family well in this time of grief.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Smith.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, we will have two Statements today, a Statement by the Minister of Education and also a Statement by the Attorney General.

The SPEAKER: Reverend Thwaites.

Rev. THWAITES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Last week the Ministry of Education caused the tabling of a Ministry Paper entitled '*Highlights of Students' Performance in the 2013 Caribbean Secondary Certificate and Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations'*. And the Statement this afternoon is to re-emphasize the narrative there, and also to add some statistics.

The Ministry of Education has been making concerted efforts through various interventions, to improve the performance of Jamaican students in Secondary Level exit examinations of the Caribbean Examination Council, that's the CXC and CAPE. In 2013, for CSEC - that's the 5th form examination, Mr. Speaker - there was a one per cent increase in the number of entries sat when compared to 2012, with the overall average pass rate increasing from 66.7 per cent in 2012 - I am sorry, 66.7 per cent in 2012, yes, to 70.9 per cent.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I felt the need to make this Statement because the Ministry Paper related to those who sat, but a very important statistic is in relation to the proportion of those who sat to the entire cohort. What we have in Jamaica, Mr. Speaker, is the unfortunate and unacceptable situation where a large percentage of our students are at high school for five years, and at the end of that time they are not judged ready to take any external examinations, and as a consequence, they leave without any certification whatever.

In 2013, for example, Mr. Speaker, only 40 per cent of the cohort of 42,200 passed the English A examination, 40 per cent, that's of the entire cohort.

(DR. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing, entered and took his seat.)

This is an improvement over 2012 when it was 33 per cent. And in relation to Mathematics, in 2013, it was 23 per cent of the cohort who passed, while in 2012 it was 20 per cent. Now, those are the difficult aspects of the content of the Ministry Paper.

The intention of the Ministry and of the Government, Mr. Speaker, is that - that by 2016 all students, every student must be engaged in a programme which leads to external assessment of his or her standard - his or her performance at the end of Grade 11, whether that examination is City and Guilds or the NCVQ - that's the Vocational Qualification - or the CSEC Examination.

But, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Education seeks the support of this Honourable House in affirming that we can no longer have these large percentages of our students going through 12 years of education and leaving without certification, they must be prepared to take examinations. That's not the

only index of a successful education by any mean but it is a very important one.

There is good news, however, Mr. Speaker, because in 2013, performance of public schools in the CSEC examination showed an improvement in 25 of the 35 subjects offered at the CSEC examinations.

Performance in the core subjects of English Language and Mathematics showed an increase of 11.7 per cent and 47 per cent respectively when compared to 2012. And some 26.7 per cent of the Grade 11 cohort - a quarter of the cohort received five or more passes in CSEC subjects, inclusive of English and or Mathematics.

That's important Mr. Speaker for us to note, because the five or more passes in CSEC is the normal threshold for matriculation into tertiary studies, 26.7 per cent of the cohort reached that level.

Members should note that Jamaican students featured prominently in the top 10 performances regionally in 34 of the 35 subjects offered by the Caribbean Examination Council at the CSEC level.

(HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing, entered and took his seat.)

Of particular note, Jamaican students obtained 1st and 2nd places in core subject areas of English and Mathematics, and Jamaica was awarded first place in 10 other subjects, namely: Agricultural Science, Clothing and Textiles, Geography, Home Economics, Principle of Accounts, Principles of Business, Religious Education, Visual Arts, Human and Social Biology and Building Technology.

May I make another interposition, Mr. Speaker? Many school principals do not allow Grade 11 students to sit CSEC Examinations in a range of subjects if they do not - if they are not considered worthy to sit English and Mathematics as the core subjects.

The Ministry of Education is imploring those principals and will instruct them - and hopes for the support of Members of this House - that students must be allowed to take whatever subject they are competent in. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Absolutely.

Rev. THWAITES: English and Mathematics are very important, and they are, in fact, the core subjects, but because you are not ready for English and Mathematics doesn't mean you shouldn't sit something else.

And this is - what we need to do, is to have our students, many of whom take more than the five years, you know, Mr. Speaker, to be ready for external examinations - we must help them with their competencies as they go along. Whenever they are ready then they must sit for them.

(MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

The first six places for Building Technology were awarded to Jamaican students last year. Several 2nd through 10th

places were awarded for various other subjects such as Social Studies, Spanish and Technical Drawing. And it should also be noted that Jamaican students featured prominently in the Technical and Vocational areas.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we are finding more and more that our students have an aptitude for technical and vocational studies, and the bent of the educational system at the secondary level has to play to those aptitudes as well as ensuring that the core academic competencies are achieved.

You will be interested, Mr. Speaker, that nine of the newer high schools had students in the top 10 performance of seven technical and vocational subjects, Black River High placed 2nd and 8th place in Agricultural Science... (Applause) ... and received a double award in Human and Social Biology.

Guys Hill High was eighth place in Agricultural Science, again a double award; Anchovy High, tenth place in Clothing and Textile; Mona High, the first place in Visual Arts, and the second place in Food and Nutrition... (Applause)

A MEMBER: Yes, yes.

Rev. THWAITES: ...Foga Road High, second place in Physical Education; Denbigh High, ninth place in Physical Education; Bellefield High, eighty place in Building Technology; Alston High, second place in Mechanical Engineering Technology, and Bridgeport High, seventh place in Mechanical Engineering Technology. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, overall, these newer schools had pass rates of over 70 per cent of those entering in 11 vocational subjects...

A MEMBER: Very good.

Rev. THWAITES: ...and the Ministry Paper includes an Appendix to that effect.

All in all, sir, Jamaica continues to show improvement in the sciences with 3.6 per cent increase in this category when compared to 2012. And, in the area of Mechanical Engineering, there was nearly a nine per cent increase in performance over 2012, and Black River High was among the top ten performances in Human and Social Biology.

I would like to point out Mr. Speaker, in concluding though, that 36 per cent of the students in 2013, some entered for at least one science subject. Those included: Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Human and Social Biology, and Integrated Science, and two-thirds of them passed at least one of these subjects.

We are very anxious and encourage Members of Parliament to advise their constituents to choose science subjects^ because in terms of articulation to tertiary studies, and in terms of preparing themselves for the working world, competence in at least one area of science is extremely important, as well as language and mathematics.

In relation to the CAPE performances, Mr. Speaker, I would only highlight that the most outstanding overall candidate in the region, in the Caribbean Advanced Performance Examination was awarded to Dea Thomas of Ardenne High School... (Applause) ...while Tasanique Henry of Hampton High School was awarded the most outstanding candidate in the Humanities.

(Applause)

You know, Mr. Speaker, our students do very well at CAPE in the Units 1 and 2, that's First Year Sixth and Second Year Sixth for the older ones among us. The Jamaican candidates from public schools scored 91 and 92 per cent passes in the subjects they took. Now, the point is that it is the better students who go on to CAPE, and it makes the underlying point about the educational system, Mr. Speaker, that access is an objective which has been bequeathed to us. Our students have a place in school and the challenge for all of us - every one of us in this House and the nation as a whole - is to achieve equity and quality among those students.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Education will continue to intervene, especially in schools that aren't performing at an acceptable standard. We are doing so by the introduction - assistance to those schools with science laboratories wherever required, and also by offering specialists in literacy and numeracy.

Unfortunately, even at the secondary level, those basic competencies cannot be assured. The Ministry aims, not only to improve the number of passes, but also to improve the quality passes. Jamaica hopes to continue dominating the technical and vocational areas and to improve or feature more prominently in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

Mr. Speaker, this statement is in the nature of continuing report and updating of this Honourable House in respect of the accomplishments of our students.

May it please you.

(Applause)

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, the Opposition has not yet been served with any copies of the Statement. And you know that is a tradition in this House. It is happening a bit too often and, you know... I don't know what the problem is; I hope it is not just disrespect to the other Members of the House. On this side, we would, more than likely, have many questions, but in the absence of the document, just... only a few of our Members will be willing to pose questions at this time.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Where are the copies?

(DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. D. SMITH: Accordingly, we are requesting, sir, that you reserve the opportunity to ask questions at a later time.

The SPEAKER: Yes, Minister.

Rev. THWAITES: Mr. Speaker, I apologize sincerely. I had asked for the copies to be prepared and given to the relevant Members, and I am sorry they have not been. And certainly, I will be ready for answering further questions at any time.

(DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western, entered and took his seat.)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw.

Mr. SHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, I am sure that all the Members would be encouraged by the results that you

have announced and the fact that there is some incremental improvement that is taking place. But, I wanted to ask your - you mentioned the introduction of Science Labs, as well as the programme for providing specialists in literacy and numeracy to our schools. I wonder, Minister, if you could elaborate on that, because you are aware, for instance, of a project that I had started in my own constituency, where we are seeking, partially through the use of CDF Funds, to try to develop a programme of actually training teachers, especially in our primary and all-age schools, in the skills of imparting reading and comprehension skills, with the idea that we want them to be able to matriculate and be more successful at the earliest ages, so that by the time they get to high school, then they will have a better chance of success.

(MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central, entered and took her seat.)

My concern is that I think that the problem is so grave, it is so serious when you look at the *Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions* that tells us that about 75 per cent of our people are without skills.

(MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western, entered and took his seat.)

And I think a skill is defined as some kind of certification, including passing one or two subjects in CXC. So, it tells us that notwithstanding the improvements that you have correctly noted, it tells us we are a far way from where we have to be. And, therefore, I wonder if the Minister, and the Government, is considering any kind of emergency programme of introducing Reading and Comprehension, especially in schools that they would have assessed to be schools that have a kind of a compromised situation where there is obvious need for help. I wonder if he would comment on that. And comment also, Minister, on what I believe, and the Opposition believes to be the need for us to target the early childhood education as a matter of urgent national government priority, because if we can capture the problem at the very beginning, then even the need for remedial education will become unnecessary later on. I wonder if you could comment on both of those issues.

Rev. THWAITES: Mr. Speaker, thank you.

The Member is perfectly correct that if we got it right the first time at the early childhood level, then many of the consequential problems that we are now labouring over would be obviated. Last year, this administration was able to increase the proportion of the e4ueatidii spend on early childhood and special education from three per cent to fourteen per cent of the education budget. (Applause) And it was done by internal reallocation of existing resources, Mr. Speaker. In addition, we hope to advance that proportion this coming budget year with the consent of this House.

How is it taking effect? We were able to establish 17 new infant schools during last

year by merging, perhaps twice that number of ineffective basic schools into infant departments of primary schools. The Member will be interested to know, it is not so much in the parish he represents as in the eastern part of the island, but also there - also island-wide - that we have over 220 schools - small schools - under 100 students - with the space - with much more space than is presently being accommodated due to shifts in demography over many, many years. We need to use that space, in many instances, to create infant departments. And it is the projection of the Ministry, which will be further set out at budget time, sectoral time, to advance another two hundred such solutions.

What is the upgrade there? The upgrade there is that the teacher becomes a government-supported factor; that training is offered to that teacher; that nutrition is advanced, and that there is a common curriculum.

Mr. Speaker, you would be glad to know - perhaps over-reaching what I might save to say in a couple of months time - we have a pilot now which is offering a proper breakfast to our Early Childhood Institutions, about 18,000 of them, giving them some porridge now; we are going to be offering a sandwich later on, because so many of our young children are compromised at the earliest stage because they do not have proper nutrition.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mrs. Dalrymple-Phillibert)

Rev. THWAITES: You know, Mr. Speaker, no one should take this odd, but I want to congratulate my colleague from North Western St. Elizabeth. He has an interesting - and Ministry of Education and community-supported effort, to provide locally based nutrition for the children in his basic schools. That's excellent! We want to see that in as many other places as possible.

So the idea is, in direct response to the Member, to have more infant schools offering a quality of education which can be better assured, better modified than when it is in a community basic school. As important as many of those will continue to be, we hope they will stay as... while the children will come into the infant schools at age four.

In respect of the upgrading in the other sectors - you know, Mr. Speaker, I may seem a reductivist in this regard, but for me, primary education ought to be centered around three things, you know, sir: the command of the English Language, the proficiency in Mathematics, and for the children to learn how to behave themselves, how to be socialized beings. Once you get those things, everything else will follow.

It is extremely important then, in respect to the Member's particular concern, we have roughly 100 literacy specialists who are available to assist clusters of schools who have a problem with their principally primary students in literacy. Many teachers simply do not know the best techniques for literacy education, and there are differential capacities in many of the students.

We are seeking to afford and to enroll an equal number - perhaps even more - of Mathematics specialists to carry out the same function because as you overheard, the

Mathematics results are even less adequate than the literacy results. Schools in any constituency that need help in that regard must ask for it. They must apply through the Regional Offices and a specialist will visit them and assess their needs. It is not a shame to ask for help, Mr. Speaker; it is a shame to need help and not to ask for it. And, this is available.

(MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

The other - in respect of Science which I emphasized in my statement, it is the intention by 2016, that in each high school - each secondary school, there should be at least one well-equipped Science Laboratory... (Applause) ...with some prototype where instruction in Biology, Chemistry, and where the teaching facilities exist for Physics or Integrated Science is available. And the Heart Trust NTA; which has a distinct interest in contributing to this, because it is these skills that will articulate into their competencies higher up are being asked to - the Heart Trust is being asked to assist in this regard.

You know, Mr. Speaker, principals and teachers have to be very helpful, and it is appropriate for me to say this briefly at this time. GSAT is in two weeks time and after that; preparations will be for the new academic year. But when students come in grade 7, into the high school and their comprehension and their expression of English, or their capacity in Mathematics is not up to Grade 7 standard, it makes no sense for them to hurry on and do the 11 subjects that are prescribed in the curriculum. What the teachers must do, the schools must do, and the parents must agree to, is that you stop, deal with the problems of the core subject and then move on. So, I am encouraging us to be, in each of our constituencies, mindful of this.

(HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister, entered and took his seat.)
(MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition, entered and took his seat.)

And finally, there will be an accelerated programme of continuing professional development for teachers of Science during this summer, and we trust that this will, over time, improve the capacity of our students to grasp these important subjects.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, just one final question. Would the - the Minister, as I know, is very concerned about the state of the plant, the state of schools in terms of the condition of many of our schools island wide, and I wonder if the Minister would wish to comment on the fact that, of - just about a Hundred Million Dollars that has been allocated for repairs and renovation in primary and high schools, that just about two thirds of that money or over Sixty-six Million Dollars

has actually been cut from that budget, the Capital A, I wonder if the Minister would be able to explain.

In the circumstances that we know, schools are leaking, others need ceilings where there is no ceiling, so the sun comes down on the roof and the children are baking, they can't, they are too hot to concentrate and study and just a general problem with poor toilet facilities and other. How in those circumstances, Minister, can we justify such a cut in what was already a paltry sum that was in the budget?

Rev. THWAITES: Mr. Speaker, it is quite true that the infrastructure plant in many of our almost 11,000 public schools in Jamaica is or could be better and in some cases, is downright inadequate.

I had the honour a week or so ago in the company of the Leader of the Opposition, to be at the opening of the Red Hills Primary School. And this is a new school and you can sense the whole uplift in mood, and no doubt, in short time in performance of the community there. And I'm pleased that Paul planted and Apollos watered and the Lord gave the increase in respect of Red Hills.

The amount - the short word is that we can't afford to build many new schools. We have to repair and expand those that we have. The cut in the Supplementary Budget of that Head is not a take-back, but is a postponement. We are assured by the Ministry of Finance that the appropriate sums would be carried into and added to the upcoming budget.

The reason why it happened that way was because, frankly, of the difficulties of procurement.

Mr. SHAW: No, no repairs, you know.

Rev. THWAITES: Yes, I'm aware. And in many cases the repairs and the circumstances surrounding the repairs have suffered inordinate delays. Another particular one that was in the Press recently was the situation at Anchovy High in relation to the Mountpelier Facility.

And, quite frankly, we have to step up our game in terms of getting the procurement of items properly fulfilled. And we have to plead for some simplicity to return to the process of doing basic repairs in schools that need them.

It is in fact regrettable, that so many more schools that do need repairs have not been repaired during the appropriate budgetary period.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Holness.

Mr. HOLNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, I have only had a few minutes to go over your statements. It is already publicly known, Minister, that there were improvements in the performance at the CSEC Level this year, and I recall making an observation, whilst congratulating the students, the Jamaican students who have done well, that their performance would have exemplified that Jamaica has very brilliant students.

However, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister, the challenge is to get all these students performing at the highest levels. So we note

that there is an average 4% increase in passes and I'm just curious, Minister, how is this average arrived at? Is it taking all the subjects passed that you have moved an index of passes, I'm not quite clear as to what this means in terms of a statistics?

Minister, there is a 2% - by your statement - a 2% increase in the number of students entering to sit the CSEC Examination. Minister, would you be able to say to us the number of students at Grade 11 who are at the level to sit CXC, but are not entered at the last sitting? I need for you to answer those two questions.

Dr. DAVIES: The level or age....

Mr. HOLNESS: Age and readiness, yes.

Dr. DAVIES: Try age.

Rev. THWAITES: Mr. Speaker, the percentage of - the four percentage is an overall average for all subjects and that's the way that is calculated.

In 2013, 40% of the Grade 11 cohort passed English A, that's 16,879 of 42,200. This was an increase of 7% in the cohort over 2012.

Mr. HOLNESS: Just to be clear, Minister. When you say the cohort, you mean the cohort sitting or the cohort in the Grade 11?

Rev. THWAITES: The Cohort in the Grade 11, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. HOLNESS: In the Grade 11.

Rev. THWAITES: Yes. And in Mathematics on the same basis, 23% of the cohort passed Mathematics, while 20% of the overall cohort again did in 2012.

These are important improvements, but we have always made it quite clear that we are not adequate and, therefore, the discourse, certainly with the Member from Manchester has been how we are going to improve these and what targets we can set over each year, in order to bring them to acceptable levels.

Mr. HOLNESS: I raise the issue, Minister, not to take away from the improvement in performance, because that is something that we congratulate those students who have done well and we encourage them to continue to do well. But I think the nation needs to be aware - and I know, this is not something that we are hiding or not focusing on, but as parliamentarians, whenever the chance comes before us we have to speak on it that there is a very serious problem amongst the age cohort that should be sitting the CSEC Examinations that for English and for Math, it is a very low percentage that actually sits, that's part of the problem.

The other part of the problem, Minister, and I'm sure you will respond to this is that there are schools who maintain a system of screening that there are Mock Exams that are given to students or other mechanisms used that would filter out students who could potentially, possibly perform, do well, but who just simply did not do well on those filtering examinations for fear that they will reduce the overall performance of the school, Minister, could you say what is the policy of the Ministry on this now?

Rev. THWAITES: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member.

It is perfectly legitimate for a school to have Mock Exams in order to expose the candidates, the cohort, to the structure and the rigor of the examination. But, I want to repeat, that by 2016, the instruction of the Ministry of Education, which I hope that the Member and indeed all of us will support, is that all Grade 11 students must sit an external examination in language, in mathematics and at least in one marketable skill, one Technical or Vocational subject. (Applause)

However, it's not just a question of being allowed to go into the examination room. Do you know, Mr. Speaker, that fully 20% of the entrance that are paid for from the public purse and private beneficence like National Commercial Bank, don't even turn up for the examination or come and write their name and nothing else.

So there is a responsibility on the students and the teachers to ensure that over the five-year period they prepare themselves to take an external examination, yes. To get a percentage of average of 40 to 45%, which is what the cut-off point that many schools set, should not be beyond any student who is not emotionally or mentally challenged and for those who are offering special assistance. And, therefore, the entire culture of this country has to become more disposed toward success in these basic areas.

Mr. Speaker, our young people*)* no matter how pretty they are, no matter how much they dance or they sing or they run, their corner is dark if they don't get a proper education.

(Applause)

And, therefore, I am seeking the support of this House to ensure that we have that resolve that by 2016, everybody must take an exam. It doesn't mean you go in and sit down, but it means that you prepare yourself and you are prepared, and you see this as being your first responsibility as a young person, rather than some incidental extra for bright ones.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, the Minister will recall that the position of each student at Grade 11, sitting an external exam and indeed, even advance than other position which there should be a national School-Leaving Certificate that that is a position that I had exposed during my time, continue to expose and support the current Minister in that position maintaining the policy of the Ministry of Education.

The country cannot get on the pathway to growth - and I'm addressing the Minister of Finance now - without having the requisite human resource, skill, properly trained and with the right attitude for work.

And so, we on this side continue to support the unified position on education attainment as an important foundation for national growth.

Mr. Speaker, through you again to the Minister. Could the Minister give us an update on the policy on the Grade 9 Achievement Test; and whether or not the Test, the changing of the Test from a transition into full High School from being what it is now to being as full test of attainment at the Grade 9 Level across high schools, is that still the position of the Ministry?

Rev. THWAITES: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Member would allow me the opportunity to be fully prepared on this one and to answer at another stage? Yes, please, I don't want to be anecdotal on this, it's too important.

I'd like to assure him, however, in respect of his earlier comments that the National Registration System, which is introduced during his tenure is alive and active and works up to Grade 8 now and is being extended to the other grades up so that there is a constant - some call it a footprint of students performance, which is not only to do with the academics, but their behaviour, their engagement in extracurricular activities, their parental involvement, right through the system.

And just to advert to a current issue, the disgraceful fire at Liberty Hill in North Western St. Ann, the fear has been expressed that the records of those students would have all been obliterated. Is the Member here?

A Government MEMBER: Yes.

Rev. THWAITES: I am glad to tell him that we have those records. (Applause) So - and this is a process started before and is being continued now.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to hear that the process of a national system of student registration is continuing. That's very, very good news.

Minister, the question of students' loans - and I am asking you the question because...

The SPEAKER: Mr. Holness, you are drifting away.

Mr. HOLNESS: I beg your indulgence. It is very much related to this.

The SPEAKER: You are drifting away.

Mr. HOLNESS: No, no, no, no, Mr. Speaker. If you allow me, Mr. Speaker, if my question is not appropriate then you may so rule, but I have not asked a question.

The SPEAKER: It is not the appropriateness, it is based on what...

Mr. HOLNESS: Subject matter.

The SPEAKER: It's relevant?

Mr. HOLNESS: It's very relevant because you will note, Mr. Speaker, that whenever there is an increase in both the number of students sitting the CSEC Examination and passing the CSEC Examination, that there is going to be as in the case in the past, an increased burden on the students. We have heard some statements being made recently to say that the students loan is not attractive to private funders and we would want to know, Minister, what are the provisions that you are considering recalling that you have led an initiative to get private banks to fund the students loan, as to whether or not that initiative is still continuing, and what are the provisions that will be put in place, come September, when some of these students seek the students loan for higher education? Mr. Speaker, I hope the question was relevant.

The SPEAKER: It's not relevant to what was asked initially, but probably the Minister could tell you when he can properly answer that question.

Rev. THWAITES: Mr. Speaker, thank you for that. I will do so, especially since the issue of the Students' Loan Bureau doesn't fall under the Ministry of Education - the Ministry of Finance. But I could just advert that many more students who we hope and expect will matriculate for tertiary education in September must apply very early for such assistance as they need. And secondly, I appeal to financial institutions to put out products that encourage savings for tertiary education. It is vitally important that families, communities, churches recognize that the State cannot bear in full the cost of tertiary education for all those who are going to be - for whom it will be available. We need to double the number of students in tertiary institutions, but Government can't pay for them, and therefore a considerable proportion is going to have to be family borne or community borne of a replete statement, regarding plans and options that are available to students, I undertake, will be make available to this Parliament.

Mr. HOLNESS: Final question to the Minister. Thank you for your indulgence, Mr. Speaker.

This year marks the 10th year since the Parliament agreed to have the National Education Task Force - the National Education Transformation Task Force, 10 years of education transformation. Can the Minister say whether or not there will be an evaluation of the process of transformation, to determine whether or not the $5 Billion that we took from the NHT in addition to the other special provisions in the budget that was spent to improve education, in addition to the structural and administrative changes at the Ministry, whether or not those changes have yielded results?

Rev. THWAITES: Mr. Speaker, the evaluation takes many forms. Some of it is quite (pertaining) to the public in terms of the results, and the results I am referring to are not just exam results, I am referring to the social demeanor and competencies of our students which have to be transformed - a part of the transformation as well. It is - other elements of it are subject to various consultancies which have been advertised and tendered for and are being undertaken. And I agree entirely, but there needs to be a reporting of what the outcomes of those evaluations are and for stocktaking to be made as to the value for money received and prognosis for future.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, we have another Statement - the Attorney General.

The SPEAKER: Okay, Mr. Atkinson.

Mr. ATKINSON: If it pleases you, Mr. Speaker.

The Members of this Honourable House will recall that in May of 2010, operations into Tivoli Gardens occurred and members of the security forces began the search for Christopher 'Dudus' Coke following a request for his extradition to the United States of America. The violence which took place resulted in the deaths of 73 civilians and four members of the security forces, and injury to scores of other citizens and members of the security forces. The security forces recovered 88 guns, 40,000 rounds of ammunitions,

grenades and other explosives in the operation.

On the night of May 24th the city of Kingston was placed under a State of Emergency which lasted for a month. Coke was eventually captured on June 22nd after being on the run and was extradited to the United States of America. In 2011 he pleaded guilty in a Federal Court and is serving 23 years in prison.

The Public Defender was charged with conducting an investigation into the Tivoli operations and submitted his Interim Report on April 29, 2013, in which, among other things, was the recommendation that a Commission of Enquiry be established into the activities, circumstances and other issues related to the Tivoli operations.

Mr. Speaker, I have given this brief background as, in accepting the recommendation of the Public Defender for setting up a Commission of Enquiry, the Government took great care to be inclusive and consultative in drafting appropriate Terms of Reference for the Commission of Enquiry into the events in Western Kingston, May 2010.

The process, Mr. Speaker, began on May 14, 2013 when a letter to the then Leader of Opposition Business in the House and spokesman on Justice, Mr. Delroy Chuck, inviting the Opposition to submit suggestions for the drafting of Terms of Reference for the Enquiry. Mr. Chuck, by letter dated May 21, 2013 declined. He said, and I quote:

> "It is our considered opinion that it would be more appropriate for you to provide us with a draft Terms of Reference for us to have a better understanding of the direction the Government intends to head with the Enquiry it has called."

At this point we could only respond in generalities.

Mr. McKENZIE: Stop waste the Parliament's time!

Mr. ATKINSON: A draft Terms of Reference was prepared and there was public consultation on the document which was posted on the website of the Ministry of Justice. Members of the public were invited to comment on the draft Terms of Reference, which subsequently was revised based on the comments that were received.

It is important to note, Mr. Speaker, that the Opposition did not submit any comments.

Mr. McKENZIE: We never mandated Hylton though...

Mr. ATKINSON: After the proposed final draft of the Terms of Reference was prepared the proposed Commissioners identified...

Mr. McKENZIE: Is who oonu nominate that is the problem.

The SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. ROBINSON: Press on, press on!

Mr. McKENZIE: You get reward, that's why you are here!

Mr. ATKINSON: After the proposed final draft of the Terms of Reference was prepared and the proposed Commissioners identified the Prime Minister, The Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller wrote the Leader of the Opposition for his comments

prior to Cabinet's approval and submission to His Excellency the Governor-General.

(THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, entered and took her seat.)

Mr. ATKINSON: The letter dated February 24, 2013 was hand delivered by the Prime Minister to the Opposition Leader on that day in this Parliament.

Mr. McKENZIE: Rubbish! You are talking fluff!

Mr. ATKINSON: Let me for the record, Mr. Speaker, read excerpts from that letter.

Mr. McKENZIE: Is another comrade... you are talking fluff.

Mr. ROBINSON: Press on.

(The Speaker gavels)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: No.

Mr. ATKINSON: The Government prepared and published a discussion draft of the Terms of Reference and sought comments from the public. I am here reading from that letter:

"Several substantive responses were received but none from the Opposition. The discussion draft was subsequently amended; in light of the comments received from the public and enclosed Terms of Reference - enclosed proposed Terms of Reference have been approved by the Cabinet."

Mr. CHUCK: The Statement is not appropriate.

Mr. ATKINSON:

"The Government has also taken care to identify proposed Commissioners who have the required experience, - skill and reputation to ensure a fair and impartial enquiry that will enjoy the confidence of the public."

Mr. McKENZIE: You have no shame.

Mr. WARMINGTON: He is bankrupt of idea. Is it that you are bankrupt of idea? You are talking rubbish!

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. ATKINSON: The proposed Commissioners who have indicated their willingness to serve in this capacity are as follows: Sir David Simmons, QC, Chairman

(Cross talk)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. ATKINSON: ...retired Chief Justice...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Minister is on his feet, I think we should allow the Member to be heard.

(Cross talk)

Mr. CHUCK: The Statement is most inappropriate.

The SPEAKER: We are struggling to find some order here.

Mr. WARMINGTON: He is bankrupt of idea.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Atkinson.

Mr. ATKINSON: I continue to read, Mr. Speaker, the letter went on to say:

"The proposed Commissioners who have indicated their willingness to serve in this capacity are:

1. Sir David Simmons, Queen's Counsel, Chairman, retired Chief Justice of Barbados and former Attorney General of Barbados;
2. The Honourable Mrs. Justice Hazel Harris, a retired Judge of the Court of Appeal of Jamaica;
3. Ms. Velma Hylton, Queen's Counsel, a former Puisne Judge of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (St. Kitts and Nevis) who resigned to become the first DPP of the Bahamas. Before this she had been the DPP of Grenada between 1984 and 1992 and before the Deputy DPP of Jamaica, an Attorney at Law in Private practice in Jamaica since 2000.

I invite your comments on the proposed Terms of Reference and Commissioners.

(Cross talk)

A Government MEMBER: Say that again.

A Government MEMBER: Could you repeat that?

(Cross talk)

Mr. ATKINSON: I invite your comments...

A Government MEMBER: Yes.

Mr. ATKINSON: ...on the proposed Terms of Reference and Commissioners.

(Cross talk)

Please, let me have your comments by the close of business this Friday February 7 as it is in my intention to discuss this matter in Cabinet next week Monday January 10…

And here there is a typographical error, because there was no Monday January 10, the following Monday was February 10…

…before proposing the Terms of References and the names of the Commissioners to the Governor-General. Thereafter, the Parliament will be appropriately informed of the matter. In view of these matters - in fact, in view of the fact that these matters will be discussed in Cabinet and have not yet been communicated to the Governor-General, I send this letter on your undertaking to preserve the secrecy of its comments".

Mr. McKENZIE: You're a mickey mouse, that's what you are. You're a mickey mouse (Inaudible) ….Parliament.

(Cross talk)

Mr. ATKINSON: You're a hooligan!

Mr. McKENZIE: Say de things dem that yuh used to sey about… Say it!

A Government MEMBER: Desmond, behave yourself.

Mr. ATKINSON: No response...

Mr. McKENZIE: Yuh lickle lackey.

Mr. ATKINSON: No response was received from the Leader of the Opposition…

Mr. CHUCK: Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Order.

Mr. McKENZIE: You're a lackey!

Mr. CHUCK: Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Order.

(Cross talk)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. CHUCK: Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Order. I have had the chance to read the Statement by the Honourable Attorney General. It's a most inappropriate political statement in this Parliament.

(Cross talk)

Mr. McKENZIE: You're a lackey!

Mr. CHUCK: Mr. Speaker, when the Member from West Kingston criticized the appointment of one of the Commissioners, it was not done in this Parliament, and the Point of Order is that this is irrelevant in this Parliament...

(Cross talk)

The SPEAKER: No, no, come on Mr. Chuck, you can do better than that.

(Cross talk)

Mr. CHUCK: ...and most inappropriate. (Applause) I cannot stay here, Mr. Speaker, to hear a political statement. This Parliament being used so politically. No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McKENZIE: And you need to rule on it. You need to rule. You need to rule on it.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker, I tend to...

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. CHUCK: I don't think we should stay in here.

(Interruptions)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. WARMINGTON: I tend to agree with the Member from North East...

(Interruptions)

Mr. CHUCK: I think we should walk out for the rest of this Statement.

Mr. WARMINGTON: ...St. Andrew, what is being said here is just fit for Riverton City.

(Interruptions)

Mr. CHUCK: Andrew, we should walk out if he's going to continue.

The SPEAKER: Come on, come on. You can do better than that.

Mr. CHUCK: Nonsense!

Mr. McKENZIE: ....go... and deal wid that.

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. CHUCK: It's a press release statement.

(Cross talk)

I leaving. I gone. I'm not staying in here for this.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Atkinson, you may continue.

Mr. ATKINSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Cross talk)

Mr. CHUCK: I not staying in here for this, I not staying in here for this.

(Mr. Chuck and Mr. Mair depart the Chamber)

The SPEAKER: Goodbye, goodbye.

Mr. ATKINSON: No response was received^ the Opposition Leader up to the time when the Governor-General appointed three Commissioners...

Mr. McKENZIE: You're a lackey. Siddung!

Mr. ATKINSON: ...February 21, 2014.

Mr. McKENZIE: Siddung! Siddung!

A Government MEMBER: Mr. Speaker, you can't have the man a talk so.

(Cross talk)

The SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie, if you cannot conduct yourself in the appropriate manner, you'll be asked to leave.

(Cross talk)

Mr. ATKINSON: Mr. Speaker, I have heard...

Mr. McKENZIE: Go outside go deal wid it.

Mr. ATKINSON: ...many stories...

Mr. CHARLES: (Rises to his feet) Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. ATKINSON: Is this a Point of Order?

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, I would like to - could you yield for two seconds.

Mr. ATKINSON: Is it a Point of Order, sir?

Mr. CHARLES: I asking you to yield for a minute.

Mr. ATKINSON: No, when I'm finished, no.

Mr. CHARLES: (Resumes his seat) You don't have to...

(Cross talk)

You don't have to respect my request, but if you want to be a parliamentarian you could accept my request. You don't have to.

(Cross talk)

The SPEAKER: After the Attorney General has completed his Statement questions can be asked.

Mr. HENRY: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: We have the Attorney General on the floor.

Mr. HENRY: Mr. Speaker, I did not hear you rule on the Point of Order because I have one.

The SPEAKER: Which Point of Order is that?

Mr. ATKINSON: He said carry on.

Mr. HENRY: The point raised by Mr. Chuck. Did you rule on that Point of Order?

The SPEAKER: There was no Point of Order.

Mr. HENRY: It was not a Point of Order?

The SPEAKER: No, no.

Mr. HENRY: On my Point of Order, on my Point of Order, you can correct me if I am wrong, but for the Minister to come here and in this Statement state that the MP for Western Kingston was taken out of context is making an accusation to a Member of this House, which is made on his premise and not on the premise of the House or anyone else. And he either must withdraw that or prove the context before he completes the Statement.

(Cross talk)

The SPEAKER: Well, let us hear what the Attorney General...

Mr. HENRY: Because, Mr. Speaker, if I may explain why it is out of context...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Warmington)

(Cross talk)

Mr. HENRY: ...and if I may explain why he says it's out of context...

A MEMBER: Sit down, man, sit down. Sit down!

Mr. HENRY: ...the issue which created that remark which is eminent in this speech is

that mothers and children tried to protect their offspring. And what the lady was bringing forward...

(Interruptions)

(The Speaker gavels)

So it's not out of context.

The SPEAKER: That has nothing to do with - Mr. Atkinson, you may continue, Mr. Atkinson.

(Cross talk)

Mr. HENRY: Have you ruled on it, Mr. Speaker, so that I can leave because I will not be a part of this Statement and I want to make that protest very clear.

Government MEMBERS: Go, go!

(Laughter)

The SPEAKER: You are free to go.

(Interruptions)

(Mr. Henry departs the Chamber)

Mr. McKENZIE: And that is what you have to say to the Member, he's free to go. Is that your behaviour of the Speaker? He's free to go.

(Interruptions)

The SPEAKER: Yes, he's free to go.

(Interruptions/Laughter)

Mr. ATKINSON: Mr. Speaker…

(Interruptions)

Miss GRANGE: You all take this thing for a joke.

(Interruptions)

You know how many lives we're talking about that you would come here...

(Interruptions)

Mr. PHILLIPS: That's why we're getting justice for them....

(Interruptions)

The SPEAKER: Hold now man, this is turning out to be a joke. (Gavels)

Miss GRANGE: ...kill.... kill all of them!

(Interruptions)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I believe a Statement is being…

Dr. CAMPBELL: We trying to protect them.

(Interruptions)

Miss GRANGE: Kill our women, kill our children.

(Interruptions)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker.

(Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, I believe a Statement is being made by the Attorney General. I believe sufficient opportunity will be given to Members of the House to respond to his Statement appropriately.

(Interruptions)

Miss GRANGE: ....None of you know it. None of you have ever felt it.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: I believe we need to allow the Attorney General to complete his Statement and if anyone has contribution to make may do so at that time.

Miss GRANGE: This is not a joke, this is not a joke.

Mr. McKENZIE: Regardless of who was the Government, don't bring somebody.... the whole a oonu, what yuh tek this thing for?

Miss GRANGE: This is not a joke.

Mr. McKENZIE: That is why you are here because you are....

The SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...the star bwoy. And that's your reward.

(Laughter)

The SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie, if you cannot confirm to the rules of this Parliament...

Mr. McKENZIE: Well tell him to siddung....

The SPEAKER: ...you will be asked to leave.

(Interruptions)

The SPEAKER: You can leave. Yes, no problem.

Miss GRANGE: Yes, kill our women and our children. Kill them.

The SPEAKER: (To Mr. Atkinson) Proceed, sir.

Mr. McKENZIE: Him caan mek sense, siddung!

Mr. ATKINSON: Mr. Speaker…

(Cross talk)

Miss GRANGE: Prime Minister, you know better than that. You know better than all of them. You know what this feels like because you have compassion.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. McKenzie)

Miss GRANGE: He shouldn't come here with that.

Mr. ATKINSON: Mr. Speaker, there are many stories from over that side of this Honourable House - that they were not consulted and when they could not...

Mr. WARMINGTON: Oh, shut up and stop that nonsense.

Mr. ATKINSON: Substantiate that line of argument...

Mr. WARMINGTON: You come with rubbish.

Mr. ATKINSON: ...they claimed that there was - the letter was a secret document and could not be shared. I would simply say...

A Government MEMBER: Dem lie.

(Laughter)

Mr. ATKINSON: ...that they need to get their story straight.

Mr. McKENZIE: You need to get it straight. You!

Mr. ATKINSON: Since the announcement of the Commission and the Commissioners...

Mr. McKENZIE: From I deh here is the first I see yuh a tremble, from I deh here.

Mr. ATKINSON: ...they have sought to question the inclusion of one of the Commissioners...

Mr. McKENZIE: Give him a glass of water. Him need it.

Mr. ROBINSON: Press on, press on.

Mr. ATKINSON: ...Ms Hylton, QC, a senior...

Mr. McKENZIE: Comrade.

Mr. ATKINSON: ...and experienced Queen's Counsel not only in Jamaica, but in other Caribbean countries who has served as a Supreme Court Judge in the Eastern Caribbean. The first female Director of Public Prosecutions in Bahamas. No one before now has ever questioned Ms. Hylton's integrity, impartiality and her abilities.

Mr. McKENZIE: You did that then.

Dr. WHEATLEY: That's a lie, that's a lie.

Mr. McKENZIE: You did… at Belmont Road.

(Interruptions)

Mr. ROBINSON: Press on, press on.

(Interruptions)

Mr. ATKINSON: Using spurious grounds, Mr. Speaker, the MP for West Kingston has sought to discredit the Commission of Enquiry before it even has started. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that in 2002, twelve years ago, Ms. Hylton was Counsel to the Commission of Enquiry into Police Activity in Tivoli Gardens. The Member from West Kingston has taken out of context a part of her submission on the evidence...

Mr. McKENZIE: You did also to. You.... defended us at that Enquiry. Yuh forget that?

Mr. ROBINSON: Press on, press on, press on, press on. Finish yuh Statement, finish yuh Statement

Mr. McKENZIE: You forget....

Mr. ATKINSON: ...that women dressed in nightwear along with children, formed a human shield for gun men...

Mr. McKENZIE: You're an evil person. You.

Mr. ATKINSON: ...as they fired at the police and civilians. She said, and I quote:

"It is my respectful submission that if the women and children deliberately put themselves between the law and other forces..."

Miss GRANGE: You can't judge that that they deliberately did do. You can't judge that.

Mr. ATKINSON:

"*...to enable those gunmen...*"

A MEMBER: If!

Miss GRANGE: ....suppose.

Mr. ATKINSON:

"*...behind them to fire at the security forces...*"

this is the Statement -

"...and to fire at civilians, I for one do not understand why in all circumstances, they could not return the fire."

Mr. McKENZIE: Whapen to what Commissioner said to her? Read the part wey the Commissioner say to her.

Mr. CHARLES: When you were on the Standing Committee; you objected to it. When you were on the Standing Committee you objected, when you were on the Standing Committee, you objected.

Mr. ATKINSON: Indeed, Mr. Speaker, if a police officer or law enforcement officer was shot and killed in any of those circumstances...

Mr. CHARLES: When you were on the Standing Committee you objected.

Mr. McKENZIE: Read the part wey the Commissioner sey to her.

Mr. CHARLES: When you were a Labourite...

Mr. ATKINSON: ...those circumstances - any of those persons could have been charged jointly with the gunmen for murder.

(Interruptions)

Mr. CHARLES: You were told us to object.

Mr. McKENZIE: You were the attorney for the...

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. ATKINSON: Mr. Speaker, this was - Ms. Hylton's statement was an accurate statement in law and would have to be made

for the benefit of the Commissioners as to what would be appropriate in the circumstances outlined.

Mr. CHARLES: When you were on the Standing Committee you objected to it.

Mr. ATKINSON: That was not the evidence.

Government MEMBERS: Read yuh Statement, read yuh Statement.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Coach him, coach him. He needs it.

Mr. McKENZIE: Him nervous man.

Mr. ATKINSON: It is important to note that Ms. Hylton, as Counsel, was not suggesting that women and children present ought to be disregarded in every and any gun battle between gunmen. That was not what she was saying. She was clearly only referring to circumstances where they were deliberate in putting themselves in the line of fire to enable gunmen behind them to fire at the security forces and civilians.

(Interruptions)

Mr. ATKINSON: And civilians.

Mr. McKENZIE: You know if you were a genuine PNP stalwart.... If you were a genuine PNP.

A Government MEMBER: Press on, press on.

Mr. ATKINSON: And if a law enforcement officer was shot in these specific circumstances, those women would be guilty of that murder jointly with the gunmen who fired those shots...

Mr. McKENZIE: If you were a genuine PNP it… not bad.

Mr. ATKINSON: ...in the circumstances outlined in the statements.

Mr. CHARLES: And you opposed that when you were on the Standing Committee.

Mr. ATKINSON: It should be noted, Mr. Speaker, it should be noted that in the very same submission, Miss Hylton commented on evidence given by the Reverend A1 Miller, that he saw two young men lying on their stomachs on the asphalt in North Street, in the heat of the day, under the watch of security forces. And she described the conduct of the security forces - and I quote: - "as inhumane and degrading".

Mr. McKENZIE: Because they were alive! She wanted them dead! Because they were alive! She wanted them dead! But you said...

Mr. ATKINSON: If one were to follow the kind of logic that is being advanced, then the police could say she is biased towards them, too.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Charles)

Mr. ATKINSON: There is no other evidence advanced by the Member of Parliament of Miss Hylton's conflict of interest, either actual or apparent, or of a bias.

Mr. SHAW: There was no need for any more!

Mr. ATKINSON: These allegations, Mr. Speaker, do not come close to bias and cannot be said to be impropriety.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Order, on a Point of Order. I made no allegations and he is making reference to allegations. I quoted from the records of the

Commission. What I said is not an allegation, Mr. Speaker, it is a statement of fact, and the Attorney General must stop mislead the House! It is not an allegation; it is a statement of fact! And I would like him to withdraw it because I made no allegations. I said it outside and I am prepared to say it in this Parliament. I made no allegation; I made a statement of fact.

Mr. CHARLES: And the Attorney General advised us when he was in Standing Committee that he was opposed to it.

(Shouting)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Atkinson.

Mr. ATKINSON: I don't know, Mr. Speaker...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. ATKINSON: ...where there is any part of my Statement that refers to "an allegation".

Mr. McKENZIE: You just said it!

(Inaudible comment from Mr. Charles)

(Heckling)

Mr. Derrick SMITH: I was there the night!

Mr. ATKINSON: There is no evidence, apart...

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, I rise again on a Point of Order! I would like the Attorney General to clarify the point. I made no allegations! I made a statement of fact! I am asking **Hansard**. He is denying it so I am going to ask **Hansard**...

The SPEAKER: Mr. Atkinson! Mr. Atkinson!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. McKENZIE: ...to quote exactly what he said.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Atkinson, on page 5...

Mr. ATKINSON: Yes, yes. But, Mr. Speaker, when...

The SPEAKER: Could you clarify that?

Mr. ATKINSON: When...

An Opposition MEMBER: Answer us, man, you are a lawyer!

Mr. ATKINSON: ...someone - anyone, whether the Member from West Kingston or not - makes an accusation of bias, I would submit to you here that that is pure allegation. I don't know what he understands allegations to mean, but it is a statement accusing - an unproven statement accusing someone of something, it's an allegation. Because I say, I say that the record of what Miss Hylton said is clear that there can be no bias.

In fact, Mr. Speaker...

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Order!

Mr. ATKINSON: Let me answer you! And sit down!

Mr. McKENZIE: On a Point of Order! You don't shout me out! On a Point of Order! What you talking 'bout!

Government MEMBERS: Sit down! Sit down!

Mr. ATKINSON: ...(Inaudible) ...in respect to the Chair.

(Heckling) (The Speaker gavels)

The SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie, your time.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Listen to the Point of Order! Listen to the Point of Order!

The SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie, your Point of Order. Your Point of Order.

(Heckling)

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, I am still not satisfied...

(Heckling)

I am still not satisfied, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I am waiting on you to rule on the matter.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. CAMPBELL: Stop yu foolishness, cause de man don't finish talk and yu... (Inaudible/Heckling) ...There is no Point of Order!

The SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie, what the Attorney General said, you...

(Heckling)

Mr. McKENZIE: Campbell! Campbell!

A MEMBER: Check de record! Check de record!

The SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie! Mr. McKenzie, the Statement by the Attorney General states that it's your allegations of bias.

Mr. ATKINSON: Yes.

The SPEAKER: Did you not make such an allegation of bias on the part of the QC?

Mr. McKENZIE: Of what? Bias?

The SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr. McKENZIE: Yes.

(Government Members shouted and applauded)

Mr. McKENZIE: It's a statement of fact! I am not making an allegation, it's a statement of fact!

(Heckling)

The SPEAKER: No, no, no!

Mr. McKENZIE: It's a statement of fact! It's a statement of fact!

The SPEAKER: No, no, no, no! Come on, man, you have to make...

(Heckling)

Mr. McKENZIE: I am not making any allegation!

The SPEAKER: You have to do better than that, man!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. ATKINSON: Mr. Speaker...

(Heckling)

...the allegations do not come close to bias and cannot be said to be impropriety. And there is certainly not any basis on which the distinguished and qualified Queens Counsel should be maligned and asked to withdraw.

Mr. Speaker, in any Court hearing...

A Government MEMBER: Apologize!

Mr. McKENZIE: Apologize for what?

Mr. ATKINSON: ...the final submissions of Counsel are of fundamental importance. It is only then that the lawyer is able to draw together the evidence elicited during cross-examination, and invite the Tribunal to draw certain conclusions from the evidence. It is only then that Counsel is able to address the Tribunal on matters of law. That's what Miss Hylton did.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHARLES: You told us, the Opposition, when you were in the Standing Committee... (Inaudible/*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. ATKINSON: Mr. Speaker, if there was even the slightest hint...

Dr. WHEATLEY: You mislead us!

Mr. ATKINSON: ...of anything that would render Miss Hylton inappropriate for this Commission of Enquiry, she would not have been recommended by us to the Governor-General.

Mr. SAMUDA: Rubbish!

Mr. McKENZIE: Rubbish! Foolishness! Foolishness!

Mr. ATKINSON: It is important, Mr. Speaker, to add that Miss Hylton is one of three Commissioners, each distinguished in their own right. And we take notice of the fact that one of the most significant features of a Commission of Enquiry is that the public itself will have an opportunity to see, hear the witnesses as they testify, and to observe them. And each and every Jamaican will be able to form his own opinion as to what took place in West Kingston May, 2010.

Mr. CHARLES: Why don't you advise them on FINSAC? Why don't you advise them on FINSAC?

Mr. ATKINSON: Mr. Speaker, we anticipated from pronouncements that were made - some of them in this very House, and others on the political platform - that regardless of who was chosen as Commissioners or of the Terms of Reference, there would have been objections to this Commission of Enquiry. They had no intent in having a Commission of Enquiry.

Mr. McKENZIE: Rubbish! Siddung! You don't deserve to sit in this Chamber! You are so dishonest! You are a dishonest person!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. ATKINSON: Mr. Speaker, the people of Jamaica deserve to know the truth...

Mr. McKENZIE: About you and what you said after 2002!

Mr. ATKINSON: ...concerning what happened in West Kingston in May of 2010. And no attempt, Mr. Speaker, to destroy the reputation of the distinguished Commissioners will be entertained.

Mr. McKENZIE: You have already done that!

Dr. WHEATLEY: You have already done that in the Standing Committee!

Mr. ATKINSON: We are to stop this practice, Mr. Speaker, of destroying people who are willing and prepared to serve with professionalism, integrity and impartiality.

(Government Members applauded)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. ATKINSON: We, on this side, had hoped that the Opposition would have been interested in unearthing the truth. All we on this side expect of this Commission is for the issues to be placed on the table and to let the chips fall where they may.

(Applause)

Mr. CHARLES: All a yu agree wid dat?

The SPEAKER: Mr. Holness.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, I start where the Attorney ends. Seventy-seven Jamaican citizens lost their lives.

A Government MEMBER: That's a fact. Tell Desmond.

Mr. HOLNESS: And I reflect on it all the time. I was able to visit Tivoli Gardens the

day after the incursion. It is not an experience that we should make light of.

I was also there in 2002. In fact, you may find it a matter of interest, Attorney General that I was with Reverend Al Miller when we came upon the two young men being held by the security forces on their bellies...

Mr. Derrick SMITH: In the hot sun!

Mr. HOLNESS: ...in the hot sun.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HOLNESS: It was not a good experience then. In a sense/I am sure we can all agree that it should never have happened again after 2002, but it did.

So, I think the nation must be reassured that the Opposition - the then Government - wants to get at the truth of what happened why 77 Jamaicans lost their lives. That is not in dispute.

(Government Members applauded)

There are many truths to be told, and few are, I suspect, would seek to ferret out some of them. But we would want to also know why is it reoccurring and why does it reoccur in West Kingston? Is there a particular profiling of the people why this happened? These are all questions that will be asked.

The Government has engaged on a particular kind of enquiry, the Commission of Enquiry. We should note that this is not the only form of enquiry. There could have been a Coroner's Inquest, which could definitely seek to match...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HOLNESS: Yes, which could definitely seek to find out who killed who. We could also go on to probably consider something in the line of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. But it leads me to the point that the Commission of Enquiry is entirely the prerogative of the Government.

I don't believe, Mr. Speaker that the Honourable Prime Minister, and the learned Attorney General and Members of the Cabinet were depending on the Opposition to help them to find Commissioners. I suspect that the Prime Minister and her Cabinet would have retained consultants and very well knowledgeable members of the civil service who would have advised and made recommendations. And the Prime Minister herself may even have gone on to Google search engine to find out what Commissioners would have said previously. They really don't need our input in determining what they have already determined to do.

So, I find - the former Minister of National Security when he was then Opposition Spokesperson on - well, no, you weren't, you had made a comment at the time about red herring. And I believe the attempt to consult - it's a red herring. The truth is, it is your prerogative and you decide. We will fulfill our duty to the people of Jamaica and to the people of West Kingston, to ensure that they are adequately represented, and that their voice and their stories are heard. (Applause) We will participate because we want to get at the truth. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I don't take kindly to the attempt to blame the Opposition^ for the bad selection of a Commissioner that has disclosed her view on a matter. Now, learned Attorney General, you have made some defense of the

Honourable lady, and I am not here to attack anybody's integrity. I am here to bring the facts, so I am not making an allegation.

One of the matters that will have to be considered by the Commission is whether or not unarmed civilians - let's say women and children - were caught in erasure. Are we to say that we will have to determine whether or not unarmed civilians placed themselves there deliberately? I just want to be clear that the standard of human rights in this country is not that unarmed citizens should be shot at.

Mr. D. SMITH: For whatever reason.

Dr. CAMPBELL: Who says that?

Mr. HOLNESS: I just want that to be established.

Mr. PARCHMENT: It is established.

Mr. HOLNESS: It is not established by the statement made by the learned attorney/ commissioner. It is not. And you know that. And that, to me, Mr. Speaker, is the danger that persons who will come to the Commission expecting that their side of the story, being unarmed civilians, caught in crossfire, will have sympathy...

A MEMBER: That's right.

Miss GRANGE: Listened to in the first place.

Mr. CHARLES: And listened to.

Mr. McKENZIE: Of course, of course.

Mr. HOLNESS: ...that a Commissioner has already pronounced on that.

Mr. D. SMITH: Yes, yes.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HOLNESS: So, Mr. Speaker, whilst we acknowledge the fact that - we want to get at the truth, 77 people died so it is a travesty.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Dr. Wheatley)

Mr. HOLNESS: But, you know, Mr. Speaker, the greater travesty is that the Government would seek to play politics with the death of 77 Jamaicans. (Applause)

Mr. McKENZIE: Disgrace.

Mr. HOLNESS: That is the greatest travesty. I have one question for the Minister. Minister, will you withdraw the nomination of the learned attorney from the Commission?

Mr. McKENZIE: Answer, answer...

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, if you will indulge me. In a sense, I just want to - the Honourable Leader of the Opposition...

Mr. SAMUDA: Brilliant man; simply brilliant.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...in his comments, made a suggestion that the consultation which the Most Honourable Prime Minister made of him, was a red herring - to use his term – which he attributed the term to me, but I don't claim any such authorship.

Mr. HOLNESS: You don't remember using it?

Dr. PHILLIPS: But... no, not of the remark, but of the term.

Mr. HOLNESS: No, not of the term.

Dr. PHILLIPS: But, Mr. Speaker, implying that it was, in a sense, insincere. But I want to refresh the minds of the Parliament as to where the antecedents of that collaboration came from - of that consultation, because it goes back, Mr. Speaker, to so-called Vale Royal talks, when the Most Honourable PJ Patterson was Prime Minister, and the Most Honourable Edward Seaga was Leader of the Opposition. And, in those

discussions it was agreed that Commissions of Inquiry should be subject to consultation regarding the appointment. It wasn't agreed - just to be clear - that there would be necessarily, agreement, but that it would be...

And we also agreed, at the time - both sides - that in relation to the Police Service Commission, and in relation to the Public Service Commission, that even though it was not a Constitutional requirement, that we would operate on the basis of there being agreement in the appointments.

And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that certainly on this side, it was in an effort to maintain fidelity to those understandings that that consultation took place. And I dare say, I am of the view, that the understandings that were arrived at, represented an attempt to remove, or reduce the partisan impulse in these critical areas of governance, and of state craft. And that I would hope that in a sense the comments of the Leader of the Opposition should not - do not portent a withdrawal from those understandings then, because I believe that the they represent something that we should, in fact, seek to build on, rather than to dismiss as insincere... (Inaudible) (Applause)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, I crave your indulgence.

The SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr. HOLNESS: The Member has raised an issue, and though it is not in response to the statement made, I am happy that you have allowed me the opportunity to respond.

I was around at the time of the Vale Royal talks. I had the opportunity to be working with the then Leader of the Opposition, and participated in one of the meetings in which you were at the time, and I am quite well aware of the attempt to establish a protocol outside of the legal framework. And I do know, that in the establishment of previous commissions, that information was passed under private and confidential cover. In this instance, information was passed under private and confidential cover, giving me three days with a time by which I should respond.

I am not going to make any comments about the insufficiency of the time, only that simply to say that I preserved my end of the bargain, which is that in these important matters of State, matters that have not yet gone to the Cabinet of the Prime Minister, or gone to the Governor-General, I maintained - based upon what those kinds of discussions need - I maintained the confidentiality. I was very surprised, Member, to hear the learned Attorney General reveal a letter, in public, that was written. The fact is, even your own statement, Minister, it said that I - the letter is sent to me on the undertaking that I keep these matters confidential. I was disappointed that it was revealed in the way that... Now, to be clear, Mr. Speaker... to be clear, I don't question the sincerity of any actions.

MEMBERS: Answer the questions.

Miss GRANGE: Three days.

Mr. HOLNESS: What I interpret was an attempt to fulfill the developing protocol, and I accepted in that way. I re-state my position. The establishment of the Commission is the prerogative of the Government. Don't blame the Opposition for a bad selection. That is the prerogative of the Government. And I reassert

my question to the Minister. Are you going to remove the Commissioner who has made statements that, in our opinion, are below the standards of human rights that should be accorded to every Jamaican citizen?

The SPEAKER: Minister Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I am still seeking...

Mr. CHARLES: 'lou the Minister. You can't be answering the questions for the Minister.

Dr. PHILLIPS: I am still seeking to understand whether...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...whether we are to - so to speak - cast aside the effort at consultation over these matters, for the simple reason, Mr. Speaker, it is not...

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Warmington)

Dr. PHILLIPS: You know, if in the...

Mr. CHARLES: I know you are trying to soothe him, but...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

The SPEAKER: Minister Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, no...

The SPEAKER: Minister Phillips...

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, it is important because, Mr. Speaker, if the... if the... you see, we can either take these matters as set pieces, and therefore as pure form, or if the Leader of the Opposition felt: (a), the time was not enough; or (b), I would like to have more opportunity to consult with my Member of Parliament, or it would - the purpose of the agreement was not to set up of the Vale Royal Agreement, was not to set-up for formalism, it was to ensure that there could be a dialogue to improve governance. So, the answer has been a little bit.

The SPEAKER: Hold on; hold on a minute.

Mr. HOLNESS: Precisely.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Unsatisfactory.

The SPEAKER: I think this aspect of the matter has to be dealt with at another place, so I don't think we should go any further into that.

Attorney General.

(HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, North, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning, with responsibility for the Public Service, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. ATKINSON: Mr. Speaker, in responding to the Leader of the Opposition, let me make it clear. We do not accept that there was any bad choice. We think we made three excellent choices of Commissioners, and I stand by that.

Miss GRANGE: Oh, my God!

Mr. McKENZIE: Answer the question.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister... will the Government... will the Prime Minister reconsider the appointment of the attorney in question? Will the Government... will the Government...

Mr. ATKINSON: You asked a series of questions, can I answer them? I will get to them in the order that I see fit.

Mr. SHAW: Where is the Prime Minister? Call her.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHARLES: Answer the question...

Mr. ATKINSON: When the Leader of the Opposition says that it is. a fact; he makes not allegations, he is stating a fact.

Mr. HOLNESS: If the Member is not going to answer my question...

Mr. McKENZIE: Answer the question and stop talk; answer the question.

Mr. ATKINSON: I am going to answer the question in the way that I see fit.

(Heckling)

Mr. ATKINSON: You asked several questions and I am going to answer all of them in the way that I see fit, not the way you think it ought to be answered.

Mr. SAMUDA: Get on with the answer.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels)

(At this point, Members of the Opposition vacated the Chamber)

Mr. ATKINSON: The Leader of the Opposition asked several questions and I am going to answer them all, and not leave them hanging out there. And I am going to answer them in the manner I see fit.

A MEMBER: Enjoy yourself...

Mr. ATKINSON: You can all go.

Mr. McKENZIE: Comrade...

Mr. ATKINSON: Mr. Speaker, the...

(*Sotto voce* comment by Dr. Phillips)

(Heckling)

Mr. ATKINSON: ...the absolute quotation... the absolute quotation...

Mr. McKENZIE: (Inaudible) ...when you were a Member of the Labour Party.

Mr. ATKINSON: Go on, you liar; you are lying. You know you are lying, so go ahead.

Mr. McKENZIE: (Inaudible) ...wouldn't say it when you defended us. You are a panya machete. If you were a good comrade, you... (Inaudible)

Mr. ATKINSON: Mr. Speaker, there was...

Mr. CHARLES: We shall return.

The SPEAKER: Hold on. Mr. Dalley... Mr. Dalley...

Mr. ATKINSON: The quotation from what Miss Hylton says, includes two critical words: *women* and *children* deliberately... to enable gunmen to fire. It is the critical part of it that they - it was deliberately done for a specific purpose. So, if there is any change in those two factors, it is manifestly dishonest, Mr. Speaker, for anyone to say that she is thereby encouraging the random shooting at women and children. That's just not true. It is so unfair.

(Applause)

It is interesting, Mr. Speaker - and I agree with the Leader of the Opposition when he said, the incident should never have happened in West Kingston. But, as I recall, as I distinctly recall, for 18 months after it occurred, I did not hear a peep out of the Government of which the Leader of the Opposition was a part concerning that incident.

They were in charge. They did nothing, they said nothing, and now, they come in here

to try and muzzle the country into hearing what took place, why it took place, so that we can ensure that there is no necessity for it to occur a second time.

(Applause by Government Members)

He suggested that a Coroner's Inquest could be held. Legally in any death, sudden death, you hold a Coroner's Inquest. But that limits itself only to the cause of death and the person who did it. Was it the result of a criminal act or not? And the verdict is, no one criminal responsible, someone criminally responsible, *et cetera.* It would not tell us what the festering problem was that caused the security force to go in every time. But you need to find out; we need to know, so that we can stop it, so that the innocent people in Western Kingston don't have to endure this again!

(Applause by Government Members)

The other day, Mr. Speaker, I watched on the news of this country, citizens of West Kingston complaining about a curfew that the police had placed on them. And the discussion went as follows: "That they set it at 7 o'clock, but when the 'Big man' was here, the curfew was 8 o'clock, and so the police change it to 9 o'clock.

Mr. Speaker, nobody commented on the fact that how dare any criminal go into any community and declare any curfew on de decent people to tell 'dem when dem must go to bed or not'! When did they say anything about that.

Mr. Speaker, the country deserves to know, and to know all of it. And this smirching the character of a good citizen. And I have never said anything bad about Miss Hylton, she's someone whom I respect. We fought against each other in Court when she was Deputy DPP. She prosecuted the Grenada - the Bishop murder case in Grenada. She's a tough prosecutor.

In the very comment, she commented when she saw, when she saw evidence that the police acted inappropriately, she submitted that it was so. When she heard evidence in there that the body-shield was deliberate, she advised the Commissioner what would be the appropriate law. She is a decent and solid citizen.

And to answer the question over there. I personally would not ask the Prime Minister to ask Miss Hylton to step down. She is a solid, solid, respectable, decent person.

(Applause by Government Members)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House a copy of the following:

- **Ministry Paper No. 19**
  On Vote-on-Account 2014/2015
- **Ministry Paper No. 20**
  Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of The Coconut Industry Board for the year ended December 31, 2012
- **Ministry Paper No. 21**
  Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of the Public Accountancy Board for the years ended March 31, 2012 and March 31, 2013

- The Bauxite (Production Levy) Act Capital Development Fund (Withdrawal) (No. 2) Order, 2014
- Customs Tariff (Revision) (Amendment) Resolution, 2014 under the Customs Act, 2014
- Report of the Committee on Tax Measures for the 2013/2014 Session of Parliament, on the Fiscal Policy Paper for Financial Year 2013/2014 Interim Report
- Report of the Sessional Select Committee of the House of Representatives on Economy and Production on "Private Members' Motion No. 6/13" relating to the prevention of Praedial Larceny
- Report on the deliberations of the Public Administration & Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives on the First Supplementary Estimates for the Financial Year 2013/2014, and the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of Public Bodies Financial Year 2013/14 Supplementary Estimates
- Office of the Contractor General of Jamaica Special Report of Investigation Conducted into Circumstances Surrounding the Entering into of an Agreement for the Operation of the Hotel (Braco Resort Hotels formerly Breezes Rio Bueno, Trelawny) between the Commissioner of Lands (by virtue of Trust on behalf of the National Insurance Fund), The Accountant General and the Blue Diamond Hotels and Resorts.

Mr. PRYCE: The Committee Chairs are here, sir.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move the following motions:

1. Vote-on-Account Resolution 2014/2015.

Whereas Section 9(4) and Section 5 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act authorizes the Minister of Finance and Planning to issue Warrants for the withdrawal of such sums from the Consolidated Fund, as the House of Representatives may, by Resolution, approve in anticipation of grants of Parliament in an Appropriation Act for the financial year in which the sums were issued.

And Whereas upon commencement of that Act the said warrant shall cease to have effect, and issues thereunder shall be deemed to have been made for the purposes of the Act and shall be accounted for in accordance with the provisions thereof;

And Whereas it is necessary to make provision before March 31, 2014, for the carrying-on of the business of the Government from April 1, 2014 until such time as the Estimates of Expenditure for the year ending March 31, 2015 are approved:

Provided that such provision shall not include:

a) any increase in any officer's salary or allowances other than approved increments and increases agreed by the Government in 2013/2014, to be paid in the 2014/2015 Financial Year;
b) any increase in the establishment over that approved in 2013/2014; or
c) any new service or work for which no provision was made in the Estimates of Expenditure for the 2013/2014 Fiscal Year; or
d) which has not otherwise receive the approval of the House:

And Provided also that no payment shall be made by virtue of the Resolution after June 30, 2014.

Be it Resolved that this Honourable House hereby approves the sum of Seventy Two Thousand, Four Hundred and Ninety-Eight point Four, Three, Eight Million Dollars ($72,498,438) being charged upon the Consolidated Fund to defray the charges of the several Heads of Expenditure specified in the attached Schedule until such time as the Appropriation Act. 2014 shall have been passed.

Be it Resolved that the Capital Development Fund (Withdrawal) (No. 2) Order, 2014 under the Bauxite (Production Levy) Act, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 4th day of March, 2014 be approved.

The Customs Act, the Customs Tariff (Revision) (Amendment) Resolution, 2014:

Whereas under the provisions of Section 5 of the Customs Act, the House of Representatives, may from time to time by Resolution, impose customs duties upon any goods which may be imported or exported from Jamaica and revoke, reduce, increase or alter any customs duties so imposed and may provide for the importation or exportation of any goods without payment of customs duties thereon;

And Whereas the House of Representatives, with effect from the 1st day of January, 1973, by Resolution entitled, The Customs Tariff (Revision) Resolution, 1972, impose the import customs duties set out in the First Schedule of the Resolution and provided for the admission into the island, of goods specified in the Second Schedule to such Resolution without payment of Customs Duties on such goods;

And Whereas it is desirable to amend the Second Schedule to the Customs Tariff (Resolution), 1972, in the manner hereinafter appearing:

Now Therefore Be it Resolved by this Honourable House of Representatives as follows:

1. This Resolution may be cited as the Customs Tariff (Revision) (Amendment) Resolution, 2014, and shall be read and construed as one with the Customs Tariff (Revision) Resolution, 1972 (hereinafter referred to as the "principal Resolution" and all amendments thereto.

2. With effect from the date of publication of this Resolution in the Gazette, the Second schedule to the principal Resolution is amended by deleting the entry after Item 78 and substituting therefor the following as Item:

79	Goods of a value not exceeding Fifty United States Dollars (US$ 50).

Note: In this Item, "value" means "free on-board value of the contents".

Mr. Speaker, I beg to further give notice that at a later stage today I will move suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take the "Carrying-On", the Vote-On-Account Resolution today.

Mr. Speaker, I also beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move to introduce and have read a first time the following Bills shortly entitled:

a) "The Financial Administration and Audit Amendment Act, 2014".
b) "The Public Bodies Management and Accountability (Amendment) Act, 2014"

Mr. Speaker, these two Bills give substance to our commitment to introduce - enhance fiscal rules before the end of this fiscal year. And, at a later stage, before the end of the Financial Year, we will take these two Bills.

The SPEAKER: Deputy House Leader.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I now ask for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable us to recommit Items: Notices of Motions and recommittal of the Item, Reports from Committees.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the suspension of the Standing Orders to allow recommital of Reports from Committees.

Put to the House and agreed to.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

Mr. PRYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table of the House, a copy of the Report of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives, on our deliberations on the First Supplementary Estimates of Expenditure for the Financial Year ending March 31, 2014 and the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of Public Bodies, 2013/2014 Supplementary Estimates.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table of the House, a copy of the Report of the Committee on Tax Measures on our deliberations on the Fiscal Policy Paper for the Financial Year 2013/2014 Interim Report.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Jackson.

Mr. Fitz JACKSON: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Economy and Production Committee, I wish to lay on the Table of this House, a copy of the Report of the said Committee on the deliberations on Private Members' Motions No. 6 of 2013, calling on the repealing and replacing of Section 37 of the Agricultural Produce Act, and the Combination and Review of the Praedial Larceny (Prevention) Act and the Agricultural

Produce Act, brought by the Member of Parliament for St. Elizabeth North Western.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

Mr. JACKSON: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice at the next meeting of the House I will move:

> Be it Resolved that the Report of the Economy and Production Committee on our deliberations on Private Member's Motion No. 6, 2013, calling on the repealing and replacing of section 37 of the Agricultural Produce Act and the combination and review of the Predial Larceny (Prevention) Act and the Agricultural Produce Act brought by the Member of Parliament for St. Elizabeth North Western be approved.

Mr. Speaker, this was laid in the House today, March 4, 2014.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker...

The SPEAKER: Minister Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move:

> Be it Resolved that the Report of the Committee on Tax Measures for the deliberations on the Fiscal Policy Paper for the Financial Year 2013/2014 Interim Report, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 4th day of March, 2014, be approved.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Pryce.

Mr. PRYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move:

> Be it Resolved that the Report of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives on our deliberations on the First Supplementary Estimates of Expenditure for the Financial Year ending March 31, 2014 and the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of Public Bodies 2013/2014 Supplementary Estimates, which were laid on the Table of the House on the 4th day of March, 2014, be adopted.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, the time being what it is, I know ask for the suspension of the Standing Orders for us to take the questions - the Questions Number 15 and 16 are both ready and will be tabled as the Members are not here who posed the questions.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the suspension of the Standing Orders to allow for Questions and Answers to Questions to go beyond...

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. KELLIER: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

Mr. DALLEY: I can go over there go sit down.

Mr. KELLIER: With respect to the answers to Question 15 on the Question Notice Paper, I wish to table the answers to those questions, seeing that the Member opposite who asked it is not here. They have been tabled.

The SPEAKER: Okay, Minister Kellier. Mr. Thwaites.

Rev. THWAITES: Mr. Speaker, I so regret. I tabled the answers to the questions from the Member of North East St. Catherine on the elimination of pit latrines in schools. I was looking forward to his responses (Laughter) but in his foreseen absence I'll table them.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, Reverend Thwaites.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance will now take the Vote-On-Account Resolution.

The SPEAKER: Minister Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, the matter before us relates to the Vote-On-Account Resolution. It is - we know, Mr. Speaker, that the Constitution of Jamaica, and sections 9, 4 and 5 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act, provides for the House to approve sums for the carryings-on of the Government's business between the close of the financial year and the coming into force of the Appropriation Act for the next year. There is a stipulation, however, that these sums should exclude any service for which no provision had been made during the previous financial year unless the House by resolution specifically authorizes such expenditure.

The financial year 2013/2014 closes on the 31st of March so this Resolution seeks the House's authority in accordance with the Constitution and Financial Administration and Audit Act, previously cited for the expenditure of approximately $72,498 Billion to carry on the business of the Government for a period of three months up to June 30, 2014 distributed as follows: Recurrent Overheads some $61,353 Billion and $11.1444 Million of Capital Expenditure for a total of $72,498 Billion. The provision for each ministry, department and agency is shown on the Schedule attached to the Resolution and in the Ministry Paper. Vote On-Account excludes statutory expenditure of $47,324 Billion which covers debt serving costs, salaries of certain positions which are provided for in the Constitution or any other law and the statutory requirement for public officers' pension. This is due to the fact that these expenditures are statutorily prescribed and do not require prior Parliamentary approval.

The Resolution will authorize the expenditure, Mr. Speaker, up to June 30, but it is expected that the Appropriations Act covering the period, 1st of April 2014 to 31st of March 2015, will have been passed before and that whenever that has been passed, Mr. Speaker, the Appropriation Act would have precedence on any funds expended will have to be in accordance with the Expenditure Act as passed by this House.

Mr. Speaker, with those brief remarks, I move that the House approves the Resolution Vote-On-Account 2014/2015.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PRYCE: Mr. Speaker, I now move for the suspension of Standing Orders to enable me to table the motion, notice of which I gave earlier.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable the Member to take the motion, notice of which he gave earlier.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Pryce.

Mr. PRYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Members.

Mr. Speaker, your Committee examined the First Supplementary Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year ending March 31, 2014, in keeping with the fiscal responsibility framework and in particular, in accordance with section 48(G) of the Financial Administration and Audit, the FAA Act.

Mr. Speaker, you would be pleased to note that your Committee gave full attention to the aspects covered in the Supplementary Estimates, and after vigorous discussions the relevant entity and their representatives of the ministries, departments and agencies, concluded the recommendations which are contained herein within the Report tabled.

I just want to place on record, Mr. Speaker, that your Committee wishes to express gratitude to the representatives of the Ministries of Finance and Planning, Transport, Works and Housing, National Security, and Science, Technology, Energy and Mining. Thanks are also extended to the Technical Advisor to the Committee, to the Clerk to the Houses and her staff for their administrative and other support. Also, Mr. Speaker, your Committee wishes to place on record our continued gratitude to the members of the public service for their investment in bringing this country and our economy to a position of strength.

May it please you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, seeing that there are no other contributions to the debate I ask that the motion be approved.

Put to the House and agreed.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I now ask for the recommittal of the item Notices of Motions Given Orally.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the recommittal of item Notices of Motions Given Orally.

Put to the House and agreed to.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY
(Recommitted)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House, we will debate this Report, and I am seeking that this Report be referred to the Standing Finance Committee, which it is proposed will meet on Thursday, March 6, at 10:00 a.m. It is proposed that we will debate the Report of the Standing Finance Committee on the afternoon of March - the Supplementary Estimates.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next sitting of the House I will move:

> Be it Resolved that the First Supplementary Estimates of Expenditure for the Financial Year ending March 31, 2014 and the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of Public Bodies 2013/2014 Supplementary Estimates which were laid on the Table of the House on the 25th day of March, 2014 be referred to the Standing Finance Committee of the whole House of Representatives consisting of all Members of the House for consideration and report.
>
> And Be it Further Resolved that the Committee, during its deliberations, takes into account recommendations contained in the Report of the PAAC of the House of Representatives on its deliberations on the First Estimates of Expenditure and the Estimates for Revenue and Expenditure of Public Bodies 2013/2014 Supplementary Estimates, which were laid on the Table of the House on the 4th day of March, 2014.

Mr. Speaker, I further beg to give notice that at a further stage today, I will move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take this Motion.

Mr. Speaker, I now move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take the motion, notice of which I gave earlier.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the suspension of the Standing Orders to allow the Minister to take the motion, notice of which she gave earlier.

Put to the House and agreed to.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, with no other contribution to the debate I now ask that the motion be approved.

Put to the House and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, it is not intended to do any further business today. I therefore ask for the adjournment of the House to reconvene on Thursday, March 6, 2014, at 2:00 p.m. The House resumes at 2:00 p.m. Standing Finance Committee commences at 10:00.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the House do adjourn to Thursday, March 6, 2014, at 2:00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The House stands adjourned.

The House adjourned at 4:39 p.m. until Thursday, March 6, 2014, at 2:00 p.m.

THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SESSION 2013 – 2014

THURSDAY, March 6, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:38 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

MR. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House.

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce

HON. ROGER HAROLD CLIFFORD CLARKE, CD, (PNP), Westmoreland, Central, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries

REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education

HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture

HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, Northern, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. NATALIE GAYE NEITA-HEADLEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sports and Deputy Leader of the House

MR. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister

HON. DAMION ORANDY CRAWFORD, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Rural, Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment

OTHER MEMBERS

DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western

HON. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern

MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central

DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern
MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition
MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern
MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern
MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western
MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern
MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western
MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern
MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central
MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern
MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western
MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western
DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. André Hylton.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

The SPEAKER: House Leader.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, we'd just like to ask for the suspension of Standing Orders - that the House be suspended at this time to enable for the completion of the Standing Finance Committee to complete its work on the Supplementary Estimates.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker, before you take the motion. The last time I raised the issue of the form of prayer, you gave strict instructions that if a Member doesn't wish to be guided by the Standing Orders in offering the prayer as it is said here, the Member shouldn't do it. And the Member who just offered prayer here, he twisted the words all over here: adding words, subtracting words and the salient point about *"...safety, honour and happiness of the Queen, public wield peace and tranquillity..."* he changed it again and I'm saying constantly…

The SPEAKER: Well, Mr. Warmington, what I will be insisting on, with the assistance of Mr. Williams, is that anybody who does not...

(MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western, entered and took his seat.)
(HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining, entered and took his seat.)

(Cross talk)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Conform.

The SPEAKER: ...say the prayer as - will not be asked to do so again.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Yes, you had asked for him to ask them before and I know the Marshal had asked them if they intended to be guided by this.

The SPEAKER: We can only find out when they are actually saying it, you know. So I say once you modify the prayer then...

Mr. WARMINGTON: Until that time, what you need to do is you need to find some sanction for these Members who keep on doing this stuff even after you gave instructions.

(Cross talk)

After the Marshal spoke to them.

(Cross talk)

(HON. ARNALDO ALPHANSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, entered and took his seat.)

(MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern, entered and took her seat.)

The SPEAKER: I will consider the matter, I will consider the matter. (Gavels) The House stands adjourned.

Rev. THWAITES: Mr. Speaker, if you will allow me on that subject?

The SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Thwaites.

Rev. THWAITES: The prayer is a spontaneous raising of the mind and heart to God and it is perfectly legitimate, except in the most stilted circumstances, for it to be subject to the aspersions which this Member today and others in the past, including myself have offered. And I for one feel that we are backward in not adopting a republican form of prayer where the use of the word "the prayer for the people" rather than the euphemistic subsuming of - the notion of the Jamaican people in the person of the Queen...

(MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. LESTER MICHAEL HENRY, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, Central, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. PRYCE: Hear, hear!

Rev. THWAITES: ...is so anachronistic. And where that is done surely the Lord, to whom we are speaking, is not outraged in any way.

(Applause) (Cross talk)

So let us put aside rigourism and deal with substance.

The second thing is, Mr. Speaker, more substantially is that I have taken the initiative of composing, a along with others, a revised version of the - we call the 1962 prayer, which elevates the people of Jamaica not to the derogation of the Queen but to their proper pre-eminence in our orations

Mr. PRYCE: Hear, hear!

Rev. THWAITES: And the Cabinet - I presented it to the Cabinet and it was approved for transmission to - I don't know if it's the Standing Orders Committee or

whatever proper committee of the House and I would enquire of you, Mr. Speaker, if you would see where that process is now so that we could avoid the obfuscations just mentioned.

(MR. PAUL LENNOX BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Andrew, West Rural, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern, entered and took her seat.)

(DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western, entered and took his seat.)

The SPEAKER: Well, it was brought to my attention. In fact, it was mentioned previously that the House Leader will have to bring the matter to Parliament for it to be referred to the Standing Orders Committee. But, in the interim, my responsibility is to abide by the Standing Orders.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: We can do this thing in different ways. If we were a republic there would be no problem and if there is a new prayer, there would be no problem. So let us exercise ourselves.

Rev. THWAITES: I'm sure you will give the necessary instructions.

(Cross talk)

(HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. KENNETH O'NEILL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, East Central, entered and took his seat.)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) House is now suspended for the meeting of the Standing Finance Committee.

The House accordingly suspended its sitting at approximately 2:47 p.m. to table the Report of the Standing Finance Committee.

The House resumed its sitting at approximately 5:44 p.m.

The SPEAKER: This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House, a copy of the following:

- Report of the Standing Finance Committee of the whole House of Representatives consisting of all Members of the House on the First Supplementary Estimates of Expenditure for the Financial Year ending March 31, 2014 and the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of Public Bodies 2013/2014 - Supplementary Estimates
- General Legal Council Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements For the financial year 2012/2013

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker. I beg to lay on the Table of the House a copy of the

Report of the Standing Finance Committee of the whole House of Representatives consisting of all Members of the House on the First Supplementary Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year ending March 31, 2014 and the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of Public Bodies 2013/2014 Supplementary Estimates.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move:

> Be it Resolved that the Report of the Standing Finance Committee of the whole House of Representatives consisting of all Members of the House on the First Supplementary Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year ending March 31, 2014 and the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of Public Bodies 2013/2014 Supplementary Estimates, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 6th day of March, 2014 be adopted.

Mr. Speaker, I further beg to give notice that at a later stage today I will move for the suspension of Standing Orders to enable me to take this Motion.

PRESENTATION OF BILLS WITHOUT LEAVE OF THE HOUSE FIRST OBTAINED

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I now move to introduce and have read a first time the following Bills shortly entitled:

1. "The Public Bodies Management and Accountability (Amendment) Act, 2014"; and
2. "The Financial Administration and Audit (Amendment) Act, 2014".

Bill shortly entitled:

"The Public Bodies Management and Accountability (Amendment) Act, 2014",

read a first time.

Bill shortly entitled:

"The Financial Administration and Audit (Amendment) Act, 2014",

read a first time.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of second reading of the Bills.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I now move [for] the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable to take the Motion, notice of which I gave earlier.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the suspension of the Standing Orders to allow the Minister to take the Motion, notice of which was given earlier.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Minister.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, consideration of the Supplementary Estimates is part of the normal undertakings of this House. This First Supplementary Estimates for the 2013/2014 financial year, however, takes place within a very specific content defined by the fact of the economic reform programme and by the Extended Fund Facility agreed with the International Monetary Fund.

I mentioned these because there are of particular significance in that they impose critical obligations with respect to overall budgetary targets, such as our central government target of 0.5 per cent and our primary surplus target of 7.5 per cent. We should remember also that these targets are not ends in themselves rather they are defined by our determination to reduce our debt and return our economy to sound macroeconomic fundamentals which will provide the foundation for growth and job creation. We should recall also that the Supplementary Estimates have been considered by the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee, the PAAC, and by the Standing Finance Committee as required by the Fiscal Responsibility Framework.

What do the Supplementary Estimates contain? The First Supplementary Estimates have been developed to address the following issues:

1) first of all, the realignment of the Expenditure Budget with the projected revenue outturn resulting in the containment of some areas of expenditure. One of the primary objectives as I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, was to ensure the achievement of the primary balance target for 2013/2014. Put simply, what this means is that we are committed to living within our means and to tailoring our expenditures to deal with the available revenues; (Applause)
2) this Supplementary Estimates also reflects the lowering of debt servicing costs to reflect savings in interest payments; and it also contains
3) the reallocation of amounts to meet salary payment from the Minister of Finance and Planning's contingency provisions and to assign these payments to the ministries, departments and agencies. It is also the case that the adjustment of the Expenditure Budget reflects under expenditure on some projects and programmes that have been affected by the implementation delays;
4) and finally, the reallocation of expenditure to meet critical payments and to reduce the build-up in expenditure arrears. And there have certainly areas some of which I'll mention later, where there has emerged, some urgency to undertake some of these expenditures that were not programmed in the amounts that were appropriated originally in the security area, for example, there have been some of these issues that we have had to deal with.

Let me deal with each of these areas in turn. The realignment of expenditure to deal with the available revenues, due to the shortfall in revenues, is essential and for which we - I think we need to confront squarely the reality that revenues and grants for the fiscal year to December are total sum $274.6 Billion; a shortfall of close to $11 Billion; $10.9 Billion against the target that was a 3.8 per cent shortfall. Of this total, tax revenue collection amounted to $242.6 Billion

which was approximately 4.9 per cent below target.

The main grants have made up for some of the difference that we have been able to make up. So, as I said, there was an overall 10.9 per cent shortfall in revenues and grants.

The main items resulting in lower than budgeted tax revenue performance were the Special Consumption Tax on imports, reflecting both primarily the reduction in the price of oil, shortfall in PAYE, and Customs Duties and GCT on imports.

The shortfall in SCT, in the Special Consumption Tax on our cross-border activities on imports was attributable to, first of all, the reduction in cigarette imports, consequent upon the ban on smoking in public spaces, and lower imports of refined petroleum products, and on motor vehicles. The shortfall in receipts from import in petroleum was in part offset by the increased in production of refined products.

PAYE and Education Tax were affected by the reduced employment in some sectors of the economy, and lower than expected compliance in the Government's wage cost being less than budgeted for the fiscal year.

Customs Duty and GCT on imports fell short partly because of the lower than programmed imports. Additionally, some of the new tax measures have not performed as was projected, particularly, in relation to the Education Tax and the Betting, Gaming and Lottery, which fell by some Nine Hundred and Ninety Million ($990M) and Nine-eighty-nine Million ($989M) respectively. And of course, there was Stamp Duty and Transfer Tax which was down by some Eight Hundred and Eighty-two Million Dollars ($882M).

With the revenues under-performing, it became necessary to realign the Expenditure Budget to a level which could be supported by the revenues.

As I have said, Mr. Speaker, we are determined to live within our means, and if the revenues don't come in we will have to make adjustments on the expenditure side. This meant that we had to curtail expenditure and to defer some payments into the next fiscal year.

Importantly, I should point out that Tax Administration Jamaica, and the Customs, have strengthened their revenue-collection efforts as another means of addressing the problem. And, certainly, as far as the first month of this quarter is concerned, January, the tax revenues were on target. I don't yet have the results of February, but I can say that the Tax Administration Jamaica, are doing everything - and the Customs - to ensure that they are able to raise the levels of compliance and secure the revenues that are due.

We have, nevertheless, over the period, had the benefit of some important savings, particularly in relation to debt-servicing cost. Public debt service for the period reflects an overall savings of Ten point Five Billion ($10.5B) from the budgeted expenditure of Two Twenty-five point Two Billion Dollars ($225.2B). (Applause) This reduction is largely due to the lower than projected domestic debt interest charges, a reduction of Seven point One Billion Dollars ($7.IB) from the Seventy-Five point Five Billion ($75.5B)

which was projected to Sixty-eight point Four Billion ($68.4B) due to the finalization of the NDX transactions which led to a lower than projected payments, and outweighed the impact of increased inflation and exchange rates on some line items.

I think it is also important to mention here, Mr. Speaker, that there has been a lower than programmed issue of Government securities. Or put another way, we have borrowed less than was projected, and this has also led to a reduction in the requirement for loan-raising expenses. (Applause)

The contingency provision that was made in the Budget that was passed last May, has been reallocated from the Ministry of Finance and Planning, to Ministries, Departments and Agencies, and include some Fifteen point One Billion Dollars ($15.IB) in compensation payments to public sector workers. These amounts were reflected in the funds appropriated for the Ministry of Finance, but now in the Supplementary Budget they are allocated to the relevant Departments and Ministries and Agencies to which the public sector workers are employed. These amounts include the payment of Seven point Five Billion Dollars ($7.5B) in arrears, related to the 7 per cent wage settlement of 2010. And they relate also, to -

- Two point Five Billion Dollars ($2.5B) for the Twenty-five Thousand ($25,000.00) one-off payment that was agreed with the Public Sector Unions for the contract period 2012/2015; and
- Two point One Billion ($2.IB) for the reclassification of Health Sector workers; and
- One point Eight Billion ($1.8B) the final tranche of the Teachers' reclassification arrears; and
- One point Two Billion Dollars ($1.2B) new rates and arrears for Education Officers, UWI Lecturers and Medical officers.

I think, Mr. Speaker, it is worth noting that despite the difficulties, we have kept faith with the public sector workers... (Applause) ...who have entered into agreement with the Government of Jamaica, and we have honoured all our obligations to public sector workers. These payments along with regular salaries, will bring the total expenditure on wages in the fiscal year 2013/14 to One Hundred and Fifty-six point One Billion ($156.IB) which is in line with the original projections and consistent with the programme to reduce wages as a share of GDP.

I turn now, Mr. Speaker, to the reduction in budget space available for some projects and programmes that have been affected by implementation delays.

Of the net Two Billion Dollars ($2B) reduction-reflected under the Recurrent Budget, One point Eight Billion ($1.8B) reflects under expenditures in the Pensions Budget. This is not essentially a cut, Mr. Speaker, but a deferral of payments to a later date. This sum represents payments that would have been made for pensions and which were reserved for the employees of the former Jamaica Customs, and the Inland Revenue Tax Audit and Assessment and Tax Administration

Services, who were scheduled to have been terminated during the financial year, as a consequence of the process to establish the Jamaica Customs as an Executive Agency, and the Tax Administration Jamaica as a semi-autonomous revenue agency.

The Pensions Act makes provision for government employees to be paid pension whenever their posts are abolished or they are separated on the grounds of reorganization. That pension should be paid immediately on their separation from government.

The Executive Agencies were implemented at a slower pace than was originally projected, and in fact, both of those, that is to say, Customs and TAJ, will have their own pension schemes. However, the arrangements are not yet in place for that transfer to take place. It will take place at a later date, and accordingly, these savings have been achieved on the Recurrent side of the Budget. No payouts have been made on account of the new schedule or the extension of the schedule for the completion of the transition to Executive Agencies.

We expect that in the case of Customs, they will reach full Executive Agency status probably by September 2014, in the course of this financial year, and around the same time we will expect the completion of all the activities, including the approval of salary scales and the approval of a new organizational structure for Tax Administration Jamaica, to take place.

With respect to the Capital side of the Budget, adjustments in Capital Expenditure reflect net reductions of Seven point Six Billion Dollars ($7.6B). However, when the One point Six Billion ($1.6B) for SLB - which is not Capital expenditure, truly - is excluded, the net reduction in the Capital Budget is Six Billion Dollars ($6B). Implementation delays have resulted in a slower than programmed expenditure in several critical investment projects; as a result, the spending has been deferred to the new financial year.

It should be noted, however, Mr. Speaker, that notwithstanding these delays in some expenditures on the Capital side, there has been a marked improvement in performance overall, compared with the previous financial year. When compared with the same period in the last financial year, the expenditure for April 2013 to January 2014 is ahead of what was accomplished in the previous financial year by about Five Billion Dollars ($5B). (Applause) This is a major improvement in the right direction.

And, notwithstanding the challenges of the 2013/2014 Revised Capital Budget, the Capital Budget accounts for 7 per cent of gross expenditure, compared with 6 per cent in the previous financial year. And we must remember that this reflects a savings, also, on the debt side. So that overall we have been moving to expand the Capital Budget which we think is an important part of repairing the economic fortunes of the country. (Applause)

We acknowledge that there are weaknesses in the Public Investment Management System, which have consistently over the years contributed to poor project implementation delays, and time and cost overruns.

With assistance from the World Bank, from the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom Government, the Ministry has commenced work to put in place improved systems and procedures to strengthen public investment management, not only in Central Government, but also in public enterprises.

Building project management capacity in the public sector, improving planning, selection, monitoring and evaluation of projects, are key issues which will be addressed under the reform.

Among the tasks that we will implement in the next fiscal year is the implementation of the Public Sector Investment Programme, which will see a much more rigorous programme rolled out for inclusion of projects on the Capital side of the Budget. There will be an extensive training programme for public officials responsible for project management, and we will also be rolling out a new procurement law which should overcome some of the causes for the delays that have been experienced.

Government MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, in relation to the - I want to say something about the grants to the Students' Loan Bureau. Of the $2.9 Billion programme for the Students' Loan Bureau, approximately $1.3 Billion has been paid out at January 2014. (Applause)

The disbursements have been affected by the slower than anticipated uptake from the increase in the education tax. Payments of the fourth quarter collections have been re-programmed for the first quarter of the next fiscal year which should provide another $500 Million to $700 Million by the end of that period, and that will be paid out in the first quarter and will bring the total payout to between $1.8 Billion and $2 Billion. (Applause)

The Students' Loan Bureau is itself, still in discussions with potential private sector investors to see how additional finances could be secured from the present portfolio, including the possibility of selling some of their receivables to financial institutions that would enable them to meet some of the shortfalls.

We will have to undertake some review of the overall financing of the tertiary education demand, but it is important that - we believe, to preserve the viability of the Students' Loan Bureau, even as we might need to make other provisions to provide support for students who qualify, but who might not qualify under - for support, but who might not qualify as part of the revolving loan scheme, and their ability to meet the particular requirements for repayment.

It doesn't make sense lending money to someone who has very little prospect of repaying in the near term. The end result of that would be that the scheme itself would be depleted of resources. So, we have to find - I think it is a societal issue, that we need to engage both the private sector, the Government, and various agencies and departments to see how we can fashion monies, including work/study programmes, to students who are qualified and in need, and need support, but who might not be able to

provide the adequate guarantees needed to be part of the SLB arrangements.

Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the overall reduction in the budget, there are some critical areas that have received additional expenditures, in relation to the priority needs of those areas, and in relation to the overall policy commitments of the Government.

I want to point out the fact that an additional three hundred and nine approximately $310 Million has been provided in support for the JUTC, because we consider public transportation services that have been provided in that area critical. Additional amounts have been provided for the Ministry of Health, and we have provided to the JDF, some $219.2 Million to secure armoured vehicles, given the fact that their present complement of armoured vehicles are in need of urgent replacement. (Applause)

We provided some $747 Million additional, to support utility charges for the Ministry of Health and Education, and we have reduced the arrears in statutory deductions for ministries, departments, and agencies by some $707 Million.

I think it is worth emphasizing also, Mr. Speaker, that, in addition to public sector workers, we have maintained our faith with the most vulnerable sections of the society. Within the limits of the resources available to us, the Government established a protected spending floor of $20.7 Billion, covering critical social programmes, such as PATH, the School Feeding Programme, indoor and outdoor Poor Relief Programme, the subsidy to basic schools, and rehabilitation grants, drugs and medical supplies, grants to children's homes, places of safety, youth employment, and other social intervention programmes. Notwithstanding the difficulties in the Budget, all these areas have been protected and the expenditure has been preserved... (Applause) ...and the expenditure will be in line with the projected amounts appropriated in the original budget.

The PATH budget was provided - $4.1 Billion in the 2013/2014 Budget in conditional cash grants to approximately 410,000 beneficiaries. In August 2013, a 15 per cent increase was provided for all beneficiaries with the exception of the elderly who received a 67 per cent increase. (Applause)

Between April and October, over 336,000 persons received grants under the programme; 243,000 children and 88,000 adults. Total disbursements in the PATH cash grants at the end of October was 1.8 Billion. Two other payments will be made during this financial year, covering the period for December 2013 which was made, and February 2014. All PATH beneficiaries will receive a further 15 per cent across-the-board increase in the coming financial year. (Applause)

Programmed expenditure in the Budget approved last May of $2.7 Billion for the PATH School Feeding Programme is on target. For the period April to October 2013, a total of $1.9 Billion was disbursed under this Programme.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the Programme of Economic Adjustment as a whole is a difficult one, but equally it is absolutely necessary if we are to correct the

macroeconomic and fiscal imbalances which have been inherited. The good thing about all of this, Mr. Speaker - and we will have opportunity to debate it more - is that our debt is down and continues on a downward trajectory... (Applause) ...and we are seeing already, the first fruits, in terms of a return to growth and containment of inflation. It is not easy; it has been difficult. But I think one thing we should remember, and I certainly don't forget, it is that the public sector workers and the bondholders who made their contribution for us to get the Extended Fund Facility, and for us to undertake this Reform Programme, required of us on the Government side, that we stick with the programme to ensure that never again will Jamaica have to walk this particular road. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: We need to undertake the adjustments, and to ensure that we don't have to do it again. This Supplementary Estimates which we are asking the House to approve, keep faith with the commitment that the Government gave to the public sector workers, to the bondholders, and to the taxpayers of the country as a whole. We need to do it now so that future generations don't have to languish in protracted poverty and underperformance.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the Supplementary Estimates to this House for approval

(Applause/*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHARLES: You notice how we listen quietly? There was no disturbance. I want no disturbance from you over there.

A MEMBER: Good point, Pearnel. (Applause)

Mr. SHAW: I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has - actually, maybe I should start where he ended, because the Minister, on many occasions, both inside the House and out of the House, refers to the inheritance of macroeconomic imbalances, and it might be very important for me to start by reminding ourselves that that inheritance of V macroeconomic imbalances is an inheritance that would be at least 20 years old. And so, just for the avoidance...

Mr. CHUCK: It started 20 years ago.

Mr. SHAW: ...of any misunderstanding that anyone listening to the Minister speaking of his inheritance of macroeconomic imbalances, it would be very important to remind the Honourable Minister, and to remind this Honourable House that the relatively short time that the previous Administration was in power between 2007 and 2011, the truth is that when we came into power, we had inherited 18 years of macroeconomic imbalances.

(Applause)

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Chuck)

Mr. SHAW: We inherited 18 years, wherein the last 14 out of those 18 years, the economy grew by a mere 0.8 per cent per annum for 14 years - 0.8 per cent - less than one per cent per year. We inherited an economy that was structurally affected by a financial sector collapse, which led to the collapse of the productive sector as well, and which also led to a virtual collapse of the

innate entrepreneurial spirit on Jamaican enterprise that we are renowned for. (Applause)

And so, when we speak of macroeconomic imbalances, just let us understand that this is not something of recent vintage. Indeed, when we got into power in 2007, within one year after being in Office, we were faced with a global economic crisis, the worse that had been seen in at least 80 years, when much of the income and revenue that we were reliant on, fell through the ground. And we had to act in an emergency manner to keep the economy stable. We had to stabilize prices; we had to subsidize even, food prices because we had a global - not just a global economic crisis, we also a global food crisis. And because of the aggressive increase in the cost of grain on the world market, we had to subsidize -1 think at one time Cabinet had to approve a subsidy of some $500 Million in order just to keep the price of food to a point where people could afford it. And in all of the crises that we faced, we were able to deliver an economy to the present Administration where the exchange rate was stable at $86 to US$, for almost two years.

(Applause)

Today we have seen a slide in that exchange rate of some 25% without there being any crisis at all, except being the crisis of the management of the present Administration. (Applause) And I am going to get back to the issue of the exchange rate, because it is one of the major problems that we face in the economy today that has to be dealt with.

So the exchange rate was stable, the economy had begun to grow again after many consecutive quarters of negative growth, largely due to the problems related to the global economic crisis. We were able to reduce interest rates Mr. Speaker to a 30-year low, interest rates. (Applause) And we were able to introduce into the jargon of interest rates in Jamaica, single digits interest rates were introduced into this country due to tenure of the previous Administration. Two Commercial Banks were competing to lend money at 9.4 and 9.5% respectively. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Management.

Mr. SHAW: Of course. And of course, that included the lowering of the Treasury Bill rate to single digit levels in the region of 6½% now lower - and we are happy about that. And the point is there was growth also in the economy. We left an economy that was growing at 1.3% in the Calendar Year 2011, and by the end of the fiscal year it was growing in fact by 1.5%. (Applause)

So, Mr. Speaker, the truth is that the debt itself had grown and we admit to that...

Mr. DALLEY: Doubled.

Mr. SHAW: It had not doubled, sheer propaganda. Did not double at all, didn't double.

The debt had grown and while we were accused of being irresponsible in growing the debt, it was not until the Minister became Minister that he realized that with the devaluation of the dollar it had a very, very heavy impact on the nominal stock of debt.

A MEMBER: Public sector entity.

Mr. SHAW: And indeed, when we were in power, because of the crisis in part, and because of the challenges of foreign exchange, we did have a devaluation from $70 to $86 before we kept it stable for two years, and that did contribute to the increase of the national debt. We were accused and pilloried for increasing the National Debt. And all of a sudden I have heard the Minister now saying, complaining that, you know, the stock of national debt is increasing largely because of the devaluation of the Jamaican dollar.

And so, here we are two years, we were accused of increasing the debt by $600 Billion. Here we are - that was over four years - here we are two years into this Administration and by the end of this fiscal year in March, this month, the stock of debt would have been increased by $300 Billion already to reach $1,924 Trillion.

Mr. HOLNESS: That's right.

Mr. SHAW: Just a year short of $2 Trillion. That's right. They tacked on $300 Billion on to it already in two years, in two years, Mr. Speaker.

(Inaudible comments by Members)

Mr. SHAW: So, Mr. Speaker, when we add PetroCaribé debt to that - and of course, PetroCaribé debt would have been added from our time as well. So we add PetroCaribé debt to that, we can see that we are - the debt is already well passed the $2 Trillion mark, heading for $2.3....

(Inaudible comment by Members)

Mr. SHAW: Yes, heading for $2.3 Trillion, because the debt on PetroCaribé is some US$2.5 Billion. Multiply that by $108.40 cents and you will see that the national debt is galloping at a pretty fair clip.

Mr. HOLNESS: That is about 140% GDP.

A MEMBER: Disaster.

Mr. SHAW: Yes, it is.

So, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, all I am saying - I just want to say - let me just say this. I think, Mr. Speaker, it is better for all of us not to talk about inherited fiscal imbalances, let's not talk about the inheritance. If you are going to talk about the inheritance, then speak, remind yourselves of the inheritance of your own failed administration for 18 long years. (Applause)

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the things I wanted to just observe in passing. I wonder if the Minister would recall and I know he is not going to say I can't recall.

(Laughter)

I'm sure that he will recall that in the Budget Debate last year, I had pointed out that there was a claim to be made from the introduction of the National Debt Exchange of a savings projected at $17 Billion. And yet, in the Budget as presented this savings was not reflected. And I saw a saving, I think, of just about $9 Billion and I remember asking the Minister what happened to the $17 Billion savings?

So as it turns out now in this Supplementary Estimates we are seeing that the remainder of the savings or more has turned up. So I'm just....

Mr. HOLNESS: Was that the contingency?

Mr. SHAW: No, no, the contingency was for salaries.

But the point I'm simply making is, and this is only a correction of your own figures. Perhaps it was your erring on the conservative side, but the truth is that the original estimation of savings on interest was programmed from the time of the National Debt Exchange. So the $10 Billion, therefore, reflected the savings in these Supplementary Estimates ought not to come as a surprise to anyone of us.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the issue of arrears has been discussed quite a bit during the Standing Finance Committee. And I want to just say to the Honourable Minister that during the sittings of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee we have actually requested from the Financial Secretary a full list of all arrears and for MDAs. In the same way that the Member from St. Catherine has requested from the Ministry of Health in order to just avoid the constraint debate about arrears.

We have done it before, I did it when I was Minister, presented the list of arrears. Let's have the list. Thirty (30) days, 60 days, 90 days and over 90 days, let's have the list of arrears. It is important because a lot of issues arise from the issue of the arrears.

Among those issues are whether the failure to pay arrears at an appropriate time, whether they in fact affect the award of subsequent contracts. And I suspect that they do, because if a contractor is owed and can't get his money, it is unlikely that that contractor is going to be in a position to be able to do any additional contracts. I need not go any further than the Jamaica Defence Force. I have used that on many occasions and I will use it again.

We keep saying that our arrears beyond 90 days, that those arrears are not being expanded. Well, that might be so, but I can tell you, Minister, without any fear of contradiction, that there are suppliers of food to the JDF right now who in some cases the arrears are not in excess of 30 days, 60 days or 90 days, in some cases the arrears are in excess of one year, one year. How many days that? Eh! Thank you very much. In excess of, 365 days in the case of the Jamaica Defence Force. So I think what we need to get here is clarity. We are not here to just prepare to accept your word for it as to the state of the arrears. Print, bring the figures and table them in Parliament so that we can see the real state of the arrears in the system.

We know, for instance, about the JPS. While we have been - the Supplementary Estimates, we have found $64 Million to pay them, but what about the other money. We are told that we owe - MDAs owe the JPS $200 Million and that does not include the amount owed for street lighting, which itself would run into hundreds of millions of dollars in additional money. Street lighting is separate from what Ministries, Departments and Agencies actually owe the Jamaica Public Service Company, so we need to clean up the issue of arrears, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to mention although the matter was raised in the Standing Committee, I do want to just spend a few minutes on the question of how certain critical areas of expenditure, modest amounts, but

every *mickle mek* a *muckle* in the business of governance. And certain critical areas of expenditure which have been sidelined and when I listened to the explanation at Standing Finance Committee, Mr. Speaker, I am not satisfied at the explanations that have been provided. Example, for the Tower Street Correctional Facility and the St. Catherine Correctional Facility a total of $70 Million, $35 Million of each were allocated to repair and to fix up these institutions, which we know by the way are aging institutions. So it is really infrastructure that is literally crumbling and a $35 Million allocation to those institutions is like a drop in the bucket. A drop in the bucket, Mr. Speaker, and yet, without any good explanation, we see the $70 Million allocated to the two prisons cut by $35.6 Million leaving only $34 Million of expenditure for those prisons. We have not been given any good explanation as to why those funds have been cut.

In fact, the Minister said something to us in seeking or I will say in attempting to answer the question about the cut in expenditure. He said that we have - I am quoting the Minister now.

> *"We have to make cuts which create the least disruption of the operational needs of the country".*
>
> Let's wrap our heads around that again. *"We have to make cuts, we have to make cuts which create the least disruption of the operational needs of the country".*

Mr. DALLEY: Wise words.

Mr. SHAW: Wise words according to you. Okay. Now, in the case of the prisons, is this something that we feel that is just not important, it doesn't form a part of the operational needs of the country?

Equally, the schools - I have mentioned that in the Primary and High Schools, Mr. Speaker, a modest sum, a modest, notice I am using a word that you might prefer, a modest sum of $95 Million was set aside in Capital A expenditure for primary and high schools to maintain, to repair, to renovate the plant.

The Minister told us today there are 900 primary schools in Jamaica. There are 160 high schools in Jamaica. And while he has given the assurance that the Recurrent side of the Budget does have money for maintenance, and I have asked for that detail because we want to break out just how much is there for maintenance in the Recurrent and we know what was put into the Capital for the expenditure there. So, you know, when I look the Minister's Statement, the question of creating the least disruption of the operational needs of the country, I wonder where do our schools come in the operational needs of our country.

Mr. Speaker, I need go no further than my own constituency in looking at the need for repairs of schools. There are 18 schools in North East Manchester. I have just mentioned here five of them. Bryce Primary School, there was a building there that had classrooms, it collapsed a few years ago, it has now been demolished with the plan to build a new classroom in another section of the school. The Minister knows Bryce; he has to drive past there to look for his relatives from time to time. So I invite you to stop there and see

what I am talking about. That project alone would take up the $95 Million.

Holmwood Technical High School, the main block at the school, that's the block that I went to school in at Holmwood as a student, I went to that school, the main block, I went there and that block, Minister, is now leaking.

Mr. R. CLARKE: Since last year?

Mr. SHAW: Okay, requires several million dollars to fix it. And they need classroom for 300 additional students.

Christiana High School, the staffroom is leaking. If rain falling the teachers cannot go and relax in the staffroom or rest in the staffroom, because the staffroom at Christiana High Schools requires $7 Million now to repair it and the money is not available.

Mr. CLARKE: Past student.

Mr. SHAW: Christiana High School also is in need like Anchovy; they are also in need of a second school because that school was built to accommodate 900 students they now have 2,100 students, so we need another school to get rid of the shift system, that's Christiana.

Spalding High School and Chantilly Primary School - they need toilet facilities and additional toilet facilities. These are monies that could come from this $95 Million.

Mr. CLARKE: Awful.

Mr. SHAW: What you mean awful? I am putting it on the table here. It is indeed awful that we should need toilets at a school and we should watch from $95 Million to $66.5 Million is being sent back into the Consolidated Fund instead of spending it among our high schools and our primary schools.

Mr. McKENZIE: Shame!

(Applause)

Mr. SHAW: And the last one I will mention, Mr. Speaker as I move on from schools is a school in Top Hill in North East Manchester where two years ago in January of 2012 a contract, the work was tendered, what was that work, fix a leaking roof, put in ceilings, because what was happening at the school is that the zinc is up there without ceiling, when the sun comes down it is baking the children with so much heat that they can't concentrate, they can't study and when the rain falls it is leaking on them. So that $2.3 Million was just to put on the ceiling, do some electrical work, stop the leaking and the tendering was done in January of 2012. The information sent to the Ministry of Education and now two years and two months later no repairs have been done on that school but we send back $66.5 Million to the Consolidated Fund and not spend it.

Mr. CHARLES: Instructions.

Mr. McKENZIE: It's a shame.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, we know other Members in this House on both sides of the House because I know that you visit your schools. We know the conditions of our schools islandwide. And regardless of whether an amount is in Recurrent as the Minister tells us for maintenance is cut by two-thirds in this Capital Budget for school is actually in my view outrageous and quite unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. And it is unacceptable, what also is

unacceptable is the suggestion that that $66 Million could not be spent because of a procurement problem. I am seriously questioning that and if that is indeed so and the Minister who is not here now has promised to provide the information - what were the schools earmarked for repairs under this $95Million programme? Why were they not repaired? Tell us the nature of the procurement problems that existed.

You know, I don't want to be accused of nitpicking but we can't just always be talking about the macroeconomic framework and we don't take time to remember that the budgetary process, inasmuch as it is important for Economic Reform Programme to please the IMF, we must remember that the Budget has to be an instrument of survival for the people of Jamaica, including our little children that go to school. (Applause) And equally at the Ministry of Labour and Social Security we see where the social and economic inclusion of persons with disabilities, that that amount, Mr. Speaker, was cut from the $35 Million allocated and reduced by $20 Million down to $15 Million persons, Mr. Speaker, with disabilities. What are we told at Standing Finance Committee? There was the need to open a special account. Well, my God, how long does it take to open a special account? To open a special account so that people with disabilities could get assistance.

Mr. Speaker, I heard a lady on radio and I think that the Member from North Central Clarendon also heard this lady on the radio a few evenings ago complaining, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, I want the Minister to hear this, because I know how busy you are so you might not have heard the lady on the radio complaining that three centres in the island for disabled people - to assist disabled people have so closed because of budgetary constraints.

Mr. DALLEY: Not State facility.

Mr. SHAW: I beg your pardon. Well, I did not say three State facilities. Didn't I say three facilities? Well, you see you have the luxury of deciding whether you want to talk about helping State facilities or other facilities. I have said and I will repeat, Mr. Speaker, three facilities to assist disabled people have been closed over the past few weeks.

Mr. DALLEY: No subvention has been cut off from any...

Mr. SHAW: And I can say to you many disabled people and their families come to me as MP. There is a Disability Association in Manchester, based in Mandeville and they do their best, they do their best and I commend them for all the work that they do. But sometimes they just can't do more than the little pittance that they have to be able to deal with it. And so it is against that background, Minister, against that background that I am just saying this is an example of a cruel cut in the Budget, and the explanation that the right account wasn't opened I consider that to be an unacceptable explanation. We are not told that the funds from the World Bank were not available, we were told that the account was not opened to receive the money and that is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker and the Honourable Minister of Finance.

Equally, the Prime Minister with a lot of feeling about the need for our soldiers to be

more comfortable, announced in her presentation last year that lands would be made available to be purchased by the National Housing Trust from the Commissioner of Lands to be passed on to the Jamaica Defence Force for the construction of houses, of barracks for soldiers. And the system would work simply that the National Housing Trust would actually purchase the lands from the Commissioner of Lands but that money would in fact go into the Consolidated Fund and would be therefore assigned to the JDF to be used for materials and so on to build out the barracks. And what do we find one year later despite the Prime Minister's grand announcement, $340 Million out of the $430 Million is gone back into the Consolidated Fund. Why? Because two government agencies, for whatever reasons, not talking to one another and not talking to one another on such a diligent basis that whatever are the issues the identification of the land, the requisite paper work, the necessary transfers, whatever are the details if the agencies are talking and they are following in accordance with the urgency of the announcement of the Most Honourable Prime Minister that project should be implemented or be well underway to implementation now and the soldiers can look to more comfort rather than seeing all of this money now being returned to the Consolidated Fund; another example of an unacceptable cut, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister has spoken about the question of the Students' Loan Bureau. The only thing that I think requires more assessment and analysis, Minister, is why is it that the projections and the actual out-turn on the revenue from the additional increase in the education tax, why has it been so drastically lower than what was projected? Certainly, it bears some analysis because PAYE hasn't fallen off like that, but not in such a drastic way and what about the regular education tax that is the old tax that you had, yes, has it fallen off by a ratio as excessive as this one? That's one thing. We haven't heard a proper analysis of that fall.

Secondly, I think that it is not acceptable for the Minister to kind of wonder and talk in a kind of loose way about the private sector getting involved with funding for students loan, no, it needs a more certain path, funding of our students in tertiary institutions, Mr. Speaker, it requires a more certain path. I am going to suggest to the Honourable Minister of Finance that until the education tax revs up somewhat he should consider approaching the PetroCaribé Fund for some interim funding to assist the Students' Loan Bureau to get over this hump as a result of this shortage in collections from the education tax. Remember that the original dream of the PetroCaribé Fund, including the dream of now deceased Mr. Chavez was human development, human resource development. Students loan enhancement from the PetroCaribé Fund would therefore be an appropriate use of funds from that particular window, and therefore I think that the Minister should not just leave it up, leave the Students' Loan Bureau up to wondering up and down the lane as to how

they are going to fill the gaps that have been created by the absence of these funds from the education tax.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak briefly about another area, the question of procurement, because that has come up time and again throughout the Supplementary Estimates delays in procurement, Ministers tell us delays in procurement; in education same thing, delays in procurement, waiting on that Report that the Minister has promised me. But this is emerging and this not a new phenomenon, it's been around from our time, from your time before that, it's been around, okay, but somebody, we have to bell this cat, okay. This is emerging as a major problem and needs to be addressed in a fulsome way, Mr. Speaker.

Projects that are realistically implementable should be selected and each ministry, department and agency needs to ensure the expeditious implementation of the projects on a timely basis within the fiscal year. I think it requires greater rigour to make the decision as to which projects are selected and whether they have the likelihood of being implemented. So what happens now, you know, is that when we have these projects that all are just summarily put back because of procurement problems maybe there were other projects out there had we given to those that those would have been more implementable. So I think that we have to wheel and come again and take another look at the whole procurement process. And to look at the identification of realistically implementable projects that can be implemented in particular budget year.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I still believe that we need to have a reconciliation between the admission of delays due to procurement and the constant statements made by the Minister of Finance today that cuts must be made to reach the targets, because they are not one and the same thing. And the Minister didn't want to accept it today, but I want to put it back on the table that cuts that have been derived as a result of the procurement programme being deficient can't be used as the argument for cuts to achieve fiscal targets. The two of them can't be reconciled in my view. And so I think - and I have already given the quotation from the Minister about, you know, the making the cuts which create the least disruption of the operational needs of the country. I am sure that he could not have meant that you take back money from repairing school buildings and stopping leaking - water leaking on children. He could not have meant that when he spoke of things that create the least disruption of the operational needs of the country; schooling of our children in a comfortable environment is an important operational need. It's an important daily operational need in our country and I put it to you that way, Minister.

In this cavalier way, is this the way fail to do minimum repairs to our prisons; repair leaking roofs at schools; pay for our soldiers food - food on a timely basis; fail to care adequately for those with disabilities or to maximize our learning curve with the e-

Learning programme? Which right now is not in primary school^ which we are told, Mr. Speaker, we're outfitting high schools first, but even as we're trying to outfit high schools first with the e-Learning programme we cut out $200 Million out of it just like that. So we're not even taking care of the high schools, but I put it to the Minister and to the Cabinet, Mr. Speaker, that it is urgent that in the next Budget coming up we stop ignoring the need to put the e-Learning programme into our primary schools as well.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, I close by mentioning a couple points which I think will be important in the debate to come and in the larger national debate. One such point is the constant devaluation of the Jamaican dollar, which has depreciated by 25 per cent in two years and two months. What are the consequences, Mr. Speaker, of that devaluation? Well, I have heard the Minister speaking about we have had an overvalued currency he says for too long. We need to have a competitive exchange rate. I want to put a rhetorical question to the Minister, does he what know what a competitive exchange rate is in Jamaica? Does anyone know what a competitive exchange is in this country? I don't even believe the International Monetary Fund knows what a competitive exchange rate is in Jamaica. That within the context of our problems in this country starting from the financial sector collapse; a competitive exchange rate is one of the most elusive things that we will ever confront in this country. And the best thing that this country needs is to have a dollar that is stable, that is predictable; the private sector can invest with confidence because they know what the exchange rate is going to be tomorrow when they invest and what interest rate exists.

What is happening now is with the dollar at a $108.40, every day is moving. The dollar is not stable at all. Prices are rising on a weekly basis. Walk into the supermarket. The price in there one week, within a week or two, the prices change in the supermarkets in the country. Business uncertainty is at an all time high still limiting investment and growth in the economy. It is affecting jobs; joblessness is a continuing problem in the country as well. And what is part of the response to that by some of our agencies: RGD, up user fees in some cases by 500 per cent. We hear the people complaining out there. So these self-financing institutions they are facing the inflation bug too. So they are now beginning to slap on the user fees upon the people who are of the same limited incomes—their incomes are not increasing but we are now slapping on additional charges on them. And one of the worse things that's happening which I mentioned before, Mr. Speaker, is the overall debt is increasing in part due to the devaluation of the exchange rate.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, we ask that the Member's time be extended for another - to complete his presentation, time enough to complete his presentation.

The SPEAKER: The question is to allow the Member's time to be extended sufficient for him to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw.

Mr. SHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And as I pointed out, without a stable exchange rate nobody knows where the debt is going to end up, certainly in nominal terms. And with that comes the increases in the cost of debt servicing and we have seen that in this Supplementary Estimate. So you save some money on debt exchange but now you have to turn around and pay out more money because you can't control the exchange rate. So in the book you'll see in multilateral loans a raft of loans where the notation is revised amount due to the exchange rate changes. In one case a contingency amount that was there for $5-odd Billion, Mr. Speaker, has now gone up by $1.2 Billion just for contingency in debt servicing. What is reason? As the Minister told me today, because in the book it wasn't stated. It said revised and it stopped. But the Minister has now confirmed that that entire increase of $1.2 Billion for that one line item is due to the exchange rate movement over the past year.

So we see, Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Minister we can talk about whether the dollar is competitive or not; it's a conundrum because the truth is that for the country to grow itself out its problems including its debt problems, grow itself into job creation, grow itself into foreign exchange earnings the country needs stability and an important pillar in the stability of a modern market economy is a stable exchange rate. That is something that we cannot avoid.

(Applause)

And, Mr. Speaker, the second major pillar that I will mention now is the issue of the major structural weakness of the bureaucracy. I believe that if we get the bureaucracy moving and that relates to procurement a lot. I think that can be done within the framework of being faithful to the IMF targets. But I really believe that the public sector and the bureaucracy need to have a whole new - a whole almost like a missionary zeal; a whole new attitude towards the part that they can play to get things freed up.

The Leader of the Opposition has mentioned on many occasions the need of us to expedite approvals whether in the parish council systems, in town planning, in NEPA, everybody - just get the thing freed up, approved things and people will - if you approve things and we expedite things and we can keep the dollar stable then you can watch the economy grow after that. And those are things on another occasion including the upcoming budget debate I think will afford us the opportunity to have further and better discussions on those matters. We have to find that formula for real stability in the economy. Real stability is not about passing IMF test alone. Real stability has to come from - yes, pass the IMF test but make sure that you are not being totally depended on. There is no magic in passing an IMF test. No magic.

(Cross talk)

Government MEMBERS: You wouldn't know that, you wouldn't know that.

Mr. SHAW: There is no magic in passing - when I gave you the economy...

Mr. DALLEY: Not even a test....

Mr. SHAW: ...and when I gave the economy after passing the first five IMF reviews...

Government MEMBERS: What!

Mr. SHAW: Yes, I did.

Mr. DALLEY: Pass what!

Mr. SHAW: Oh, yes we pass the first two reviews. Check the records, check the records. When I gave you the economy notwithstanding the IMF the economy - the dollar - start with that the dollar was stable and nobody can challenge that. (Applause) Nobody can challenge that. We pass three IMF test now and the dollar a gallop away. Galloping away and the people are suffering, but we're bragging about passing IMF test, okay.

(Cross talk)

So that is - the point is we need real stability, Mr. Minister and I verily believe that part of real stability is a stable exchange rate. Part of real stability is a bureaucracy that is responsive. Those are two things that can be worked on right away.

Let me just end by asking, Minister, is if in your closing if you would indicate to us when the next publication of the Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions will be published and made available to this Parliament.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

The SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr.Speaker, permission to speak from a seat other than mine.

The SPEAKER: You may proceed.

Mr. McKENZIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I feel it's an honoured privilege to be able to participate in this section of the Supplementary Debate.

I want to, Mr. Speaker, use the opportunity to touch a few areas of the portfolio responsibility which I have the honour of speaking on this side of the Honourable House.

I believe that the country is hoping that we will get past this Debate on the First Supplementary Estimates for 2013/2014 as quickly as possible, so that we can move on to the Estimates of 2014/2015.

Like my colleagues and many Jamaicans, we do not blame them, because these Supplementary Estimates have turned out to be nothing more than a major disappointment to the people of Jamaica. I am sure that when this Debate is over the country will express a common sigh of relief, and start praying for some improvement in 2014/2015.

But, Mr. Speaker, the indications are that as far as the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development is concerned, divine intervention may be a better proposition for that Ministry.

I am going to start, Mr. Speaker, with a very simple, basic issue, that of the National Heroes Park. This Park is the only - is one of a few sizeable green spaces in Kingston, and in fact, one of the largest in Jamaica. It is the resting place of our National Heroes, it has tremendous social heritage, has a recreational space and was a venue for some important national events in the past.

So, Mr. Speaker, I find it a little bit difficult that the Ministry would seek to cut the budget for the maintenance of National Heroes Park almost in half, from a meager Three Million Dollars ($3M), Mr. Speaker, down to One point Six Million Dollars ($1.6M). And when you consider, Mr. Speaker, that the Ministry of Finance occupies a significant portion of National Heroes Park for parking, it requires, Mr. Speaker, that this important national venue in the heart of the city, that the Ministry of Local Government, in consultation with the Ministry of Finance, consider the amount of One point Six ($1,6M) for the maintenance of that facility to be totally inadequate. And I urge the Government to reconsider the position as it relates to National Heroes Park.

It is significant to point, Mr. Speaker, in illustrating how callous the Ministry, and by extension, the Government has been, in putting together these Supplementary Estimates; so it came as little surprise, Mr. Speaker, that not even the Twenty-one Million ($21M) that was budgeted to assist our street people was saved. As I pointed out at the Standing Finance Committee meeting that although the amount might be small, Mr. Speaker, but I think that that is one area that the Government should not interfere with.

And while I am on the subject of street people, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister whether or not a survey was done to find out how many people are there in Jamaica, and how many of them are receiving assistance under this Programme. It really does not make any sense boasting that we have a programme for homeless people, when we are not even in a position, Mr. Speaker, to say how many of them are living on the streets, and how many are covered under this Programme.

So I am urging the Minister to do an audit, and to inform this House as to how many people are living on the streets of Jamaica, and how many of them are covered by this Programme. I am tempted to suggest that the number may have risen drastically over the past two years, considering the economic suffering that our people are going through, but I will await the outcome of the audit.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Everybody suffering!

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, the Recurrent Estimates for the Fire Service show that travelling for fire officers who are involved with the instruction and public education in fire prevention has been cut by some Three point Four Million Dollars (S3.4M). Now, how do you cut the compensation for travelling payable to firemen who we rely on to educate the public in fire prevention, considering the alarming number of fires we have been experiencing, the loss of lives, including small children, and the loss of property.

We all welcome, Mr. Speaker, the Sixty Million Dollars ($60M) allocated for the purchase of new equipment for the Fire Service, as well as the Eighty-five Million Dollars ($85M) included to complete payments for three new fire trucks the Ministry has been promising for some time now and which was included in the original Budget tabled in May.

However, if you look closely at the figures relating to the increase in the allocation, you will see that at the same time Six point Seven Million ($6.7M) has been cut from the Forty-three Million ($43M) allocated to the repairs to fire stations. Guess where that Six point Seven ($6.7M) went, Mr. Speaker? Four Million ($4M) went into the Eighty-five ($85M) to pay for the fire trucks, One point Two Million ($1.2M) went into the Thirty-four point Six Million ($34.6M) for the rehabilitation of fire vehicles, and One point Five Million ($1.5M) went into the Sixty Million (S60M) to purchase fire-fighting equipment. As old-time people would say, Mr. Speaker, you rob Peter to pay Paul, because that is exactly what is happening here.

Fire stations are badly in need of repairs and improvement, and there is no reason why funds to repair the stations should have been cut. But this is a perfect example of the juggling that this Government is doing to meet its expenses. I am not saying that people cannot juggle, but when the Government start juggling, they must bear in mind that they are juggling the lives of the Jamaican people while the hopes and aspirations of its young women and children, and the dreams of its elderly. They should remember that the promise was to balance people's lives, not to juggle it. This is not something that should be taken lightly, like you are playing Poker or Crown and Anchor.

Mr. Speaker, I want to touch on another important area under this Ministry, and that is the Social Development Commission, which has history linked to the founder of the People's National Party and National Hero, the Right Excellent Norman Manley.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Goodman!

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, the under-funding of this important aspect of government is alarming. I checked the Estimates, and there is nothing under Capital, Mr. Speaker, for the SDC, but there is some Forty-three Million Dollars ($43M) in the Current Expenditure for the Commission. But when you look closer, Thirty-five Million ($35M) of the increase was from Appropriation-in-Aid, and only Steven Million ($7M) came from the Consolidated Fund. It is obvious, therefore, that despite the severe under-funding in the Budget, the SDC is being asked to finance its survival for the rest of the year.

Mr. Speaker, an important arm of government such as the SDC which offers service Mr. Speaker to develop community projects cannot continue to suffer by Central Government, because they play a function, Mr. Speaker, and that function must be recognized. And if the work of the late Right Excellent Norman Washington Manley is to mean anything, then the Government should remember its founder, and to do more to keep the SDC alive, Mr. Speaker. And I urge the Government to reconsider its position on the Social Development Commission.

With all the problems, Mr. Speaker - including security - affecting our infirmaries, the only increase that sector has received was some Twenty-seven point Seven Million ($27.7M), and all of this money was to meet outstanding payments to health personnel,

including Matrons, under the Health Sector Reclassification exercise. The old people living in these infirmaries need some balancing too Mr. Speaker.

The recent developments in St. Mary tell us, Mr. Speaker, that there is urgent need for the poor in these infirmaries to be considered. The conditions in many of these infirmaries, Mr. Speaker, leave much to be desired. And it took an unfortunate incident, the assault of a 69-year-old woman in the keep and care of the State, for the Government to realize that there needs to be an examination of our infirmaries.

And you know Mr. Speaker - I am sorry that the Minister of Local Government is not here - the incident that took place at that infirmary, they tried to cover it up. It was not until I made a public statement on the matter, and the Minister of Local Government in response to the statement that I made, advised me to stay clear from trying to score political points.

Mr. Speaker, it was not my intention to score political points, it was my intention to bring to the public's attention the failure of the Ministry of Local Government to do what was necessary to protect those under its keep and care, Mr. Speaker. And I await the findings of that investigation that the Minister of Local Government has promised.

And, I hope, Mr. Speaker, that outside of what the law will take care of, that the Minister of Local Government will do what is necessary to ensure that there isn't a repeat of what took place, and the necessary disciplinary actions will be taken against those who facilitated - and let me repeat it - those who facilitated the act, and those who committed the act, Mr. Speaker. And it should never happen again! None of our elderly in the care of the State should be subjected to that kind of treatment.

An Opposition MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, let me turn now to the National Solid Waste Management Authority. The Authority has received an additional Fifty Million Dbllars ($50M) to be spent on public cleansing and garbage collection. This is the same Agency which a few months ago informed a Committee of this House, the PAAC, that it will have to make significant cuts in its already limited garbage-collection service, because the Two point Five Million ($2.5B) budgeted was well short of what is required.

If I may, Mr. Speaker, I would like to refer to a paragraph from a Report submitted by the Executive Director of the National Solid Waste Management Authority. She told the Committee that while the Solid Waste Authority seeks a budget of Eight point Two Billion Dollars ($8.2B) this year to finance its operation, it only received approximately Two point Five Billion ($2.5B), including some Three Hundred Million ($300M) of its own revenues.

She said that while areas likely to be affected by the cuts include maintenance of vehicles and equipment, fuel and other costs associated with its 55 garbage-collection units, providing covering materials for major disposal sites, and to provide critical infrastructure, including sanitation, light water, and shelter at most disposal sites. She

said that the agency really needs 274 trucks, doing two trips per day to do waste collection effectively. But it only had 55 units at the time, plus 80 contractors, bringing the total number of trucks to about 140 with the contractors doing two trips per day at a cost of approximately $15,000 per trip. Two trips per day, each contractor amounts to $30,000 per day.

Mr. Speaker, the $50 Million is nowhere adequate to meet the needs of the National Solid Waste Management Authority. There is a serious rat infestation right across Jamaica. In many communities, Mr. Speaker, residents have to resort to burning their own garbage, Mr. Speaker, because of lack of adequate garbage collection, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I note the recent findings of the Contractor General on a report of the agency a few years ago. I think the Contractor General owes it to himself, and to the nation to do a follow-up to see what has happened at the National Solid Waste Management Authority since the change of government, because my information is, the situation has never been as bad as it is now. And it is not only people on this side who are saying so, but there are Members on that side, and many Jamaicans, Mr. Speaker, who share the views that what is taking place now at that Agency cannot continue.

And, Mr. Speaker, I urge the Minister of Local Government to ensure - and I am hoping that during the Budget Debate, that the Minister will spend some time and speak to the issues facing the National Solid Waste Management Authority.

I note, Mr. Speaker, also, that the National Disaster Fund in the Ministry has been trimmed by some $30 Million. And the explanation, as I understand it, is that this $30 Million was used as a donation to assist some of our Eastern Caribbean neighbours who recently suffered a very bad disaster. Mr. Speaker, I am not against Jamaica making a donation to assist our CARICOM neighbours who suffer disasters, but I am very concerned that the resources of this Fund which are so depleted that it cannot even finance a proper disaster mitigation programme, was used for donation.

We have to look at this in the context that there is no contingency funding in the Budget, Mr. Speaker that speaks to major disasters in Jamaica. Let me repeat, that there is nothing in the Budget, Mr. Speaker, that speaks to major disaster in the country. We are gambling with the lives and property of our people.

And, in addition to that, there is a reduction of $106 Million from the $159 Million allocated to the community-based Landslide Risk Reduction Programme which is funded by the Japanese and the World Bank. And here again, we are taking a gamble with natural disasters. We cannot expect to be raiding the Tourism Enhancement Fund every time we have a disaster, including the flooding that was the case in St. Mary and Portland recently.

In addition to that, the explanation, Mr. Speaker, is that the reduction was due to a delay in the implementation of the project. I want to touch, before I close, Mr. Speaker, the question of multilateral funding. When you

look at page 7200B - 1 of the Estimate, and when you flip to page 7200B - 2, there is a programme, the Caribbean Local Development Finance Programme that is financed by the Caribbean - that is financed by the Canadian Agency, CIDA: Spending reduced by $13.3 Million this year due to the delay in project implementation. This seems to be something that has affected the public sector, Mr. Speaker. This has been happening too often over the past two years. Billions of dollars invested in projects to improve the lives of Jamaicans, from bilateral and multilateral agencies, continue to languish in ministries because of delays in the implementation of a - because of the lack of delays, Mr. Speaker, for all sorts of the reasons. This is not good for a relationship with these agencies. And we must stop it before a lot of these agencies get angry and withdraw funding.

Mr. Speaker, people can't be giving us money - people can't be giving us money to help us - we can't find it, and when people volunteer to give us these funding, Mr. Speaker, instead we jump and use it. We allow the funds to sit there until they have to return them. So, what is it you are saying; we don't need the services of these agencies, Mr. Speaker? That is not the case.

Mr. Speaker, I close by asking the Government what are their plans as it relates to urban and rural development. It is obvious, Mr. Speaker, that most persons who visit the Corporate Area in search of jobs and opportunities for creative involvement, Mr. Speaker, don't go back to the country.

You know, since the 60s when the most Honourable Edward Seaga had responsibility for social development, when he introduced the *Hundred Villages Development Plan* in which, Mr. Speaker, it looks at the question of developing rural areas and offering young people an opportunity to make a success of their lives...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, in the Budget just concluded - in the Budget just concluded, Mr. Speaker, we note that no provisions were made as it relates to urban and rural development. And I am urging the Government to think seriously on what is taking place in our urban centers. I am urging the Government to ensure that a significant allocation is made to promote and to encourage investment in rural areas, built around a plan for education and training facilities for our young people.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot depend on China Harbour and the Chinese Government to respond to our rural challenges. At least, Mr. Speaker, we must be bold enough as a Government to ensure that we provide the necessary framework to encourage persons from rural Jamaica to remain and to build their own communities. Mr. Speaker, failure to do so will continue to see a rise in the level of crime; will continue to see a rise in the level of unemployment, and making the urban centers more difficult to police.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to make this brief intervention on the closure of the Estimates.

The SPEAKER: Dr. Baugh.

Dr. BAUGH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the day is well-spent, and many very important issues have been addressed. And therefore, I will endeavour to be brief in my presentation.

My contention is the issue of human capital; the well-being of the Jamaican people, and what is happening to the people of our country in the context of this serious austerity programme being pursued.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Spokesman on Finance on this side, the Member from Manchester, who pointed out that devaluation, is something that is unstoppable, especially in the context of our balance of payments and our current account deficit, in terms of the balance of trade. As long as that exists, who can predict where the dollar will stop. It is rumoured that a target has been set for $120, but I am worried that even if the target was set and we reach $120, it will go beyond. And that was our experience in the 1990s that it moved from $5.50 to about $77 to US$1 by the year 2002. And it is quite obvious that it is difficult to set a target.

The Central Bank of Barbados' Governor made a statement that was carried in our Press, when he was questioned as to the issue of the Barbadian dollar being fixed, in relation to the exchange rate. And he said that the Guyanese dollar and the Jamaican dollar are not floating, that they are sinking. And that is, in fact, true.

Mr. Speaker, when we look back at the 1980s - because this is not the first time that we are pursuing austerity programmes. This is not the first time that we are hearing about fiscal deficit and fiscal prudence, and fiscal disciplines, and fiscal rules. It may be that the names have slightly changed. But, in the 1980s, it was the first time - and I was a Member of that Cabinet - the first time that we went through a programme of serious fiscal discipline. And I remember the Prime Minister at that time, Mr. Edward Seaga, also Minister of Finance, who said he was going to set it in such a way that nobody could pursue the profligacy and the indiscipline of the 1970s which ended up with a huge deficit, with serious unemployment and an economic crisis in Jamaica.

I should also point out, as it is now relevant - and this is topical today - that in the 1980s, we failed several IMF tests. But, Mr. Speaker, the country grew eventually, from 1985, at an average of six per cent per year GDP growth. Unemployment was significantly reduced. The dollar was stabilized. Inflation was controlled. And we must ask ourselves why, although we were pursuing fiscal discipline and fiscal policies, similar to what we are discussing today.

And the reason is that in addition to the policies of fiscal discipline, the Government of that day, in the 1980s actively, and aggressively, and creatively mobilized the country pursuing productive enterprises. No one can forget the effect of the 807 garment industry, when at the beginning we exported US$25 Million per year which moved up to US$500 Million per year and creating significant employment. Agro 21, HEART training for a good cross-section of people, winter vegetables, Spring Plains, all these were productive enterprises.

And so today, Mr. Speaker, in the context of austerity programme being pursued, I am concerned - we on this side are concerned that there is a propensity to pursue one-track programmes - economic programmes in Jamaica. It is as if people are inured to the consequences of these severe programmes. There is a lack of a comprehensive approach. It is not counter balanced by compensatory policies, and it is a debate that is taking place across the world as to whether in the current crisis, we should be pursuing solely, a procyclical. Procyclical means that cutting costs, cutting expenditure in the public sector, and at the same time imposing on private sector, taxes and other measures that also compromise the ability of private sector to create jobs and to create export, and to deal with the question of our trade deficit.

Mr. Speaker, this propensity for a one-track approach to solving our economic problems is manifest over the years. The first instance was in the 70s, when a centralized command economy was pursued, principally on ideological grounds, and drove capital and skills out of the country, and created an economic crisis.

In the 1990s, there was a... (Inaudible) ...as the then Government turned around and pursued policies that resulted in a 1,500 per cent devaluation over the years, caused mega inflations, caused excessive increase in interest rates - and, Mr. Speaker, I was a victim of that - negotiating an interest rate for a loan at 15 per cent. When it arrived it was 45 per cent, and by the time it was implemented it was 80 per cent.

And then, Mr. Speaker, the current severe austerity programme is causing contraction of the economy. The Minister of Finance has said that the objective is to live within our means. But what if we observe here, Mr. Speaker - and this is in general - that the severe austerity leads to contraction of the economy, because it affects both the public and the private sector, it reduces revenue to the Government as we are now seeing this is why we are here today with the Supplementary Estimates, to acknowledge that the revenues have not performed as expected. And, therefore, one has to consider not the issue of living within our means, but how do we sustain the means if the means are contracting, then the quality of life is also going to decline. And that in effect, is why I am concerned about our human capital, our people, because there are factors of production that can help our economy.

The first factor of production is land and natural resources and Jamaica is not very rich in natural resources, not like Trinidad and Tobago with its resources of petroleum, Mr. Speaker, not like countries in Central America where they have volcanic soil or even Mauritius, which is highly productive, Jamaica is a limestone country, the soil is not that good, a lot of our country is in the hills. As a matter of fact, it is somewhere between 10 and 15% of our land is actually arable land. And we have a huge population density, somewhere in the region of 260 per square kilometer in terms of land. And for arable land, the population density is much more than that. It means that every inch, every

square kilometer of land in Jamaica must be put into production.

The second factor of production is financial capital and that's where we are again starving, we are hoping to attract foreign direct investment. Can we attract foreign direct investment when the policies we are pursuing are creating serious contraction in the economy that it is having a negative impact on our human resources.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we are not fortunate as people were in Europe in the postwar era when a Marshall Plan was implemented. That Marshall Plan, named after George Marshall the Secretary of State to the United States of America at that time about 1948, involved the expenditure of some US$45 Billion, equivalent today to at least half a Trillion US Dollars. Out of that grew the recovery of Europe, out of that grew the effect on Asia, we have not been fortunate to have that kind of capitalization. I am bold enough to say that the history of Europe would be different today in the absence of that Marshall Plan.

And then there are other Plans; Operation Bootstrap, Plan Colombia, Mr. Speaker, we are not fortunate to have benefitted from that, we have to find a way within the context of our own abilities to promote production and development and growth in our country.

So, Mr. Speaker, that run-up is just to explain that we have to depend on our human resources to a large extent. And what is going to make a difference to us is the issue of total factor production, Mr. Speaker, in that we require human capital to be efficient and productive. Mr. Speaker, the effect of the current austerity programme is to make worse certain serious social problems that we have and I want to concentrate on the health services.

I have already spoken in this House about what happens to our people under conditions of austerity, because they don't have good access to medication and pharmaceuticals, there is a much higher incidence of the complications of chronic diseases. Productive people in mid-life usually, not only lose limbs but develop complications such as renal disease, heart disease and stroke. I have seen this in my own constituency. Time and again we see women who have children and who have serious responsibilities because sometimes they are the only bread-winner. They plant the ground, they go to market and are responsible for a household of about five to seven children, and suddenly they are removed from the face of the earth.

Mr. Speaker, we have to be concerned about the inflationary effect of the devaluation on medication, because as we speak, the prices on medications - which are all imported, we don't manufacture to any degree medication in this country - the prices are rapidly increasing, putting medication out of the reach of some of our people. There is no question.

The National Health Fund is a very good Fund, it's a successful programme and I applaud it, but it is limited to certain chronic diseases, it is limited in availability and many patients, many patients suffer the consequences.

Mr. Speaker, one of the areas that is of great concern to me and I am certain, and I

mention it today, of concern to most parliamentarians, is that from time to time we are approached by our citizens, our constituents because they have been to a hospital, they have taken suddenly ill, they are incapacitated, but in order to treat their illness they need certain materials, especially surgical materials, implants, especially orthopedic implants, mesh for repairing hernias, pacemakers for the heart, which is a matter of life and death, and they are given a bill, they are told yes, you can have your operation, but they are given a bill. And they now have to go and purchase the material before they can access care.

The same thing happens with investigations and tests. They need an ultrasound, they need CAT scan, they need MRIs and that technology is abundantly available in Jamaica. If one of the things we have achieved, Mr. Speaker, is to provide the technology and the skills for good medical care of a very high standard in this country. But again, certain of our people, especially poor people have difficulty gaining access because they cannot afford the provision of these things. And I have suggested to the Minister of Finance that he seriously considers, that within the context of the National Health Fund that preparations are made to finance these materials for people, not just the pharmaceuticals for chronic diseases, but materials that can help them to access surgical care when they need it, and also to access treatment for cancers, which is very expensive.

Mr. Speaker, the other aspect is the quality of life of our people in terms of housing, overcrowding, in terms of the socialization of our children. I want to, in particular, address the tragedy of the youth, youth unemployment in general and I would like to point out a parallel of another country that is pursuing a serious austerity programme and that country is Greece. Greece is a country, which is an OECD country (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), which means it is of a certain standard. Their economy, the size of their economy is over US$200 Billion. They undertook hosting the Olympics in 2004, they ran into a crisis and they are going through the same austerity programmes with the consequence that unemployment has reached 29% and youth unemployment is 59%. The question is, Mr. Speaker, are we going to continue to go in that direction?

I'm sure each Member of Parliament is facing his own constituency with the high demand for overseas work. Mr. Speaker, there is great anticipation and expectation of the Farm Work Programme for Canada. I get hundreds of calls per week of people who are aspiring to go. I've met many young middle-management young ladies in New Kingston in my practice who are saying that they have at last decided to leave the country to go to Canada or the United States of America. There is a new wave of people who are getting out of the country because of the difficulties, the economic difficulties that they face.

One other area, Mr. Speaker that I want

to emphasize is the issue of mental illness. Again, we discussed it when we were in the Finance Committee. The question is, is mental illness on the rise? I have before said that surveys in similar countries, especially in urban areas done abroad have shown that there is a high incidence of psychological disorders, some of them leading to hostility and maybe even causing violence in the country.

In the earlier part of this millennium, Mr. Speaker, a decision was taken in the context of the then austerity programme to close the Bellevue Hospital. We contested this decision and it was compromised, it is not closed, but severely reduced in terms of its capacity for the treatment of patients. The intention is a good plan to decentralize to regions, to parishes and to provide care for people in their communities. But it is important for us to review this policy because I do not believe that the provisions were ever made, they never materialized, and there is inadequacy of the services provided in the communities and at home. Time and again we are confronted with mothers of psychotics who have difficulty controlling them, who feel themselves at risk. I have known one mother who, after complaining and seeking help was actually killed by her son, because he's a psychotic.

The other concern I have is that recently, there have been some gruesome murders. And these murders were committed, when you read the details you will find out that they were committed by people who are of unsound mind and who have threatened to do this before, threatened the same people or just threaten in general, like the two boys from Clarendon who was found hacked to death. It was known that there was someone in the community who was making these threats. Like the young woman who was killed by her spouse. Like the young girl in St. Thomas whose neck was cut, obviously by a man of unsound mind. And I have raised the issue today, what provisions have been made for treating the criminally insane in a specialized way that is necessary to deal with this issue, where the decanting of people from Bellevue to the community. Where there are inadequacies of services in the community? What has happened is that they are coming into confrontation with the Police Force, with the arm of the law. One person of unsound mind was recently beaten into unconsciousness and admitted to a hospital, others have been killed in the past, but because of this Policy and because of the inadequacy of treating them, because of the deteriorating circumstances in our economy, undermining the abilities that exist in the community, there is a serious deficiency here, and I believe our people is suffering the consequence when people are extremely affected, are of unsound mind, and are free to roam the community.

Mr. Speaker, our goal must not just be passing the IMF test. Our Spokesman on Finance has made a good point that it goes beyond that. I would like to say to you that it goes beyond just passing the test to the quality of life of our people. I do not believe that it is impossible under the current economic circumstances. I believe that if you don't have the money to provide a stimulus programme

creative ways can be found. And under the Golding administration with this Spokesman who was Minister of Finance at the time, creative ways were found to stimulate the economy and the result was stabilization of the economy and the creation growth, as he said, 1.3% when we gave up office, 1.3% for the year.

One of the things that I fail to understand is why we are not pushing agriculture to a greater degree. I am aware of the efforts. I am aware of the failures: the onion farms that failed, the shrimp farms that closed, and those were foreign investments, foreign direct investments. But in my constituency and in many other constituencies, I am certain in St. Mary and constituencies that are predominantly agricultural land is idle, people are idle, farmers don't have capital, they don't have materials and they don't have equipment. To my mind it would be a simple procedure to stimulate agriculture marry it to tourism, as we have been discussing over the years, and provide opportunities for employment and provide opportunities for improving our export, provide opportunities for a better economy. But, Mr. Speaker, we cannot achieve that when we open up our economy to all kinds of imports without any regard for the economy of our farmers. There are many examples but I have made the example in this House, I speak particularly of imports of pork because that is most evident, that 3.3 million kilogrammes of pork were imported into the island in one year and created a glut.

Mr. Speaker, I promise you that you cannot export to Japan rice, it is protected; you cannot export dairy to Switzerland, it is protected. It is important for Jamaica to focus more on the quality of the life of our farmers and give them protection in those areas that they are competent to produce high quality products. There are many such areas but the farmers are now inundated with imports from abroad. Mr. Speaker, it helps the traders, it doesn't help the farmers. I have seen my own farmers who were doing very, very well with the pork industry; high production, first-rate quality and suddenly found out that there were no markets for their products when the Government changed in 2011, and it is because of the influx of this pork from abroad. So let us find creative means of creating opportunities for our own people, especially the poor people of the country, in rural Jamaica, to stimulate them by giving them the opportunities. Let us proceed, Mr. Speaker, to embark on technological training to create productivity at all levels.

I recently learnt that India has become a software giant not just the usual ICT but a software giant, and opportunities are great in Jamaica. I have been told that there is a need for more people to be in this area of specialization. Why don't we train our people? Apart from that, Mr. Speaker, and agro-processing, we need to fix the infrastructure, make sure that water is available to our farmers and in general reach for the low hanging fruits and to make our economy more productive. It is only then that we can counter balance the effects of this severe austerity programme. Under the circumstances where our human capital is being severely impaired

it is impossible for us to attract foreign direct investment. It may well be that the Chinese are going to save us, they are building highways, they are involved in agriculture and the Logistics Centre is a big promise. But that alone cannot do it. We need a broad-based effort to stimulate our economy and there are many low hanging fruits. I would like to suggest to us that we make the goal the quality of life of our people, especially our farmers, to make sure that we will survive this period of severe austerity programme.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much. (Applause)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Samuda.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker, before you ask Mr. Samuda to speak, based on the time it is 8 o'clock, I don't recall the House Leader seeking permission for us to go beyond 7 o'clock - 7:30, so I think the House Leader needs to make provision for the House to sit beyond the time. No provision was sought.

The SPEAKER: Your point is well taken, Mr. Warmington.

House Leader.

Mr. SHAW: *Yuh fi* do your work.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, the time having passed 7:30, I now ask for us to continue the session towards completion.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the time be extended to allow for the House to complete its business.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. SAMUDA: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

You must excuse my voice I've been having trouble with it. I do not intend to delay this Honourable House much longer because we have been here a long time, all morning, and I just want to try my best to make my presentation in the most concise manner.

First of all, I just want to indicate that, as I have said before in this Honouarable House, I think, Minister, your heart is in the right place. You assessment of our problems, however, has not been subject to the remedies that are necessary to solve it. I believe that you caved in with the IMF. I believe that you should have taken a page out of 1985 experience with Edward Seaga when they insisted that we had to devalue our dollar. They didn't like the auction system, we refused and we were on our own for a year after our dollar stabilized and we experienced great progress at the end of the nineties. (Applause) They are not terribly concerned about - they talk about it now because they see the danger you are in, because without growth you can't pay them back. The fact is though the medicines that they have imposed on you are too drastic. The period is too short. They are putting pressure on this little country that, quite frankly, I am not sure they put on all other countries, especially the European countries. So I think that you have literally caved in too soon because you are anxious to come to an agreement. You are anxious to come to an agreement.

Mr. Speaker, we are having this Debate at a time when our unemployment is rising, there is no profit in the private sector.

The private sector is being deprived of the necessary inputs to grow their business. Raw material imports are down. Capital goods imports are down. You don't stimulate production, local production by reducing your importation of raw materials and capitals.

Our exports, our exports to be meaningful must have the largest possible local content. In agriculture for instance, we are seeing some encouraging signs, but on the export side we are down in sugar by nearly 50%, nearly 50% at the end of the year.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at, as my colleagues has said, question of capital, look at what the productive sector is taking out of the banking sector to enable them to grow; the manufacturing sector in terms of loans from the commercial banks and from the non-commercial banking financial houses is flat; construction is worse than flat, it's negative compared to...

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Dr. Phillips)

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, in 2012...

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Member is misleading the House - if he is referring to the latest reports, the quarterly reports of the PIOJ and the Bank of Jamaica, it is not true that construction is negative.

Mr. HOLNESS: Flat, flat!

Mr. SAMUDA: Allow me to...

Dr. PHILLIPS: He said it is worse than flat, it is negative. We can go and get **Hansard**. It is not true.

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, I urge you to listen carefully to me. I said you assessed it through the access to finance that they borrow to expand and in the area of construction, I am saying this without any fear of contradiction, that the banking sector, the non-bank loans in construction is minus, minus over last year; 2012 it was $739 Million. In this year, last December, 2013, it was $599, a substantial, substantial reduction. So there is no question, don't challenge me with those things, you should know that by this.

Dr. PHILLIPS: That was not what you have said.

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, we continue to see a trade balance that is four times our total exports - a trade deficit, four times. In other words, our trade deficit as at December 13 was US$1,168 Million. We were nearly four times below our total merchandize export. So he is in a box of bricks. What has he done, he has taken bad choices. He has made bad choices. I started by saying his heart is in the right place, his strategies are wrong. He has made bad decisions and what are those bad choices - and no smiling away of these serious matters is going to help you, my friend.

Dr. GUY: Make up your mind.

Mr. SAMUDA: I said his heart is in the right place, he has made bad decision. What do I mean by bad decision? How in God's name can you come to a country like Jamaica and tell us that in order to grow our economy you are going to deny your marketing arm, the arm that is going to make you encourage people to leave investments elsewhere and come to Jamaica; you cut off their promotional funding, you reduce their goods that they need to expand their operations

worldwide, you contain them and then you expect to experience increase in foreign direct investment. Mr. Speaker, it is highly unlikely that we will achieve the objectives in this Budget or anyone that resembles this because he simply has not focused on the areas of greatest need. He has been so preoccupied with trying to reduce his deficit that he has withheld payments.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I made mention of it in the Committee, the easiest way to try and fool a Board of Directors is to conceal expenses. I speak of that from personal experience. I was in a company where somebody tried to do that and misled the Board of Directors into believing that we had made a handsome profit, why, because the employees, the executives were going to benefit from the profits, bonuses. What are our bonuses, a feel good for a short while? So he has literally come here and tried to pull the wool over our eyes by telling us that he has been very efficient in containing expenses. He has not contained expenses, he has contained payments. (Applause) That is what he has contained payments that are due and payable and he can only do that because we don't have an accrual system that dictates that you must book your accounts payable. That's why I have asked for it repeatedly. No business, no country can run like this on a cash basis. We should get rid of it and go to an accrual system where we know what our debts are and we keep constant view of it and we come to this House and table as the Minister, former Minister of Finance has said, table your indebtedness to the country, then you can come to the country with a clear heart and tell them exactly what the state of their finance is. That's what you would have to do if you are a member of a Board, if you are a managing director or a financial director of a company. But I am not going to beat him up anymore for the day. I have done enough of that.

I want - I want Minister to put to you a few recommendations. Firstly, I want you to review your budget strategy for your investment promotion arm, JAMPRO. I want you to encourage local business as well as promoting foreign direct investment. You can't encourage investors to come here if you don't encourage local investors to indicate their confidence in their own country. So there is the focus: focus on local investors and make sure that you encourage them in every way. In the productive sector, Mr. Speaker, I unreservedly declare that we must fast track the importation of raw materials and capital goods; put that ahead of consumer goods. The largest import bill that we have to face is consumer goods; take away oil, *et cetera;* that is where (Inaudible). So we want to fast track raw materials and capital goods; don't facilitate consumption, promote production.

Mr. SHAW: Hear, hear!

(Applause)

Mr. SAMUDA: We need to finance in a meaningful way the creative industries. You can't go hypocritically talking about you believe in the promotion of our artistes, the promotion of those who produce and have intellectual property that is marketable and at the same time you're putting pressure on the agency responsible for ensuring that that is

properly promoted. You don't even have a film director right now. What is happening in JAMPRO it's a shame because it is being reduced in the scope, size and content, because it lacks financing.

Mr. SHAW: Vanishing.

Mr. SAMUDA: Vanishing.

Mr. SHAW: Vanishing.

Mr. SAMUDA: So that's why I say he's makes bad choices. I don't want anybody get me strong. I'm not saying that everything he has done is bad; I am saying in certain key areas he has made bad choices.

Mr. SHAW: And that's why Cabinet is not (Inaudible). The whole a *dem*.

(Cross talk)

Mr. SAMUDA: He needs to finance the training of not only private sector, not only persons for private sector such as the ICT sector, he needs to build ICT facilities we have been talking about the expansion of ICT for too long and we haven't built one building. The Government has not built through public/private partnership one building; we have not provided a seat. We had plan at Caymans Enterprise Zone and they haven't done one scintilla of work towards that since coming to office although the blueprint is on the table. Ground should have broken in August, 2011 for the development of that and it still remains as is.

Mr. DALLEY: Why didn't you? Why did it remain? You were the Minister.

(Cross talk/Laughter)

Mr. SAMUDA: That is another problem for another day. That's another discussion for another day.

We need to establish a specific structure to encourage production for export.

Opposition MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. SAMUDA: People say production. You must have production with a purpose and the purpose must be, Mr. Speaker, just as my colleague from West Central St. Catherine has said we must produce from the goods that we - we must build out on the goods that we produce, agro industry, we must start to have that value added so we can earn foreign exchange and retain it in Jamaica; that is what is necessary.

Mr. Speaker, do you. know, Mr. Speaker, that there is an experience we had in this country where a firm decided to give us a turnkey operation, in Naggo Head - you have heard them speak of that repeatedly; two hundred thousand square feet of building. We could today have two thousand young people employed over there and nothing has become of it. We had got to the stage we could simply move ahead with the project and you know why, because of that terrible scourge on the land called bureaucracy. It is worse than the tax man. It is more of a pickpocket in the context of growing our economy; bureaucracy. And the acceptance of the fact that when an idea comes before people who have the ability to decide, they must decide; be decisive, decide and move forward in an expeditious way. And that is why I say we must accelerate the pace at which we dredge the Kingston Harbour before we lose the opportunity. Others are not waiting on us they are already far advanced in that process, right, and we must do that. In addition, I anxiously

await the outcome of the environmental assessment study on the Goat Islands, because if there is no environmental abuse every single Jamaican owes it to themselves and their future generations to promote such a development.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. SAMUDA: The southern belt of St. Catherine coming round to Kingston and St. Andrew and Clarendon is an industrial belt. It's not an agricultural belt. It cannot. It's too high in limestone. It is designed as God would put it, adjacent to deepwater, that is accessible if properly utilized that will revolutionize the expansion development of this great country of ours. We mustn't sit around waiting for months for a decision. Make timetable. Put a timetable on the completion of that so that the Jamaica can know where we stand and as soon as it comes in, if it is not abusive to our environment we must press along rapidly before we lose the boat.

(Applause/Cross talk)

So, finally, Mr. Speaker, I say that these problems that we're on have already started to take negative - have negative impact on us socially. Do you know that as I speak here, Mr. Speaker, that the prison in Montego Bay that there is a riot on today? Do you know they riot because the supplier of the food has walked out for nonpayment?

Mr. DALLEY: There's a prison in MoBay?

(Cross talk)

Mr. CHUCK: Jailhouse.

Mr. SAMUDA: The jailhouse. The lock-up. They have walked out. The previous supplier of food, Mr. Speaker, went bankrupt. The new supplier has walked out because she can't get pay and so today in your town and you probably heard about, it, they have rioted today. That is the beginning of rot that is setting in. So when I hear these armchair economic philosophers talking about how wonderful we are doing and how great the Minister is handling the affairs of the country that is living in a fool's paradise. Time has a spanner to fit every nut and time has a spanner to fit this delusionary mood in which we find ourselves that we are doing so well. We are in the deep, deep, deep trouble and we can only get out of it by ensuring the strategies employed by the Government through the Minister of Finance who is leader of that team are appropriate to meet the requirements necessary to move us forward.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I take my seat.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Chuck.

Mr. CHUCK: Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to make a short contribution to this debate too and it will be seen that, indeed, I am on the same page as previous speakers in terms of what's a being said and how we focus on this Supplementary Budget, because, Mr. Speaker, we have heard from the Minister of Finance and from persons who support him that we're on the right track. The economy is on the right track. Growth is showing and that debt is reducing - debt to GDP is reducing. But, Mr. Speaker is that really the true position? Are we really on the right track?

A Government MEMBER: Yes.

Mr. CHUCK: The right path?

A Government MEMBER: Yes.

Mr. CHUCK: And this right path taking us to prosperity or to financial hell? (Applause) Is it to prosperity or to financial hell...

A Government MEMBER: No, prosperity.

Mr. CHUCK: ...because, Mr. Speaker, when the Minister tells us that debt to GDP has reduced from 147 to 139 per cent. He didn't tell you that in 2012 it increased from 140 to 147; and in 2013 moved back down to 139. So the Minister is really telling you what is a real yo-yo; you move up and then you move down.

(Cross talk)

So there is no doubt, Mr. Speaker, to say that it move down in one year without telling you that in the previous year it move from 140 to 147 is not giving you the full story. But, Mr. Speaker, if the economy is on the right track, why are companies laying off staff? And, Mr. Speaker, it is the most painful thing, Mr. Speaker, when the people having been in job for years, for decades and lose their jobs and people who are in a managerial positions, people who have been in institutions for long periods and having been laid off, Mr. Speaker, the chance of getting another job is really dim. And you are seeing this, Mr. Speaker…

(Cross talk) (The Deputy Speaker gavels)

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Chuck, continue please. Members.

Mr. CHUCK: Mr. Speaker, please the point, Mr. Speaker, to repeat, if the economy is on the right track why are so many companies laying off workers and so many companies, Mr. Speaker, having great difficulty and challenges retaining their staff? Believe me, Mr. Speaker, all the businesses across Jamaica are telling you that business is down and they are having challenges retaining their staff because most of these staff have served for extended periods and they recognize the human suffering if they should lay off staff. Mr. Speaker, if the economy is on the right track why is our dollar depreciating by almost a dollar per month? In 2013, Mr. Speaker, the dollar went from $92 to $105 and in the first three months of this year it has move from $105 to $108, which is over one dollar per month, Mr. Speaker. And where is it going to end?

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, I would like the Minister of Finance to tell this House what is it going to stop the dollar from the moving from the projected figure of 120? What is it that going to stop it from moving to $150 or to $200 or beyond.

And that is why, Mr. Speaker, when we say you need a stable dollar, put a figure. Is it one-fifty, is it one-twenty, and let us defend it at that figure. Because at the moment floating it, Mr. Speaker, it is not floating as the previous speaker indicated the Governor from Barbados, it is a sinking dollar. And, Mr. Speaker, there is nothing to stop it.

And the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker, says nothing is wrong with some devaluation because it becomes more competitive, the economy becomes more competitive. How can we be competitive, Mr. Speaker, when we are exporting nothing, nothing of any consequence!

As the previous speaker told you, Mr. Speaker, over the past two years, with a devaluing dollar, the current account is still four times our export. The export is not increasing and the current account deficit is not decreasing. In other words, Mr. Speaker, no increase in export, no decrease in import, which means, Mr. Speaker, that the competitiveness of our economy is not really bearing any fruit.

And, Mr. Speaker, if you want to see how poor our export is, just pass by Newport West and see the thousands of containers that come in with goods and remain there idle. Those containers, Mr. Speaker, in any well-run economy should be leaving with goods, but you see them down there looking stacked up five and six stories high, thousands of them, because, Mr. Speaker, they are empty, and it is expensive to move them off the dock.

So, Mr. Speaker, what we are saying is, if you are competitive, many of those containers would be leaving with goods. But no goods are being produced, Mr. Speaker, to export. And the truth, Mr. Speaker, as the previous speaker has said, we have not as a country, given enough prominence and priority to export. And this country can never, ever achieve prosperity unless we concentrate on manufacturing, industrialization and production that export.

Mr. Speaker, that is how the Asian countries became tigers of the world economy. And you have to look at a comparison, Mr. Speaker, of those countries in Asia that succeeded and those that failed. When you look at countries - the four Tigers, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, and compare them with countries like Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, what the Tigers did, Mr. Speaker, they concentrated on those industries that were performing for export, as against the Philippines, where they concentrated on import substitution, which is what we are concentrating on.

And I say, Mr. Speaker - and I hope that the Government, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and maybe the Minister of Agriculture, will speak as to how Jamaica can be so transformed that we stop looking at production for consumption, and look at consump - sorry, production for export because unless we do that, Mr. Speaker, we are going to fail and continue to fail as a country.

What we have been doing, Mr. Speaker, to balance the Budget, is taxation. And what the Minister is now discovering is that the additional taxation that he has imposed, that more taxation doesn't mean more taxes, indeed, it means less taxes, because he has collected less taxes with more taxation.

And a good example, Mr. Speaker...

(*Sotto voce* comments from a Government Member)

Mr. CHUCK: You don't understand that. He has raised taxes and collected less.

An Opposition MEMBER: Diminishing returns.

Mr. CHUCK: Diminishing returns.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHUCK: And a good example, Mr. Speaker, a good example which the Minister of Finance brought here tonight, is that he has

increased Stamp Duty and Transfer Tax, which the former Minister reduced, but in the past year he increased Stamp Duty from 3 to 4 per cent, and Transfer Tax from 4 to 5 per cent, and collected Eight Hundred and Eighty-two Million Dollars (S882M) less. A good example, Mr. Speaker, where he raised the Stamp Duty and Transfer Taxes, and he admitted tonight that they collected less, Eight Hundred and Eighty-two Million ($882M), Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is quite clear that the Minister is learning. Because he is admitting that he is collecting less from the increased Stamp Duty and Transfer Taxes, and also that the economic adjustment is not only difficult, but they are collecting less from PAYE, because staff taxation has reduced.

And, Mr. Speaker, if it is one thing this Minister and this Government can do while they are in office, is to transform their way of thinking towards business. Because, Mr. Speaker, in the seventies, in the two previous dispensations of this Government, in the seventies they devastated the business sector. The managerial class migrated between '72 and 1980. Between 1989, Mr. Speaker, and 2005, hundreds of businesses capsized and downsized.

When you think, Mr. Speaker, in St. Thomas we had Goodyear factory producing tyres. Right now, Mr. Speaker, we have in excess of 500,000 motor cars using at least four tyres, on average, per year, two million tyres per year. Every single one is imported, when, Mr. Speaker, twenty years ago they would have been produced in Good Year factory in St. Thomas.

Mr. McKENZIE: Empty! Empty!

Mr. CHUCK: Empty! Rotting! Rotting!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHUCK: Mr. Speaker, every morning every single one of us - every single person listening to us, Mr. Speaker, we brush our teeth with toothpaste, we bathe our bodies with soap. Twenty years ago, Mr. Speaker, the toothpaste and soap were produced here. Not one single tube of toothpaste that we use today is produced here! Nor soap, Mr. Speaker! The only thing that is produced here is blue soap, and you can't really bathe with that.

(Laughter/*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. PARCHMENT: Bomber is produced here!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHUCK: And what I am saying, Mr. Speaker, you had a situation, Mr. Speaker, where fifteen/twenty years ago soap, toothpaste, razor blade, Mr. Speaker, that we, the men, use every day - and some women - not one is produced here, Mr. Speaker, all of it is imported.

And, Mr. Speaker, all that one is saying - and, Mr. Speaker, I can repeat the number of things that were produced here 15/20 years ago. Steel that is used in the construction industry, virtually light, virtually everything, Mr. Speaker, Spanish Town Road was a beehive of activity. Now when you pass on Spanish Town Road, nothing - it looks more like a cemetery as you pass on Spanish Town Road.

And I am making the point, unless we transform the economy so that we can shift again to have some more manufacturing in this country where those industries that used to produce, not only for us, but also for export, we are down the wrong economic path. Unless we can start to open up manufacturing and industrial plants that produce for us, the consumers, and also for export, there is no question, Mr. Speaker that we cannot, cannot create prosperity in this country.

And, Mr. Speaker, what I urge the Government, you have to become friendly and attractive to the business community. Unless you are friendly and attractive to the business community, we are not going to have any expansion of business, and we are not going to get investors coming into this country.

And, I can only hope, Mr. Speaker, that under this IMF Programme, which is causing great, great despair amongst the vast majority of our people, and in spite of the Twenty Billion Dollars ($20B) that the Minister says is being used to ease the suffering of the poor, through PATH, through the School-Feeding Programme, the CDF, *et cetera*, that the pain and despair amongst our constituents right across Jamaica is being felt every day. That Twenty Million Dollars ($20B) is not easing the difficulties and challenges that they have.

And I say, Mr. Speaker that is not the way to go. The way to go has to be to ensure that the economic engines really are pumped up. And only when the economic engines are given the necessary opportunity to expand can the suffering of our poor be eased. But under this present Programme - we passed the IMF Test, of course, but the question is, are there other programmes that could be used to ease the suffering of the poor, and not only the Twenty Billion Dollars ($20B) that the Minister speaks about, but we have to find ways and means, Mr. Speaker, for businesses to expand. And not only businesses for consumption, but as the previous speaker said, businesses that can produce to export.

I say to the Minister of Finance, in the next Budget, unless they have some policy, some incentive, some stimulation for the private sector to really start to grow, then believe me, Mr. Speaker, we will be coming back here next year speaking the same arguments, speaking the same sounds, asking the question, when are we, as a country going to start moving forward?

So my plea tonight, Mr. Speaker, is to urge the Government, where you think you are on the right track think about it again, because the economic indicators are not suggesting you are on the right track. I ask the Government to think about what happened in their previous dispensations and to do the very reverse. Because what happened in their two previous dispensations was that the business sector was totally devastated, businesses closed. Make sure that you do the reverse this time, so that businesses can open and really expand. Because if you don't do that, next year, five years time, you will have very few businesses from which you are going to get taxation, because they are going to downsize and close again. So I urge you, Minister - you may well feel you are on the right track, but I urge you, think about it, because some of the

indicators suggest otherwise. And when you return, not only in your closing, Minister, but when you come back in the next Budget, I urge you to ask the question and to answer it, are we doing enough? Are we doing enough to really inspire the business sector to expand and to grow?

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Holness.

Mr. HOLNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to address you at this late hour. It demonstrates, in a way, Mr. Speaker, that Parliament takes its work seriously, and the Members who have decided to stay here, I believe the public should take careful note. The Opposition, of course, Mr. Speaker, is very well represented, and we have participated with substance. The Minister, for very good reason, is uncomfortable when our Members rise to make the points that we have, because we have shown up the illusion that the Government is trying to create, that all is well and we are on the right track.

Mr. CHARLES: We have more Members in the House than them.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, from what I have heard the Minister said, the Minister seems to be buying into this notion that all is well; we are on the right track. I want to say, Mr. Speaker that the Opposition has taken a very responsible and progressive view of the economic situation in which we find ourselves. And whilst the Minister may secretly harbor concerns in his mind - he won't say them publicly, but the Opposition has a duty, Mr. Speaker, to highlight some of the problems, and also, to show alternatives.

Mr. Speaker, I am certain that when the Minister spoke in tabling the Budget, as he always does, he mentions the National Debt. In fact, the entire economic policy of the Government goes right back to, we must do what we have to do because of the National Debt. The National Debt now stands, the Minister says, at one hundred and - Minister, please correct me if I am wrong; you are very quick to do so - 139 per cent of GDP.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Dr. Phillips)

Mr. HOLNESS: Well, 140? You said 139.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Dr. Phillips)

Mr. HOLNESS: Oh, okay, so it is about 140.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. HOLNESS: I want to treat with this subject, Mr. Speaker, carefully.

Mr. SHAW: We have lots to talk about.

Mr. HOLNESS: We have lots to talk; we have other things to talk about, so don't worry about it.

Mr. SHAW: We have lots to talk about, you know.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, I want to treat with this subject very carefully. And I see members of the Press here dutifully observing, very carefully - because, you see, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance, or the Minister Without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance keeps talking about what we got when we came into power, what we inherited, a debt ratio of what, 107 you said?

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. HOLNESS: One hundred and seven. You know, Mr. Speaker, it is accepted by the analysts, by the academics, those who study our national debt, that our current debt crisis has its genesis in two things: the first one is what is called the socialization of bank - failed bank loans. In other words, Mr. Speaker, FINSAC.

Mr. SHAW: Yes.

Mr. HOLNESS: You remember what I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, that everything the Minister speaks about, he says, *we have to take these tough measures; we must undertake austerity; we must pass these IMF tests because we are correcting decades of fiscal indiscipline.*

Well, it is not that many decades since FINSAC, and that, Mr. Speaker, is the fiscal indiscipline that we are being asked to correct now. Curious, because you see, Mr. Speaker, the Minister is an academic and, in preparing for this, I made sure, because I know you will appreciate when I put on the table, the research.

Some years ago, Mr. Speaker, not that long, long time, there was a think tank - we used to have regular think tank group meeting, and CaPRI did a presentation there in 2008, and they published a report on it - very interesting report. And at the time it said, Jamaica's debt stands at just over $1 Trillion. This was in 2008. Of course, the National Debt now stands at $1,928 Trillion. This amount represents more than three years worth of Government revenue, referring to the debt as it was in 2008. So, if the Government should attempt to pay off the debt, for three years it would have absolutely no revenue. Most of the debt was accumulated during the financial crisis between 1996 and 2003 when debt as a percentage of GDP went from 79 per cent - that was in 1996 - to 141 per cent of GDP in 2003.

Mr. SAMUDA: My God!

Mr. HOLNESS: So, I want it to be established, Mr. Speaker that this business of inheritance is not from JLP to PNP, no.

Mr. SHAW: It is from PNP to PNP.

Mr. HOLNESS: It is from the PNP Administration to the PNP Administration.

(Applause by Opposition Members)

Mr. SHAW: That is correct.

Mr. HOLNESS: We must establish these facts, that, when the Minister says that the people of Jamaica must make the sacrifice in austerity - and we are coming to austerity side of things - the Minister must not try to share the blame to say, well, the Opposition had a part in this fiscal indiscipline... no. The debt crisis that we have is as a result of policies pursued by a People's National Party Administration, starting in 1993 which led to high inflation, a devaluation of the dollar, high interest rates that created business failures which made debts that were privately contracted, unable to be paid, and as a result of that, to prevent the total collapse of the banking sector, those private debt were brought on to the public's books. And that is the debt crisis that is with us today.

Mr. SAMUDA: And ruin lives.

Mr. HOLNESS: That has its roots in the People's National Party Administration of the

time. (Applause) That point, Mr. Speaker, must be clearly made.

Mr. Speaker, it was not just poor economic policies which caused businesses to fail, which caused private debt to be brought onto the public books; in other words, Mr. Speaker, brought onto the backs of the every single Jamaican, rich or poor. That wasn't the only thing.

Another part of the debt, Mr. Speaker, was created because we took some decisions then - not we, but the previous Administration - took some decisions to continue to support loss making enterprises. We can't forget the debts of Air Jamaica, NWC, the sugar companies.

Mr. McKENZIE: All those were NROCC - NROCC.

Mr. HOLNESS: All those debts were brought on. Now, the question is, where was the attempt in government to make these Government entities efficient? There was no real attempt because there were political untouchables. So, we continue to absorb the loss and place it on the backs of the public.

And then, of course you will remember, Mr. Speaker, that there were some other debts which were incurred directly because of government policy. We could recall some of the debt from World Cup cricket. We could recall debt by virtue of CAP. And all of those taken together brought the national debt over 100 per cent of our gross national production - domestic production - GDP, and maintained it there since 1996 to now. That's the real problem.

So, the Minister, yes, has to galvanize the nation to support austerity measures because the truth is that if Jamaica fails it is not just the PNP that fails, the JLP people who supports the JLP fails too. We are all in the boat together. We don't want the country to fail. But when we debate, we must establish what is the truth.

Mr. SHAW: And stop telling lies.

Mr. HOLNESS: I want to just go back a bit in history because it is important. The Minister should internalize this point. I am not particularly, Mr. Speaker, disturbed that the Minister has decided to follow fiscal responsibility. In fact, Mr. Speaker, if I were to say, or to commend the Minister, I would commend him on his practical approach, that he realizes that the principles and philosophical outlook that he held 20 years ago are not relevant to today's circumstances. So, I commend him for changing.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Dalley)

Mr. HOLNESS: I commend you for changing, and following more progressive policies. But Mr. Speaker...

Mr. SHAW: Over enthusiasm.

Mr. HOLNESS: ...it doesn't mean that there are no alternatives and that the policies that the Minister is following cannot be changed, tweaked and improved.

Mr. SAMUDA: Re-focused.

Mr. HOLNESS: Or re-focused. Let's look at one area in which the present Government is making a terrible mistake. They are making a terrible mistake with the Foreign Exchange policy. We have said it over and over, and over again. We believe in a market-determined rate for the dollar. We believe in that. But Minister, when you look at

the behaviour of the Jamaican dollar in an open market, you realize that its persistent depreciation over time is not in keeping with other countries with similar size and similar economies, that there is a fundamental problem with Jamaica's foreign currency - demand, supply and market operations.

I want to draw a comparison. If you take the value of, let's say the Trinidadian dollar, or the Barbadian dollar, or St. Lucian dollar; let's look at it historically, 20 years ago. Let's take the Trinidadian dollar, which I have some statistics for. In 20 years, the Trinidadian dollar has devalued by 13 per cent - in 20 years, 13 per cent. In one year, the Jamaican dollar - which was last year - devalued by 15 per cent. In 20 years, the Jamaican dollar has devalued over 360 per cent.

It says that - let me repeat again, Minister, because it's an important point. The Trinidadian dollar has devalued by 13% in 20 years. Last year...

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. HOLNESS: Yes, 20 years, I'm just taking a long-term trajectory of the dollar.

Last year our dollar devalued by 15% alone, and if you were to compare over 20 years, it's almost over 360%, there is a fundamental problem. And, Minister, I don't want you to be sucked into this analysis that our dollar is overvalued. Don't be sucked into the argument....

Mr. SHAW: He is sucked in.

Mr. HOLNESS: …that our dollar, if further devalued or further depreciated, would mean somehow an increase in our exports. Let me give you the perfect example, Minister.

Twenty (20) years ago, 25 Trinidadian cents could buy one Jamaican dollar. Today, six Trinidadian cents buys one Jamaica dollar, has there been any improvement in the balance of goods trade between Trinidad and Jamaica seeing that the value of Jamaican dollars in Trinidad has gone down so much?

No, no, our goods are not any more cheaper to Trinidadians even though their dollar is much stronger, it's not more attractive. There has been no improvement in our balance of trade. The fact is that the devaluation or depreciation of the dollar does not help our exports. There are other variables that impact upon our exports.

You know, you know, what variable has greater impact, Mr. Speaker, energy, you know it, energy. It is a dangerous policy to pursue the devaluation of the Jamaican dollar.

Mr. SAMUDA: Absolutely.

Mr. HOLNESS: The Opposition spokesperson on Finance asked for the Report, the Survey of Living Standards. I would really want to see what has been the impact on poverty. I'd really want to see that.

The interconnection, Mr. Speaker between the value of the dollar and the inflation rate - dollar slide, the inflation rate will rise. And don't watch the headline rates which is what you get from STATIN, you have to watch the supermarket rates, because any housewife, Mr. Speaker, can go and do the simple calculation; six months ago this is what I paid for a tin of corned beef, this is what I paid for it now, what's the price difference? It is

usually greater than the average given.

You see, so while the Minister is basking in the glory of passing the IMF test, he's not passing the supermarket test.

An Opposition MEMBER: Not passing the people's test.

(Inaudible comment by Government Members)

Mr. HOLNESS: So, I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that while he is accepting the awards from the Private Sector and the Gleaner, I guarantee you that he has no awards to get from the housewives. He has no award to get from the motorists, because the people are feeling the effects of a deliberate policy of devaluing the dollar. The policy has to be stability in the exchange rate market, that must be the policy. And we the people elect a Government not to just swallow up everything external forces tell you, but to do what is in the best interest of the people who elect you. And I am saying here today, Mr. Speaker, it is not in the best interest of Jamaicans to pursue a policy of devaluation. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, there is also another thing which I am going to urge the Minister not to accept. There is a very robust debate and it's interesting, I like it, I listen to it all the time about stimulus or austerity. And the view is of course, some of our learned economists say, well, if you engage in any stimulus now, you are going to doom the country to return to the period of running deficits. And in any event, where are you going to get the money from to do any form of stimulus, because nobody is going to lend you anyway because you are in such a bad shape.

So, some are of the view that you should just continue to pursue fiscal austerity measures, tight fiscal policy and somehow magically, somehow growth is just going to appear. That is not this case, Mr. Speaker. That is not the case. There is no Government that can show only a policy of austerity and at the same time show growth.

We can use the United States Government and, you know, the first thing you will say, well, you can't compare the US to Jamaica and there are some similarities. They too have a national debt, not as large as ours, nowhere nearly as large relative to its GDP as ours, but it is still a matter of concern. They too have great debates and fights in their Parliament about great fiscal responsibilities, about maintaining good fiscal governance. But whilst they do have that debate and they do continue to do that, they make provisions for stimulus; they literally put money back into the economy to replace value lost by virtue of the economic crisis that happened in 2008.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Samuda)

Mr. HOLNESS: Quantitative easing, they do that. So they don't just follow fiscal austerity they deliberately, Mr. Speaker, go after the stimulus, and all countries have to do that. For Jamaica we accept that we can't do quantitative easing, we don't have that, we don't have that. And it's not as if there was value there in the first place to replace, a lot of the value was paper value, we can't do that. So nobody is asking the Government to go and borrow money or find money in the budget and give it away to business, that's not what we are asking. What we are asking, Mr.

Speaker, is for the Government to understand what truly a stimulus means, to be creative.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Phillips)

Mr. HOLNESS: I am coming to it. To be creative in how you.... relax, relax. To be creative in how you provide a stimulus.

Mr. Speaker, some months ago I suggested that the Government should go through all the Parish Councils, find all the projects that have been there two or three or a year, projects that are just small things that are holding them up, get them out there. And I have noted, Mr. Speaker, that I see some, I see some of the Parish Councils doing that and they are not a stimulus, because many of those projects....

Mr. DALLEY: But that started long before you.

Mr. HOLNESS: Well, thank me for suggesting that you should do it.

Mr. DALLEY: Thank you.

(Laughter)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, we noticed that there is some of that going on. That's a stimulus, it doesn't require the public to absorb any incentives or subsidy and that stimulates the economy. There is another. I heard the Minister saying he might consider comprehensive tax reform as a stimulus. It can be a stimulus and the Member from North East St. Andrew pointed out that if you were to just take that risk of reducing your headline rates for taxation, you could possibly see an increase in your taxation uptake. In other words...

Mr. SAMUDA: You get investment.

Mr. HOLNESS: Just reducing that just that one thing could be a stimulus, yes. In fact, in fact, you know.... (Chuckles) ...it is clear that the more your tax rate approaches what is notionally understood to be the taxable limit, the less you collect in taxes, right. And I think we can say we are close to that taxable limit.

Mr. Speaker, we on this side have spoken about bureaucracy and the bureaucracy being so dense, so constricting that we cannot grow. This Supplementary Budget tabled here today, Mr. Speaker, is a perfect example of the bureaucracy preventing growth. Because, it's amazing that the Government can allocate resources to build schools, to repair infirmaries and then come to Parliament and say that well, because of procurement issues or absorptive capacity these projects could not be done and, therefore, we are just going to shave them off to meet whatever goals or targets are set. But if that is not in itself anti-growth, Mr. Speaker, then I don't know what is. (Applause) Because, Mr. Speaker, whilst these cuts may just deliver what we would call flesh wounds, next year we are going to be here debating the same things and the cuts....

A MEMBER: Same things?

Mr. HOLNESS: No, the next Supplementary Budget, next year, it's not just going to be some flesh cuts, which the Minister can disguise and say well, you know, we are sending it back because they were not able to use it. This time it is going to be some real cuts because they would not have done anything to increase their revenue collection.

They wouldn't have done anything to give stability and confidence to the business.

By the way, the foreign exchange rate is the best index of business confidence. So if you really want to know where business confidence is, look at that foreign exchange rate. So if you want to restore confidence, you get that rate stable. Get that rate stable, right.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am saying to the Minister, on this side, we support tight fiscal policy. We support maintaining the path of fiscal discipline. In fact, we have said publicly and we await the Minister's tabling of the Fiscal Rule.

Dr. PHILLIPS: It's stabled here.

Mr. HOLNESS: Sorry, I meant your debate on it, Mr. Speaker. But that in itself is not sufficient to bring growth. If we do not find creative ways of stimulating the economy, then the cuts are going to become more difficult every year and they are going to have social consequences. And once we start to see social consequences as a result of budget cuts, that is going to lead to social instability, and then that is a whole new dynamic, Mr. Speaker, which we really don't want to happen here in Jamaica.

Unfortunately, Government continues to be the largest driving force in the economy, both for employment, for contracts and for consumption. So once the Government is cutting and cutting and cutting you can rest assured that the economic space becomes smaller and smaller and smaller; in a different context we would say that the retreat of Government is good. But in this case, Mr. Speaker, it is not as if the business is going to take up the retreated space. No. It is the case, Mr. Speaker that the economy is going to get smaller and smaller and smaller. So Government, in addition to dealing with fiscal discipline, must create stimulus for the economy. And this doesn't mean, Mr. Speaker, spending more money in subsidies or giving away money. It means, for example, getting our energy cost down.

Very interesting point was made that the 360-megawatt plant will not bring us to a price point that will make us competitive for industries. But even if we were to go down from 40 kilowatt cents per hour to 30, you would be saving something like almost US$300,000,000 imports of oil. That in itself, Mr. Speaker, is $300,000,000 more available to you in your surplus. That, Mr. Speaker, is a stimulus and that's what we mean when we say that the Government must be proactive, must be instrumental, the Government must become market makers and opportunity creators, because that is the stimulus that will grow the economy.

Mr. Speaker, may it please you.

(Applause)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Minister Phillips.

(Applause)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, for a moment anyone hearing us could be forgiven if they had forgotten what it was we were in fact debating. (Laugher) We are debating the First Supplementary Estimates. We are debating the First Supplementary Estimates which are coming three weeks before the end of the fiscal year, not as in August 2011 when

the Budget had just been passed a few months and a brand new supplementary came taking something like $14 Billion out of it within three months, four months after the Budget had been passed. This is simply tidying up some arrangements. I want also, I think, there is a disconnect from reality when I listened to some of my friends on the other side, all if truth be told.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Opposition Member)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Because, Mr. Speaker, we are talking about adjustments on the capital side of about $63billion out of a total Budget of $520 Billion - no, $6 Billion and we took $10 Million of saving, which I am certainly you will appreciate on the interest, so let's take that out. There is another one point-odd on the pensions which has been deferred, one point eight, and indeed all of that that remains represents - there is not one programme, not one programme that has been removed that will not be carried out, that has been taken out of the Budget, all of these expenditures will take place but they have been extended, not taking place in March but covered for the most part in the vote on account to take place in April. (Applause) So, Mr. Speaker, and we are doing that because we have no compunction, we rather pass the test than fail the test and we make no apology for it. (Applause) You know, there is no man who hates exam like a man who can't pass exam.

(Applause)

Mr. SHAW: You are not passing the people's test.

(Cross talk)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker....

(Cross talk)

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, the reason why we are here is because we passed the people's test and you failed the people's test.

Mr. SHAW: We will see.

Dr. PHILLIPS: We will see what we shall see.

Mr. SHAW: They can't afford to go to the supermarket anymore.

Dr. PHILLIPS: I never troubled a soul. I never troubled a soul. Let us go through it.

Mr. Speaker, what we are talking about in the extended payments is 1% of the total budget, 1% and this heavy weather is made about cuts that are going to destroy JAMPRO, destroy investment, destroy the educational system and destroy human resource management. It is not true. It is a falsehood that is being perpetrated here tonight. (Applause)

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Opposition Member)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Let me say, Mr. Speaker, I spoke about inherited fiscal imbalances. If truth be told, I wasn't really making any insinuation, allegation about their stewardship. There is much that can be said about it, much negative that can be said about it, but that was not what I was doing. I have said time and time again that when you look at the history of this country, over the 50 years but particularly over the past 40, what we see is a situation where the country has grown an average in terms of GDP by less than 1% *per annum*.

Over the same period our debt has grown by 700% and that the extent of the debt constitutes an impediment to our capacity to growth. If there is blame that one seeks to assign there is enough to go around for all of us to accept some. My friends over there seem to be mired in the past and it will make them if they keep looking back like Lot's wife, salt. (Applause) We need to focus on how we can go forward as a country rather than seeking to engage in all kinds of contortions to assign blame to one place or another. What we have now is a reality...

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Holness)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Don't interrupt me! I didn't trouble you! Don't interrupt me! Hold on! Hold on!

(The Speaker gavels)

(Cross talk)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, what we need to do is to deal with what is before us which is the Estimates of Expenditure. The fact of the matter we have faced a reduction in revenues, some, approximately $11 Billion, but let's be clear on one thing. We are looking at 3%, three point-odd per cent of the target. So it's not as if there was a grand divergence of revenue earnings. What were the causes - less tobacco. Because we all agree that we should not smoke in public places. It had a consequence. When the Budget was being prepared we had that timetable in view and we never estimated the consequences. The price of oil changed in the world market that resulted in some lower earnings. There were some changes on PAYE which was $2.8 Billion or thereabouts - $10 Billion. What we are committed to doing is that where the Budget, where the revenues are down we are going to live within the means available, we are not spending more. (Applause) When the Members say despite the revenues being down spend more, what we are saying is borrow more, and we are not going to borrow anymore. We are not going to borrow anymore. Is only two ways the revenues can come to maintain that level of expenditure...

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

(Cross talk)

(The Speaker gavels)

The SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Holness.

Mr. HOLNESS: I would request that **Hansard** be brought into this Debate to show whether or not any Member on this side said the Government should spend more. My distinct recollection, Mr. Speaker, is that we said we do not have the resources to spend or to provide subsidies - be clear.

(Cross talk) (The Speaker gavels)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, it would be charitable to say - let's take the charitable course and say he did not hear or does not understand.

The SPEAKER: Continue, Dr. Phillips.

Mr. HOLNESS: No, Mr. Speaker, no, Mr. Speaker, none of us said nothing that would suggest the Government should spend more.

(Cross talk)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I am on my feet.

Mr. HOLNESS: The Minister must withdraw the comment. It's a point of order.

Dr. PHILLIPS: He has ruled on the point of order. He said continue.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, the Member would have to show where any of the Members on this side said the Government should spend, otherwise withdraw the comment.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Come and *mek mi* withdraw it.

Mr. HOLNESS: I am not going to engage in what you like.

Dr. PHILLIPS: No. Well, then all right, sit down.

(Cross talk)

Mr. HOLNESS: So, Mr. Speaker, I ask for your ruling.

(Cross talk)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Sit down! Tell him to sit down. (Laughter) Mr. Speaker, by extension of logic if they do not want to see any cut at all and they have a opposed every single -

(Cross talk)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, again a point of order, a point of order.

A Government MEMBER: Sid dung!

Mr. HOLNESS: It is obvious that the points we have made escapes the Minister. What we have suggested to the Minister is that he release bureaucracy. He increases efficiency of his Government.

(Cross talk)

(Inaudible) ...projects that can bring growth; that is what we have suggested to the Minister. We have not asked him to spend any more. My statements to the Minister was that we support the path of fiscal discipline.

(Cross talk)

Where in that does it say we must spend more? The Minister is misleading the House and, Mr. Speaker I implore you to act justly in this matter.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker…

Mr. HOLNESS: Withdraw!

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. SHAW: Stop misleading the House.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, this is a debate there is no point of order.

(Cross talk)

Mr. SHAW: Hold on, *dey.* You're the Speaker. How you mean there is no point of order?

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Shaw, let me hear. What is....

(Cross talk/Laughter)

Mr. McKENZIE: Hansard, Hansard.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker...

(The Deputy Speaker gavels/Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker.

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: I will not rule until there is silence.

Mr. WARMINGTON: He's misleading the House.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Now, because of the very truncated way in which this particular discussion has gone on I am proposing that based on Mr. Holness' point of order that at another sitting of House when the **Hansard** -

Opposition MEMBERS: No!

(Cross talk)

A Government MEMBER: Allow the Speaker to speak.

The Deputy SPEAKER: I am speaking within the context on the amount of time, we would have to adjourn and it would take some time -

(Cross talk)

Mr. SHAW: But we have a lot of time.

(Cross talk)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, let me assist them all. There is a…

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) One person at a time.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, throughout the entire *corpus* of this Debate all those who intervened in relation to any particular downward adjustment on any budget head, on any budget head expressed doubt as to the value or the necessity of such downward adjustment.

(Cross talk)

The logical consequence, Mr. Speaker…

Mr. SAMUDA: You are deducing.

Dr. PHILLIPS: That's what I am deducing. I am deducing.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Samuda)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I have every confidence in your capacities of analysis. And I, therefore, direct, as I should, my comments to you. The implication, Mr. Speaker, in the context of reduce revenues of any refusal to make downward adjustment on expenditure would mean logically that someone either has to give us some money, we have to raise more revenues or we have to borrow.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, since the Member insists on the - Mr. Speaker, no, on the - Mr. Speaker…

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Yeah, but the Member rose without - are you on a point of order?

Mr. HOLNESS: The Member continues to debate the point of order to explain it.

The Deputy SPEAKER: All right, Dr. Phillips.

(Cross talk)

Dr. PHILLIPS: I am not debating your point of order. I am continuing in the debate.

(Cross talk/both Members on their feet)

Mr. HOLNESS: (Inaudible) ...that what the Member...

The Deputy SPEAKER: No, no, I cannot have two Members on their feet. (Gavelling) One will have to sit.

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, is this a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

(Cross talk)

Mr. HOLNESS: Yes, it is you have misled the House. You have said something that is not true.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Sit down.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Well, we are going to have it said till kingdom come tonight.

(Laughter)

The Deputy SPEAKER: I had indicated earlier that given the time constraint -

An Opposition MEMBER: We will wait.

The Deputy SPEAKER: No, no!

(Cross talk)

An Opposition MEMBER: We will wait.

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: What - Dr. Phillips, what I am going to ask, as I said before

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: What I said before - -just a moment, Dr. Phillips, what I said before still stands. I am saying that challenge based on the point of order coming from Mr. Holness with respect to going back to **Hansard** to ascertain what was, in fact, said would at this point create some amount of undue delay.

(Cross talk)

I am, therefore, asking that Dr. Phillips continues outside of any further reference to -

(Cross talk)

Opposition MEMBERS: No, no, no!

(Cross talk)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker...

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: No, no.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker.

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Dr. Phillips.

(Cross talk/the Deputy Speaker gavels)

Do not challenge me.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker:

Mr. WARMINGTON: No. You know better than that, Minister.

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: I am asking you, Dr. Phillips, to continue away from…

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker -

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: And we will deal that matter…

Mr. SHAW: No, man the Speaker is speaking.

A MEMBER: Be quiet man.

(Cross talk)

Mr. SHAW: No order in the House.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Are you finished, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. SHAW: We don't want to hear you until the Speaker is finished. Let us filibuster then, Let us filibuster then. Sit down and let the Speaker finish ruling. Thank you very much.

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Members, I would ask that we… (Gavels) …let us remain calm. There is no need to descend in this sort of vitriolic behaviour. I am suggesting some commonsense here and I am requesting of you, Dr. Phillips, based on the fact that we can revisit this at another time...

(Cross talk)

I think it is your constant loud talking that has done that. (Laughter) I suggest, Dr. Phillips that you move away from that particular - yes, and pursue the rest of your closing remarks so we can leave in good stead. I so rule. (Gavels)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I think there is a very important issue that the entire country, indeed, the world as a whole needs to understand. Should one, not them, but should anyone be of the view that

the revenues can fall and there be no adjustment to spending…

(Cross talk)

Should anyone on this earth that God has given us be of the view…

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker I urge you, I urge you, Mr. Speaker it is adding pathway on which the Member has engaged.

Opposition MEMBER: ....want to go to **Hansard.**

Mr. HOLNESS: On this side, it must be absolutely clear from our side that there are differences in priorities.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker I have no idea why I am not at liberty to continue my intervention.

(Cross talk)

I have no idea why the courtesy which I afforded the Leader of Opposition should not be afforded to me as I seek to conclude.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, the Member continues in the point on which you have ruled.

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, no.

Mr. HOLNESS: Yes.

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, I have not made reference to you.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, the Member continues on a point on which you have ruled.

Dr. PHILLIPS: I have made no reference to you.

Mr. HOLNESS: To me?

Dr. PHILLIPS: I have made no reference to you or any other - Mr. Speaker, we are discussing a serious issue here and the point I simply make it, and it needs to be understood, is that if the revenues fall then there need to be cuts if we are going to maintain our targets in relation to our deficit and our primary surplus. If it is not the particular cuts that are outlined here then it would have to be some other cuts.

Mr. HOLNESS: Exactly.

Dr. PHILLIPS: The alternative to that - Mr. Speaker, I was scrupulous in my refusal to interrupt anyone over there...

The Deputy SPEAKER: Okay, Dr. Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...and I insist on being allowed to make a point because it is of fundamental importance to the financial management and fiscal...

(Applause/Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) I will allow for you without any making any reference as is the case.

(Cross talk/The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Just a moment. So far you have not and I have no doubt that you will continue along that path. Continue.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, in the alternative not one of these adjustments was an easy adjustment, but where a project is not ready for implementation what should we do? Keep the money inside it? Inside the Budget that will not be spent?

Mr. DALLEY: Twenty-five days left in this financial year.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Were talking about twenty-five days remaining in this financial year.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Warmington)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, in every area, in every area we are told we were told specifically that in relation to security by the Opposition Spokesman that there is $70 Million cut from prisons…

Mr. SHAW: No, I didn't say $70 Million is cut.

Dr. PHILLIPS: $70 Million.

Mr. SHAW: Thirty-five point six.

Dr. PHILLIPS: How much that come to? Thirty-five in each come to how much?

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker: Point of order.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr. SHAW: I said that $70 Million was allocated for the prisons $35.6 was cut leaving $34 Million.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Thirty-five Million Dollars ($35M) was cut and should not be. The fact of the matter is that those expenditures that were inadequate in the first instance, will be - the work for which they were appropriated will continue, will be done. But it is also true that in this same Budget, we have found an additional Two Hundred and Twenty-three point Three Million Dollars ($223.3M) to assign to Security for the Automated Fingerprint Identification System upgrade, for the upgrade... (Applause) ...to the Police Telecommunication System, and for additional construction work.

Mr. SAMUDA: But did anybody object to that?

Dr. PHILLIPS: What we are saying, Mr. Speaker, is that a reasonable discussion and analysis of these cuts would not just simply roll out a litany of objections to cuts which must take place and build a whole architecture of doom and gloom on the basis of that.

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker...

Dr. PHILLIPS: It is one per cent...

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker...

Mr. CRAWFORD: Si' dung! Mr. Speaker, you mustn't allow him!

(Cross talk)

Mr. SHAW: It's a point of order!

Mr. SAMUDA: A point of explanation.

(*Sotto voce* comment from Mr. Chuck)

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Chuck!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Is it a point of order, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. SAMUDA: A point of explanation, Mr. Speaker.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Is it a point of order?

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, no! Mr. Speaker, I don't know the term, 'a point of explanation'. Mr. Speaker, I don't know...

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Samuda, what is your point of order? Let me hear it please.

Mr. SAMUDA: I have a point of order.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Let me hear it. What is your point of order?

Mr. DALLEY: He has no point of order!

(Cross talk)

Mr. SAMUDA: My point of order is that the Minister...

A Government MEMBER: He is out of order!

Mr. SAMUDA: …..is misleading the House, and has not brought specific evidence

by way of an example of what he is accusing us of.

Mr. SHAW: Yes!

Mr. SAMUDA: I am going to ask the Minister if he recalls when we were on page...

(Heckling)

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. SHAW: Listen!

Mr. SAMUDA: Hold on! Hold on a minute - when we were on page 5300(B)(1), I made the point to the Minister, I said, Minister, why are you putting in Forty-nine Million Three Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars ($49,350,000) for something that we have lived with for years? And that is the question of the insolvency provisions.

And I said to him...

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker...

Mr. SAMUDA: Hold on!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker...

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Samuda...

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker...

The Deputy SPEAKER: I think you have exhausted...

Mr. SAMUDA: No, no, no, I am not...

(Heckling from Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, the point is that I was suggesting to you that here is a case where he could use those funds elsewhere.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Okay.

Mr. SAMUDA: I was offering an option, but if that is too complex for him...

(Cross talk)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker...

Mr. DALLEY: Not a point of order, but point taken.

Mr. SAMUDA: You don't get the point!

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. - Just a moment!

Mr. SAMUDA: I withdraw!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker...

The Deputy SPEAKER: Just a moment! Mr. Samuda...

Dr. PHILLIPS: It has nothing to do with the Bill.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Samuda! Mr. Samuda! Mr. Samuda - House Leader.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker! Mr. Speaker, the time has expired and therefore we are...

(*Sotto voce* comments from Mr. Dalley)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Dalley!

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: ...asking for an extension of time to allow the Minister of Finance to complete his presentation without interruption.

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Members! Members! Members! I would appreciate if you allow the Minister to complete his presentation...

Mr. SAMUDA: Him not going bullyrag anybody over here so!

The Deputy SPEAKER: ...without these constant...

Mr. WARMINGTON: Not if he provokes us!

The Deputy SPEAKER: ...interruptions!

Mr. McKENZIE: Stay in line! Stay in line!

The Deputy SPEAKER: I am appealing to your better sense of judgement in this matter!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SHAW: Tell him not to talk any nonsense, otherwise we will have to interrupt!

(Heckling)

Mr. McKENZIE: Stay in line!

The Deputy SPEAKER: Okay.

The Minister's time for speaking is up. The question is that the Minister be allowed to complete his presentation.

Opposition MEMBERS: No! No! No more time!

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. McKENZIE: A divide! A divide, Mr. Speaker.

(Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Let me just make a couple of specific points. The Member from West Kingston spoke about no provision for disaster relief.

Let me say that we pay the Catastrophe Fund premiums of Two Hundred and Eighty-nine point Five Million Dollars ($289.5M) in this financial year, the purpose being to enable us - the country, to receive liquidity support in the event of a natural disaster of a particular magnitude.

There is no doubt that were we in possession of more resources, that additional provisions over and above this could be provided for. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, we take credit over here, and we feel proud of the fact that we were able to adjust to the Hurricane Sandy...

(Applause)

Mr. DALLEY: Hear! Hear! From the Budget.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...effects from the Budget, and to meet our obligations to our citizens who were so affected by that.

Much has been made about the idea that there is no...

Mr. SAMUDA: You lose yu place! Wrap up!

Mr. SHAW: Yu look like you wrapping up now!

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...growth.

Mr. DALLEY: That is not true!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Let me just make the point.

Mr. DALLEY: We don't ready to wrap up yet!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, it has been a very difficult adjustment - I had a long day, and you come 'bout midday. But, Mr. Speaker, let us understand that in all the - with all the adjustments, what we have seen throughout this fiscal year is a return to growth...

(Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...annualized! Annualized!

Agriculture in the third quarter annualized is growing at more than 10 per cent.

(Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Tourism at more than 5 per cent. (Applause) Mining at 15 per cent.

(Applause) Manufacturing is soft; manufacturing is soft. And what we need to recognize is that, yes, while there is a return to growth, setting the economy on a platform to sustain this level of growth will require a number of things. It will require fiscal consolidation that is for sure. It will require as well, a change in the general tax environment.

It is not true that we have not made any downward adjustments in the effective rate of taxation. The point of the Employee Tax Credits and the adjustments that have been made in the Fiscal Incentives Bill is to facilitate an effective lower rate for the investor, small, medium and large.

It is also the case, Mr. Speaker, it is also the case - and we are proud of it - that we raised the Income Tax threshold... (Applause) ... to benefit the workers. It is also the case in this Budget, difficult though it is; we have kept faith with the workers... (Applause)...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: And we are proud of it!

Mr. JACKSON: Tell them not one red cent more!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Now - the hour is late, now is not the time nor the place for us to engage in this lengthy, lengthy, lengthy...

Mr. SHAW: The dollar galloping! Prices gone to hell!

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...discourse.

One of the things that is clear that the heart of the problem of the exchange rate centers upon the Balance of Payments and the Current Account. Put simply, the Current Account on the Balance of Payments speak about how much you spend overseas in foreign currency, and how much you earn. We have had a persistent Current Account deficit, 14.9 per cent GDP, 14.9 per cent 2011/2012, 12.8 per cent 2012/2013.

We project this year - and it has to do with the adjustments in the exchange rate - an outturn of between 9.5 and 10 per cent. That is heading in the right direction.

(Applause)

But understand, if you have a persistent deficit then there are two things that can happen, you either have to earn more or you have to borrow, or somebody has to give you. There is no one giving us to make up the balance. We have limited opportunities to borrow to sustain it at that rate, so we have to make adjustments effectively to import less; and the mechanism that manages that is your exchange rate.

But don't forget, in that same period we have moved our Net International Reserves from a little bit more than Seven Hundred Million US Dollars (US$700M) to over a Billion US Dollars (US$1B) in the period. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, all told, it has been a difficult, extraordinarily difficult adjustment, painful for many, many thousands of Jamaicans. But they have stayed the course. They understand that they have an Administration they can trust to tell them the truth! (Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: They know they have an Administration that is pursuing their best interest! They know they have an Administration that is not misrepresenting the

history of the build-up of this debt! They know who was responsible!

And, Mr. Speaker, it is against that background that I move that we approve the Supplementary Estimates.

(Applause)

Mr. CHUCK: You must get a last lick!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that...

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) The question is that the…

(Cross talk)

All right, enough of the cheering.

The question is that the Supplementary Estimates as presented, be approved.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. DALLEY: Walk out now!

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Member Warmington, remember you are the Opposition - you are sitting in that seat, you know. Tuesday is the 11th, I think.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is not intended to do any further business today. We therefore ask for the adjournment of the House till next Tuesday the 11th of March, at 2:00 p.m.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that this Honourable House adjourns until next Tuesday, March 11, 2014.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) This Honourable House now stands adjourned.

The Honourable House of Representatives was adjourned at approximately 9.55 p.m. to resume on Tuesday, March 11, 2014 at 2.00 p.m.

THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SESSION 2013 – 2014

TUESDAY, March 11, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:25 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

MR. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House.

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security

HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, Northern, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

MR. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, Attorney General, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern

HON. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern

MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, Eastern

MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western

MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western

MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. DARYL WESLEY PHILLIP VAZ, (JLP), Portland, Western

MR. KEITH ANTHONY WALFORD, (PNP), St. Ann, South Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Dr. Andrew Wheatley.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

The SPEAKER: Before we get down to today's business, let us welcome some guests we haye here, from Mico University we have twelve (12) students and one (l) lecturer; from the International University of the Caribbean we have 8 students (Applause) and all the way from South Manchester we have twenty-five (25) students from Cross Keys High and two (2) teachers. (Applause) I hope they find today's sitting interesting.

Mr. D. SMITH: I hope so.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House a copy of the following:

- Addendum to Ministry Paper No. 18/14 Entitled "Highlights of Students' Performance in the 2013 Caribbean Secondary Certificate (CSEC) and the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations (CAPE) which was laid on the Table of the House on February 25, 2014
- **National Works Agency**
  Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements For the Financial Year 2009/2010
- **Jamaica Civil Aviation Authority**
  Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements For the Financial Year 2012/2013
- **Certified Appropriation Accounts**
  Governor-General and Staff 2010/2011
- Management Institute for National Development (MIND) 2012/2013
- Administrator General's Department 2011/2012
- Jamaica Customs Department 2011/2012
- Registrar General's Department 2011/2012
- Ministry of Youth and Culture 2012/2013
- Forestry Department 2012/2013

(DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western, entered and took his seat.)

(REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, entered and took his seat.)

(MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central, entered and took her seat.)

(MR. RICHARD ANTONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, CD, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

BILLS BROUGHT FROM THE SENATE

The Clerk read the following message from the President of the Senate:

"To the Honourable House of Representatives:

I have the honour to advise the Honourable House of Representatives that on the 7th day of March, 2014 a Bill entitled "AN ACT to Make provision for the disruption and suppression of criminal organizations; and for related matters" was passed in the Senate with three (3) amendments for which the Honourable Senate desires the concurrence of this Honourable House.

The amendments are in Clause 2.

In Clause 2(b)(ii) delete the semicolon after the word 'benefit' and add the words, "but does not include any combination or arrangement among three or more persons, whether formally or informally organized, acting in contemplation of furtherance of an industrial dispute within the meaning of the Trade Union Act".

And in Clause 6:

Clause 6(4) delete the words "a person's place of residence shall not be the sole" and substitute therefor the words "the community in which the person resides shall not be a".

The Second Schedule:

In the third column which relates to section 3 of the Bill, delete the word, 'twenty' and substitute therefor the word, 'twenty-five'.

Signed: Floyd E. Morris
President of the Senate."

Mr. BUNTING: Mr. Speaker, I now move that the Senate amendments to the Criminal Justice (Suppression of Criminal Organizations) Bill be now considered.

Put to the House and agreed to.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The SPEAKER: House Leader.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we are going to do Question 18.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining answer the following questions standing in my name.

Question 1:

Will the Minister provide an update on the initiative to incorporate the use of computer tablets in schools?

Answer:

In 2013, the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining, e-Learning Jamaica Company Limited and the Universal Service Fund in collaboration with the Ministry of Education developed a Tablets in Schools Pilot Project. This project is being funded by an allocation from the Universal Service Fund in the amount of J$ 1.4 Billion and will provide tablets to students and teachers in 36 schools at the pre-primary, primary and secondary levels; one school for students with disabilities and one teacher training institution.

The pilot project is intended to achieve, among others, the following objectives: firstly, allow learners within and outside of the classroom to collect, analyze, consider, synthesize, evaluated and communicate ideas and information from a pool of available resources and apply this to complex and practical real-world problems.

Secondly, accelerate the change in the teaching and learning process with the students assuming more responsibility for their learning and enhancing the role of teachers to become facilitators as well as repositories of knowledge in the classroom.

Thirdly, in the case of secondary schools, to augment the e-Learning High School Project previously instituted by e-LJam and to support the roll-out of an e-Learning pre and Primary School Project by providing students and teachers with the means of accessing e-Learning content at home or other designated access points.

The 38 institutions which are a part of the pilot were selected by the Ministry of Education based on criteria which included, among others, the need to accelerate student performance within select institutions; provide comparative analysis with Centres of Excellence vide traditional secondary schools; and facilitate the study of the effects of variables, such as location and traditionally satisfactory scholastic performance on teaching/learning outcomes under the project.

In addition to the dissemination of tablets, the projects will also provide electronic content, internet connectivity and appropriate information technology training for teachers and students. Instructors and facilitators at various learning centres and access points in the neighbourhoods surrounding the pilot schools will receive training in the utilization of ICTs and how to assist learners in accessing and using e-content.

To date the following activities have already been undertaken under the project:

1. Preliminary baseline survey of 38 schools to determine the readiness of the physical infrastructure and the capacity of the teachers to actively participate in the project;
2. Training of teachers in the use of Information and Communication Technologies;
3. Training of teachers in the integration of tablets in instructional delivery, under the Tablet Integration Training Programme and providing continuing training opportunities;
4. Sensitization of Principals with respect to their role in fostering the new e-learning culture;
5. Identifying and assessing the applications and e-learning content to be preloaded on the tablets;
6. Selection of four providers for the delivery of the tablets and the associated managed services;
7. Development of a Tablets in School Policy Manual which covers agreements with parents and guardians on the use and security of the tablets;
8. Sensitization of school boards, Principals, teachers, parents, community leaders;
9. Establishment of Community Advisory Groups;
10. Development of a comprehensive Public Education Campaign;

The pilot will be undertaken for one school year commencing September 2014. In preparation for the new school year tablets will be given to the students and teachers in the pilot during the period May to August 2014, during which time further training sessions, focused on the use of the actual device, will be conducted.

Question 2:

Is the report from the team comprising representatives of the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy & Mining, the Ministry of Education, e-Learning Jamaica Co. Ltd, available to this Honourable House?

Answer:

The project document is currently being updated by the e-LJam and will be made available for review by March 25, 2014.

There is also a Planning and Project Development Committee comprising representatives from Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining, Ministry of Education, e-LJam and the USF, which will determine the appropriate strategies, steps and timeframes to inform the design, development and implementation of the project.

Question 3:

Will the Minister indicate what will be the nominal cost to students under the Tablets in Schools Programme?

Answer:

During the pilot phase of the project there will be no cost to the students. It is anticipated; however, that the full roll-out will require an element of cost sharing.

Question 4:

Can the Minister advise as to what is the cost of enabling schools to become wireless hotspots pursuant to the tablets in schools initiative?

Answer:

The cost of enabling schools to become wireless hot-spots is approximately J$150 Million.

Question 5:

Will the Minister outline the procurement procedures that have been employed in acquiring tablets to be used in the pilot phase of the project?

Answer:

The procurement commenced by way of Open Tender and four suppliers were selected. It should be noted that the Government of Jamaica Procurement Guidelines recommend Direct Contracting as the methodology of choice for the purposes of research, experiment, study or development (Volume 2 Section 1.1.4(d). Given, *inter alia*, the nature of this procurement and the need to indentify different options for implementation and assessment of the various components, the National Contracts Commission advised that this initial process should be discontinued and the Direct Contract Methodology applied.

The NCC further instructed that negotiations be undertaken directly with the four (4) suppliers.

Of note, the process recommended by the NCC for the pilot project resulted in the project obtaining additional tablets with improved specifications at a lower per unit cost. The Cabinet has since approved the award of contracts.

Question 6:

What are the key performance indicators pertaining to the pilot that will inform the full roll-out of the Tablets in Schools Programme?

Answer:

Some of the key performance indicators that will inform the full roll-out of tablets in school include the impact of tablets and other technologies on student and teacher research; impact of tablets on improved homework completion; the quality of the homework produced by the student pre and post integration of the tablets; number of students and teachers exhibiting increased use of e-Learning materials; impact of tablets on school attendance; use of the applications and e-books, preloaded on the tablets, in curricula delivery; ability of the tablets to withstand the normal wear and tear associated with consistent use; consistency of internet access and the use of the pilot schools as a hot-spot by the wider community.

Question 7:

Will the Minister indicate when we will be in a position to assess and analyze information gleaned from the pilot phase of the project?

Answer:

A preliminary report on the Pilot will be available for review by the end of May, 2015.

Question 8:

Can the Minister advise when full roll-out of the programme will be brought on stream?

Answer:

It is intended that full roll-out of the Tablets in School Projects will commence in September 2015.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Thank you very much, Minister for this comprehensive set of answers. I just have a few questions that I believe if you are able to give us some insight will shed some more light on this very important project.

Minister, you stated that you have four suppliers, Cabinet approved four suppliers, can you first give us some information as to the process that will be used to evaluate the different Tablet brands and technologies associated with it, what are the criteria?

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Cabinet has approved the contracts for four suppliers based on the procurement process. There are specifications on which basis they tendered and we do have some of the specs here. The four suppliers are Innovative Corporate Solutions and they are to provide 10,500 Tablets, a company called Geo-Tech Vision to provide 5,500 Tablets, Digicel Jamaica to provide 5,500 Tablets and PBS Company Limited to provide 5,500 Tablets, so the total is J$800,000,000.00. (Applause)

(HON. ROGER HAROLD CLIFFORD CLARKE, (PNP), Westmoreland, Central, Minister of Agriculture, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Minister, Minister, you gave us information as it relates to the providers, but in terms of the specs, the specs for the different Tablets being supplied by the four different suppliers, because I believe that is a very critical component in the whole evaluation of the pilot process, in order for us to ultimately select a single provider or the ideal provider based on the available funds.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, in the answers that I have provided I have committed to ensuring that the Parliament gets the full document for the project, because the specs are quite lengthy, but there are some things that are common.

Firstly, there is in the specs a requirement that every single Tablet is traceable, that is, their locations are known and that little Johnny when he leaves home in the morning, we'll know exactly where that Tablet goes for the day. And if that tablet were to be stolen - and we are cautioning Jamaicans against them - that it will be disabled, it can be disabled, it can be cleared of all its content and very importantly, we can trace it within three to six feet of its location. Those are some of the specs, but, of course, there are more, there are other more technical and detail specs which we'll provide in the Report.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Thanks Minister. You spoke about the traceability of the Tablets and that was one of the question I would want to ask, but you are saying that we are able to trace these tablets if they are stolen. But, Minister, isn't it that these Tablets must be connected to the network for it to be able to be traced, because we are using GPS technology to do the tracing? So, if someone stole a Tablet and does not go online, then that Tablet cannot be retrieved, correct?

Mr. PAULWELL: Each Tablet will be connected, yes, to a....

Dr. WHEATLEY: But, Minister, if they are disabled.... sorry. If they disabled the GPS, you will not be able to trace that Tablet because each Tablet is… and it is when they are connected to, it is when they are connected to the Internet that you'd be able to trace where it is.

So if someone should steal a Tablet and disconnect the GPS - and I hope I'm not giving anybody any idea how to... (Chuckles) But, it is something that we need to consider from a security perspective.

(Inaudible comment)

Dr. WHEATLEY: I'm telling them. (Chuckles) From a security perspective, for us to be able to trace these Tablets, is there any other mechanism that is being thought of from a security perspective, Minister?

The SPEAKER: Police.

(Laughter)

Mr. PAULWELL: (Chuckles) Mr. Speaker, let me say that a part of this project is going to be the requirement for parents to sign an agreement with the Government, for community leaders to be involved. And, in relation to the technology, it is my advice that the technology is so advanced today, that even if you were to turn off that instrument the system would still be able to identify the Tablet. And in any event, the content will be and can be erased from a remote once it is reported. So, we are doing a number of safeguards and this pilot is going to determine which is the most effective.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Minister, the infrastructure cost for this Pilot Project is estimated to be $150,000,000.00, correct? Now…

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Yes, this is infrastructure, the infrastructure for the project.

Minister, has there been a RFI or RFP created for suppliers to bid on the provision of the relevant infrastructure?

Mr. PAULWELL: Firstly Mr. Speaker, the project is being implemented by two agencies. You have the e-Learning Jamaica Limited, which is working in conjunction with the Ministry of Education and then you have the Universal Service Fund, that has responsibility of enabling the locations with Broadband Internet Service. In these areas we are going to be establishing Wi-Fi systems, and that has been through their own procurement. And, they have assured me that all the locations will be established in time for the project.

Now, a very important aspect of this - and I really want Members of Parliament to be aware - because in addition to enabling every

single student and every single teacher at these locations, persons from the community would be able to come on the premises with their own device and be able to access full high-speed internet. And I think that that is really to encourage now the wider communities to get involved in the project.

(Applause)

Dr. WHEATLEY: But, Minister, the status of the RFP, you have not given me an answer to that question. What is the status of the RFP as it relates to the infrastructure?

Mr. PAULWELL: The Universal Service Fund has established providers of Wi-Fi and Internet service across the country. They have their established procedures. We'd be quite happy to share with you that. It was really required in this question, but we'll be quite happy to share it with you. All we are assuring you is that in relation to all the locations, it will cost approximately $150,000,000.00 and it is to be provided by existing providers of USF Systems at Post Offices, CAP Sites and in our libraries.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Minister, so basically you are not able to provide us with that information as it relates to the RFP, but the Universal Service one has that information? All right.

But, Minister, that's a very critical component for the roll-out of this Pilot Project, so I think that is information that we need to have on hand, because it will.... As a matter of fact, having the Tablet without the necessary infrastructure doesn't make much sense. But, Minister, the - based on your answers, you stated that preinstalled content would be on these Tablets and these preinstalled content would have been approved by the Ministry of Education.

Now if, for example, Minister that a child is in possession of one of these tablets and he is not able to - he doesn't have internet connections at home…

A MEMBER: He or she.

(MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James Central, Deputy Speaker, entered and took his seat.)

Dr. WHEATLEY: …he or she - how useful would that Tablet be to that student at home seeing that you must be in the environment of a 'hot-spot' or at school to have access, and it is supposed to assist with homework, and as the name implies homework is supposed to be done at home, so how do we alleviate that possible problem?

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, let me just - before addressing this other question - just to make it absolutely clear. This project can't operate without access to the Internet and access to Broadband. So when I say to this House that every single location would be a "hot spot" that has to be a prerequisite, even before you distribute the Tablets.

(MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central, entered and took his seat.)

Now, in relation to the content, much of the content you would be able to access it and download it and have it on the Tablet, stored

on the Tablet. So you need not have at your home, even though we are encouraging parents - to have Broadband access at homes. What we are doing - in addition to these "Hot-Spots" - we are ensuring that those community access points that are now existing - and we have identified a number of them clustered around these schools - that they too will have access to free Internet Service. And so the youngster, if he's not in the close proximity of his school, can visit these Community Centres. But ultimately, and for Jamaica to become the true knowledge-base society that we want it to be, we need to have access to the Internet everywhere, including our bathrooms.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Minister, just two follow-up questions.

I must commend the aspect of the programme that speaks to PATH students getting it free and disabled students being able to access the Internet and so forth. Now, Minister, with the continuing slide of the Jamaican dollar, is it being factored into the overall cost of the budget for this programme?

And also, Minister, with the change in technology, as you know, technology changes every year and these Tablets, will they be able to withstand the change in the technology, because we all know that within a year a Tablet loses some of its ability in a sense to be up there with the change in technology. So, you know, that it is something that even us as parliamentarians, those Tablets that we got are more or less obsolete…

Mr. ROBINSON: No, don't say that. Don't say that.

Dr. WHEATLEY: In terms of the advances in technology. And we appreciate, we appreciated those Tablets, but, of course, you know that there has been a lot of advances in the technology. So, Minister, the real question is though, the real question is...

Dr. DAVIES: I was hoping you would get to it.

(Laughter)

Dr. WHEATLEY: The real question.... And I'm getting there. The real question is this. Have we taking into consideration the changes that will come with technology? For example, I know that a fixed budget would be in place for these Tablets, so after two years, how will those Tablets fair with the change in technology?

Mr. PAULWELL: Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, in relation to the first part of the question, the contracts are denominated in US currency, so if there is any slippage, then it will be more Jamaican dollars.

Dr. WHEATLEY: It will be at a more cost to us?

Mr. PAULWELL: It is in US currency so, yes, yes, yes, yes!

Mr. Speaker, the equipment that are being procured now, are highly sophisticated equipment. It will enable Jamaican students to be on the same level as students in Japan, Australia, United States of America, that's the baseline from which we are starting.

And, of course, yes, we can anticipate that over time - but this pilot is for one year, so we don't envisage that there will be any

obsolescence occurring then. And, in fact, I believe that based on the specs you will have sufficient capacity in these devices to last well beyond three to five years.

And, finally, I want to make the point, Mr. Speaker, because this project is to facilitate all Jamaicans so we have to, under the Ministry of Education that has with our approval, ensured that a school that is dedicated to the disabled community is a critical part of this pilot. (Applause)

Mr. ROBINSON: Hear, hear!

(MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition, entered and took his seat.)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to ask, how many students are actually involved in the pilot programme? And of $1.4 Billion targeted we have identified $950 Million to be spent so far; how will the other $450 Million be expended?

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the project will enable the delivery of 26,000 tablets in the hands of students and teachers. So every single teacher and every single student at these institutions will each receive a tablet. The Member is quite right that so far for the infrastructure and the tablets it's $800 plus $150, the balance is going to be on content. And let me say something, because the Leader of Opposition mentioned to us recently on the [issue] about content. We believe that there is indigenous content in Jamaica; youngsters who are writing apps and businesses that can provide and already e-Learning Jamaica has received submissions from a number of enterprises, Jamaican enterprises, that are seeking to provide content for this project. And we want to salute them because it will enable us to utilize the content, but also an opportunity for export of the content. So, Mr. Speaker, in relation to the project the content is a critical component and it will take up the remaining sums that's available out of the $1.4 Billion.

The SPEAKER: We have a line of - you're finished, Mr. Shaw?

Mr. SHAW: No, not quite. There are 27,000 tablets that have been ordered, not 26,000?

Mr. PAULWELL: Twenty-seven thousand.

Mr. SHAW: Twenty-seven, but you said 26,000?

Mr. PAULWELL: Distributed, but you have to have spares.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Robinson)

Mr. SHAW: Okay, so that's the total number of tablets that will be used in the pilot project. And is it possible to get a list of the schools to which this project will apply?

Mr. PAULWELL: Yes, I'm sure the Minister of Education will provide the list in due course. It's a project that we deal with the technology side and they deal with the selection of schools.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Minister, I'm not sure if you answered the question as it relates to the internet service provider? Who is the preferred

internet service provider and at what cost will internet connectivity be sourced for this pilot project?

(HON. DERRICK FLAVIUS KELLIER, (PNP), St. James, Southern, Minister of Labour and Social Security, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. PAULWELL: As I mentioned to the Member, that procurement is being done now and we'll provide that information to you. We need to be clear that it is a free service to the beneficiaries. So all the students, all the teachers will access the internet for free.

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister; Minister, there is a lot of talk about tablets and it's a kind of catch phrase now. But are you aware that, for purposes of assisting our young students, that the vast majority of them would have been trained on Microsoft and that the tablet as a sole source kind of instrument is now getting quite redundant in light of the cross over productions - you're probably not aware of it, but...

(Laughter) (Cross talk)

The SPEAKER: Question, the question, question.

Mr. SAMUDA: ...the cross-over productions that is utilizing the Microsoft. In other words, it serves a dual purpose. It's a touch and as well as an ordinary laptop.

A Government MEMBER: So you're proposing what?

Mr. SAMUDA: And I am suggesting to you is that you reconsider or you refocus your attention from this idea of just a tablet from 4his idea of just a tablet because the student with the tablet cannot do half as much as the student with the more flexible piece of equipment. So do a little research and you'll find that I'm right.

The SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. House Leader, will the Minister of Local Government…

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I did indicate that we will be doing one question today. The Minister of Local Government [and Community Development] will answer the question next week.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. McKENZIE: With all due respect to the House Leader. The question was slated to be answered today by the Minister and in regard to these questions that I tabled, Mr. Speaker, I think it warrants an immediate response from the Minister because there is a latest development surrounding those questions, Mr. Speaker, and I would hate to know that a postponement until next week would allow certain things to be done. You know I'm really concerned, Minister.

(HON. COLIN ALFRED A. FAGAN, (PNP), St. Catherine, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. PAULWELL: I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, that I hear you and I understand

the sense of urgency. The Minister is undertaken on my behalf to answer the questions next week, and we so undertake.

Mr. McKENZIE: But it would also be two sets of questions he would have to answer that are standing in my name.

(Cross talk)

Leave me alone.

(Laughter)

The SPEAKER: So, Mr. McKenzie, you want both questions answered?

Mr. McKENZIE: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would appreciate that both sets of questions be answered next week.

The SPEAKER: And we have that commitment, House Leader, next week? No delays - no further delays.

(DR. THE HON. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, (PNP), St. Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health, entered and took his seat.)

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, under Government Business we intend to commence with Item 4 a continuation of debates which was started by the Minister of Agriculture [and Fisheries] and I gather that the Member, the Opposition Spokesperson on Agriculture will now respond.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Hutchinson.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker, this document produced is a very large document, but some critical elements are lacking. Food availability, food access, food utilization and stability of food supplied are goals which we have to strive for.

The 38th Special Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development in October 2011 in Dominica endorsed the proposed regional food and nutrition security action plan and focuses now on its execution. Recommended steps for immediate action are:

1. clearly identify the timescale for implementation of the different actions;
2. prioritize the implementation of specific actions; and
3. establishing the specific targets for each of the food and nutrition security goals as well as food safety goals.

I need to ask, Mr. Speaker, where are we with these actions now? The main constraints highlighted were availability of the quality of local material, inefficient marketing and market linkages, lack of consistency in production and post harvesting, limited investment in research and development and high energy and transportation costs. Linkages between the domestic agriculture and food manufacturing sectors are inadequate. Mr. Speaker, this shows a totally disorganized agricultural sector. Other factors which are causing a stagnation in the growth of the agricultural sector is the rapid slide of the dollar, the counter-productive taxes introduced by the Government inhibiting the growth potential of the sector; GCT and port fees have curtailed the purchasing power of agricultural inputs by many farmers. For the Minister to claim the great achievements this Government has made is totally misleading.

We need to take any growth in the context of where we are coming from. The Minister speaks about the growth of certain crops. I don't think he has much to boast about when you look at where we are coming from. I will identify four main crops to indicate the growth in 2012 compared with 2008 to 2011 when there were droughts, floods, fires and disease devastating the agricultural sector.

The first one, Mr. Speaker, onion 2008 to 2011, the average annual growth was 41 per cent; 2011 to 2012, annual growth was 7.19 per cent. When you look at carrots, 2008 to 2011 the annual growth was 23 per cent; 2011 to 2012, it decreased by 7.73 per cent; ginger and turmeric, two of the crops that are being promoted now, 2008 to 2011 the annual growth was 62 per cent; 2011 to 2012 it decreased by 5.16 per cent; Irish potato, 2008 to 2011 average annual growth 70 per cent.

Dr. DAVIES: Seventy?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Seventy pro cent...

Government MEMBER: Is pro cent or per cent?

Mr. WARMINGTON: Shut yuh mouth!

The SPEAKER: No, no, Mr. Warmington.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: ...between 2008 and 2011 the growth was 211 per cent, if you don't understand; 211 per cent for that year. Average annual growth, 70 per cent...

Dr. DAVIES: Tufton Hutchinson.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: And 2011/2012 the increase was 0.40 per cent.

What is the structure that is needed as a companion measure to this policy which is hanging out there like an apple on a tree which cannot be reached? My concentration now is, therefore, on the way forward. For this to be moving forward, Mr. Speaker, there has to be what is called a bottom-up approach. This is where the farmers' organizations are the catalyst to provide the stimulus that is needed for the growth. The structures that brought about the growth in the period 2008 to 2011 have been dismantled.

To achieve the goals outlined, the mantra therefore, should be to establish:

1. Organizing farmers organizations.

This will assist in:

1) purchasing inputs at a cheaper cost;
2) assisting with the marketing of agricultural produce, as well as providing higher prices to the farmers for their produce;
3) construction of agricultural production centres with an abattoir, and for grading, packaging, processing, storage and distribution of all agricultural items.

These centres will:

a) provide a ready market for farmers produce;
b) curtail praedial larceny;
c) encourage entrance to farming;
d) increase food and nutrition security and certification of the products;
e) provide traceability;
f) allow produce to become more competitive; and
g) enhance the value chain.

Mr. Speaker, the law should also make it compulsory that children in all primary and basic schools be provided with a breakfast

consisting of 80 per cent local food, with locally-made fruit juice.

At this point in time, Mr. Speaker, some schools you have 40 per cent of the students go to school hungry. A breakfast programme increases the school attendance and the child's academic performance.

What we find in many instances, Mr. Speaker, is that the children who go to school hungry, 9/10 o'clock you find that the brain goes dead and they are unable to learn properly, and then the teachers are the ones that are blamed for the students not performing.

In North West St. Elizabeth there are 28 schools that have been assisted with this programme, with 532 students benefitting at a cost of roughly Six Million Dollars ($6M) for the academic year. Locally-grown food is purchased from the farmers, fruit juices substitute the bag juice which makes the children go to sleep, and vegetables are taken from some of the school gardens. The PTA members do the cooking at these schools.

Just last week I gave a Report to the Minister of Education, which was done by the CDF officer, who gave an Evaluation Report of the breakfast programme in the schools he visited. And it is one which shows the great improvement that has taken place because of the breakfast programme.

Mr. Speaker, I emphasize once again, there has to be a structured agricultural sector. And, it must be compulsory for the children in the basic and primary schools to be provided with breakfast. Fruit juice is imported, so the value chain has to be promoted at all levels.

I say again, Mr. Speaker - and I have said it all the time - the motto, therefore, should be:

Grow what you eat
Eat what you can
And can what you can't.

Thank you very much, sir.

(Applause)

Dr. DAVIES: I like the last sentence.

The SPEAKER: Dr. Ferguson.

Dr. FERGUSON: Mr. Speaker, I thank this Honourable House for the opportunity to contribute to the discussion on the National Food and Security Policy.

The document before this Honourable House embodies a definition of food security that is beyond the traditional narrow concept of food self-sufficiency and the physical availability of food supplies over time and space. It includes socioeconomic and nutritional aspects of having economic and physical access to adequate, safe and nutritious foods.

Food and nutrition security in this document embodies four major pillars:

- Availability
- Accessibility
- Consumption or utilization and
- Food stability

(HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. Speaker, in support of the policy, I will confine my remarks to the nutritional

considerations. Correctly so, the food-security debate has been widened to include some focus on non-communicable diseases, and the impact of these on the health and mortality of the population, as well as the burden they impose on the resources of the health sector.

From the Lifestyle Survey conducted in 2008, Mr. Speaker, the prevalence of hypertension and diabetes was 25 per cent and 8 per cent, respectively. There was a significant difference when overweight in males represented 38 per cent and was compared to that of females of 65.8 per cent. Approximately 40 per cent of Jamaicans were engaged in less than the recommended 30 minutes of moderate physical activity daily.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, a study carried out by the World Health Organization in 2007 showed that directly and indirectly, the hypertension and diabetes, which are just two of the NCDs, were costing the Government and the people of Jamaica approximately Four Hundred and Sixty-one Million US dollars (US$461 M) annually. During the same year the Working Document of the Heads of Government Meeting held in Trinidad confirmed that Latin America and the Caribbean, as a region, represented the highest level of morbidity and mortality in relation to the NCDs.

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica, like the rest of the developing world is facing one of the greatest public health challenges of the 21st Century. It threatens to undermine social and economic development, shaking the very foundations on which we build progress.

Mr. Speaker, we are facing a non-communicable disease epidemic. In some places it is described as a tsunami.

Mr. Speaker, there are an estimated 70 per cent of Jamaicans that die annually due to the NCDs, some in the prime of their lives. In fact, some 34 per cent make the transition before age 70. We find that it is mainly cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes. Yet, according to the World Health Organization Chronic Disease a Vital Investment Study of 2005, 80 per cent of all heart disease, stroke and Type 2 diabetes, and over 40 per cent of cancer can be prevented, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica is committed to reducing the number of deaths attributable to NCDs by 25 per cent by 2025...

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Dr. FERGUSON: ...in keeping with our commitment to the World Health Organization. And this is why, Mr. Speaker, my Ministry has embarked on a course to put policies in place to support this effort.

Mr. Speaker, we co-sponsored the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy, which we are debating today. We are working on an Infant and Young Child Feeding Policy, which is far advanced, and we have established a National Strategic Plan for the prevention and control of NCDs and their risk factors in Jamaica, 2013 to 2018...

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Dr. FERGUSON: ...which has already been approved by Cabinet.

Nutrition-related diseases next to tobacco

use are now the main public health problems in Jamaica, and as was said earlier, costing millions of dollars per year, as persons continue to make incorrect food choices, coupled with unhealthy lifestyles.

Mr. Speaker, as a nation we need to establish guidelines that will engender healthy nutritional habits. This has to begin at an early age. The status of young children is one of the most sensitive indicators of nutrition in a country, as they are the most vulnerable to the effects of poor nutrition. Globally and within the Caribbean region, reports of obesity on the one hand, and malnutrition, on the other, are reshaping the approach that countries are taking to encourage improved nutrition for our respective population.

A MEMBER: That's right.

Dr. FERGUSON: Local studies have shown that in 2012, 5.9 per cent of children were above the normal weight for their age, 3.2 had grade 2 malnutrition, and 0.1 per cent had severe malnutrition.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that we engender healthy lifestyle practices in our children. Early habits are hard to break. If children are not properly guided very early, the chances are these nutritional challenges will follow them throughout their lives into adulthood. This will result in a vicious cycle, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it seems as Jamaicans, we tend to have a strong appetite for foods that are not nutritious. I believe that there is a need for disclosure of nutritional information and caloric value make-up on foods, including the Quick-Food Industry, so persons can make more informed choices. We also need to include more fruits and vegetables in our diets, especially for an agricultural nation such as ours.

Mr. Speaker, we need to pay special attention to portion sizes and the urgent need for increased physical activity.

I support the objectives of the Policy which seek to:

- achieve sustainable food and nutrition security;
- ensure the full protection and realization of the right to food for all Jamaicans and residents of Jamaica;
- eliminate all forms of malnutrition in order to have a well-nourished and health population.

This is important, Mr. Speaker, for national economic development and to move us towards our national development goals outlined in Vision 2030, to make Jamaica the place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

The SPEAKER: Mr. Charles.

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, as one of the rural MPs or MP representing the rural area somewhere off, I would like to say a few words and ask permission to divert a little from the topic, but to stay under agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, I think the time has long passed - I think we have been saying it in this House for a long time, we keep saying it but I don't know that we take it outside of the House - that our farmers need to be educated

some more in agriculture, what they plant, when they plant and where they plant.

Mr. CHARLES: I think that those of us who visit the market - and thank God we are fortunate this year, we didn't have the hurricane like last year, we have food in the market, plenty food, but all comes in one time. And so the farmers - you'll go to Coronation Market and you have yams, potatoes - and the Minister of Agriculture probably will have to tell us whether or not we can determine what area we plant and when we plant.

I remember at a time in this very House, it was announced that we were doing a survey of the island - Trelawny, St. Ann, Manchester, for the planting of yams, that we could plant yam this month, we could plant another five months at another place. What we have now is everything coming in one time. All the markets are filled with the same thing and the farmer is discouraged, because he puts it in - those who are fertilizing now it's probably nearly $500.00 a bag for fertilizer - and when he reaps and everybody reaps, he gets little or nothing.

So, Minister, I know you've said so; I know you're working on it I think that all of us have to intensify our effort to train our farmers what to plant, when to plant and where to plant what. I think, Minister, that it would help us when we reap and so that you can have Irish potato. Last month Irish potato was at $140.00 a pound; $120.00 in the supermarket and some farmers are getting $40.00 a pound. Somebody has to find out who is the middleman or educate the farmer how to sell, how to market. Again, teach him what to plant, we have to help him to market it.

And I am not attacking you, Minister, I know you've been on it; your colleague over this side has been talking about it. But I don't think that you've educated all of us in this House and outside of the House to help the farmer, to teach him some of these techniques. The farmer failed to reap, and everything goes away, because if he reaps it stays on the side, nobody comes to buy it.

When I was a boy there was the marketing centre where he could carry his food to now that has gone out of style. But, Minister, the few people who leave with a truck to Trelawny to buy yam, and he buys at the price that he who catches him first gets, again it comes back to marketing, again it comes back to education. The farmers can plant, but they need leadership. Why is food so expensive to some of the Jamaican people? Why, when those who are producing it get little or nothing for it?

And, Minister, last week I went to the May Pen market and there were bags and bags of imported Irish potato, overwhelming in the May Pen market because the farmer was trying to sell his Irish potato at $80.00 a pound...

Mr. CLARKE: When?

Mr. CHARLES: ...and the imported Irish potato...

Mr. CLARKE: When?

Mr. CHARLES: Last week.

...and the imported Irish potato was going for $55.00 a pound. How can we encourage our farmers to do that?

Minister, last week Friday I bought Irish potato for $70.00 a pound. Now if some men or women, some big company can import Irish potato and come there and sell it for $50.00 a pound, how can the farmer get anything?

Mr. SILVERA: What?

Mr. CHARLES: Irish potato.

Mr. SILVERA: The Irish potato price wrong Pearnel, Irish potato price wrong.

Mr. CHARLES: You have some? You want to come with me tomorrow? Come with me tomorrow, I will take you with me tomorrow.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Stick to the point.

Mr. McKENZIE: Pearnel nuh listen to Silvera.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Stick to the point and do not listen to him.

(Cross talks)

Mr. CHARLES: Minister, I am not here trying to score points or try to attack anybody, I'm telling you what is happening out there. And I said last week, last week, in the nice imported bags, right, $50.00 a pound for imported Irish potato and the Jamaican farmer was trying to sell it for $70.00 and $80.00 and in the supermarket it's $120.00, so anybody who wants to go and check it go and check it. I checked it because I have interest in the farmer.

Minister, who has the right to import? And I didn't call you because I heard you on television saying we were probably about 20% short in Irish potato and that you would not allow more than the shortage to be imported. I don't know how well you're able to guide that once there is some outlet for importation we know. I don't know how you're able to do it but I can tell you an overwhelming amount is in the market.

Now something that is being done now - and again, Minister, I'm glad to see large companies coming in to be part of the agricultural project.

Mr. SILVERA: All right.

Mr. CHARLES: When Mr. Seaga was Prime Minister once there was Agro 21, he was taken to task. And I recall going to Clarendon and saw tomatoes being produced by a company, and because they had transportation and market, all the farmers around were invited to plant, and they were buying from them and selling. So because there was a big man who can market, can produce, can pay, the little man got a break. So I'm glad to see that...

Dr. DAVIES: You were exporting something or just... (Inaudible)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Go on man, let's close it.

Mr. CHARLES: Well the Government was advised that a plane was taking Irish potato - I mean tomatoes away; we saw them going.

Dr. DAVIES: I know.

Mr. CHARLES: But it's not a joke, the point is this is that if you get the big companies and the big farmers to get into agriculture they will lead the way of production and marketing for the small farmers and we'll be better off. So they can mechanize, you're not going to find every

little farmer with a cutlass and a hoe digging between stones to plant yam anymore, when some people are able to drop a plough and put in yam.

Minister, some time ago there was a new way of planting yams -1 don't know if it's you or it was under you - they do without using the stick.

Dr. DAVIES: *Mini-set*.

Mr. CHARLES: *Mini-set*.

Dr. DAVIES: Yes.

Mr. CHARLES: I don't know if it is still going, but it was revolutionary when I saw it in Manchester once, but we don't do these things because we're not continuously encouraged to do so, or maybe it fail one year and we get out of it, so if it is working, let us work with it. So, Minister, I divert a little...

Mr. WARMINGTON: Yes, a lot.

Mr. CHARLES: ...from the main part of it, because...

The SPEAKER: You're coming back to the main part now?

(Laughter)

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, sorry.

Dr. DAVIES: He is inviting you to return.

(DR. KENNETH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, West Central, entered and took his seat.)

The SPEAKER: I'm bringing you back on neutral.

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, you know why I keep - the Minister knows that I have more than political interest, more than vote-catching interest, I have interest in seeing food being produced; I have interest in seeing the small farmers of which I'm out of one of them, it is because of them why I am here. And I'm interested in asking him, Mr. Speaker, to lead the way, or continue to lead the way and for all of us in here to do something like that. Because agriculture is the only thing in my opinion that's going to save the food part of it right now; going to save the food part.

(Applause)

When you see a handcart man pushing food in Central Kingston, Minister, I'm sure you feel good. When you go to Brown's Town or you go to May Pen or you go to Linstead or Montego - all of these markets filled, we all feel good, but at the end of the day...

Mr. WARMINGTON: Come Pearnel, come, come.

Mr. CHARLES: ...some of the higglers...

Mr. WARMINGTON: Come, come.

Mr. CHARLES: ...borrow money to carry the food to market, borrow money to buy it from the farmer and they have to borrow money to go home. Why? Because everybody bring all the food one time, that's the education I want.

Lastly, lastly, I want to ask the Minister, Mr. Speaker, to let us continue this market in the communities all over the island, to save the farmers.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Reverend Thwaites.

Rev. THWAITES: Mr. Speaker, I wish to confine my remarks to the issue of the

feeding of school children, adverted to by the Member for North West St. Elizabeth, and first of all to commend him on spearheading a very innovative project whereby the youngest children in his constituency are provided with reasonable local based nutrition to ground their mental development and their learning.

The system is that rather than sending supplies of flour and rice and bully beef and mackerel to the schools in that area, the value which would approximate those purchases - all imported purchases mind you, Mr. Speaker - are given to responsible people in schools and converted in, with the assistance and cooperation and partnerships that he mentioned, into nutritious meals for the children. And they will sometimes have to purchase local protein, but local supplies can't take care of everything, I imagine, but it is a step in the right direction. And it's a step in the right direction for two reasons: one, because of the emphasis on using local produce which increases aggregate demand particularly for the small farmers and the communities, and also Mr. Speaker, because it is decentralizing the School Feeding Programme.

Mr. Speaker, this House should remember that we're spending about $4 Billion a year - the Government is - to supplement the diets of our children. It used to be the stock in trade calculation that the school feeding should provide about a third of the daily nutrient that the children required. Mr. Speaker, from observation and from some studies now being done, it is quite clear that that one-third is no longer adequate, for many children, what they get at school is what they have for the day. We have the situation where many students are getting whatever it is, the lunch, the bulla, the juice and they will consume part and wrap up the rest and carry it home. These are the realities, they're not to create guilt or anger, they're rather to induce innovativeness on our part.

And therefore, I want to encourage other Members of Parliament, other community groups, those who sponsor Basic Schools, Infant Schools particularly, because the nutrition of the early childhood Sector is particularly important. If it is lacking at that early stage, it is impossible by whatever you eat afterwards to catch up with it - catch up with what has been lost.

And the Ministry of Education, I wish to inform this House, is available to work with any Member of Parliament, any Counsellor, any responsible group in order to ensure that the programme can be decentralized. What are the requirements? One, strict accountability for the funds, yes, and secondly, appropriate nutritional standards and health standards for the recipients. A good deed has started here and in various other areas of the country, I believe it can be expanded to our great advantage. The direction we are taking school feeding is to use more local produce. Why should we not be using our own sweet potato, our own Irish potato which appears to be in very good supply. Obviously, volume prices will have to apply. That is (Inaudible) and popular thing, but that will have to be.

The shortage of eggs at Christmas, Mr. Speaker that many experienced was because

the Nutrition Products had been buying up large quantities of eggs for the School Feeding Programme. That is to the good. That is a step that we have already taken. The availability of juice concentrates - and, indeed, I am pleased to tell you, sir, the use of local protein, chicken in patties and sausages is being tried experimentally now by the nutrition products for consumption in the schools. This is the direction we must go to save foreign exchange and to maximize the benefit to the farmers and to enhance the diet of the students. I look forward to partnerships and co-operation in this regard.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Dr. Baugh.

Dr. BAUGH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I apologize for being late and having missed the presentations from other colleagues in the House...

Dr. DAVIES: Pearnel spoke on your behalf.

Dr. BAUGH: …in particular, the Ministry of Health, I would have been very happy to have heard his presentation; because this issue of food security is of absolute importance to the future of this country and the world. In 2050, it would have been anticipated that we will have about nine billion people in the world, just under ten billion people actually. And one of the greatest demands will be for food security, for water, for energy, but in particular, food because that population in 2050 is going to be 70% urban people, urbanized population, 70%, which means that the consumption of this urban population of energy and food and the need for other services such as disposal of garbage and other services that are important to our urban population, that the demand will be very high.

The issue of food is, therefore, tied with sustainable development and that is something that I don't hear much discussion about, sustainable development, which basically is defined as exploiting the natural resources today for our own needs without compromising the ability of future generations to provide for their own needs. That is a substance of discussions that has taken place at the level of the United Nations, special conferences have been held about sustainable development. And it also implies that there is a certain - there are pillars for sustainable development. One of those pillars is social needs, that means that the people are taken into consideration, but also environment needs, that means that the environment is taken into consideration. These two factors, along with economic considerations, form the three pillars of sustainable development, which is something that we are invited as a country to pay attention to. I am not certain whether we are taken seriously in Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, I have before raised in this House the issue of agricultural lands that Jamaica, which has 11,000 square kilometers, only have somewhere between 10% to 15% of that land as arable land. As to whether it is irrigated or not a much smaller percentage is irrigated and therefore available for agriculture. But, at the same time Mr. Speaker, we are proceeding to build houses on these flat, level, irrigated agricultural lands. And I

know that I am coming into conflict with some of my colleagues when they plan industrial development on flat arable lands.

I remember discussing this issue in the House when I spoke about the decline in production of agriculture in Jamaica. The now Minister of Agriculture pointed out to me that we couldn't produce the same amount of sugar as we did in 1965 when sugar peaked at 500 tonnes for export and today we are struggling to produce 120,000 tonnes. And the Minister of Agriculture pointed out to me that at that time; so many houses were not built on agricultural land. If you remember that discourse that we had, Mr. Minister.

Mr. CLARKE: Yes.

Dr. BAUGH: And which means that we are impairing our own ability to feed our people. We are making ourselves more and more dependent on imports and in 2050 we are going to find ourselves - I won't be around, most of us won't be around and there are a few people here who might be around in 2050.

Mr. VAZ: Pearnel.

Dr. BAUGH: Mike will be around, certainly, in a wheelchair.

But the fact is, Mr. Speaker, we are going to be absolutely dependent on importation of food. What that does to the economy you know, Mr. Speaker and Minister of Agriculture, is the fact that again we are exporting our primary products in decreasing amounts and importing finished products in increasing amounts. We are paying for other people's value added. And believe me, this country is not going to move one step further unless we take into consideration something called TFP, Total Factor Productivity, which is using technology to add value to our own primary products and raw materials. If we keep on exporting primary products, we are losing that value added and we are paying other people for their value added. In other words, we are paying for the labour and the technology in other countries. And agriculture in Jamaica, even in rural Jamaica among the small farmers, is begging for some technological development to bring it into better productivity to make it competitive with those products that are coming into Jamaica.

And I heard the Minister of Education, the current Minister of Education speaking a while ago and I am reminded of articles that were written by Mr. Aubyn Hill pointing out that a lot of the agricultural produce when we are in great production go to waste. Boys in St. Elizabeth play football with the watermelons.

Mr. H. BUCHANAN: Not true.

Dr. BAUGH: Not true. A lot of produce are wasted. They did, and I know some that did.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. H. Buchanan)

Dr. BAUGH: And a lot of other produce are wasting.

Mr. Hill pointed out at the time, why are we throwing away our fruits and importing those things that go into the drinks from Trinidad and Tobago which go to feed our school children. There are many aspects of this, you know. There are other things too. Because the same Mr. Hill found out when he

became head of NCB that, in fact, NCB was ordering all his uniforms from abroad and found out that other companies were doing the same thing, denying our own people of that added value in terms of production of these entities rather than importing them. So the question of food security is a broader question than just growing enough food. It implies that the need for technology to make ourselves competitive to be able to package our products, to be able to reach not only our market but other markets in the Caribbean.

And that brings me to the issue, Mr. Speaker that food security goes beyond our shores. There is an initiative called the Jagdeo Initiative, which was put forward by 'Basdeo'...

A Government MEMBER: Bharrat Jagdeo.

Dr. BAUGH: Bharrat Jagdeo, sorry, my mistake, who was the President of Guyana.

Mr. CLARKE: You know who put that name.

Dr. BAUGH: I don't know who put that, I just know it was the Jagdeo Initiative and it is well established in the Caribbean as a policy whereby large amounts of land are available in Guyana, which is seriously under-populated and in Belize seriously under-populated with a vast supply of water most of the time because they have huge rivers. In Guyana one river is 21 miles across. And I have been to Belize and I have driven across their rivers to see how water is abundant. But land and water are abundant in those countries and the Jagdeo Initiative is encouraging Jamaicans, our business people, our visitors to take an interest in utilizing the CSME and to take advantage of the natural resources in those countries to exploit them for the benefit of the total Caribbean. But also in terms of having export from Caribbean to Third World countries, we have not sought to move on that front, Mr. Speaker, and we are losing ground because that is a great opportunity.

There are certain economic drivers in the Caribbean. Trinidad is doing it because Trinidad has a lot of capital, but there is no reason that Jamaicans should not be because Jamaicans did this many years ago in Belize. It was Jamaicans who went across to Belize and initiated their citrus industry. Today we cannot compete with Belize in terms of producing citrus and orange juice, and that's because of Jamaicans. But there is no doubt as a Caribbean, as a CARICOM, as a CSME, the opportunity exists in those under-populated areas where natural resources are abundant for Jamaicans to take an interest.

So if we are to achieve food security, in spite of the growing population needs, in spite of the urbanization that we, too, are going to experience like the rest of the world' that we have to preserve our lands for agricultural production and, at the same time, add technology to this production so that we are competitive. If we refused to be competitive, if we do not produce in large quantities and packages so that it is available at a good price, then other products are going to compete in Jamaica against our own items because they

have applied technology and they have packaged it in such a way so that it is accessible and available and competitive in terms of prices.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. That is my contribution.

(Applause)

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, as one of four practicing farmers in this Honourable House.

Dr. GREEN: What you know.

Mr. SAMUDA: Precisely. What is little known is that I live on a farm. I wake up every morning on a farm. I go to bed every night on a farm. I am a farmer. (Applause) And my bank will confirm that.

Dr. DAVIES: ...Desmond...

Mr. SAMUDA: The fact is...

Mr. McKENZIE: Weh yuh seh? I farm you last night. Is two you get last night in your own backyard.

Dr. DAVIES: I won't allow you to… (Inaudible) …me again, especially when you can't pay your light bill.

Mr. McKENZIE: Is all right.

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, I lament the fact that agriculture has suffered from inattentiveness, inattentiveness in critical areas by successive administrations. And I say that without fear of constructive contradiction. In this Honourable House when, years ago the Economy and Production Committee met, review and discuss and recommend the way forward for the dairy industry, despite the recommendations of the Committee, not to expose local dairy farmers to a level of competition from milk powder that totally eroded the dairy industry, Cabinet refused, refused to heed the advice of the Parliament. As a result, today coming from, I believe Minister, something like 45,000...

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Clarke)

Mr. SAMUDA: All right, 38, say 40,000 head of dairy cattle, I don't think you have 5,000 today.

Mr. CLARKE: What you speaking about there is milk product...

Mr. SAMUDA: Yes, milk product.

Mr. CLARKE: Thirty thousand.

Mr. SAMUDA: Yes. And we had about 40,000 head.

Mr. SAMUDA: Now, listen to this. Of the remaining portion of cattle in the dairy sector, you don't have 1,000 purebred. We have done no significant research that has contributed to the development of the Dairy Industry despite the quantity of cash that has been spent on that sector.

So the fact of the matter is, not only the Government is at fault, but so too are those who have managed agriculture are equally at fault.

I hear talk of reduction in agricultural lands. Yes, there have been. I think the pasture population total acreage is down by some 40% since 1968 or 1996 in fact to now - 2007, down by about 40%. Why? Simply because, more land on which cattle can graze have been allowed to fall into ruin.

I remember when I worked at Alcan, Mile Gully was one of the prime locations for the most beautiful herds you could find anywhere in the world. You remember that, Richard?

(Mr. Richard Azan nods)

Anywhere in the world, when you go there it was a pleasure to see it. Today, you need binoculars to find one.

(*Sotto voce* comments/Laughter)

Mr. SAMUDA: What is worse, what is worse, is that despite some loyalist within the industry trying to retain the integrity of the Red Poll Herd, today what you have is what they call a commercial herd, 'a potpourri of all kind a cattle', dairy, Black Poll, Red Poll...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Clarke)

Mr. SAMUDA: No, 'a tell you, I'm a farmer'.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Clarke)

Mr. SAMUDA: No bother.... come on, man. This is not a joke. I have farmed a… I have farmed coffee, banana for export, cane, coconuts, copra, cattle, dairy and a little bit of thoroughbred breeding horses.

(Laughter)

Now, the fact of the matter, Mr. Speaker, if we as a nation, when we talk about feeding ourselves, we are engaged primarily in subsistence farming. Nothing more than subsistence farming.

When you go to the Hague show, my colleague is well.... but when he goes and sees a nice array of vegetables, is like a sample. That's not production for export. It's not even production to serve the tourism industry if it is not brought together under proper management, so that one person can consolidate it, package it and present it, it's just subsistence farming. So when we come in here and get emotional about agriculture, agriculture is in a disastrous condition despite efforts of Ministers past and present, disaster. Worse yet....

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Is Hutchie you a trouble? (Laughter)

Mr. SAMUDA: Worse yet, Amity Hall, Amity Hall, which is a Agro-Park that the Minister spoke about....

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SAMUDA: Hold on little. Agro-Park in Amity Hall, I don't know where it's going, where is its future, where is the overall plan? Because as far as I'm aware, the Minister of Agriculture need to talk to the Minister of Industry and the Minister of Transport because the Agro-Park is part of the Logistics Hub for the manufacturing sector, not for the agricultural sector.

Because, essentially, the whole a that belt is not good for agriculture, it's too high in limestone, it is for manufacturing.

Mr. CLARKE: Where is that?

Mr. SAMUDA: Southern St. Catherine.

Mr. CLARKE: What you talking bout?

Mr. SAMUDA: Well, check you facts. That is why the.... check. You want the source? The National Survey of Land Utilization done by the UDC.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Clarke)

Mr. SAMUDA: No. Adjacent area, but Amity Hall itself is destined for expansion within the context of the Logistic Hub.

Mr. A. BROWN: What about Bernard Lodge?

Mr. SAMUDA: The same thing.

Mr. BROWN: ….limestone. No lime-stone in Bernard Lodge.

Mr. SAMUDA: The predominant feature of the South Coast, Southern St. Catherine and Clarendon, you have patches.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Parchment)

Mr. SAMUDA: In my farm, for instance… Hold on. Hold on. Hold on. Hold on. Minister, in my farm, we have bone gate clay, we have all the kind of alluvial soils that you can think of, but we also are well endowed with high levels of Limestone. When you are going to do agriculture on a commercial basis, you can't be patching - you have a little strip so - and a little strip so and a little strip so, it must be a massive area con

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. SAMUDA: Yes, continuously structured in a way that will give rise to modern technology. So we have to understand that what we are here beating up our gums about is subsistent farming, not farming for production seriously, for export.

Now, what I think the Minister and the Ministry should focus on, is what industry in Jamaica is part of the export industry that can be served by the Ministry of Agriculture. You know what that industry is? Tourism. And every farmer, who can produce for that sector should be paid in US Dollars. It is part of the export sector, right.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. H. Buchanan)

Mr. SAMUDA: It should be part.... Now, the only reason a hotel will buy imported goods is if it's not here. Tourism is the salvation coupled with the build out of the factory facilities for reassembling and sales out of Jamaica through the Logistics Hub, that's our future. That's our future, quite frankly.

So, it's not a question of coming here and becoming emotional about agriculture. Agriculture is critical, absolutely critical. But we have been approaching it in a way that does not lend itself to real expansion.

You know, Minister, I have been in agriculture since 1978, and you know, in all those years, unless I call, I've never been visited by an officer, extension officer. I have never been visited by an extension officer. I have never had somebody come and say, "how you doing?" I have asked for advice and by the time I get the advice, right, I have already made up my mind.

Mr. CLARKE: They know that you know more than them. (Laughter)

Mr. SAMUDA: You know something Minister, if an extension officer is not engaged in agriculture in a personal way, chances are that a farmer knows more than them. If you don't know what it's like to have pressure to find a payroll, you're not a businessman, you're not a businessman, you just playing with business and you dreaming about it. You have to know it, you have to get your hands dirty, you have to be there to see the crisis that can attend a farmer. You know that, I shouldn't have to tell you that. (Mr. Samuda addresses Mr. R. Clarke)

So the fact is, Mr. Speaker, let us not get emotional because a few houses are being built on agricultural lands. We have a growing population and I long for the day when I will come into this Honourable House – I hope I

live long enough to see it - when I come into this Honourable House and I see that they have decided to put bulldozers through the Caymanas lands for the purpose of building factories.

Mr. SILVERA: No, you started it?!

Mr. SAMUDA: Yes.

Mr. WARMINGTON: So, shut up.

Mr. SAMUDA: It's an idea, it's an idea that I believe its time has come. The best agricultural lands we have in Jamaica right now is right at the University of the West Indies.

(Laughter/Disturbance)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. SAMUDA: Followed only, followed only by New Kingston.

So when we talk about development, we must be mindful that at the end of the day, what we are trying to do is not to have stops and starts in the utilization of agricultural land, but is to create sustained employment so that the people who we seek to benefit will be able to eek out a proper living and develop their families for the future. That is what we should be about and the rationale about it, not be emotional. As one man said one day, 'for goodness sake, what he's asking us not to do at a certain place where decisions are made, don't fall in love with Air Jamaica'. Don't fall in love with agriculture that is not going to give us the results that we want and will prevent the development of industry for the creation of jobs and the development of our people's livelihood and welfare.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Miss HANNA: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture will close the debate next week and so we are asking for the suspension of the debate, so that we can give other persons an opportunity to participate until next week.

The SPEAKER: Is that the wish of the House? Okay.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Miss HANNA: Mr. Speaker, I ask that you now permit the Member from South West St. Catherine to close the debate at Item 1?

The SPEAKER: Mr. Warmington.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much and thank the Honourable House.

This Private Members' Motion, we commenced debate on this on March 20, 2012, and I brought it back after it fell off the Order Paper. What I'm asking for here, Mr. Speaker, is for Section 14(1) or the Governor-General (Expenditure, Personal Staff, Tax Exemptions and Pension) Act and Section 14(l)(a) of the Second Schedule of the Pensions (Prime Minister) Act to be brought in parity with that of Section 7(1)(a) of Retiring Allowances (Legislative Service) Act or in the alternative that Section 7(1)(a) of the Retirement Allowance Act to be brought into parity with them.

I have amended the Prayer, Mr. Speaker, whereby the amendment is of such:

> Be it Resolved that this Honourable House call on the Government through the Cabinet to establish a Commission or Committee of private citizens to review and recommend amendments to the Governor-General (Expenditure, Personal

Staff, Tax Exemption) Act and the Pensions (Prime Minister) Act to bring the provision with respect to pensions and allowances in line with the provisions of the Retiring Allowance (Legislative Service) Act, or in the alternative, the Retiring Allowances (Legislative Service) Act, the amendment reflect similar allowances and/or benefits as provided under the Governor-General (Expenditure, Personal Staff, Tax Exemption and Pension) Act and the Pension (Prime Minister) Act, as the latter stood before the 2008 amendment.

The previous Prayer I had there, Mr. Speaker, was for the House to recommend the change as such, but now what I'm asking for is for the Government through Cabinet to establish a Commission of Private Citizens or a Committee of private citizens to look at this and make the necessary recommendation if we should have this parity, Mr. Speaker. So I'm asking the House to accept or adopt the Prayer I'm asking for here?

The SPEAKER: Well, first we have to put the amendments.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, I ask for the amendment.

Be it Resolved that this Honourable House call on the Government through the Cabinet to establish a Commission of Committee of private citizens to review and recommend amendments to the Governor-General (Expenditure, Personal Staff, Tax Exemption) Act and the Pensions (Prime Minister) Act to bring the provisions with respect to pensions and allowances in line with provisions of the Retiring Allowances (Legislative Service) Act, or in the alternative, the Retiring Allowances (Legislative Service) Act, the amendment reflect similar allowances and/or benefits as provided for under the Governor-General (Expenditure of Personal Staff, Tax Exemptions and Pension) Act and the Pension (Prime Minister) Act, as the latter stood before the 2008 amendment.

Amendment put to the House and agreed to.

Motion as amended put to the House and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Miss HANNA: Mr. Speaker, it's not intended to do any further business, so we ask that you adjourn the House until next week, the 18th of March in the year of our Lord 2014?

The SPEAKER: The question is that the House do adjourn to next week Tuesday, the 18th of March, 2014 at 2:00 p.m.?

Put to the House and agreed to.

The House was adjourned at approximately 4:12 p.m.

THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SESSION 2013 – 2014

TUESDAY, March 18, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:25 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

MR. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House.

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing

HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security

HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce

HON. ROGER HAROLD CLIFFORD CLARKE, CD, (PNP), Westmoreland, Central, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture

HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, Northern, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. NATALIE GAYE NEITA-HEADLEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sports and Deputy Leader of the House

MR. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, Attorney General, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce

HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central
DR. KENNETH LEIGH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, West Central
DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western
DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western
MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, OD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central
HON. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern
MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, Eastern
DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern
MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western
MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western
MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern
MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central
MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern
MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western
MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern
MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. Julian Robinson.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

The SPEAKER: Before we get down to today's business, let us welcome from Manning's High School, 50 students and four teachers. (Applause)

Mr. CLARKE: The best school in Jamaica.

The SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Clarke.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

The SPEAKER: House Leader.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport, Works and Housing will make a Statement.

The SPEAKER: Minister Davies.

Dr. DAVIES: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that it is most appropriate that I provide to this Honourable House, to the general public, and particularly, to depositors in the Bernard Lodge Housing Scheme, an update on the status of affairs of

the Housing Agency of Jamaica. More specifically, it is important that I address the recent developments that resulted in the resignation *en bloc* of the Board of Directors of that institution.

Mr. Speaker, many of the negative comments which have been circulated publicly, represents a combination of speculation, half-truths and innuendos. Therefore, I take this opportunity to set the record straight and to reassure this Honourable House, and members of the public that notwithstanding the challenges being experienced, the Housing Agency of Jamaica will fully discharge its responsibility to its clients and to the country.

Mr. Speaker, there is no denying that on the face of it, there was justification for concern about the high attrition amongst employees at the agency. However, when the figures are disaggregated, they present a somewhat, different picture from that initial impression. Between April and December, 2014, 44 employees separated from the Agency.

(DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western, entered and took his seat.)

It should be noted, Mr. Speaker, that the Agency undertook a restructuring exercise which resulted in the elimination of some positions from the organizational structure. Staff members and their unions were apprised of the decision and its implications. Persons were asked to indicate whether they would opt for voluntary redundancy. As a result, 18 persons opted to leave through that mechanism, 10 persons resigned and 10 contracts ended. Some persons opted not to renew their contracts, given the uncertainty resulting from the restructuring exercise, while the contracts of five were terminated.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps the development which has caused the greatest concern was that over the last eight months, three Managing Directors separated from the Agency.

(DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central, entered and took his seat.)

First, Mr. Joseph Shoucair opted not to renew his contract when it expired in December 2012. However, based on a request from the Board, he remained in office until July 2013, at which time the Agency was well advanced with the recruitment of a new Managing Director. His successor, Miss Rosemarie Brown, was selected from within the organization, but she too tendered her resignation in November 2013. Finally, Mr. Karl Bennett, who succeeded Miss Brown, resigned as of March 10, 2014.

Not surprisingly, the departure of the latter two Managing Directors, in such a short space of time created some amount of disquiet amongst staff and Board Members. The matter of staff turnover was escalated to the level of Parliament when the Minister without Portfolio was asked to respond to questions raised by the Opposition Spokesman on

Transport, Works and Infrastructure Development. Among the issues raised, was an allegation of political interference in the day-to-day operations of the Agency.

Whilst rejecting the allegations of political interference, the Board deliberated and decided to step aside to provide me with the opportunity to objectively review the situation at the Agency, and decide on the appropriate set of actions that would ameliorate the seeming instability and disquiet.

Mr. Speaker, having reflected on the situation at the Institution, I accepted the resignations. I take this opportunity to report to this Honourable House and to the nation, that just yesterday, Cabinet approved the appointment of a new Board which is to be chaired by the Honourable Derrick Lattibeaudiere, former Governor of the Bank of Jamaica.

(MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

The other Board Members whose appointments were also approved are: Mr. Norman Reid, a Banker; Mr. Donald Moore, Senior General Manager of the NHT; Mrs. Lucille Brodber, a quantity surveyor and Head of the JEEP Secretariat; Mrs. Maureen Vernon, a senior public servant; Mr. Jerron Green, a Public Management Consultant; Miss Susan Lawrence, an attorney-at-law and Mr. Kenarthur Mitchell, a Financial Analyst.

Mr. Speaker, I have taken the decision to appoint, at this stage, a small Board, in order to return operations to normality as quickly as possible. In fact, the first meeting of the new Board will take place this week. In due course, after discussions with the new Chairman, additional Members will be appointed.

Mr. Speaker, even as I welcome the members of the new Board, I wish to place on record my appreciation to the outgoing Board for the significant amount of work that it undertook during its tenure. Notwithstanding, the innuendos and the rumors that have been circulated, I wish to take this opportunity to state publicly that at no time have I had any reason to question the integrity or competence of any member of the outgoing Board.

Mr. Speaker, a matter which has generated a great deal of discussion is the Public/Private Partnership agreement between the Housing Agency and Malphrus Incorporated. This Agreement is to facilitate construction of 604 one-bedroom units, and 980 studio units in Bernard Lodge, St. Catherine.

(DR. THE HON. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, CD, (PNP), St. Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health, entered and took his seat.)

The one-bedroom units were to be sold for $4.9 Million while the studio units were to be sold for $4 Million. Worthy of special note, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that the initial plan was that the first set of 350 units was slated for completion at the end of this month, that is March 31.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, that delivery date will not be met. It has been rescheduled to

July, 2014. The main reason for the delay is that significant changes have had to be made to the design of a storm water drain for the development. The original plans included the construction of a large drain across Highway 2000. However, that design would have led to traffic delays on the Highway as well as to increased costs. Therefore, that design was abandon, and the National Works Agency has done a revised one. Work is in progress to implement the new design.

(HON. ROBERT DIXON PICKERSGILL, (PNP), St. Catherine, North Western, Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change, entered and took his seat.)

Additionally, the developer has indicated that based on new internal arrangement in respect of their ownership structure, they have had to seek new financing arrangements for the project. In finalizing these arrangements, there is ongoing discussion between the Housing Agency and Malphrus Incorporated. The Housing Agency has been assured that all prior commitments will be honoured.

Mr. Speaker, to date, 321 persons have made deposits on phase I and 371 persons have made deposits in respect of Phase II. I have been advised, Mr. Speaker, that because of the delay in delivering the first set of units, some depositors have requested refunds of these deposits. These requests have all been honoured. I repeat, these requests have all been honoured. But, it is worthy of note, that the slots which have been vacated by those who have asked back for their deposits have been immediately filled by new depositors.

I want to assure depositors that their funds are safe, and that the Government has taken all the necessary steps to ensure that there is no negative fallout other than the rescheduled delivery date. Mr. Speaker, that is where we are.

(MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central, entered and took her seat.)

Let me now turn to the way forward. Mr. Speaker. I am giving my commitment to this House, and I want you to hold me to the promise that whatever it takes, the project will be implemented. A special management team is to be appointed to give specific focus to the timely implementation of the project, given the new timelines.

The new Board has been charged with the responsibility to accelerate the search for, and the appointment of a new Managing Director.

The restructuring of the Agency is to be expedited, based on collaboration between my Ministry and the Ministry of Finance and Planning. This will ensure that stability is restored and the uncertainties which have affected staff members and other stakeholders will be eliminated.

Mr. Speaker, let me close by saying that the Agency is under my watch and that of the Minister without Portfolio. The Agency will discharge its responsibilities, and whilst we recognize that there are challenges, we will be moving within the shortest timeframe possible

to ensure that the Agency continues to carry out its mandate of providing affordable housing for those individuals, and groups, who are presently, not served by existing entities.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Dr. Chang.

Dr. CHANG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, just a couple of short questions. One, the total number of units originally projected was 1,584 according to - from my own knowledge and according to your presentation. You have had 692 depositors; is the target still to provide 1,580 units and could you say how many depositors have sought refund at this stage?

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker, yes the target remains and 53 depositors have sought refund - sought and received.

Dr. CHANG: Not much work seems to have started. I know some redesign work has been done and you're still holding to a July delivery date for the units given where they are now?

Dr. DAVIES: That is the information which I have queried and that's the assurance I have.

(Cross talk)

This is not for the completion of the 1500 units.

Dr. CHANG: No, no.

Dr. DAVIES: Okay, right.

Dr. CHANG: Final question, I notice in seeking to fulfill your commitment to the Bernard Lodge project, there will be a special oversight committee and will not depend - likely depend on the appointment of a new managing director I would expect given what you said here? Are we to interpret this to say that you will have a special committee monitoring the Bernard Lodge project?

Dr. DAVIES: Yes, there will be, but I expect that the decision on the appointment of the Managing Director will be momentarily – will be almost immediately.

Dr. CHANG: Finally, Minister, the by-laws or the regulations governing the Housing Agency, formerly NHDC, gives the Minister almost veto right on the appointment of the Managing Director; it's an authority you can delegate, of course, to the Board, but I suspect - can I ask if you will be taking a closer look at who assumes this responsibility this time?

Dr. DAVIES: Yes, very close.

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Bartlett.

Mr. BARTLETT: Just two questions for the Minister. Firstly, Minister is the HAJ now financial? Is it financially viable as an entity? The last time they were before us in a committee of the House they were projecting a deficit of some $300 Million, and we were trying to determine how that would be derived in order for them to be able to deal with operational cost and other obligations, including, you know, paying of their statutory and other obligations. At the time it was said that the NHT would be paying up -front based on some transactions that they have; they have a $150 Million and the other $150 Million they would go to market to get. Would the Minister say whether those two arrangements have, in fact, been put together and, indeed, whether the HAJ is now financially on stream?

Dr. DAVIES: The arrangements have not been completed, but discussions have begun. I have already been in dialogue with the Chairman of the NHT, but as you may now but certainly the Opposition Spokesperson knows that agency in certain instances have been given literally basket to carry water in terms of being given obligations without the requisite financial support to carry them through, and so that's one of things we'll be looking to determine what of these - which of these obligations should be regarded as a national responsibility and the commitments to support will be forthcoming to carry these out and which ones that the institution will be able to carry out on its own. Unfortunately, what we have simply done and the provision of infrastructure for the PRIDE schemes is a case in point in that these are significant outlays required. So I expect the new Board - the new Board will be undertaking almost immediately an audit and I expect to have their findings in terms of where we are at the present and what are possible steps that can be taken for us to get out of the situation.

Mr. BARTLETT: Minister, I'm sure you are seized with the urgency of that, especially as it relates to the thousands of Jamaican homeowners and those who expecting delivery from the HAJ in the number of areas, including some of us in this very House in relation to programmes that we have with the Food for the Poor, and so on. So one of the concerns that I did not hear you say specifically on, Minister, is whether that financial commitment is, in fact, in place and, indeed, are the arrangements that we were told about, are they, in fact, in place? Have the HAJ actually gotten the loan from the financial institution, or wherever it was that they were going to get it? Or has it come from the Consolidated Fund and, indeed, has the NHT made good on that payment because up to the last time that I checked the NHT had not yet passed on any money, because of arrangements which have to do more with the central treasury management and so on? I think you are fully seized with that Minister. Would you just assure us that, indeed, the funding is in place? Because, you see, it makes a mockery of the whole process of talking about a Board or even to put out for contracting managing directors and so on, if the entity is not financial. I await your response, Minister.

Dr. DAVIES: As regards accessing funds from the private sector, we have received the approval permission of the Ministry of Finance to carry that through, so that was a major first step. As regards the discussion with the NHT, these are ongoing and I have no doubt these will be completed shortly. We are faced with a challenge, but these are not insuperable challenges. These are things which we will have to work through but the preservation of the institution, such as the HAJ, is critical because it speaks to the needs of a section of the population which is currently not served and during this next period I will be giving personal attention particularly in terms of a closer collaboration with the NHT because we can produce a win-win situation where there is a significant percentage of their contributors who are not in

a position to benefit from any solution and so that will be in their interest and in a sense that's one of the main reasons the HAJ was amalgamated - I wouldn't say established, but it was amalgamated to respond to that. You recognize the problems and I share with you and I accept your analysis of problems. What will be the major issue now is how we can design approaches which will address these problems.

Mr. BARTLETT: Just the last one. Having regard to how, in fact, you position the role that HAJ has to play and the relationship that it has with the NHT. Minister, in the context of fiscal consolidation, don't you think it might be a useful policy direction to go to merge the NHT with HAJ, so that you could have a security of flows or what a former Prime Minister called a certitude of flows into the HAJ so that it can fulfill its mandate?

Dr. DAVIES: I know that this is - this approach has been mooted but I think we have to be careful not to spread the NHT in areas it was not designed - the NHT is a housing finance bank and in that context it is possible for the NHT to work closely with HAJ in delivering units and then you can double count. HAJ produces units and NHT... but that - and I intend to do that. I certainly intend to do, but I not believe that the solution is to absorb one under the other.

Dr. CHANG: One last - Minister, there is a project that you actually initiated and which did some excellent work that benefited a particular sector of society: the Squatter Upgrading Programme with funding from TEF and a large part - most of the funding and I noticed that in recent times TPDCo could not spend the project funds for TEF, but I would ask really in the reconstituting of the Board and refocusing of the organization, are you looking at the possibility of restarting that programme, because...?

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Davies)

Dr. CHANG: I'm quite happy with where they start. The upgrading of informal settlements and depressed areas anywhere in Jamaica is a benefit to the country and a benefit to your colleague in security as well who can tell you it does contribute significantly in dealing with the issue.

Dr. DAVIES: We recognize - we have developed, for example, a very close partnership between JEEP and the TEF and if you note in terms of the new appointments, the director of JEEP is on the new HAJ Board and I believe that expertise will be very, very useful in putting us in a situation that you will never comment ever again on the inability to spend the allocated resources.

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Speaker, thank you for your indulgence to allow me to ask a second set of questions and it will only be one. It will only be one. Mr. Minister, further to what the Member from North West St. James asked you about the $1 Billion that you so very carefully mooted and which was taken up by the Tourism Enhancement Fund and a $1 Billion - J$1 Billion was, in fact, allocated. To my best knowledge somewhere in the region of about $750 Million or so of that has, in fact, been spent on a number projects.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Bartlett, where is this coming from?

Mr. BARTLETT: No, let me – it relates to HAJ, because the implementation agency was HAJ and there are still outstanding…

The SPEAKER: Yeah, but hold on, Mr. Bartlett, we have to confine the follow-up questions relevant to the specific questions that were asked. It's a new field you gone on to now.

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Speaker, with the respect, Mr. Speaker, if you bear with me...

The SPEAKER: I'm bearing very…

Mr. BARTLETT: ...if you bear with me, you will see the relevance of it. The current situation, Minister, is that there is a contractor, for example, who did work for the HAJ and some $49 Million, I understand, is still outstanding. Is there, Mr. Speaker, any arrangement now with regards to getting the remainder of this $250 Million from the project so that HAJ can pay those contractors that are outstanding and to continue the development programme it was ongoing in the St. Ann, St. James and Westmoreland?

The SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bartlett, but that has nothing to do with it. Mr. Samuda, get us back on board.

Mr. SAMUDA: Minister.

(Cross talk)

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Speaker, I have a difficulty with that, because this is a legitimate question with regards to the HAJ's commitment to...

The SPEAKER: That has nothing to do with... No, Mr. Bartlett don't let me have to get back to square one to explain to you about clarification. Nothing was mentioned in the Minister's Statement.

(Cross talk)

Yes, I'm irritable.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Samuda.

Mr. SAMUDA: Minister, I would just like you to tell me, is Bernard Lodge subject to any restrictive covenants, number one. Is Bernard Lodge, the estate, the land, subject to any restrictive covenants? In the event that it is not, would you indicate if it is the plan to expand the construction of houses on that land? That's number one.

Number two, the corridor leading from Ocho Rios to Kingston, the North-South Corridor being built by CHEC, could you indicate if lands have been identified...

Dr. PHILLIPS: That is wide. The first one is on the page.

Mr. SAMUDA: ...for housing, as I am aware that the highway is moving apace. It is very complementary and I am happy for it. And I expect that it is going to be complete by August, I am told. That is straight through to Spanish Town?

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SAMUDA: But the most important one is the question of Bernard Lodge, if it is the plan to build more houses on Bernard Lodge?

Dr. DAVIES: The plan is to build the fifteen hundred units. And in terms of the section between - the lands adjoining the North-South link...

(HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister, entered and took his seat.)

...and at a function to which you were invited but where your absence was noted, the head of CHEC indicated that they have a specific interest in housing development along that corridor.

The actual locations which will be turned over to CHEC have not yet been determined. The Agreement with CHEC speaks to that matter being raised on completion of the highway, that's when.

Mr. SAMUDA: Which will, of course, include Bog Walk and so on.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Mair.

Mr. MAIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, Minister you mentioned that the new Board would be getting an audited report - the new Board would be requesting an audit - a report, you mentioned that?

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. MAIR: You mentioned that the new Board would be getting an audit report on the status of the Housing Agency, you mentioned that. You mentioned an audit report that the new Board would be getting. I just want to know, in the receipt of that report, would you be willing to table it here in the House? The new Board is going to get an audit report on the status of the Housing Agency, so on its receipt, would you be willing to table it in the House?

Dr. DAVIES: Well, I am not a lawyer, but I said an audit of the situation, I didn't speak to an audit report. I don't know what you mean by that, but I mean they want to know - a photograph, what is the situation now. And that one, when I receive it, it may have nothing exciting to say, but when I receive it then I will make that determination.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House the following:

- **Ministry Paper No. 22**
  Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of The Agro Investment Corporation for the year ended March 31, 2011
- **Ministry Papers Nos. 23-26**
  Annual Reports and Audited Financial Statements of the Registrar General's Department For the Financial Years 2003/2004 to 2006/2007
- Professional Engineers Registration Board
  Annual Reports and Audited Financial Statements For the Financial Years ended December 31, 2011 and December 31, 2012.
  (And these have been transmitted electronically)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The SPEAKER: House Leader.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we will be answering Questions 22, 19, 17 and 14, starting with 22.

(DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. HUGH CARL BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Western, entered and took his seat.)

The SPEAKER: Dr. Baugh - which question? Oh, Miss Grange, you are starting at the bottom. Miss Grange.

Miss GRANGE: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister answer Question 20 - I am sorry, Question 19.

"State whether or not the Ministry and/or..."

The questions standing in my name, Question 19.

The SPEAKER: No, Miss Grange, that's not your question.

Miss GRANGE: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Youth and Culture answer the Questions standing in my name, Question 22.

The SPEAKER: Thank you. Miss Hanna.

Miss HANNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Question 1:

Will the Minister say if the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Youth and Culture was recently suspended or otherwise separated from his post?

Answer:

a) The Permanent Secretary was not recently or at any time suspended or otherwise separated from his post.

b) The Permanent Secretary requested and was granted leave between January 27, 2014 and March 9, 2014.

c) The Permanent Secretary was reassigned by the appropriate authority to duties as the Director General in the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, effective March 10, 2014.

Question 2:

If the answer to Question 1 is in the affirmative, will the Minister say when he was suspended or otherwise separated and for what period?

Answer:

a) See answer to Question 1.

b) The information provided by the Cabinet Office and the Office of the Public Services Commission, who are the appropriate authorities responsible for administrative matters concerning Permanent Secretaries, indicated that the reassignment was not for any fixed period.

Question 3:

Will the Minister say why such action was taken, if any?

Answer:

I wrote to the Cabinet Secretary on January 17, 2014, informing of a letter I had received from the Children's Advocate that same day, advising that a serious report regarding a child, concerning the Permanent Secretary, had been received and recorded by the Office of the Children's Advocate. I am aware that under the Child Care and Protection Act, such reports would have to be investigated. I conveyed to the Cabinet Secretary that I did not think it would be in the best interest of the Ministry for such an investigation to take place while the Permanent Secretary continued to function in the capacity as the public officer with

responsibility for the portfolio which deals with the protection of children in Jamaica.

Question 4:

In particular, will the Minister say whether he was suspended or otherwise separated due to matters within the remit of any agency of the Ministry of Youth and Culture?

Answer:

The reassignment is not due to any matters within the remit of any agency of the Ministry of Youth and Culture. The Office of the Children's Advocate reports directly to Parliament.

Question 5:

Will the Minister indicate the relevant agency or agencies?

Answer:

See answer to Question 3.

Question 6:

Will the Minister say when the matters giving rise to the suspension or other means of separation, came to the attention of the relevant agency, if any?

Answer:

See answer to Question 4.

Additionally, I am not aware when the report was received by the Office of the Children's Advocate.

Question 7:

Will the Minister say when the matters giving rise to the suspension or other means of separation, came to her attention?

Answer:

See answer to Question 3.

Miss GRANGE: Minister, did you at any time communicate to the Office of the Children's Advocate about rumours you heard about the Permanent Secretary, and ask that an investigation be done?

Miss HANNA: I am responding to - I responded to a written report received by the Office of the Children's Advocate, and that written correspondence came to me on January 17, 2014, to which I wrote to the Cabinet Secretary. Any matters relating to children in my Ministry - certainly, I don't operate on rumour or innuendo, I operate on facts.

Miss GRANGE: Minister, were you aware and did you have any concerns from last year about rumours that you heard related to the Permanent Secretary?

(*Sotto voce* comments from Government Members)

Miss GRANGE: And I am asking questions. Please!

A Government MEMBER: Don't use the word, rumour!

Mr. McKENZIE: Everybody know is not rumour, is true! Everybody know it!

A Government MEMBER: How you know? (Heckling)

Miss GRANGE: Well, Minister, you were on record last year actually responding to the press when they had asked about questions relating to the Permanent Secretary.

I am asking you if you were aware from last year? If you had any concerns, and that you in fact wanted the Permanent Secretary to go on retirement from last year?

Miss HANNA: I don't think it is a secret that quite recently the person in question actually took three of us to Court, on the basis of what you are asking. And we were served on the - and went to Court on the 3 rd of March, based on the Permanent Secretary saying that the same preretirement that you are speaking of, that matter has been withdrawn...

(Inaudible comment from Miss Grange)

Miss HANNA: No, this matter was this year - that matter was withdrawn because he realized that certainly, there was no evidence to substantiate the claim.

I can't go further into any other Court matters because the matter is still before the Court.

Miss GRANGE: So, Minister, you are saying that because the matter is before the Court you can't answer any questions?

The SPEAKER: No, Miss Grange, Miss Grange, I think you are aware that any matter that is before the Court we cannot deliberate on it.

A Government MEMBER: Should be aware!

(Heckling)

Miss GRANGE: Minister, did you inform anyone in authority sometime last year that you wanted the Permanent Secretary removed?

Mr. McKENZIE: Yes or no!

Miss HANNA: No, I did not.

Miss GRANGE: Did you, Minister, communicate to the Cabinet Secretary sometime ago when there was another Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, did you communicate that you wanted that Permanent Secretary removed?

Miss HANNA: I am not sure I understand your question?

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Miss GRANGE: Minister, whatever your answers may be in this document, do you think the right procedure was followed in dealing with whatever issue, whatever matter the Permanent Secretary was accused of, do you think the right procedure was followed?

Miss HANNA: Yes, I do.

Miss GRANGE: Minister, I'd like you to repeat for me, what exactly are the charges or the accusations against the Permanent Secretary?

(Cross talks)

Miss HANNA: Mr. Speaker...

(The Speaker gavels)

Miss HANNA: ...I'm quite capable of answering the question.

The SPEAKER: I know.

Miss HANNA: As you are aware, any matters relating to children should really be protected with extreme care and extreme caution. As I understand it - and there are some children here as well - there should be some discretion as we relate and treat with our civil servants and also with children. This matter is being investigated by the Office of the Children's Advocate. (Applause) I would be irresponsible...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes.

Miss HANNA: ... if I went into any matters, not only as the Minister with responsibility for dealing with these matters,

but also under the Child Care and Protection Act. So I'm asking, I'm asking you to just take a step back a little bit.

Mr. PARCHMENT: Hear! Hear!

Miss GRANGE: So Minister, you're refusing to say what the accusations are against the Permanent Secretary?

(Cross talks)

Miss HANNA: All of the documentation is now public record and it is before the Court. I received a letter from the Children's Advocate outlining that she had received a report on - regarding my Permanent Secretary involving a child, and she was bringing it to my attention. She has no other need to tell me anymore of that, other than that. It was my duty and I saw it as such, to write to the Cabinet Secretary and I also informed the Prime Minister of the report that I received.

Miss GRANGE: So Minister, you were not aware of these accusations until the CD A got in touch with you - the Children's Advocate - OCA got in touch with you?

Miss HANNA: Well I came to the Ministry and saw Mr. Bartley. Mr. Bartley has been a senior civil servant for a long time. He was also in your time as the Principal Director of Culture. There will always be rumours about people; there are rumours about me, there are rumours about you, it is how we act on rumours, and I don't act on rumours.

(Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

(*Sotto voce* remarks)

Miss GRANGE: Minister, the gentleman...

(Cross talks/Heckling)

(The Speaker gavels)

Miss GRANGE: ...was in the Ministry of Education during your Administration as Director of Culture. He was in the Ministry of Tourism under your government's Administration as Director of Culture.

(Cross talks)

Miss GRANGE: I inherited the gentleman and my Ministry, so it is not necessary for us to be saying who he belongs to.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Him belong to Desmond, him belong to Desmond.

(Heckling)

Miss GRANGE: Now, Minister...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Him belong to Desmond.

(Cross talks)

(The Speaker gavels)

Miss GRANGE: ...Minister...

Mr. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker...

Miss GRANGE: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker...

Mr. DALLEY: Babsy, Babsy, point of order.

Miss GRANGE: ... Mr. Speaker...

Mr. DALLEY: Babsy, Babsy, Babsy, Babsy...

The SPEAKER: Point of order, point of order.

Mr. Dalley.

Mr. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker...

(Cross talks) (The Speaker gavels)

Mr. DALLEY: Please, please, on a point of order.

Mr. Speaker, some questions have been tabled by the Opposition Spokesperson on

Culture and Youth; some answers have been given by the Minister of Youth and Culture. I'm asking that we do not; we do not descend into anything further about our public servants...

A MEMBER: Through yuh involve in it?

Mr. DALLEY: ...about our public servants other than to stick to the questions and the answers given.

(*Sotto voce* remarks)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: They don't know about that.

Mr. DALLEY: On that basis I'm requesting of you, Mr. Speaker, to rule...

Mr. BUCHANAN: You are out of order!

Mr. DALLEY: ...that the subsidiary questions be taken out - be withdrawn.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Precisely.

The SPEAKER: Well, Miss Grange... I accept your point of order Mr. Dalley... Miss Grange...

(*Sotto voce* remarks)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: She is out of order!

(Cross talks)

Miss GRANGE: Minister...

The SPEAKER: No, Miss Grange let me explain. You can ask for clarification on the answers specified in writing.

Mr. DALLEY: Yes.

The SPEAKER: If you need any clarification we're not going beyond that today.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Desmond has the report, see it there.

(Cross talks)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Desmond, you ask for a report, see a report here. Desmond, see a report here.

Mr. McKENZIE: You are a Christian so you must act like a Christian.

(Cross talks)

The SPEAKER: I'm waiting on Miss Grange, if she has no more questions I will move.

(Cross talks)

The SPEAKER: House Leader, next question.

Mr. PAULWELL: Question 14.

The SPEAKER: Dr. Baugh.

Dr. BAUGH: Mr. Speaker, I asked the Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce to answer the Questions at Number 14, standing in my name. Just to know, Mr. Speaker that these questions were originally posed on the Minister of foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, but were diverted to the Minister of Industry. I really have no objections, just clarifying the issue.

Thank you very much.

The SPEAKER: Okay.

Minister Hylton.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. L. Buchanan)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Buchanan, please.

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: The questions - following questions were asked of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, which was subsequently submitted to me for the answer:

Question 1 - Part 1:

Will the Minister please advise the House whether the allegations of unfair

trade practices in relation to trade with Trinidad and Tobago have been placed on the agenda of COTED for discussion?

Answer:

The Government of Jamaica places specific trade concerns on the agenda of the Council of Trade and Economic Development (COTED) where deemed necessary. Jamaica found it necessary, at the last Regular Meeting of the COTED held on November 8, 2013, to place on the agenda a request for a review of the CARICOM Procedures for the Verification of Community Rules of Origin. This was due to challenges encountered in the process of seeking to verify the origin of lubricating oils imported from Trinidad & Tobago.

After outlining the rationale for the review, all Member States, including Trinidad & Tobago, agreed to Jamaica's request. The CARICOM Customs Committee commenced the review process at its meeting held on February 6 through 7, 2014. At the request of Jamaica, the CARICOM Secretary General is using his good offices to facilitate a timely resolution of the origin query initiated by Jamaica on lubricating oils. We are aware that the Secretary General is acting on this request.

During a Special Session of the COTED on November 9, 2014, Jamaica raised concerns about the practice of the dual pricing of energy – during the Special Session of the COTED - a Special Session of the COTED on November 9, 2013, Jamaica raised concerns about the practice of the dual pricing of energy by Trinidad & Tobago, underscoring that the cost of energy greatly impacts the competitiveness of the economies of the Region, which, with the exception of Trinidad & Tobago, are net importers of energy. Jamaica called for the urgent convening of a Special Meeting of COTED Energy and Trade Ministers in order to address this longstanding and vexing issue and further requested that the CARICOM Secretary General use his good offices to facilitate this dialogue at the earliest opportunity.

We're also aware that the trade issues that might arise with Trinidad & Tobago and other Members at times are related to sanitary and phytosanitary measures. Work is now advancing within CARICOM for the full operationalization and strengthening of the regional sanitary and phytosanitary regime.

Question 2 - Part 2:

Will the Minister please state what is the effect of the measures recently taken by the Minister of Industry Investment and Commerce to impose a penalty on duties - penalty on duties on lubricants imported from Trinidad & Tobago for goods imported from Trinidad & Tobago, but which were suspected of having their origin in Venezuela?

Answer:

In September 2012, in keeping with the CARICOM Rules of Origin Verification Procedures, a formal verification query

was submitted by the Jamaica Customs Agency with regards to lubricating oils being imported from Trinidad & Tobago.

Following the consistent failure of the Customs and Excise Department of Trinidad & Tobago to appropriately respond to these queries in accordance with the CARICOM verification procedures, Jamaica Customs introduced a deposit on these shipments with effect from May 14, 2013, pending the satisfactory conclusion of the verification process. This measure remains in place pending the satisfactory conclusion of the verification process. This measure remains in pace pending:

i) The provision of the appropriate responses from the Customs and Excise Department of Trinidad & Tobago through the CARICOM Secretariat; and
ii) An evaluation of these responses by the relevant authorities in Jamaica.

In this regard, we wish to note that the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce received copies of the most recent response from the Trinidad & Tobago Customs Department only yesterday, that is March 17, 2014, and we will seek guidance from the CARICOM Secretariat and will immediately begin the process of reviewing this new documentation along with the Jamaica Customs Department and any other stakeholders.

Question 3 - Part 3:

Will the Minister please report to the House on the status of discussions between Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago on issues regarding rules of origin of agricultural and agri-processing products and the imposition of non-tariff barriers on Jamaican products entering Trinidad & Tobago since the Treaty of Chaguaramas makes provisions for negotiations, consultations, mediation and arbitration and other dispute resolution mechanisms, in the event of disputes between territories and such action was initiated two or three years ago?

Part 4:

Will the Minister please inform the House on the status of these discussions and the response from Trinidad & Tobago?

I will respond to Parts 3 and 4 together.

Answer:

The Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas governs trade in CARICOM and where a Jamaican entity is of the view that there has been a breach of Treaty provisions, there is an obligation for that entity to provide specific facts to substantiate its claim. These allegations are then carefully researched and then considered by the Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies who sit on the Trade Enforcement Advisory Mechanism (TEAM), chaired by the Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce. Following evaluation there is a joint determination of the appropriate action to be taken. The Government of Jamaica

does not engage its regional trading partners in cross-border trade disputes based on anecdotal evidence or casual allegations. This means that discussions take place in the context of specific issues at the level of a sector, a product or a firm.

Response:

Where it is felt that there is horizontal procedure or a Treaty provision which requires amendment, proposals are made through the Council for Trade and Economic Development for a regional review. This was the proposal made to the COTED with regards to the origin verification process and this review is now underway.

The Government of Jamaica is unaware of any specific: (1) rules of origin or (2), non-tariff barrier issues with regards to agricultural and agro-processing products with Trinidad & Tobago, which has not been addressed. Should there be specific trade concerns, this is an open invitation to Members of this Honourable House and the trading public to submit these concerns. They will be evaluated and the appropriate action will be taken.

The Government will also be taking steps to increase the training opportunities available to the private sector in the rules and procedures of trade. This includes Rules of Origin procedures under the Revised Treaty, which covers certification, verification, as well as derogations from the Rules of Origin. These derogations allow for the use of specific quantity of extra regional material for a specific period of time where there is a difficulty in sourcing regional supplies. Steps have already been taken by the Trade Board Limited to offer training and this will be further improved during the 2014/2015 Fiscal Year.

Part 5:

Will the Minister please inform the House on the operation of the Private Sector initiatives in relation to these issues, setting up a Trade Facilitation Desk to liaise with trade related institutions and establishing a clearing house between the Manufacturers Association of these two countries, in cooperation with the Jamaica Trade and Adjustment Team in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade?

Response:

A Jamaica-Trinidad & Tobago Trade Facilitation Desk was established in May 2012 by Trinidad & Tobago with financing from the Bermudez Group Limited. The Desk is located within the Trinidad & Tobago Manufacturers' Association. The Desk Officer and members of the Trinidad & Tobago private sector has visited Jamaica on several occasions, in order to hold consultations with key stakeholders in the public and private sectors.

The feedback received thus far, is that the Trade Desk has been doing a positive job in addressing the concerns of our Jamaican exporters and the local private sector has requested that the Trade Desk

places greater focus on providing market intelligence and establishing contacts between companies in both countries.

Part 6:

Will the Minister please state what are the proposed steps to deal with the dual pricing of energy as practiced by Trinidad & Tobago, alleged to be made a mode of subsidy for manufacturing in Trinidad & Tobago, thus creating an unfair advantage within the context of the CET, which imposes an obligation on the parties to undertake fair practices in matters of trade?

Response:

This has been a longstanding issue. There have been ongoing attempts to address this matter in the context of the Special COTED on Energy, which is attended by the Ministers of Energy within the region. However, to date the matter has not yet been satisfactorily resolved. At the national level, the Anti-Dumping and Subsidies Commission, an agency of the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce has been requested to examine the allegations of dual pricing and the general concerns raised by the private sector, in order to ascertain the best way forward in the matter. The Commission's staff has had meetings with the private sector bodies to discuss these general concerns. To date, no specific claims have been made by the private sector in terms of actual subsidy programmes provided by the Government of Trinidad & Tobago to Trinidadian manufacturers of particular products exported to Jamaica. The Commission is conducting research on potential subsidy programmes being provided to Trinidad & Tobago producers by the Government of Trinidad & Tobago.

The Government of Jamaica, through representation at a special session of the COTED on November 9, 2013 raised concerns about the practice of the dual pricing of energy by Trinidad & Tobago and called for the issues to be addressed at a special meeting of Energy and Trade Ministers. The CARICOM Secretary General was requested to use his good Offices to facilitate this dialogue at the earliest opportunity.

Additionally, the point has been made that the Private Sector of Jamaica and indeed, any Private Sector, Body throughout CARICOM, has a private right of action, under the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas and can petition the Caribbean Court of Justice to grant it the right to file an action or seek declaratory judgment in this and other matters.

(Applause)

Dr. BAUGH: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister of Industry and Commerce for his responses, which are comprehensive and informative, and informative.

Mr. Speaker, there are a few follow-up questions that I would like to put to the Minister. First of all, while I appreciate the information that the CARICOM Secretary General was requested to use his good offices to facilitate this dialogue at the earliest opportunity, I'd like to ask the Minister, if he

is aware of a similar instruction to the CARICOM Secretariat which followed the CARICOM Conference of Heads in Montego Bay in 2003. And that the CARICOM Secretary General was mandated to prepare a report on the issue and to report back to the Conference of Heads in November of that year?

That Report has been done by the CARICOM Secretariat, is available to be read and, as a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, is awaiting further action. It would be frustrating for us to be reinventing the wheel. In other words, having an enquiry into the same issue, which is only - well, 11 years later. Does the Minister recall such a meeting in Montego Bay under their Administration? Does he remember that one particular Junior Minister was very vocal at that meeting? And, is he aware of the....Well, I would like to ask him if the opinions of the then Junior Minister remain in the same? Was it reflective of the Government's position and has that Government's position changed? Because the Minister was very strident and very vocal and is on record for criticizing the issue and making certain that it was properly investigated by the CARICOM Secretariat?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. A. G. HYLTON: Thank you for that question.

I recognize the then Minister of State to be now the Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce. And I was vocal then on certain issues and my position has not changed. But I do want to separate and indeed there was, you would have known and as you said, a briefing was done and the Secretary General, using his good offices, did render an opinion on the matter.

I would, however, like to separate the opinion that was granted that spoke to an interpretation of Article 7 and 8 of the Revised Treaty and the issue was not centered around subsidies per say. There were two separate sets of issues, this issue concern and the question focus - your question focused on the subsidy issues to which the answers, a fulsome answer was given in my responses. The issue of interpretation of Article 7 and Article 8 remains, to my mind, outstanding issues.

Dr. BAUGH: Mr. Minister, I disagree with the response I just had from the Minister. I would just like to read to him a section of that Report. This section is quoted directly from the Report:

> *"Industrial competitiveness is among the most immediate concerns. Energy is a significant cost component in the production process. Access by the productive sector in Trinidad & Tobago to natural gas at lower net back prices than is available to the productive sector in other Member States, has been claimed to have had a devastating impact upon the manufacturing industry and balance of payment profile in many of Trinidad & Tobago's traditional trading partners within the community. This impact has been said to be so grave as to be unsustainable."*

That is a part of the Report. I don't want to be long-winded, I won't read other paragraphs

but other paragraphs are available much in the same spirit. So that...

Mr. SHAW: So why we beating around the bush then?

Dr. BAUGH: Exactly!

I would also, since I am on my feet, like to ask the Minister, that in subsequent years, the matter was pursued. Is the Minister aware of a meeting which took place in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, involving the Permanent Secretary from the Ministry of Industry in Trinidad & Tobago and our local Permanent Secretaries in Foreign Affairs, Industry and other relevant sectors. It was initiated in 2011.

The process I asked about in terms of dialogue, investigations, other methods of resolving issues of dispute, at least an initiative was taken. The process has been frustrated because of the lack of responses. I would like to ask the Minister if there is any follow -up to that initiative, and what are the responses to date, are we making progress in resolving these issues?

Mr. A. G. HYLTON: Again, Minister, as the - I can speak with certainty that, the matter which was the focus of the issues then before the Secretary General for his good offices, focused on the Treaty - the interpretation of Articles 7 and 8. Other matters were raised, but again, the issue of subsidy is, as you are aware, a very involved and detailed set of issues and very, very technically difficult issues. It is the reason why the Anti-Dumping Commission, as I mentioned in my responses, has been given the task on our side of coming up with a set of responses to the very technical issues of subsidies as it relates to energy in Trinidad & Tobago.

I am aware that there have been and there continues to be discussions, both within the public sector and the private sectors of both Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. Indeed, more recently, I met with a group of manufacturers, representatives from the Trinidad & Tobago Manufacturers' Association, along with representatives from the Jamaica Private Sector to discuss this very issue and the next step forward.

It is, to my mind, where we are now. We await a response from the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers' Association. They have promised a response that is due any time now as to a specific proposal that was put to them. Depending on the answer to that proposal, I think the Government of Jamaica then would have to decide how it proceeds from thereafter. But a specific proposal was put to them via the Private Sector of Jamaica, my Ministry, through the Manufacturers Association for them to give a response to the proposal. As soon as we get that, we will determine what the next steps would be.

Dr. BAUGH: Mr. Speaker, before we even get to the details of the course of action being taken and the dialogue between Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago, there is the issue of the vision of CARICOM, of the CSME as contained in the Declaration in the Treaty of Chaguaramas. And I'd like to ask the Minister, if, one, the spirit and the intention and the vision of CARICOM is being fulfilled in his opinion, or, if the intentions are being

frustrated by distortions affecting intra-CARICOM Trade within the context of a marketplace that was created by the Common External Tariff, which is the CARICOM Marketplace, in which there must be free movement - if it is to be successful - free movement of the factors of production, which is labour, capital, goods and services and people - well, labour is people. Because the Declaration of Chaguaramas acknowledges that we are all mindful that the benefits expected from the establishment of the CSME can be frustrated by anti-competitive business conduct whose object or effect is to prevent or to restrict or to distort competition or trade activities in any way.

Acknowledging that there are resource differences within the territories of Caribbean, and that if these are to work - if it is to work on behalf of all the members of the CARICOM with equity and fairness, then we have to see to it that those factors move without obstruction. And it is known that, internationally, in global trade and regional trade, that when tariffs were removed as barriers to trade, there was a sharp increase in non-tariff barriers and technical barriers to trade. And we have experienced that in CARICOM.

Mr. Minister, there was a proposed reconstitution of the Intergovernmental Task Force which originally was involved in the design of the CSME. And that reconstituted Task Force is to review the practices of CARICOM, over the years, to see to what extent it is working or being frustrated by these distortions.

I want to be assured of Jamaica's participation in that review. Is it taking place? Has the Task Force been reconstituted? Can we expect that Jamaica will be well-represented? Because in effect, Mr. Speaker, we are not against the CSME, we are against the CSME that is distorted by these various objections, obstructions, and distractions, but if the CSME was to go along the lines as it was originally intended to be a marketplace, to accommodate development of all the territories, through the free movement of the factors of production, then there will be no problem.

To what extent, Mr. Minister, are we reviewing our experiences in CARICOM, looking at the implementation gap, because inasmuch as we talk about the measures to be implemented, many are not being implemented? NTBs have mushroomed. I had to deal with that as Minister of Foreign Affairs. I don't have to remind you about those issues. But, to what extent are we reviewing it and making certain that the CSME proceeds as it was envisioned in the first place.

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Mr. Speaker, as the Member well knows, there are issues within CARICOM concerning the interpretation by various Member States, of the rules and the provisions within the revised Treaty of Chaguaramas. I have been very vocal and consistent within Government and out of Government about...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Well, if you call the Myrie case ineffective, then you are not aware of what has been happening.

Mr. SHAW: You didn't represent well.

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Yes, I did; I filed those actions. I filed those actions, but for my sojourn here.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Opposition Members)

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: As the Member may know, that from the time the brief was filed in the matter for the Secretary General's good offices, from the time that brief was filed by myself, seeking the good offices of the Secretary General to the filing of the Myrie matter, I am of the firm belief that there is a Court, the CCJ, and there are dispute settlement mechanisms to which, I think, resort should be had to a final settlement of disagreement, or disputes governing or concerning the operation of the CSME.

I think, therefore, that - there have been complaints; there have been concerns by Trinidad and Tobago against other Members States as it is with Trinidad and Tobago. And again, I think the suggestion is that, rather than interpreting the provisions ourselves and taking action - unilateral action - based upon those interpretations, that resort should be had to the dispute settlement mechanism if those differences give rise to the level of a dispute between the Member States, or the other mechanisms for dispute settlement or conciliation, be utilized to ensure that we have an agreed view on the interpretation - appropriate interpretation of the Treaty.

Insofar as the Intergovernmental Task Force is concerned, I know that that Task Force is in place. I can't give you an update as to its working. This is properly a matter being monitored in the Ministry to Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, and a supplemental question could provide that answer from the Ministry, in terms of a follow-up to the specific question of the current operation working of the Intergovernmental Task Force.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hylton. House Leader.

Miss HANNA: Mr. Speaker, we will now have the answers by the Minister of Local Government.

The SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. McKENZIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Will the Minister of Local Government answer the following set of questions - Questions No. 17, and I think...

The SPEAKER: And 19.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...and 19 that have been tabled in my name?

The SPEAKER: Minister Arscott.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Question 1:

Is the Minister aware of the redeployment/reassignment of Mr. Christopher Powell who has been serving as Secretary/Manager in the Manchester Parish Council?

Answer:

I am advised that on the 2nd January, 2014, the Parish Council Services Commission transferred Mr. Christopher Powell, Secretary Manager, from the Manchester Parish Council to assume duties as Secretary Manager in the St. Mary Parish Council.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. Buchanan and Dr. Wheatley)

Question 2:

Will the Minister advise of the reasons that have prompted this reassignment?

Answer:

Section 10 of the Parish Councils (Unified Service) Act, and its Regulations, Regulation 4(1)(b) provides that the Parish Council Service Commission shall determine any questions in relation to transfer temporarily or otherwise of unified service officers from the service of one parish council to that of another parish council with, or without, the officer's consent or the consent of the Parish Council from the service the officer is transferred.

Mr. Speaker, the matter of the transfer of Parish Council Officers is entirely within the jurisdiction and authority of the Parish Council Services Commission, not the Minister with Portfolio Responsibility for Local Government.

However, I am advised that Mr. Powell, being an experienced Secretary/ Manager, had particular skills and competencies that would bring added value to the St. Mary Parish Council.

Question 3(a):

Will the Minister indicate where the officer has been redeployed?

Answer:

As previously stated, the officer was transferred from Manchester Parish Council to the St. Mary Parish Council.

Question 3(b):

Can the Minister confirm whether he has actually taken up assignments by assuming duties, pursuant to the redeployment?

Answer:

I am advised that Mr. Powell did not take up his assignment at the St. Mary Parish Council. He requested and was granted vacation leave. At the end of the leave, he tendered his resignation, effective 3rd March, 2014.

Question 4:

In the event that the officer has actually assumed duties, will the Minister advise of any challenges that may give rise to such a situation?

Answer:

I am not aware of any challenges, whether on his part, or otherwise, that may have given rise to Mr. Powell not assuming his duties.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McKENZIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Minister for answering the questions. I think the answers satisfy my curiosity. But just to say, Mr. Speaker that this officer in question is one who had been a part of the Local Government system for quite a long time. He has served in many capacities in at least four Parish Councils. It is just unfortunate, Minister, that the situation ended in the way it did. But I just want to ask one question of the Minister. Is it a fact, Minister, that Mr. Powell will be

employed in the Ministry of Local Government in the area responsible for Local Government Reform? And if the answer is yes, could the Minister say why?

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, I am not aware that there are any vacancies in that department, neither am I aware that he is being considered for employment in such.

Mr. McKENZIE: Thank you, Mr. Minister, for your response.

A MEMBER: Propaganda.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Government MEMBERS: Rumormonger.

Mr. DALLEY: *Wa'an* destroy people all the while. You think a Brewery this? *Nah* destroy no more public servant. You think a Joseph Brewery?

Mr. ARSCOTT:

Question 1:

Will the Minister please state whether or not his Ministry and/or the local authorities are engaged in an audit of street lights island-wide?

Answer:

The Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, working with the local authorities has undertaken a joint audit with the Jamaica Public Service Company, to determine the precise number and location of street lights for which the local authorities have responsibility.

Question 2

If the answer to Part 1 is in the affirmative, will the Minister please state who is conducting the audit?

Answer:

See the answer to Question 1 above.

Question 2.2

When was the audit commenced?

Answer:

The audit commenced on September 2012.

Question 2.3

Whether or not the audit has been concluded?

Answer:

The field work phase of the audit was completed in September 2013. However, Mr. Speaker, the verification phase is underway and is expected to be completed by the end of April 2014.

Question 2.4

Whether he will provide copies of the audit to Parliament?

Answer:

The final report can be tabled in Parliament and would be ready the first quarter of the fiscal year 2014/2015.

Question 3:

Does the Minister recall that in announcing the increase in property taxes in 2013 the Government assured the country that funds would be allocated to improve and/or maintain a proper street light system across Jamaica?

Answer:

Property taxes have always been and continue to be used to pay for the provision and maintenance of street lights across the island. There is an excess of 100,000 street lights for which the local

authorities are paying from the proceeds of property taxes. The challenge which successive administrations, both the Jamaica Labour Party and the Peoples National Party, has had is that the revenues generated from property taxes have never been sufficient to meet the demands for which property taxes are required to fund: these include street lights, solid waste management, parochial road rehabilitation, among others.

As a result, in the past we have had to get support from central government to cover the deficit. This support was known as deficit financing. As is well known the financial realities have ushered in a new paradigm whereby there is no longer any deficit financing. In other words, Mr. Speaker, property taxes will be the only source of revenue to carry out the responsibilities of property-related expenditure in the Ministry.

The monthly average cost for street lights has increased by approximately 35% since 2010/2011 financial year. This Administration has recognized the challenges currently and we are well advance in the process of implementing measures geared at significantly reducing our energy consumption of street lights. This will lead to significantly lower street light charges. Further details will be provided in the new financial year.

Question 4:

Does the Minister think that this commitment has been met or, if not, why not?

Answer:

Progress has been made, Mr. Speaker, and further actions which will lead to more significant impact are underway.

Question 5:

Will the Minister give this House a full update on the street light situation and what steps are being taken to ensure that the public gets value for their property payments, property tax payments in terms of its expenditure on street lights?

Answer:

The following measures are being implemented to improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of how we treat with street lights. As a result of the street light audit, Mr. Speaker, for the first time the Government of Jamaica is gathering specific knowledge of the number, the specific GPS identified location of all street lights for which the local authorities have responsibility. The results of the audit are being used to populate a newly developed database which is being rolled out to all local authorities. This database will allow each local authority to track the number of street lights for which it has responsibility, confirm the monthly bill payable to JPS, document and track any rebates payable to the authority and to monitor reported non-functioning lights and the time it takes for each street light to be repaired and the specific location of each light.

We have undertaken, Mr. Speaker, the specific actions that can be taken to reduce street light charges. We have

worked with the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining, Ministry of Finance and Planning, the local authorities, JPSCo, OUR, NWA and the Bureau of Standards to develop the required plan of action. This has been approved by Cabinet. After significant analysis and negotiations with key stakeholders to fundamentally transform how we have addressed the matter of street lights for decades, in short order we will be announcing actions that will:

1. Reduce the actual energy consumption of street lights;
2. lower existing street lights tariff;
3. improve the technical expertise of personnel in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development and the local authorities for better management of our street light programme and to sufficiently represent the Government's interest in the determination of street light tariffs;
4. significantly reduce the time during which street lights are in a state of disrepair; and
5. change the existing protocol where taxpayers pay for street lights for 12 hours every day whether or not they are working to a protocol where we pay for actual street light consumption.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McKENZIE: Thank you, Minister.

Mr. Minister, first of all I would like to ask the Minister just to make a clarification for the record, because in your response to the question of the use of the property taxes you mentioned that the property taxes is also used for the rehabilitation of parochial roads. Is that a statement of fact or it is a mistake, Minister? Because my understanding of the property taxes, that the property taxes are to be used solely for the purpose of public cleansing, street light, *et cetera*, but not to be used on the maintenance of roads. My understanding is that it is the proceeds from the motor vehicles that go into what is called the Parochial Revenue Fund. So, Minister, could you just clarify that before we move on any further?

Mr. ARSCOTT: Yes, Mr. Speaker. It is a fact that we also used some of the funds from property taxes to repair some of the parochial roads. I want to remind the House that significant - about 80% of the roads in Jamaica are the purview of the local authorities and therefore they already present a challenge. The PRF is insignificant to really maintain these roads. In fact, it has never been achieved, Mr. Speaker, the PRF only able to maintain roads. In fact, there is required significant capital expenditure to upgrade our parish council roads and we are also working on a particular approach to deal with those.

Mr. McKENZIE: Minister, really, you know, this question needs a lot more information because - can the Minister say when was this decision taken to use the property taxes and could the Minister be more specific? Because as far as I am aware and as the guidelines covering the property taxes is specific. So will the Minister really say when was this decision taken, if this is a new policy

of the Administration and when was this decision taken and how is the disbursement made? Can the Minister say that because I know that there is a percentage of the property taxes that goes to the parish councils but it goes to the parish councils with specific instructions for a specific area for that to be used and roads, Mr. Speaker, do not fall within that. So, Minister, before we get any further into the questions, can the Minister really shed some more light on this matter?

Mr. ARSCOTT: It's nothing new, Mr. Speaker. A per cent of the property taxes is available to the Minister. And usually by way of resolution from Councils, some of the issues come on request on resolution from Councils to assist in those areas where it is possible.

Mr. McKENZIE: Again, Minister, again the information to the House is wrong, Minister. Councils, the parish councils can only by resolution seek funding from you from the Equalization Fund which is a portion of the Parochial Revenue Fund and not property taxes. I need, Minister, for you to clarify or, Minister, let me grant you the favour by allowing you to go back and to get the proper information and come back to the House, because this matter, Mr. Speaker, I am not going to allow the matter to die like that, Mr. Speaker, because the Minister must be clear. There is one source of funding that is available for roads for the parish councils and that is the dedicated fund which is known as the Parochial Revenue Funds that come from the proceeds of motor vehicle licence, *et cetera*. And the parish council can use their own source, their own generated revenue, but this is a new dispensation. I have never heard in all of my years of involvement in local government that property tax is used for the repair of roads, Mr. Speaker. I have never heard of it before.

The SPEAKER: You want the Minister to tell you when that decision was taken?

Mr. McKENZIE: When that decision was taken?

The SPEAKER: And the mechanics.

Mr. McKENZIE: Because it can't be an arbitrary decision.

The SPEAKER: No, no, we don't have to go and debate it. We don't have to debate it. You need to know from the Minister, if not today, when was that decision taken and how is the money to be disbursed?

Mr. McKENZIE: And the roads, Mr. Speaker, because it is very, very important.

The SPEAKER: Yes. So, Minister, how quickly can we get that information?

Mr. ARSCOTT: Okay. Thank you very much, Member. I will research the details on that one and I will get back to you. But I would hazard a guess that in trying to develop an incentive for property tax payments, part of some of the proposals incentives, I have to try and get the information, the details to you. We should try to encourage or incentivize some areas that have done well in their property taxes. But you are right the Equalization Fund is what - the resolution coming from Councils deals with some of the roads. But you know, very well former Mayor, yourself how inadequate that is. But I will research the data and give you the information.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, I want the Minister and the Honourable House to understand that I will not oppose the use of property taxes to supplement the repair, the maintenance of roads, but the first priority of the property taxes, apart from solid waste, is to pay for providing street lights and the question that I have asked the Minister is how effective is the property taxes in terms of meeting its obligations. Minister, I would like to ask you if you are in a position to say how much money is owing to the Jamaica Public Service Company for street lights, and when was the last payment made and the impact that it has had on the wider repairs to street lights?

Dr. PHILLIPS: He couldn't answer to that now. Supplemental questions must come with answer.

Mr. DALLEY: Write it and bring it come. You think is KSAC this.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, the arrears to the JPS is just above $2 Billion.

Mr. SHAW: Just above?

Mr. ARSCOTT: Slightly above $2 Billion - Billion, Billion.

(Cross talk)

Let me say that - Mr. Speaker, since the increase in the property taxes we have increased our average monthly payment to the JPS by over 300 per cent from the average of approximately $60 Million per month in the fiscal 2012/2013 to an average of around $180 Million in this financial year. If I give you a breakdown, Mr. Speaker, 2010/2011 the average payment was J$177 Million; in 2011/2012 211 Million; 2012/2013 $217 Million per month; and 2013/2014 $234 Million per month.

Mr. McKENZIE: Minister, while I agree...

(Cross talk)

...while the agree Minister - Minister, but are you aware Minister -

(Cross talk/the Deputy Speaker gavels)

Is it fair to say Minister that because of the substantial amount owing to the Jamaica Public Service Company that we have seen little repairs and installation of new street lights, Minister; could you attribute why we have seen such a small increase in the amount of street lights and repair carried out by Jamaica Public Service Company? And, Minister, in answering the question right across Jamaica, Minister, there is a constant cry about lack of proper street lights. There are many communities especially in the Corporate Area that are without street lights, major - no, no, I said especially in the Corporate Area, because the Corporate Area has of the 105,000 street lights in the country - the corporate area has 76,000 of that so it has a greater percentage of street lights.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Him never know that you know.

Mr. McKENZIE: But Minister, one of the problems in speaking to the JPS and I don't know if there is any evidence to substantiate the claim by Jamaica Public Service Company is that in many areas where there is a lack of street lights is because of people trying to trespass on the JPS line. Now I don't know if sections of Michael Manley

Boulevard and sections of the Spanish Town Road and Waltham Park and many other areas - in some parts of % rural Jamaica where there is a lack of street lights, and Minister you said something about we paying for lights but how long will it take, Minister? You said the audit will be tabled - will be ready by the 14th; will this audit outside of this new arrangement you just mentioned, put us in a position to the exactly say what is we are paying for? Because I am quite sure, Minister, of the 105,000 street lights in Jamaica it is safe to say, Minister, that at least 35 per cent of those street lights are not working and a lot of that can be attributed to lack of maintenance, because there are many areas where the lights went down and JPS has not gone back to fix it, Minister. I know there are some areas where the criminal elements don't want the lights and that is a small percentage, Minister. But, you know, it is a long time we are struggling with this, Minister. And I believe that $2 Billion figure that you mentioned if we have really get a hold exactly of how many we are paying that figure would be significantly reduced, Minister.

Mr. ARSCOTT: All right, let me tell you first of all. You need some more information and I am going to give it to you. We are paying for 93,000 street lights, right. The record shows that there are 108,000 street lights, okay. So there are - that's why we are trying to tie up the difference, but there is no doubt that there are more street lights that we are currently paying JPS for.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Working street lights?

Mr. ARSCOTT: I would hazard the guess that is so. However, I am going to tell you what we are going to do about it. We are currently in negotiation and it's something that I don't want to speak out everything that I have for my sectoral debate.

Mr. DALLEY: Don't tell him, don't tell him.

Mr. ARSCOTT: And, therefore, the Minister from North Clarendon is advising that I should not say it just yet.

Mr. DALLEY: And it's good advice. Take my advice.

Mr. ARSCOTT: So I will tell you in the sectoral debate a detail expose of the plans we have to deal with the whole question of street lights right across Jamaica but on the previous point that you had asked and Minister Fagan has reminded me that remember 10 per cent of the property tax goes to fund the Equalization Fund, right and it is from the Equalization Fund now that the resolutions coming from the councils are addressed, so that is connection between the property taxes and the roads. So it is not directly to roads as you very well know. There are other issues, for example, infirmaries or other expenditures that the councils may have, and as two former Mayors you know how that operates, okay.

(Cross talk)

Mr. McKENZIE: Minister, I advise you to take the advice from your Minister of State. Take it cautiously, okay. Let me repeat that 10 per cent that comes from property taxes to the parish councils is used specifically for community development like the maintenance

of parks, sanitary facilities *et cetera, et cetera, et cetera,* not roads, Minister. Anyhow, Minister - Minister, I think you have answer the questions fairly, but I just want to ask you Minister and I'd to just advise that knows in most of your presentations when you speak about new initiatives there are no timeline, Minister and in this one where you speak about the working of the Ministry of Finance and the Planning Authority and the JPS and the OUR and the Bureau of Standards to put in this new programme. You said that you will speak about it. But what is the timeline, Minister, because there must be a timeline? You must, Minister, be able to say that by the end of the next financial year it is the intention of the Government to reduce the amount owing to the Jamaica Public Service Company by a significant amount. It doesn't make sense, Minister, you make these announcements, Minister, and when I come back - well, I hope you won't be in a job next year, but when I come back and ask more questions, Minister, I get the same answers, Minister. But you have to put some timeline to it, Minister.

(Cross talk)

Mr. ARSCOTT: Member from Western Kingston, I can tell you that we expect a - usually from this time of the year from the end of March to April, there is a significant inflow from property taxes and usually at this time we pay significant portion towards the JPS bill. So we expect to be in a better position when I report - when I speak in the sectoral debate it should really be a significant difference in terms of the arrears outstanding to the JPS.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Dr. Wheatley.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Minister, do you believe, Minister, that because of the amount of funds that we owe the JPS currently, over $2 Billion, that it has resulted in a delay in terms of the response to repairs to street lights, especially when customers call JPS. It is frequent complaint by customers that whenever they call the JPS to repair street lights that the - as a matter of fact, they do not come to repair these street light, as a matter of fact. It's not about a delay but no, not a delay in response but in most cases and I am sure my colleague from Portmore will agree with me that I am sure -

(Cross talk/Laughter)

But, Minister, do you believe that because we owe JPS so much money that it affects the level of response to complaints by customer as relates to defective street lights?

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, I hardly think that would be the case, but the JPS is aware that we will pay them. But part of it - we are in intensive negotiations - we are going to change the lights. The entire ones that we have here now are obsolete technology, right, so hence I don't think there are stocking their spare parts in terms of the ones we have now, because they very well know – the negotiation are far advanced in terms of what is to be done, but nevertheless there should no delay in replacing the bulbs and so on. Where you have new installation might be in question, but certainly, if there is any kind of tardiness, please report to the council or we have a hotline that we have set up at the Ministry to

deal with street lights, just please refer the persons to those and we will ensure -

The Member from the West Kingston had asked a question about the problems with some of street lights, especially in the Corporate Area and we know what is happening that citizens tap into the street lights and it is a problem for the JPS. Many times they don't repair those, because they provide current to those who are tapping into them. So that is problem that we have found. We have had discussions with them. In many areas, especially in some of the inner city areas and so we have an active programme to try to see how we can put in antitheft devices to approach those.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Minister, earlier you stated that you are trying to encourage persons to pay their property Taxes. Now, have you ever given it thought that by effecting proper repairs to street lights encouraging or have a more timely garbage collection that that would, in fact, encourage persons to want to pay their property taxes, especially in light of the fact that we, or you, Minister, the Government, retain 10 per cent of the property tax for other use. If we are able to use that 10 per cent to improve garbage collection and also pay some more over to JPS so that they can respond more timely to the needs of the citizens whenever lights are non-functioning?

Mr. ARSCOTT: Yes, Member, I think we are on same page. I really thank you for the support to encourage the citizens to pay their property taxes and we will aggressively - once we are able to get out these obsolete lights we are sure to be able to.

(Mr. Spencer crossed the floor)

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Spencer, the Speaker has ruled. You are not to cross the floor, sir. (Cross talk)

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, final questions to the Minister.

Government MEMBER: Final, final.

Mr. McKENZIE: Minister, you are aware of the concerns as it relates to the installation and maintenance of street lights in private developments in most housing schemes across the country and you would know, Minister, that in many of these housing developments, the maintenance of street lights is a major problem, because the JPS doesn't want to carry the repair because the parish councils in most cases, you know, have not taken over most of these schemes, Minister.

And while we agree that it is the Parish Council's responsibility, we must though, Minister, insist, and I am hoping that in this audit that you are doing, Minister, that housing schemes are a part of that audit. Because in those areas, Minister, there are a lot of street lights in many of these housing developments right across Jamaica. And I am hoping that you will capture that information in the audit and try to work out something, Minister, in terms of how people survive in those housing schemes when they call upon JPS to carry out those repairs.

Thank you, Minister.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, the audit entails every street, every road every part of Jamaica, so housing schemes are part and parcel of the programme. And I venture to say that once we...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. ARSCOTT: All roads. No, no, it is. But what I can give assurance - I have seen the new lights, we have tested some of them, the reliability is much more, the consumption of energy is much less. And therefore, I can assure you that once we get out of these types of systems that use the photocell and the ballast, and the kinds of things that - those will be history. Now, the technology has put us in a place where we are more advanced, more efficient, longer life street lights and that is what we are expecting to implement. And I will give you a timeline in respect of those in the Budget Debate.

Mr. McKENZIE: Thank you, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. ROBINSON: Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I have a question.

The SPEAKER: Pardon me.

Mrs. ROBINSON: Go ahead?

The SPEAKER: Miss Robinson.

Mrs. ROBINSON: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the expiration of twenty-one days I will ask the Honourable Minister of Tourism and Entertainment the following questions.

Question 1:

Will the Minister advise of the Tourism Product Development Company's (TPDCo's) mandate and core functions?

Question 2:

Can the Minister say whether there have been any significant adjustments in the company's mandate, since the current Administration took office in January, 2012?

Question 3:

Will the Minister identify, based on projections in the 2013/2014 expenditure budget, the special projects TPDCo proposed to embark on during the said financial year?

Question 4:

Will the Minister update the House as to what portion of TPDCo's special projects budget has been actually used to date?

Question 5:

Will the Minister outline the rationale or justification provided by TPDCo in respect of its special projects expenditure to date?

Question 6:

Will the Minister indicate whether he is satisfied with the level of budget absorption and the stewardship of TPDCo's leadership in this regard?

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the expiration of twenty-one days I will ask the Minister of Local Government the following questions tabled in my name.

Question 1:

Can the Minister state whether it is a fact that US One Million Dollars is being spent on the access road to the Riverton City dump?

Question 2:

If the answer is in the affirmative, can the Minister state which Government Ministry, Department or Agency is in charge of the project?

Question 3:

Can the Minister inform the House about the full details and conditions of the project and state who is the contractor who has been assigned to the project and what was the process of selecting the contractor?

Question 4:

Can the Minister state whether any similar approach is being taken towards improving the state of and operations at the Riverton City dump?

Question 5:

Is the Minister aware that the dump is currently operating without the necessary registration/licensing from the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA) and that NEPA has offered to cooperate with the National Solid Waste Management Authority in approaching the Ministry of Finance for funding to address the problems?

Question 6:

Can the Minister state whether there are any plans to regularize this situation at the dump in the near future?

Also –

Question 1:

Can the Minister say what was the cause of the recent fire at the Riverton City dump?

Question 2:

Can the Minister state if any private contractors were contracted to assist in putting out the blaze?

Question 3:

If the answer to Part 2 is in the affirmative, can the Minister name the contractors and how much money was spent to undertake the operation?

PUBLIC BUSINESS

The SPEAKER: House Leader.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, under Government Business, we intend to do Item 6, Items 8 and 9. And the Minister of Agriculture thereafter will close - after the Member from East Portland makes a contribution, close the debate on the National Security Policy for - sorry - Ministry Paper No. 40 of 2013.

The SPEAKER: Minister Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, the first of the items which we propose to take is the Customs Tariff (Amendment) Resolution. The matter there is a simple matter, Mr. Speaker.

The *Customs Act,* at Section 5, empowers the House of Representatives to impose import duties and to revoke, reduce, increase or alter such duties, and to provide for the importation of any goods without payment thereon. It is in relation to this power that the House, through the Customs Tariff (Revision) (Amendment) Resolution, seeks to invoke.

The issue here is to amend the Second Schedule of the Customs Tariff, to increase the *de minimis* value, that is, the value at which it is determined that an assessment would yield negligible revenue.

Currently, the *de minimis* value is US Twenty Dollars (US$20.00) which has been in

place for some time. It is proposed to increase that Twenty-dollar limit to Fifty Dollars US, (US$50.00) to offset disproportionate assessment cost of the Jamaica Customs Agency. This amount was arrived at on the basis of careful analysis by the Jamaica Customs Agency. What it will mean is that the Agency will not assess duty on any goods of value of fifty dollars or less, and therefore, those, if they were imported by means of through the mail or by any other means, they would come in without in fact attracting any duty.

This Resolution is before the House, Mr. Speaker, and I move that we in fact, approve it.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Those in favour of the resolution?

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: The Resolution is passed.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, in relation to the other matters, I am proposing, Mr. Speaker, that we take the matters at Items 8 and 9, that we debate them together.

Mr. Speaker, Items 8 and 9, we are proposing, with the approval of the House, Mr. Speaker, to consider those matters together.

We debate this, Mr. Speaker, against the background of the well-known predicament of the country, which it has experienced for some time, of high debt and suboptimal growth. The current medium- term economic programme...

Mr. SAMUDA: Sub-optimal growth?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Sub-optimal.

Mr. SAMUDA: Sub-optimal? It sounds better than low.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Yes. Low, less than desirable.

Mr. SAMUDA: You pass.

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, we will always break it down to help you, you know, any time you want.

(Laughter)

Now, we don't come here to quarrel, but the facts, should they be raised, will show who has had growth and who has not.

(Government Members applaud)

Mr. SHAW: Really!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Yes.

Mr. SHAW: Oh, really!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Yes. The facts will show it, the facts will show it.

(Heckling)

Because the record of twelve successive quarters of negative, we know where it come from.

Mr. SHAW: Oh, so you not going back there now.

Dr. PHILLIPS: A not going there now.

Mr. SHAW: You don't want go beyond that?

Dr. PHILLIPS: I not going there now.

Mr. SHAW: You don't want to go beyond that?

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, man, we can go have a seminar. Belmont Road...

Mr. SHAW: There is another debate coming up, a gwine fix yu business!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Yes, dat is true! And I get to talk twice!

(Laughter)

Mr. CHARLES: Condense milk and bully beef, all de growth ounoo talking 'bout, people not growing!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Is all right. No, man, you don't believe him can handle it?

(Inaudible comment from Mr. Charles)

Dr. PHILLIPS: You don't have confidence in Audley to...

Mr. CHARLES: Tell me 'bout growth in the people's lives! Stop talking 'bout dis Washington and IMF!

A Government MEMBER: Your hair has been growing.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Hear what I say. Man wey ca'an pass exam cuss exam!

(Laughter/Applause)

Hear what I say again...

A Government MEMBER: I am going to put some more tax on hair!

(Heckling/Laughter)

Anyway...

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, what we are discussing here today is enhanced fiscal rules for Jamaica. And the fact is that this process that we are here discussing is a process as far as the legislation of fiscal rules is concerned, which began in 2010, under the stewardship of the Member opposite, from North East Manchester.

The three main Fiscal Rules were:

- a nil fiscal balance by the end of 15/16
- a debt to GDP ratio of 100 per cent or better by the end of 15/16

That was what was passed in 2010 -

- and a wage to GDP ratio of no more than 9 per cent by the end of fiscal year 15/16.

These rules were further enhanced in 2011, and attendant regulations for both the *Financial Administration and Audit Act* and the *Public Bodies Management and Accountability Act,* were approved by this House.

The review of the Fiscal Policy Paper by both the Auditor General and the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee, is part of the governance structure that was established when the original Rules - *Financial Administration and Audit Act* under the *Financial Administration and Audit Act,* were passed.

The current reforms that are before this House, Mr. Speaker, build on that framework that was established, and which are enshrined in Section 48 of the *Financial Administration and Audit Act* and in the *Public Bodies Management Act,* and the *Public Debt Management Act,* which will be amended later on in the next fiscal year. What we seek to do is to strengthen the definition of public debt and the escape clause in a manner consistent with the *Financial Administration and Audit Act.* In other words, the primacy of the Fiscal Rules, with respect to these matters, is set out in the *Financial Administration and Audit Act.*

Specifically, Mr. Speaker, in relation to the Fiscal Administration and Audit Act, the amendments in the Act will, in the first instance, seek to define coverage for the purposes of enhanced fiscal rules in relation to

what is called the specified public sector, meaning the public sector, excluding the public bodies that have been certified by the Auditor General, as carrying out functions of a purely commercial nature.

The criteria to be laid out in the *FAA Act* and the Fiscal Responsibility Framework regulations are to be laid during the House later in the fiscal year.

Secondly, the legislation and the *Financial Administration and Audit Act* - the amendments - define public debt consistent with the definition of the specified public sector, to be the consolidated debt of the specified public sector, including its government guaranteed debt after netting out the cross holdings of debt entities within the specified public sector, other than holdings by the Bank of Jamaica.

Put simply, that it seeks to define the public debt, which is the debt of all the public sector excluding commercial enterprises and excluding also debt held by other public entities in the public sector.

Thirdly, the amendments to the FAA Act define an enhanced role for both the Auditor General and the Parliament. The Auditor General's independence and integrity make that office the institution best placed to certify that the conditions necessary for the observance of the fiscal rules have been met, and to provide assessments that Parliament would need to take into account in order to better evaluate its decisions given, given, Mr. Speaker - and I think it's important to emphasize here - that the administration of these rules will require not only a greater role for the Parliament, but I dare say that it will test the capacities and the maturity of the Parliament as a whole and this is something that we are - there are areas of this that will need to be taken into account as we proceed. And I would expect that at some point we're going to need to have a discussion - including with you, Mr. Speaker, and the leaders of government business and the leader of opposition business - about ways in which we can enhance the role of Parliament and make it more efficient in providing oversight for the fiscal affairs of the country.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. D. Smith)

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, we will do that.

One requirement which will arise is that we are going to have to try to make the fiscal year meaningful, that is to say we'll have to pass the budget, beginning next year before April 1st, which is the start of the financial year. And that will also mean that we're going to have to find effective ways of achieving oversight for the House, but at the same time having a speedier determination of the matters that are before us. So I am pleased to hear the Leader of Opposition Business express openness to new ideas on behalf of the Opposition.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: The fourth area of adjustment being sought in the Financial Administration and Audit Act, relates to the levels of fiscal savings that will allow the debt sustainability threshold to be attained. This is the main premise of the fiscal rules. The fiscal balance is the policy instrument and the debt target of 60% or less to be achieved by the end

of fiscal year 25/26 is the desired outcome. And there is a formula set out in the Legislation as to what the acceptable fiscal balances are, if we are to achieve this target of a debt to GDP ratio of 60% or less, by 25/26 - by 2025, 2026.

The Legislation Fiscal Administration Audit Act also seeks to establish an automatic correction mechanism that will allow for any deviations to be addressed in a systematic manner, with specified adjustment levels relative to whether the deviations exceed either the lower threshold of 1.5% of GDP or the upper threshold of 3.5% of GDP.

Simply put again, Mr. Speaker, what the Legislation provides for is that there will be unforeseen circumstances, whether in the wider global economy, whether as a consequence of natural disasters which may cause - which may force an adjustment in the deficit targets that have been set. These and - should that occur then there is provision for an adjustment to be made to the targets with the approval of the House and for the correction to take place.

The Legislation introduces an escape clause that was first introduced in 2010 and revised in the Public Debt Management Act in 2012. The escape clause is both constitutionally and legislatively enshrined to recognize that Jamaica, as a small island developing economy, open to economic and weather-related shocks outside our control, will have to adjust to these shocks. The escape clause has to be triggered by one of four events, with a fiscal impact of at least 1.5% of GDP, that is to say a natural disaster or a severe economic contraction; a public emergency or a financial sector crisis, and which would result in a suspension of the target for one year or not more than two years subject to parliamentary approval of an order. The Legislation also provides for regular recalibration at the end of every three year period or at the end of an escape clause to determine the adjustments that will be needed to achieve the debt target.

And, Mr. Speaker, finally, the Legislation - the Financial Administration and Audit Act introduces a framework for the Public Investment Management System to ensure alignment of the Public Investment Plans, with the country's strategic and fiscal imperatives, as well as to secure value for money on public investments and to fully capture project costs, both recurrent and capital.

With respect to the Public Bodies Management Act, what that does is to provide - what the amendments in that Act does is to provide a framework for the treatment of public/private partnerships and contingent liabilities which will be enshrined in the Act. There's a distinction made in the Act, Mr. Speaker, between user paid public/private partnerships where the revenue stream generated by those who use the service, is to be used to repay any advances or investment made and government paid public/private partnerships.

There is a ceiling of 3% of GDP for the period between April 2014 and March 2017, for the user paid partnerships, thereafter the

ceiling could rise up to 8% of GDP. The purpose being overall to limit the exposure of the Consolidated Fund in the event that anything may go awry with any of these investments and partnerships. Government pay PPPs in contrast will fall under the public debt ceiling and are treated simply as debt for the purposes of this Legislation. Once an entity receives a guarantee from this Parliament, that guarantee would form part of the public debt. We're already constrained by the target for guarantees in the Public Debt Management Act, and an important point to be made is that the user paid ceiling is linked to the public debt ceiling in the FAA Act. If we're able to reduce the debt below the 60% GDP ceiling, then there would be scope obviously for additional use of the user pays PPPs.

There's a specific exclusion in the Act, that is to say the Public Bodies Management Act, for projects already underway. The Norman Manley International Airport, the Kingston Container Terminal are two main projects currently underway that will benefit from early accommodation within the 3% of GDP user pay PPP contingent liability ceiling. The older PPPs with contingencies which are already in operations are excluded from the ceilings. And I refer, for example, to the Sangster's International Airport and the Trans-Jamaica Highway. Where a PPP has a similar transaction structure to the North South Highway, for example, which means that there are minimal contingencies, it will also be excluded from the user pay PPP ceiling, but this exclusion has to be certified by the Auditor General.

Put another way, Mr. Speaker, where there is a public/private partnership, but where there is no explicit guarantee or implicit guarantee on the part of the Government and where there is a specific identifiable flow of funds or other assets, which exclude the possibility of resort being made to the Consolidated Fund, then upon certification by the Auditor General's Office, they will be excluded from the ceilings. Overall, since we're currently involved in the Extended Fund Facility arrangement with the International Monetary Fund until 2017, there's a transition period during which the automatic correction mechanism and escape clause and the related roles of the Auditor General and Parliament will not be operational. These provisions will be passed into law but will not become effective until April 2017.

That simply recognizes, Mr. Speaker that we already have an indicative programme which has these limits and expenditures already embedded in it and therefore it would be superfluous to have these other mechanisms become operational immediately. And we know - we all know and the House has been kept informed on the particular limits that we have here. I think we need to recognize also, Mr. Speaker that these Bills represent a commitment that we must make to ourselves. Because in fact, we are determined certainly, and I would hope and expect that the whole House is united in the determination that never again should we allow our debt to

mount up to the point where it becomes an impediment to our capacity to grow as an economy.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, just to go through the clauses in the Act, let me deal first with the Financial Administration - the FAA Act - Financial Administration and Audit Act.

Mr. Speaker, Clause 1 sets out the short title, construction and commencement.

Clause 2 sets out the amendments to the principal Act on the Schedule. The following definitions are inserted into Section 2 of the principal Act in support of the enhanced Fiscal Governance Framework, definitions of. contingent liability, notional account, public debt, public investment as defined in the PBMA, Public Bodies Management Act, Public Investment Project, Public/Private Partnership, recalibration, severe economic contraction, specified public sector.

In relation to Section 48B, subsections (1) and (b) are inserted to provide for - and this is where, this is one of the areas where we are going to have to change our approaches, Mr. Speaker. In relation to Section 48B, what the new subsections 1(a) and 1(b) provide for first of all, is the simultaneous tabling of Estimates for both Expenditure and Revenue in a timely manner, to effect approval no later than March 31, if any financial year. And as I said, that is going to require an extreme level of discipline both by the Ministry of Finance and the other Ministries, but also by the House.

And quite frankly, I believe that the time has come for us to look at how we conduct our budget approval exercises. They run an average for about a month or more, and I think it's not beyond us, Mr. Speaker, and House Leader, for us to find a way of reducing that extent of time, so as to enhance disbursement; so as to enhance good sense and speedy consideration of the budget and to enhance proper management of our fiscal accounts such that we don't go for three months out of the year really without a budget, so as to enhance but operating simply on the vote-on account, so as to enhance as well project implementation, so that projects don't have to have this period when they are basically in abeyance because there is no budget to support.

Clause 2 there requires that there be a budget call before September 30. Clause 2 subsection (2) was replaced by the new subsection, which requires that both the Fiscal Policy Paper and the Public Sector Investment Programme be tabled with the Revenue and Expenditure Estimates.

Section 48B, Clause 3, the total debt was deleted and replaced with 'public debt' in subsection (4) with a definition of 'public debt' to be consistent with the enhanced fiscal rules.

In Clause 4, the Auditor General's role is expanded and the timeline for reporting on the Fiscal Policy Paper is reduced to allow Parliament to benefit from the Auditor General's review. The Auditor General must report on the Fiscal Policy Paper within one week of it being tabled in Parliament. The Auditor General must identify which Public Bodies are commercial and as such do not comprise, are not included within the

definition of specified public sector. And the Auditor General must provide an opinion if a PPP involves only minimal contingent liabilities or greater than the minimum liabilities.

In relation to Section 48C, the repeal and replacement of Section 48C: Section 48C is repealed completely and replaced with a new Section 48C, which sets out first of all, beginning with the fiscal year ending March 31, 2018, a fiscal balance target that allows for the debt to GDP ratio of 60 or less by March 31, 2026 must be achieved.

Secondly, that the target is to be computed according to a formula set out in the Fifth Schedule of the Act.

Thirdly, that the wages to GDP must be reduced to 9% of GDP by March 31, 2016, and the ratio maintained or improved thereafter. This rule has not changed, this is a rule inherited from the 2010 legislation.

Fourthly, that the Appropriation Act and the Supplementary Estimates must be developed to meet the fiscal balance needed to achieve the debt to GDP target of 60% or less.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Samuda)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Section 48C.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Samuda)

Dr. PHILLIPS: It's about 10%. That no more deviation be recorded in the notional account until the end of the fiscal year when all reconciliation is complete.

Section 48C(2) establishes the escape clause, namely the events that could trigger it. The criteria for the suspension of the fiscal rules, the responsibilities of the primary stakeholders and the procedures and the duration of the suspension.

What is provided for, Mr. Speaker, what are the triggers is that period of public disaster within the meaning of Section (20) of the Constitution of Jamaica; (b) a severe economic contraction; (c) a public emergency within the meaning of Section 20 of the Constitution of Jamaica; (d) a financial sector crisis.

Where subsection (2) applies, there are four (4) criteria outlined, anyone of which must occur for suspension to be considered. As I said, a period of public natural disaster, a severe economic contraction defined as accumulative decline in GDP over four consecutive quarters of 2% of GDP or a one-time quarterly reduction in GDP equal to or greater than 3%, relative to the same quarter of the previous financial year, or public emergency or a financial sector crises as we indicated.

So of note here in relation to 48C(2) is the scale of the decline in GDP that would have to result by virtue of a severe economic contraction.

Section 48C(3) and (4) says that subsection (2) is only applicable if subsection (3) has been complied with. And that means that, first, the Auditor General has validated that the fiscal impact is greater or equal to one and a half percent of GDP; and (2), that the Minister, pursuant to the Auditor General's validation has made an Order subject to affirmative resolution seeking suspension for a year in the first instance. So, that it is not just

the Auditor General's confirmation that the terms of the fiscal impact or the contraction, the terms of the legislation as far as a fiscal contraction or a contraction of GDP exists, but that there has to be the concurrence of the House that such a situation exists.

Again Mr. Speaker, I want to say - I want to emphasize that the operations of the legislation is going to test the maturity and collective resolve of the Parliament. Because what we have to determine is that we meet these targets. That election time is not a time to breach fiscal targets that exist for the good order of the House and the country more significantly, it is going to mean that we are going to have to not simply try to stymie an order issued in good-faith and in conformity with an Auditor General's rulings, because we think that there is political advantage to be derived by one side or another.

Mr. Speaker, it's going to mean that we don't approach the consideration of budgets simply by insisting on more expenditure, even though we refuse to identify where the revenues are to come from to meet the expenditure because that, you know, easy populism, easy populism won't, won't meet the requirements of long-term growth and survival of our nation.

Subsection 4 of Section 48C, establishes a minimum and maximum period for suspension. The initial suspension expires at the end of one year, and if the Auditor General validates that the impact is still significant enough to warrant the continued suspension, the suspension cannot exceed one additional year.

Subsection 5 of Section 48C establishes the procedures and reporting relationships. Both the PIOJ and the Bank of Jamaica would need to report to the Auditor General and the Minister at the same time, on events (1) and (2) in the case of the PIOJ; and (3), in the case of the BOJ respectively.

Subsection (6) prescribes what the Minister needs to do as the first step in getting back on the path towards 60% or less of GDP. At the end of the period of suspension, the Minister must table recommendations for recalibration of the fiscal balance.

Section 48C(a)(i). This new section explains the automatic adjustments that must occur if the cumulative deviations in the notional account exceed the lower threshold of 1.5% of GDP or the upper threshold of 3.5% of GDP. The first step is to use the Fiscal Policy Paper tabled in February to let the Parliament and the public know what the projected notional account balance is for the year end of that fiscal year.

The second step to be stated in the Fiscal Policy Paper is to provide the measures that will need to be taken to achieve the required fiscal balance target.

The third step is to implement measures that have to be effected within the coming fiscal year.

The new Section 48C(a)(i), this has controls to ensure that the fiscal balance target is met. The Auditor General is required, by law, provided that measures have been tabled to report to the Parliament. The Auditor General is required to report if the measures are adequate or not, or if the measures are not

being implemented in time to achieve the reduction in expenditure needed to meet the fiscal balance target.

Secondly, the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee of Parliament, is required by law, on receipt of the Auditor General Report to consider the Report, and secondly, to recommend measures to be taken to achieve the cut in the primary expenditure during the fiscal year.

Third, cumulative deviations, whether at the lower or upper threshold have to be addressed in no more than two financial years.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is worth mentioning that this is going to require a substantial strengthening of the capacities of the Auditor General's Office. You know, we have in other Legislatures, in the United States, for example, you have the Congressional Budget Office; you have the Office of Budget Responsibility, I think it is called in the United Kingdom, and you have other similar entities which really represent an independent source of advice to the Legislature. But the independent source of advice, in and of itself, does not solve the situation. Having received the independent advice, what you need now is a Parliament to act responsibly - a Legislature to act responsibly. And what that is going to mean in our context, is the capacity of a Legislature to sublimate its partisan proclivities to some degree and to focus on national interest and national... (Inaudible)

(Applause)

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Samuda)

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, I expect, given all that I have heard from you over the years, that you, having devoted 20/30 years to national service, would want to see your efforts bear fruit in a way, better than has been the collective possibility for either you or I, and so many others to have witnessed in our time.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. Samuda)

Dr. BAUGH: That is good psychology.

Dr. PHILLIPS: You won't be here 2025? You don't plan to be here 2025?

(*Sotto voce* comments/Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Shame on you. Why would you say a thing like that?

Mr. SAMUDA: But you will be here.

Dr. PHILLIPS: You plan to be here 2025? Yes, all of these plan to be here 2025.

(Referring to Members in the back row)

Mr. SAMUDA: (Inaudible) all back benchers.

Dr. PHILLIPS: No. Then they will be sitting here.

A MEMBER: (Inaudible) ...Lloyd B if he plans to be here...

Dr. PHILLIPS: You plan to be here?

MEMBER: Why not? (Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Sections 48C(a)(ii), (iii) and (iv). These relate to recalibration, Mr. Speaker. Recalibration refers to the process of periodically resetting the minimum fiscal balance required to achieve the debt to GDP target of no more than 60 per cent by March 31, 2026. Recalibration occurs every three years, or at the end of an escaped clause suspend period. When recalibration occurs, the notional account balance is reset to nil, and

whatever was in the account is factored into a formula used in the Fifth Schedule to arrive at the fiscal balance requirements, going forward.

The Auditor General has to review the classification of public bodies to determine if there has been a change as to which entities fall within the definition of the specified public sector, since this could impact the fiscal balance that is needed to achieve the debt target.

Section 48E(1) and (2)

Subsection (1) of Section 48E, basically sets out the tabling and timing of the tabling of the Fiscal Policy Paper twice per year, as well as additional requirements set out in Amendments to the Third Schedule. Subsection (2) requires that accounting officers provide the Minister subsequent to the budget call and in the time prescribed a business plan budgets and projects approved for inclusion in the PSIP. All should have a trajectory of not less than three years.

The new Section 48J, speaks to the Public Investment Management System of which the Public Sector Investment Programme is the centerpiece. The Public Investment Management System is the common governance framework for public investment with provisions outlined in the Fourth Schedule. Guidelines will be promulgated by the Minister, and we expect this to take place early in the financial year for the operation of this system. Public Investment Policy will balance economic and social development and environmental resilience with fiscal prudence.

The Third Schedule, the new paragraphs 3, 4, 5 and 6, are being inserted in the Schedule to augment what the Fiscal Policy Paper will report on; first, information on public investment as a portion of GDP to be spent, as well as the medium-term trajectory.

A provision needs to be made for weather-related events to be kept in the Contingencies Fund. I believe the Member from North Central St. Andrew has been - and the Member from North East - although he breached it regularly - but we all agree that we need to be making a provision for contingencies for weather-related events as a standard feature in our budgets.

(Applause)

It is provided for in this Third Schedule too, that there should be full disclosure on contingent liabilities arising for non-guaranteed borrowings, whether for PPPs or otherwise, and full disclosure on the number of public bodies validated by the Auditor General as not being part of the specified public sector.

There is a new Fourth Schedule which complements Section 48J. It outlines and defines the following; namely, the Public Investment Management System, Public Sector Investment Programme, the Annual Public Sector Investment Programme Policy Paper, Public Investment Management Guidelines, and a slew of performance requirements in relation to public investment.

What is proposed is that there should be a three-year rolling public investment programme, so that we ensure that only

projects that have been adequately prepared get funded in the Capital Budget; projects that have had feasibility work done, have had a business plan, an implementation plan developed, and where all the necessary drawings and preparatory work are in place, so that it is going to, kind of, eliminate things that have happened over the years. And I think all of us know of circumstances where initiatives get developed shortly before the start of a financial year, and where oftentimes, inadequate preparation has been done and as a consequence of which oftentimes, substantial resources either get wasted or misspent on priorities other than of deserving priorities.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Or not spent at all, as the case may be.

The new Fifth Schedule sets out the formula for calculating the fiscal balance requirement relative to the debt-to-GDP target. The formula provides an element of transparency as our Central Government's operations are on the Ministry's website. Anyone can do the calculations, and determine if we are on track in this enhanced fiscal Government framework.

In relation to the...

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Minister's time for speaking has expired.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, we now ask that the Minister's time be extended to allow him sufficient time to complete his presentation.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Minister's time be extended, sufficient for him to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Minister.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, in relation to the Public Bodies Management Act, the aim of the amendments to Section 2 Interpretation, Section 2A and Section 7, and the introduction of new Sections 6B and 6C is to enshrine the fiscal treatment of public-private partnerships in law, strengthen the fiscal rules governing investment activities of public bodies, and to establish ceilings for contingent liabilities that are fiscally prudent, and in keeping with the outcome of fiscal sustainability.

The amendments to the Public Bodies Management Act seeks to meet specific fiscal policy imperatives, namely to consolidate and complement similar amendments made under the FAA Act, and to strengthen the Fiscal Governance Framework, and to achieve wider public sector coverage as possible - as wide a public sector coverage as possible to ensure that fiscal risks are minimized and managed prudently.

The Bill is referred to as the Public Bodies and Accountability (Amendment) Act 2014, and becomes effective on April 1, 2014.

Clause 2 - The following definitions are inserted in Section two of the principal Act to support the enshrinement of PPPs, Public Investment and Contingent Liabilities within the Fiscal Government Framework. So, what we have defined here is the Government pays public-private partnership, public investment, also defined in the Financial - in the FAA Act, Public Investment Management System - It is also defined in the FAA Act - public-private partnership to reinforce the approval of PPPs

policy framework; user pays public-private partnership, *et cetera.*

Clause 3 provides for amendments to Section 2A to achieve the following: It requires that public bodies comply with the institutionalization of the Public Sector Investment Programme by providing information on their Public Investment Programme.

Secondly, it establishes a Pivotal Budgetary Reform which is timely tabling of the Estimates on the one hand, and the approval on the other, no later than March 31 of the financial year immediately preceding the new budget year.

Three, it defines the Public Sector Investment Programme, and outlines the parameters to be used to review and update the PSIP on an annual basis.

Clause 4 is the most substantive of the new changes. New Section 6B and 6C are inserted. Section 6B seeks to ensure, first of all, continuous assessment of contingent liabilities, full disclosure and regular reporting through the medium of the Fiscal Policy Paper. And secondly, the integration of PPPs into the Public Sector Investment Programme to ensure standardization as well as a mechanism for the entry of PPPs into the Public Sector Investment Programme.

Section 6B is a particular importance in that it sets out the accounting and debit treatment of the PPPs. As I indicated before, it differentiates between government-pays and user-pays PPPs. Government-pays PPPs comprises part of public debt while user-pays PPPs do not comprise part of the public debt. It establishes an interim cumulative ceiling of 3 per cent of GDP for the period April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2017 for user- pays PPPs and a subsequent cumulative ceiling of 8 per cent through March 31, 2026. It ensures that there is a link to the public debt to GDP ceiling, whereby if the debt to GDP ratio falls below 60 per cent of GDP after the period of the interim ceiling, there is discretion to use that additional space to augment the 8 per cent ceiling.

Section 6B also allows for a number of exclusions: where a user pays PPP is already in existence as at March 31, 2014, the user-pays ceiling does not apply to this PPP, I mentioned already. And where under the FAA Section 48B (6)(d) the Auditor General has certified that a PPP involves only minimal contingent liabilities to the government such a PPP would be exempt from both the user-pays and public debt ceilings, an example would be the - as I mentioned, the North-South highway link where there are commercial type guarantees and assets to be transferred to eliminate any liability on the part of the Government. Section 6B is explicit on how PPP-related debt is to be treated with - that is to say in subsection (8) only when the contingent liability becomes probable will it form part of the public debt as opposed to being captured under the user-pay PPP ceiling.

Subsection (9) sets the international accounting standard definition of contingent liabilities is the definition of contingent liabilities that will be used to determine when

a contingent liability becomes probable.

The new Section 6C ensures that it is clear that the public investment management system must be complied with not only by ministries, departments and agencies, but also public bodies.

Clause 5 amends Section 7 of the original Bill to place the onus on Boards of Directors of public bodies to submit draft corporate plans to the Minister of Finance and their portfolio Ministers no later than November 30 of each financial year to inform the budget preparation process.

Mr. Speaker, it bears mentioning yet again that these amendments here today extend a process which began in the previous Administration that it certainly will, as I have said earlier, test the resolve of the House as a whole, but it should be a resolve that is shared on both sides of the House given the provenance of this effort at achieving fiscal responsibility. But rules in and of itself themselves, Mr. Speaker, don't guarantee performance. Rules don't guarantee results. That is going to require conduct. That is different. Play by these rules and you will achieve a better result than you or us have achieved in our political life so far.

(Cross talk/Laughter)

But, Mr. Speaker, these rules represent our commitment but they also represent - and I think it is worth being said - they represent a commitment also under the Extended Fund Facility Agreement with the International Monetary Fund. They represent a commitment that to be implemented, to be passed into law before March 31 of this year. And I think it is important that we recognize why it is in the programme, not only why it was in the earlier programme but why it is in this programme. It is in this programme and in the earlier programme that had been negotiated by the now Opposition when it was in Government, because the international community: the financial markets, the multilateral agencies, the private and official lenders are not convinced that we collectively have the fiscal discipline to prevent the future run up of our debt. We need to prove them wrong. The rules alone won't guarantee but they represent – the passage of these enhancements in the legislation will at least demonstrate that we recognize there is a problem and that we are committed to a solution, but the true test is to come when we see how we manage both our expenditures and our revenue raising to ensure that future generations don't have to labour under the strictures that we now have to labour under.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Applause) I commend these Bills to the House.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker – sorry - just to indicate, at the later point there are couple amendments to each Bill in the definitions that I will move.

Mr. D. SMITH: And they were circulated?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Yes.

Mr. SHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has gone to great - has taken great care to mention the genesis of these Bills that have been tabled in relation to the drilling down of fiscal rules

and so I need not go over that. Except to say that I found it quite interesting that some weeks ago one of the major newspapers dedicated an editorial in which they wanted to know the position of Opposition concerning fiscal rules and I had to send a message and indicate to them that all they need to do was to go back to the formation of the Fiscal Responsibility Framework in 2010 and they would see that that is where it had actually begun.

But let me first of all, Mr. Speaker, raise once again an issue that has to do with the appropriate scrutiny of legislation by Parliament and we are here talking about fiscal rules and the truth is that we are breaking the rules. We are breaking the rules and the customary practices of Parliament where we are to allow for Members to carefully examine legislation, especially game-changing legislation as what we have as these two Bills that are before us; that it has always been customary practice, Mr. Speaker, that the House puts these Bills to a committee usually a Joint Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament and, therefore, to allow for a careful examination and allows also for civil society to be able to participate in the case of this Legislation, the Minister spoke about the question of Public Sector Investment Programme, which includes private public partnerships or public private public partnerships, whichever way you want to call it, and the rules that will govern that and how it has to be administered.

Here would be an excellent opportunity for the private sector and those who are interested in investing in these private public partnerships to come and sit down at Bar of Parliament and to be part of an examination of this game-changing legislation and understand it better from this stage, understand the process because oftentimes we criticize a process and claim that it is overly bureaucratic and it is fraught with all kinds of difficulties and that criticism sometimes comes from a lack of knowledge; sometimes comes from lack of understanding, and I think that while it is - it might be one of unwritten rules but the truth that legislation like this, game-changing legislation like this, should not be rushed through the House and Members should not be deprived of having the opportunity of carefully going through the legislation and allowing for civil society and the private sector and other - across the board even members of public sector to better understand it because they are ones who are going to have to implement it.

And so, I regret that once again we are being told, as the Minister told me earlier, that he has to rush it through because of the IMF programme. Now, we have to remind ourselves that ultimately this is not the IMF programme, it's our programme.

MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

(Applause)

Mr. SHAW: And we want to give it the best opportunity to succeed and if we want it to succeed and we want to give it the best opportunity to succeed, then from day one let us really exercise in the spirit of real democracy. Let us all as Members on both sides embrace it and let us use Parliament as

the forum for going into great details so everybody understands exactly what these fiscal rules are all about. (Applause) So I still would want to ask the Minister to reconsider and that even when we listen to your presentation, I have been through it. I understand it and maybe a few of us more in the House understand it, but I can guarantee you that the majority of us in the House right now didn't understand everything - all the details that you went through.

And because some aspects of it are fairly complex. Let me give you an example. The same old question of the Public Sector Management System, which you made reference to, right in that section you have about eight different steps, bureaucratic steps, that will be carried out. You have the:

- Public Investment Management System;
- Public Sector Investment Programme;
- Public Investment Management Committee;
- Public Investment Secretariat;
- Public Investment Governance framework;
- Public Investment Management Information System;
- Public Investment Performance Report; and
- Public Investment Monitoring and Evaluation Committee.

Now, the work of the Joint Select Committee could go into that in some detail. And maybe looking at customary practices, maybe looking at how others do it we might find that we cut out some of that eight in order to make the thing more...

Mr. DALLEY: Efficient.

Mr. SHAW: ...user friendly and perhaps more efficient. Because it is possible that we might just be going overboard with so many layers of bureaucracy that it might very well become counterproductive and we don't achieve the purposes for which the whole thing was intended.

So, I really would urge the Minister, you know, that this should be reviewed and you consider saying to the IMF, we need a few more weeks just to make sure we do it the right way, and getting everyone involved so that we can have a total buy-in into what is very, very important legislation.

Let me point out as well, that some aspects of what we had introduced in the Fiscal Responsibility Framework is already being done. For instance, we had started with the Fiscal Policy Paper from my time, but the Auditor General had not begun to report on the Paper that I was doing. The first Report of the Auditor General, however, has come out, reporting on the Fiscal Policy Paper that you, as Minister, tabled in the House last year. And while we know that the amendment is supposed to require that analysis to come back, I think in a week's time, this one came in June after you had tabled - I believe you had tabled it on the 18th of April, and the Report of the Auditor General on the Fiscal Policy Paper came out in June of last year.

Of interest, there were a couple points of concern that the Auditor General had noted - and I will just mention two of them - one of

them being the question that while the initial amendments to the law had called for a 100 per cent debt to GDP ratio by fiscal year 15/16, that the Auditor General pointed out that although that was already in the law, that in your responsibility - Fiscal Responsibility Statement of 2013/14, you indicated that the debt to GDP ratio is projected to trend towards 112 per cent by fiscal year 15/16. The Auditor General was simply pointing out there that there was a disconnect between your projections in your Fiscal Policy paper, with what was actually written into the earlier legislation to which you referred.

The Auditor General also expressed concern that in reviewing the Fiscal Policy Paper - and I read from her Report:

> *It revealed that although some fiscal risks were mentioned therein they were not quantified or reflected in the projections. Consequently...*

It goes on -

> *...it was not clear to me as to what extent the deviations, such as underperformance of revenue were due to forecast errors, deviations from assumptions, or unforeseen events or shocks.*

As a result of those two concerns she went on in her opinion section to give the following two caveats. She said:

> *I consider the effect of the matter mentioned in paragraph 10 to be a material departure from the fiscal management principle stated in Section 48B, and the target set out in Section 48C of the FAA Act.*

That relates to the debt to GDP ratios. And then she went on:

> *On the basis of the limitation indicated at paragraph 13...*

That's related to revenue and so on -

> *...I do not form an opinion on the explanation provided by the Minister for the variances between established targets and the outcome of the fiscal indicators.*

I only mention this to say that it's a work in progress, because that, in fact, became a part of the analysis of the Auditor General in critiquing the Fiscal Policy Paper as presented by the Minister of Finance. Clearly, it is a beginning, and these laws that we are debating today are therefore a continuation of the road towards achieving greater fiscal responsibility.

So, Mr. Speaker, since I had mentioned the question of the Public Sector Management Programme - and I listed the eight of them - I wanted to - I want the Minister to make it absolutely clear that this Public Sector Investment Programme to which he refers now, is all encompassing. That it is not just a regime for public/private partnerships, but that it is in fact a regime that is going to take into account the total public sector investment among public bodies.

And, here again, since that is so...

Dr. PHILLIPS: Central Government.

Mr. SHAW: Of Central Government and public bodies, right, so it's a big task, it's a pretty big task, because you are moving - you are transitioning from what initially was Corporate Plan. Everybody - it was required by law to present their Corporate Plan. So

each person has a Corporate Plan, and we table in this House the Public Bodies Programme and we have the Central Government Budget, and we have the Investment Programme that you said in there. We are superimposing now, a new bureaucracy for Public Sector Investment Management.

I am just saying, Minister, we need to go through it very carefully, so that the transition is seamless, everybody understands it, and it doesn't end up – rather than speeding up the process, it doesn't end up, in fact, slowing down the process much more than it already is slowed. Because we have seen in public appropriations at the Administration Committee just last week where the Tourism Product Development Company is supposed to manage, Prime Minister. Because you - I know tourism is close to your heart - that the TPDCo. was supposed to manage for this fiscal year, six hundred and eighteen million dollars ($618M) of funds from the Tourism Enhancement Fund, Three Hundred and Ninety Million ($390M) of it to be spent in the Corporate Area, a good amount of funds in Montego Bay, in Ocho Rios, even the South Coast - I don't know if any would have come to Christiana, but even the South Coast had a Hundred and Fifteen Million ($115M) set aside.

What have we found? Only Ninety-four Million Dollars ($94M) of the Six Hundred and Eighteen Million Dollars ($618M) of raw cash that is sitting in a bank account for the TEF, will be spent by the end of this fiscal year. Fifteen per cent, Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker, in circumstances where our tourism product needs to be developed. And the money is there, and a Development Company was formed to be the marshal for the development of the products.

And then we ask why, what happened? Couple answers came. In one case they said the UDC had procurement problems. In another case we were told procurement problems all around. Well, is this bureaucracy that is now being put in here, is this going to help the procurement problem?

Mr. Derrick SMITH: So where was the Minister? Supervision....

Mr. SHAW: So, I put that out as an example.

Prime Minister, I will give you another example, I know it's close to your heart. Schools, we have a Hundred Million Dollars ($100M) in Capital A, and it's there to renovate and repair schools. The leaking roofs, some need ceilings, as the one in my constituency, because when the sun comes down on the zinc and it really heats up the children they can't concentrate, they are too hot.

The tendering process had been gone through in one case that I know about some two years ago, and we are told the money is not spent because of procurement problems. Sixty-six Million Dollars ($66M) out of the Hundred Million Dollars ($100M) gone back, Prime Minister, in this Budget. A Hundred Million Dollars ($100M) that should have been spent fixing up schools, primary schools and high schools islandwide.

So, this is the context within which I am just cautioning against the potential for an

overbearing bureaucracy to hit us in this situation. It needs to be reviewed and needs to be carefully calibrated and carefully examined by the Minister. And, with all due respect, I think that if we had put it to Committee as a practical matter, we knocking our heads here perhaps could come up and say, now, is this workable? Will this work? Can we look at it as a simple pragmatic thing, examine it and see if it could, or could we make it better? Because we want to make sure that we haven't just picked up something from somewhere, and we add this and we add that, and it looks good on paper, but it also is frightening to me when I look at it, in terms of all of the layers that we are imposing.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to mention - because, you know, the Minister is correct, we all want this programme to succeed. We want the programme to succeed because Jamaica - we are stressed out, as a country and we need to get back to serious economic growth in the country.

The promulgation of Fiscal Rules will be part of that pathway to growth, there is no question about it, because it is part of the pathway to building confidence in the prudent economic management of the country. Very important. But, I believe that...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SHAW: Minister, I believe that we have to have an appropriate environment for the successful promulgation of the Fiscal Rules, as well. And I think the first one that comes to my own mind is the question of the need really to have a stable - we have to have a stable economy, we have to have a stable economy, yes, and we are told we need Fiscal Rules for the economy to be stable, that's true. But we also need a certain stability within the economy, which a stable exchange rate, by the way is a very important part of that stability for the economy. I see a stable exchange rate as kind of the epi-centre of a stable economy. Because let's look at it...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SHAW: Gentlemen, gentlemen, it's distracting, it's distracting, okay.

Let's just look at this for a moment. An unstable exchange rate, apart from wreaking havoc on prices and affecting the decisions of businesses to invest because of the uncertainty of what the exchange rate will be tomorrow, or next week or next month, it also has an impact on the fiscal accounts, as you know. I have heard you complain about it, about the fact that devaluation has caused the nominal stock of domestic debt to increase. When I heard you with it I was wondering if you didn't remember that I was Minister of Finance. But anyway, we move on.

But the truth is that the $300 Billion increase in stock of debt since this present Government is in power, almost a half of it, $146 Billion by my calculation, close to $150 Billion of that is directly as a result of the slippage in the exchange rate. So the truth is, that if we don't find a way to hold down and keep the exchange rate stable, then the slippage - continual slippage in the exchange rate can threaten the integrity of your own fiscal rules that we put in place, can do it. It

can threaten the integrity of your debt to GDP ratios.

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. SHAW: That is because it keeps moving and getting away from us. It is something therefore that we can't give short shrift to.

And you know, Minister, I hear you sometime - some irresponsible remarks made in our country. In one quarter I've seen it written on newspaper that the competitive exchange rate for Jamaica is $150.00 to $160.00.

Mr. D. SMITH: Wow! Him sey soh?

Mr. SHAW: No, somebody says that.

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. SHAW: But the truth is, the truth is, Mr. Speaker...

(Cross talks)

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to delve in that very much now because I'm going to speak about it in more detail in the Budget Debate, okay, because it is an issue we must confront. We must confront the issue, because if there are people in this country really believe that we will sit around and watch this dollar slide to $150.00 and $160.00, when people's incomes are not improving, people are on fixed incomes...

Mr. MAIR: Frozen, they're frozen.

Mr. SHAW: ...some are falling because they've lost their job; the public sector wages have been frozen and yet every two weeks you go to the supermarket the prices going through the roof. So how people are going to survive in this country and where is the growth going to come from, because businesses are not going to invest in these circumstances.

Mr. CHARLES: Balancing the books.

Mr. SHAW: And at the same time, the Budget is going to blow...

(Cross talk)

Mr. SHAW: ...the budget is going to blow at the same time because the stock of debt is going to - it's going to make the target of debt to GDP a joke at the end of the day.

Dr. BAUGH: That is elementary.

Dr. PHILLIPS: A unoo alone gwine talk about it.

(Cross talks)

Mr. SHAW: Yes we'll talk about it. We'll talk about it.

Dr. BAUGH: Elementary.

Mr. SHAW: You know, and you know why we have to talk about it, Mr. Speaker? Let me tell you why. In the same Fiscal Policy Paper Review by the Auditor General was not information from the Ministry of Finance, which explains, for instance, why we had shortfalls in revenue. And among the reasons listed for shortfalls in revenue are: weaker economic growth, which adversely impacts the revenue base. If you don't have economic growth you're not going to have revenue, which we must have for the fiscal rules to work. Then hear this, lower than programmed inflation; so we're relying on inflation to...

Mr. SAMUDA: To come down to...

Mr. SHAW: No, no.... we're relying on inflation to inflate revenue, and we're even relying on inflation to inflate the GDP. What we need is real growth, real jobs, real

earnings, real foreign exchange earnings, not borrowing, earning the foreign exchange.

Mr. CHARLES: Work, work.

Mr. SHAW: So all I'm saying is, we're going to have to do everything together; everything has to work together like an orchestra.

And, Minister, the former Prime Minister had put it on the table, I raised it in the course of the Budget Debate last year, and there have been times in our recent economies, certainly since the 1980s, where we've seen stable exchange rate situations. In 1986 we had an exchange rate that remained stable for three years and in that time the economy return to a healthy 6% annual growth rate. We had it at almost - at $86.00 to $1.00 for almost two years. We did return to 1.5% growth rate but we can't just give it short shrift, that's all I'm saying we're going to have that debate.

But, Mr. Speaker, let me just mention a couple other things before I come down. One of them has to do with arrears, because how can we talk about fiscal rules and yet we have significant buildup in arrears of payments of government obligations? The Minister of Local Government just told us that the arrears at JPS is now $2 Billion. I never left it at $2 Billion.

Mr. DALLEY: More than that!

Mr. SHAW: The arrears were just over $1 Billion when I was Minister. Don't talk about more than that, check the records.

Mr. DALLEY: Me can check this one.

Mr. SHAW: So now I'm alarmed to hear that the arrears at the Jamaica Public Service for street lighting have virtually doubled.

Dr. BAUGH: Over a billion.

Mr. SHAW: Right. Now, how can we - in fact, I would say, Mr. Speaker, that were we sitting at Committee level, I'd be respectfully suggesting that there should be an amendment to the Legislation to put a clause in there on arrears and make it unlawful that arrears should exceed 90 days in the country. Make it unlawful.

Mr. DALLEY: Why you never pass it when you were there?

Mr. SHAW: Right. Because how can we credibly say that we're achieving our targets on expenditure while at the same time the army has debt there that in some cases it's over one year old.

Mr. DALLEY: You have debt from your time.

Mr. SHAW: Three hundred and sixty five days in excess for food...

Mr. DALLEY: In your time.

Mr. SHAW: ...that has not been paid for. And we hear about JPS and there are many others.

I was confronted recently in a parking lot. People supply to the health service, they can't get money, they're in arrears over a year in the health service. I'm suggesting that there should be an amendment to this fiscal rule legislation to make it unlawful for the Government to be running such serious arrears in the country. (Applause) And then we're talking about we're achieving our targets; we're not achieving our targets.

And the next stop that we have to make as

far as I'm concerned, Mr. Speaker, is perhaps now is the time for us to move from cash accounting to accrual accounting.

A MEMBER: Yes.

Mr. SHAW: We've been talking about, Mr. Speaker, we've been talking about accrual accounting for some time now, instead of cash accounting. Some countries that's where they are and accrual accounting simply is that once a liability has been incurred it becomes a formal part of the budget; it becomes a formal part of the obligations that are specifically set down. (Applause) But we have cash, we work on cash, so if we owe money and we don't pay it, then it's not listed as expenditure, right, it's just waiting to be expended in another budget cycle in another budget period.

So, Mr. Speaker, finally I would want to ask the Minister, who is otherwise engaged, I would want to ask the Minister, just want to clarify something. The question - you were talking to your staff when I mentioned that we must bring back accrual accounting onto the radar to look at that, because in the accrual accounting discussion, that would actually take care of the question of the arrears. We would just know that - you see, if it is cleaning up time you know, you might as well just do the cleaning up right around, just do a comprehensive clean up and face the music one time. So face the arrears and in facing the arrears if you go to accrual accounting you'd take that into account right away.

Dr. PHILLIPS: A me and you.

Mr. SHAW: I want to just ask the Minister, when we speak of the debt to GDP ratio there's sometimes some confusion as to whether we're using the debt, which includes PetroCaribé or we're just using the debt minus PetroCaribé, and I think that needs to be cleared up. I think we need to have one debt figure in the country that everybody knows, right. Because we're only fooling ourselves if we report one debt level and we know that there's another US$2½ Billion of money that we owe, which is hundreds of billions of Jamaican dollars and we're not putting that in the official figures it doesn't make any sense.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Though you asked the question mine you're answering it wrong.

Mr. SHAW: No, that's why I want you to answer it, because I suspect that the IMF has tempted to include that in their figures...

Dr. PHILLIPS: What's the problem now?

Mr. SHAW: ...and we don't tend to include it in our official stated figures. So we might want to just look at that as well and say now let us just face the music, put all of it together and we all know what the story is.

Dr. PHILLIPS: But we will need you to help us.

Mr. SHAW: So, Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Minister's point that the Auditor General will have to be given more resources in order to play a more critical role in the monitoring under this new regime. But here once again, I just end by saying to the Minister, if you can find a way to have more inclusiveness in looking at the Bills; it would be helpful in the process of a buy in.

Thank you very much. (Applause)

Mr. SAMUDA: Yes, Minister, just two questions. You did mention...

Mr. DALLEY: Very disappointing.

(Cross talks/Laughter)

Mr. SAMUDA: No, no.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Samuda.

Mr. SAMUDA: ...you did mention that in the initial stages you were going to limit the public/private partnership to 3% of the value of the investment, is that including the private sector and the public sector combined or just the private sector? Just make a note of that. First of all, Minister, I don't believe, I think it's too low, because 3% of GDP is - I think GDP is about US$3 Billion?

Mr. SHAW: Around that.

Mr. SAMUDA: About US$3 Billion?

Mr. SHAW: Yes.

Mr. SAMUDA: Right. It's small money, it's small change in today's context, so I think that that threshold is too low. And I hear you say you're going up to as high as 8%, but I think that that, Minister, is far too low and you could look at revising that.

Minister, the next thing that I think is - you could probably answer for me is what are the sanctions if any, for breaches to the Fiscal Rule? What's the point of having a Rule and you don't have a sanction? And who is to be sanctioned? Is it he who holds the purse strings or is it what? Who?

Mr. DALLEY: Tell him, a yuh fi tell him.

Mr. SAMUDA: So I think you need to, in my humble opinion, Minister, deal with the sanctions.

And thirdly, and finally, the question of being able to project a budget that is realistic, you need data, you need data. And what is happening is that there's a lag between occurrence and reporting, there's a lag. In other countries, albeit more developed countries, you get it almost as it occurs; we have to wait sometimes months to get simple data that would be of assistance in guiding you on the way forward. That has to be cut out, so whatever you do set aside additional funds, whatever you do try to ensure that the data that you need to work and make appropriate decisions is available to you almost in real time, as it is in other countries that are faced with the difficulties we have.

Thank you.

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Speaker, just to - I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, but I think that whilst we are in the business of just tidying up, I think it is useful for us to raise two other points which the Minister may want to take into consideration. Because in fairness we all support the whole matter of fiscal rules, because we recognize that fiscal responsibility is our responsibility and we want to make sine that we put ourselves in a position to grow.

But one of the concerns that we have, Mr. Speaker, is the institutional capacity that exists to ensure that the rules that are put forward here today are maintained and carried through and that all the numerical aggregates that are required are managed properly and timely. And whilst mention was made of the layers of bureaucracy these Ps that were mentioned a whole series of Ps, including the Public Investment Secretariat, an acronym which I will not pronounce right now, but certainly, that would be perhaps the sort of wider management centre, that would be nerve

centre to ensure that those critical underpinnings are carried through.

Now, what is going to be the nature of the PIS and who is going to manage the PIS and what level of technical support the PIS will have because that to me is going to be the central core? Are we going to have a construct which would become like bizarre for public investment projects that will really manage that whole process and be able to report to us on the performance of all the projects that are out there and that they come through on a timely basis?

The other question, Mr. Minister, relates to the AG's Department because a lot of emphasis is going to be placed on the AG's Department and here's the Auditor General's Department, the Member from North Trelawny. (Laughs) The Auditor General's Department which now will have to be beefed up because they are going to not only now be able or be required to examine the Fiscal Policy Paper in the way that they normally do, but there is going to be some urgency to it and some timeline that they are going to have to deal with, a timeline which is missing in the measures that are put here. And I would, in fact, have loved to see that a week or so after the FPP is tabled in the House that it is presented. But, what I see there is that as soon after that is practical - my word practical - that the AG then will report back to us on the position of the FPP.

And I take it what that means, Minister, that would be after the PAAC has had an opportunity to review and then it goes. So what we are saying then is that, where there are infractions where, for example, the - what you call the 'exit clause', the 'escape clause' would trip in and that's where the AG Department would be strongest because that would be the institution which determines whether or not the escape clause that we want is going to be effective. And then they will look at the outturn and then they will come to the Parliament and propose to the Parliament on the basis of that that we Parliament vote that the ceiling should be amended whether upwards or downwards.

So it is very important because it could put you in a position where, because of the political majority or the configuration of the House, we make even a mockery and a nonsense of the whole business of those ceilings because whatever the Government in power wants it will get because of the type of majority that it has in the House.

So I believe that there is need for us also to indicate some level of whether it's two-thirds majority of Members present must agree that the ceilings can in fact be adjusted and amended in relation to the proposals made by the AG's Department.

And the last point, Mr. Speaker, relates I think to the strengthening of the Parliament's ability to review and to oversight. And this is where the PAAC, I believe, comes in and the need for us now to look at creating a stronger technical support system for the PAAC so that it can in fact do a more detailed and thorough job in reviewing and in over-sighting as is required.

What it may very well mean, Mr. Speaker, is that we may have to look at the Standing

Orders. And perhaps amend the Standing Orders to require that the PAC meets more often, so as to be able to review those PBMAs that are probably over 100. And when you add them all and you call it the MDAs, which are the ministries departments and agencies, you have over 200 of those to be reviewed. And in any fiscal year, it's going to be quite a task for any Committee without high, strong, technical support mechanisms to be able to deal with it and to deal with it effectively, so that the taxpayers of the country can be assured that there is value for money that is given, that there is transparency and that there is efficiency.

Those are the points I wanted to raise, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Roger, don't encourage no one else, man. (Laughs)

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank colleagues opposite for their contributions to the debate. Let me just emphasize at the outset something that I think everybody recognizes. You mentioned it; the Opposition spokesman on Finance mentioned it and it was raised also by the Member from St. James, East Central.

Just to say that first of all, yes, the arrangements are in place. Indeed, we expect to incur substantial expense in upgrading the Auditor General's Office more than $150 Million in upgrading. It will need a whole new skill-set - ranges of skill-sets coming to enable it to perform this function separate and apart from its usual audit function. So, yes, that will be provided for.

It is also the case, Mr. Speaker that we will be making effort in the Parliament to provide training, exposure for Parliamentarians, especially those who will learn. (Laughter)

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. MAIR: Who can, some can't.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Exactly! So that we recognize that too. What we need to - and I had said at the outset, we need to look at - and there is not provision yet, but it's something that we need to do at ensuring that there is - that the Clerk and the Clerk's support for committees to function et cetera, can be augmented or that there is a direct line of support coming from the Auditor General's...

Mr. BARTLETT: No, no, you have to do even more than that to be able to do the kind of work.

A MEMBER: Poor Clerk.

Dr. PHILLIPS: So that is something.... And it also means, Mr. Speaker, as I said, that we have to look at some of our own procedures here.

I think the Opposition spokesman summarized it. It is a work-in-progress. We don't proclaim that there is a final product that is available to us now, so I want to make that point. I want to make the point also that the ultimate sanction that will apply will not just be the sanctions in the regulations which are to come but the ultimate sanction - and this is something that we need to understand is the market; ultimate sanctions for fiscal irresponsibility... (Applause) ....is the market. And so the critical ingredient - and we have had long debates with international partners among ourselves and everyone - the ultimate requirement that is included in this legislation

is transparency, everything is out and open. If you don't maintain adequate debt to GDP ratios, or if you try to engage in double accounting, it won't be possible and the markets will punish you. You know, James Carville, I think in the Clinton White House once said, if he was to die he'd want to come back as the markets because they really get the chance to impose discipline and punishment on everyone. And so I think that's one lesson over the years that we need to learn.

But, specifically, there will be provision in regulations which are to come earlier in the next fiscal year accompanying regulations for this, which will set out some of the specific sanctions for nonperformance of specific tasks for Boards, for accountable officials. And ultimately the Parliament has a role for, if there are breaches at the level of policy and ministerial level in relation to this Legislation.

Let me say in relation to the other point that you raised that the 3% limit is a limit - we are talking about the value of the investments booked or liabilities, booked in any particular year, so it mightn't be all. Take a PPP that is being implemented over a number of years. The entire value of the project might not be booked in any single year though we agree, we agree that the limits particularly on the 3% - the limits are narrow limits but let us - we have the limit between now and 17, 2017, and let us make that work.

I think we need to accept something even as we do it. These limits are stringent limits and they are stringent limits in a sense because we collectively, we still need to earn credibility with the very markets that I referred to. We have gone through many episodes not only of building debt, but shall we say disguised debt through guarantees, deferred financing, other things, but, in the end, the one thing that we have convinced everyone about is that we like to spend and given the opportunity we will spend. We have to correct that reputation at this point in time and demonstrate that there is no fiddling with the books, there is no off-budget expenditures, no disguised build-up of debt anywhere.

I will raise in relation to the question you raised about debt which debt measure. When we quote the debt of 145 plus percent to GDP of 2013, start of the last, it includes PetroCaribé debt, and when we say that we are down at the end of this fiscal year to 139 debt to GDP it includes the PetroCaribé debt. (Applause) When it goes up it includes it. When it goes down it includes it. I want to....

Mr. SHAW: We are using that now.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Well, we still do our calculations but I think that the public don't need to be confused. I mean, we think technically there is a case because, as you know, there is the PetroCaribé Fund makes provision for the repayment, it sets aside the resources so that they are provided for. But, look, you know, it doesn't make sense - we are not the financial capital of the world and the world ask the question always, what is going to happen to this? So, let's just take the measures here.

Now I want to make two more points in closing. First relates to the fact I think there is some - the Member raised the issue of the Public Sector Investment Management

System. There is no massive bureaucracy that is being created. It really relates to a set of procedures. For example, what you have provided for is a set of procedures and stages through which an investment proposal has to pass. There will be a Public Investment Secretariat, which will be a small unit of highly skilled technicians in the Ministry of Finance. There is a governance framework. We are going to be, including after all the stages have been passed through a Public Sector Investment Programme which will have project lined up over a three year rolling cycle. So that, to use the example that you gave and you gave it as an example of a deficiency, which I agree with, about funds not spent. But oftentimes that result from plans not properly made. Anybody can spend any amount of money if you walk out on the street and decide to spend it. But can you properly spend it? Can you spend it in a way that gets value for the taxpayer for the money? Now that's an entirely different matter.

What this is intended to do is to ensure that we are not just spending it willy nilly and after you have spent hundreds of millions, indeed, billions of dollars when you look and say what have we got for it, we can't answer satisfactorily. That is what we are trying to avoid.

Mr. SAMUDA: Access to data.

Dr. PHILLIPS: The access to data, yes, I think there are improvements. I think we do pretty well generally speaking. We have a month lag on the inflation numbers that come out. We have real-time on your tax numbers and your expenditure numbers which are on the website of the Ministry. What we don't have in some of the calculations, your employment numbers could be better calibrated and some of your production numbers can be better. But we have a lag now of three months and it can be improved. I accept that we can do that. So, yes, we can do that and I will go beyond that. But there is the question - I would love to see much more data, much more sector- specific data, much more of a micro- economic model in specific sectors.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Samuda)

Dr. PHILLIPS: I am certain that you have had the experience of really not having adequate knowledge of the impact of policy measures on specific sectors, because you really haven't modeled the operational arrangements and business plan operations of specific sectors.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Samuda)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Not all sectors are the same.

I want to make one final point. I accept, I accept, the Government accepts that ideally the legislative procedures should perhaps permit more time. We have in some instances, for example, with the Omnibus Banking Act, negotiated successfully, an extension of the period so that it will be laid in the House but it doesn't have to be passed as per the original schedule by March 31.

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: And Insolvency.

Dr. PHILLIPS: And for Insolvency which went to Committee. In this instance there is a - we need to pass this by March 31st. We are under pressure for time. But one of the

reasons we are under pressure for time is of our own making because truthfully this represents the area where we have been most egregious in our failings, in other words, running up the debt. But there is at least a fail/safe mechanism. There is transitional period. Not all the provisions come in place immediately. In fact, the guidelines such as some of which we've mentioned really don't come in place until after 2017. So we will have an opportunity collectively to be able to make some adjustments as we go along.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Bartlett)

Dr. PHILLIPS: And so what I think we need to do is to deal with this legislation and we will be putting in place subsequent measures, regulations. We will be putting in place some of the operational procedures to strengthen the Auditor General's Office. We will be putting in place procedures to strengthen the Parliament and its operations. We have to make some of these adjustments. So we will have time.

But one of the things, and I am certain every Ministry can point to it, bits of legislation that we have committed to passing sometimes five, six, seven, eight, up to ten years ago and we haven't brought it to the Parliament.

Mr. CLARKE: Twenty.

Dr. PHILLIPS: What is the case now, this is of such importance that no one was prepared to take a promise that, yes, at some point we will do it. And when we correct our record in this regard - and when we correct our debt realities we won't have anyone from anywhere, multilateral organizations or anywhere else being able to take advantage of our indebtedness.

Mr. BARTLETT: You need to deal with the exchange rate.

Dr. PHILLIPS: That is the commitment which we need to make to ourselves inside here.

Mr. Speaker, I move for second reading of the Bills. (Applause)

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Bills be read a second time.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Bill entitled:

AN ACT to Amend the Financial Administration and Audit Act

read a second time.

Bill Entitled:

AN ACT to Amend the Public Bodies Management and Accountability Act

read a second time.

The SPEAKER: The House will now resolve itself in a committee of the whole House to consider the Bills clause by clause.

COMMITTEE STAGE

Dr. PHILLIPS: We have amendments. Which one are we going to deal with first, Mr. Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN: The Financial Administration and Audit Act.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Both have similar amendments. You are doing the Financial Administration and Audit Act.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Dr. PHILLIPS: I have an amendment to the Schedule which has been circulated

paragraph 1(a) of the proposed amendments to Section 48A(1) which has the definitions, Including local authority. They have been circulated.

The CHAIRMAN: Well, when we get to the Schedule - we will put the amendments first.

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Chairman, I am looking at these amendments, particularly I notice that the whole business of determining what they called the 'national and the supernational' are now taken care of by way of the KSAC and other such bodies being brought into the whole entity for control and management. The one thing I wanted to find out if there was any need for amendment to the Municipality Act or the Parish Council Act to allow this to happen or we can just make the changes here in relation to the...

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, the advice is that it doesn't require any amendment. It just speaks to the fact that it is providing a definition for our local authority which relates both to KSAC and to Parish Councils and to Municipal Council, of which there is one, which is the Portmore.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, this document on the long sheet, the short sheet has some typo errors. We won't go through those typographical errors. The Clerk will take care of that, so we will just deal with the amendments.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: So for the Financial Administration and Audit Act, that's the one we are going to take?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: I put Clause 1.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put Clause 2.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

We have a number of amendments to the Schedule.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Yes. Well, it's one sheet but there are more than one.

The CHAIRMAN: More than one amendments.

Dr. PHILLIPS: So put the amendments.

The CHAIRMAN: I put the first amendment.

Put to the Committee and agreed.

Mr. SHAW: That would be (a).

The CHAIRMAN: (a) and then (b) public debt.

I put the second amendment.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: (c) public investment.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: (d) public/private partnership.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

The Schedule as amended put and agreed to.

The Title and Enacting Clause put and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that I do report the Bill as having passed Committee Stage with four amendments.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

Dr. PHILLIPS: We can go now, Mr. Speaker, to the Public Bodies Management and Accountability Act and there is a similar set of amendments to Clause 2.

The CHAIRMAN: Okay, I put Clause one.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put Clause 2 .

Dr. PHILLIPS: Well, the amendments. We have amendments to Clause 2.

The CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Amendments to Clause 2.

The CHAIRMAN: I put the first amendment to Clause 2.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put the second amendment.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: The Third Amendment, Public Entity.

I put the Third Amendment.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

Public-Private Partnerships, I put the Fourth amendment.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put Clause 2 as amended.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

Clauses 3, 4, and 5, put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put the Title and the Enacting Clause.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that I do report the Bill as having passed Committee Stage with four (4) amendments.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

RESUMPTION

The SPEAKER: The Bill entitled: AN ACT to Amend the Public Bodies Management and Accountability Act passed with four (4) amendments.

(Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

The SPEAKER: I do report that the Bill: AN ACT to Amend the Financial Administration and Audit Act, passed with four (4) amendments.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bills be read a third time.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Bill be read a third time.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Bill entitled:

AN ACT to Amend the Financial Administration and Audit Act,

read a third time and passed.

Bill entitled:

AN ACT to Amend the Public Bodies Management and Accountability Act,

read a third time and passed.

(Applause)

Mrs. NIETA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, it is not intended to do any further business this evening...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, there is to be one contribution, prior to the closing, of the Food and Nutrition Policy. The Member from East Portland...

The SPEAKER: You may proceed.

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. BLOOMFIELD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, it is imperative that we focus on the matter at hand, for today has emphasized, based on the words of the Minister of Finance, the complexities of Finance, but also this policy of Food and Nutrition Security Policy is important. And so, I rise to make a short contribution because this policy goes to the heart of what our country is all about as we seek to effect change, not only generally, for the nation, but also for our constituencies, and for ourselves as Members of Parliament who must implement this policy.

The long course of history tells us that food and agriculture has been the mainstay in terms of the development of civilization, from primitive society upon to this point of the technological advances, and certainly as we go forward into this post modem era.

Despite this progress, Mr. Speaker, we are still dependent upon food, and if we do not adopt this policy and implement it, it certainly will and… and retard our development as it implies that we ought to modify our lifestyles, or else we are going to reap, indeed, what we sow or indeed, reap what we do not sow.

The policy is appropriate amidst the demands for food production, amidst price increases, amidst the threat to food security, amidst the realities of our financial situation, our crises and amidst the vulnerabilities of climate change, such as carbon emission, the global warming and the disastrous hurricanes that we are so subject to from time to time, makes it indispensable prerequisite to our sustained orderly development. So we dare not just debate the policy but advocate very strongly that having laid it on the Table of the House, that we each take ownership of it and make strong attempts to implement this policy.

We have a good opportunity, not only to use this as a very highly descriptive and indeed, prescriptive policy, but to move it to become an active and a progressive, and a very transformative policy. At every level, it begs us to consider the very basic pillars of this policy which are: availability of food and nutrition, the accessibility of food, the utilization of food, and the stability of the supplies; indeed, important elements as we are constantly being shocked by the changes that affect food and nutrition.

Mr. Speaker, it is not time to split hairs or to live on the precept of this policy, but rather, for all of us to look at it as a complex, but very timely intervention. As the Prime Minister has spoken about rural development, I posit that we cannot develop and motivate, and encourage, and indeed, galvanize our young people at this time of special dispensation if we do not consider this policy as being vital, because it is predicated upon production.

We, as a nation, have basically failed over the last 50 years, to feed ourselves, and the time is now when this policy is in front of us for us to be able to do so.

If I may mention very quickly, Portland, for example, there has been a great decline in banana, dasheen, coffee, and so on, for many decades. The tremendous effect of the European Union and World Trade Organization, and their decisions over a few

years, have impacted us, and things are now going to become worse now by the merging of Fyffes and Chiquita, in terms of banana production and the chance of export.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Dr. BLOOMFIELD: It is not true that only four farmers are here in Parliament. There are many of us who have spent time creating employment...

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

(Applause)

Dr. BLOOMFIELD: ...who have created in producing pepper, honey, and we could go on. And it is not fair that we should even try to drive into the future by looking into the rearview mirror, for the truth of the matter is that we cannot uproot the University of the West Indies nor of Technology, nor can we bulldoze down New Kingston, in order for us to provide and to produce adequate food. It takes now, a broad participation by all of us.

And so, it is the Ministry of Agriculture's lead and its work that is cut out for it, to be of great urgency in inciting all of us to join in this battle. Broad participation is necessary if we are going to achieve some of these so called Millennium goals that we have set ourselves to. All the ministries, departments and agencies, the MDAs, all the ministries that can act in a joined-up way: Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security; indeed, the Ministry Industry and Commerce, Tourism, and of course, Land, Water, Environment and Climate Change, as we all work together in trying to ensure that we, not only create the idea, as Norman Washington Manley had said, but that we have a fixity of purpose in being able to, not only eat what we grow, and grow what we eat...

Mr. SAMUDA: What you know about Norman Manley?

Dr. BLOOMFIELD: ...but also that we should eat what we should grow and grow what we should eat.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes.

(Applause)

Mr. SAMUDA: Norman Manley never said that; Norman Manley never said that once.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. BLOOMFIELD: In terms of accessibility... because we know the challenges about food being available, but accessibility must be a reality.

And, Mr. Speaker, we need to focus on working from the womb to the tomb on this one. How do we put in practice... how does the policy put in practice, as we speak to the delivery of optimum food and nutrition to our citizenry? Will there be a prescriptive part of the policy for the unborn child as we deal with antenatal care and as we deal with the vulnerable pregnant teenagers, as we deal with the pregnant financially challenged? What about the lactating mothers who must use whole milk; who must deal with the formulas, whether they have DRA or ARA, or other elements that are important... that are important for the development of the brain, for the development of the eyes, and for the ability to learn later on in life? We are certainly reaping, probably some of the

consequences of not taking care of our antenatal mothers, our lactating mothers, and so on.

It is important also, that we look to the adolescents who are undernourished as they go to school day by day, who cannot concentrate, who are fainting in class. We are the ones who see them on a regular basis, and we are intimate with that. Those who are over-nourished, who are now becoming obese...

Mr. MAIR: Not over-nourished, they are overfed.

Dr. BLOOMFIELD: ...and so, lead to the non-communicable diseases such as, hypertension and diabetes, as the Ministry of Education confronts meals in schools; in our adults who are overly obese because of the lack of an understanding of what good nutrition is all about; in our State care institutions, such as our schools, our hospitals, our infirmaries, our elder care institutions. This policy must guide how food safety, and so on, takes place in these institutions. The consumer safeguards that will protect us, and the Minister, I am sure, will speak to praedial larceny as an important part of how we are going to go forward to manage our food security as it is.

Our elderly, for example, who the policy must speak to in a practical way, those who are in the institutions, who we must now decide how our food is going to be tailored to suit that large and expanding part of our population; the mere simple fact that elderly people do not have a big appetite, that they produce saliva in much smaller quantity and therefore, when you begin in our institutions to feed the elderly with dry foodstuff, like bread, you go back four/six hours later and it is stuck to their palates because they do not simply, produce saliva, and we are not taking these things into consideration; the fact that half of our elderly are constipated, and it impacts on their appetites; the fact that most of them have no teeth, some basic, simple, elder care issues that this policy should impact on. (Applause)

There is one area of food that many of us do not necessarily take as part of our nutrition and that is the concept of water - vital to the policy in the midst of our national water crisis, even as we speak. This must be engaged as part of the policy, going forward, in how we construct the National Water Policy, how we conduct our water resource management and information systems, the various water usages, for example, in rain-fed agriculture, or irrigation agriculture, and look at the problems we discovered recently, based on the lack thereof. What about the economics of water?

Many years ago we exported one bottle of water but we imported ten bottles of water, and I suspect we are still doing this even at this time.

The environment. What about the mitigation strategies that we are using right now. Jamaica has the best tasting water in the Caribbean and yet our agencies are not manufacturing and distributing water at that level which will produce a cultural change in how we view potable water and how drink water as a part of health seeking behaviours. And so it is important that we all try to impact on this use of water in vast quantities that are

affordable, that are available and that is easy for us to distribute to all Jamaicans to prevent water and food borne diseases and many other benefits.

I will close by making a quick statement about Portland: 6,500 farmers have registered with RADA and out of that number less than 1,500 are women and I know that you will be surprised that 130 of the 6,500 are below thirty years old. And that speaks to the need to urgently get our young people motivated and engaged in the process of production in terms of their psyche, in terms of their sense of self, in terms of pushing this country forward, in terms of food substitution, in terms of export in those areas which are going to be necessary for this country to break the back of this financial crisis-for crisis it is indeed. If we do not mobilize our young people towards land occupation and utilization, towards the technical competencies that are there through RADA and other resources to make loans and other facilities that will encourage the participation in our own food production in developing strategies to small businesses, agro-businesses, target as we call them cottage industries so that we can now begin to be really independent as nation.

Mr. Speaker, a crisis is a terrible thing to waste. We must all sooner or later sit down to the consequences that we have created for ourselves and what a banquet we will sit down to if we do not adopt this policy, if we do not implement it, if we do not have educational and national awareness campaigns towards production and food management then we are going to be forever tabling policies and leaving it just there. Joined-up government is what it will take.

Mr. Speaker, the future is where we will spend the very rest of our lives. We dare not fail our country. We dare not fail our youth. For every promise there is a price that we all must pay and it is time that we focus especially on a policy like this. Read it, study it and begin to implement it in our own constituencies. Let us get involved. It is doing our best at this present time, at this present moment that will put us in the best place for the next moment. So when we do well we are setting ourselves up to do well again and setting ourselves up to do even better. I look forward enthusiastically to the Minister leading the charge through this policy to implementing and putting the policy in practice so that all of us will become beneficiaries and leave a legacy for our children. I wholly commend this policy to all of us.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

MEMBERS: Well done.

Mr. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all my colleagues who have participated in this Debate. I want to particularly thank my colleague Ministers of Health and Education who comprehensively dealt with those aspects of the policy dealing with nutrition as it relates to the nation's health and the school feeding programmes buttressed significantly by the contribution made by the Member from East Portland. (Applause) This has been a lesson in nutrition and as an agriculturalist my job is to provide the food. I want to thank also the

Member from West Central St. Catherine for his incisive comments and for placing the debate within the context of worldwide trends in population growth, urbanization, the result and pressure on our natural resources to feed a burgeoning population and hence the need for the policy to be placed in a sustainable developmental framework.

I feel constrained, Mr. Speaker, to respond to some of the specific issues raised by Opposition Members from North West St. Elizabeth and North Central St. Andrew and also North Central Clarendon. Let me say first that the Opposition needs to agree among themselves whether we are going to support the continued and indiscriminate conversion of agricultural lands to commercial/residential use or whether we should abandon the agricultural development as the Member from North Central St. Andrew is suggesting and support only industrial development. His colleague from West Central St. Catherine is quite correct in identifying urbanization and the rapid wholesale conversion of agricultural lands for other uses as a clear and present danger to any nation's food security, particularly a small island developing state like Jamaica. In fact, urbanization itself should provide the greatest impetus to developing agricultural production and productivity. I don't know, for instance, how the Member proposes that we're going to orientate agriculture to support tourism if at the same time we're going to give up prime agricultural land for industrial development. (Applause)

Additionally, if we are to move agriculture from its purely subsistent level, as characterized by the Member from North Central St. Andrew, to a commercial endeavour as he advocates we will need to preserve more of our prime flat, arable lands which the Member wants to be bulldozed to put into industrial development and manufacturing.

(Cross talk)

Does the Member from North Central St. Andrew know, for instance, as a former Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce and an acclaimed farmer that the vast proportion of manufacturing activities in Jamaica today, based on agro-processing, that is the major aspect of manufacturing in Jamaica today. You bemoaned the decline of the dairy sector from over 40,000 to 5,000 heads of cattle. How are we going build that dairy sector if we're taking over all of those lands and putting them into factories and housing as you suggest? Juxtapose what you have said against what the Member from West Central St. Catherine said and you know when you got you said, "Oh, I am a farmer". Well, listening to you and listening to the West Central MP who didn't proclaim himself to be a farmer, I left with the feeling that the real farmer was the Member from West Central St. Catherine.

(Cross talk)

We have been taking a planned approach to agricultural development for instance, Mr. Speaker, in all of our agro-parks crop selection and production are dictated by soil capabilities studies undertaken by the Ministry. When you say that all the southern Plains - Amity Hall to be exact, is pure

limestone I must disabuse your mind and say that it is not so.

Government MEMBER: Rubbish!

(Cross talk)

Mr. CLARKE: And the south - if you were to look on the - if travelling on the highway now starting from Bernard Lodge and going all along the highway, all along the highway on your left...

Mr. SAMUDA: Is that the housing project?

Mr. CLARKE: ...just look, Mr. Speaker...

Miss NEITA HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. CLARKE: ...and see the level of agricultural production that is taking place there.

(Applause) (Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, we are in the process of developing all those linkages and when you speak about tourism...

Mr. SAMUDA: But sugar is down.

Mr. CLARKE: ...Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, when one looks at the linkages between tourism, agriculture, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and I tell you we are doing a tremendous job. Joined-up Government is at work (Applause)...

Government MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CLARKE: ...dealing the movement of agricultural production...

Mr. SHAW: The Government of slogans.

Mr. CLARKE: ...to satisfy tourism demand...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Shaw)

Mr. CLARKE: ...and for agro-processing.

Mr. PRYCE: Game-changer.

Mr. CLARKE: When I listened to the Opposition Spokesman on Agriculture I was somewhat taken aback also.

Mr. SHAW: You set yuh eye on JC now?

Mr. CLARKE: No, I'm just repeating what he said.

(Cross talk)

He spoke about...

Mr. SHAW: JC is not here, you know.

Mr. CLARKE: But he can understand and he will listen. He spoke about no agro-parks. Mr. Speaker, I on Sunday started in Southern St. Elizabeth...

Mr. PARCHMENT: Yes, good place.

Mr. CLARKE: ...I came through agro-park in your constituency and in your constituency. I would invite all Members of Parliament to have a look at that agro-park where we just put irrigation systems in a year and a half ago; the level of production is overwhelming. (Applause) I stopped at Ebony Park...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Samuda)

Mr. CLARKE: Five years ago there was nothing there. Stopped at Ebony Park and Mr. Speaker you would be very pleased. The Spring Plain that used to be is now back on track.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. CLARKE: Yes, Spring Plain, Spring Plain. (Applause) and then I stopped at Amity Hall and there, Mr. Speaker, back on track. Let's visit, let's come on a Sunday afternoon when you probably having your Sunday dinner those are the times when I drive around.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Samuda)

Mr. CLARKE: 1,200 acres of land in production in those agro-parks (Applause) even the Plantain Garden [River] which had the big problem about onions. We're talking about an operation of 40 acres within an operation of 3,000 acres and it was made out to be, oh, that is what an agro-park is.

Mr. SHAW: You plant back the onion yet?

Mr. CLARKE: Onions being planted. Go to Yallahs - and if you go into Coronation Market now you will see onions coming out of the Yallahs project where we just put in irrigation.

When the Member from North Central...

Mr. SAMUDA: Where you selling that? Subsistence farmers.

Mr. CLARKE: Coronation Market, all over the country.

What is subsistence? What is the meaning of the word subsistence? It means that the farmers producing. That is what gives them sustenance and allows them to subsist. In the absence of the subsistence farmers you are talking about, what would happen? The same small farmers them we talking about and call them subsistence farmers, those are the farmers who provide all the yam, the cocoa, the dasheen, the baddoe.

Mr. SAMUDA: Nobody is criticizing that. Pushing a little kechie-shubbie.

Mr. DALLEY: At least you never push none.

(Heckling) (The Speaker gavels)

Mr. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SHAW: Roger, how you one have three pens in your pocket?

Mr. CLARKE: Because I love to write. I write very well. There is hardly any Member in here can write better than me, so I use one - I just write. (Laughter)

Mr. SHAW: Is green pen dat? Gi me one!

Mr. CLARKE: Good writing. Writing was a subject when I was going school.

(*Sotto voce* comments/Laughter)

Mr. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, and it was a long time ago. I left school in 1957, 57 years ago, and I am still bright.

(Applause/Laughter)

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the Opposition Spokesman on Agriculture spoke about putting agro-processing plant in every one of the agro parks. The number of agro-processing facilities in Jamaica today that are performing below capacity - so we don't have to put up an agro-processing plant in every place. We have to produce in these agro-parks to satisfy those processing facilities, and that is what we are about.

Mr. SAMUDA: You are not keeping up to the level of subsistence.

Mr. DALLEY: It just start.

Mr. CLARKE: It just start.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, I am going to share something with this...

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. CLARKE: I am going to share something with this Honourable House.

Mr. Speaker, you know that in terms of the volume of importation into this country,

between 1998 and now, in terms of the volume it has not increased. What has increased is the price, the price, the price, the price.

Mr. BARTLETT: And the people suffering. Poor people can't...

Mr. CLARKE: So it's not about importation going through the roof, the volume has almost remained constant.

Mr. SHAW: The exchange rate going through the roof!

Mr. CLARKE: And I am speaking in US-dollar term, right. So the farmers of this country have been producing, because the volume that we have been importing has remained constant. What is happening is that the price of the importation with certain things moved up significantly, things like animal feed and those things, but the farmers have been producing.

Mr. Speaker, after Hurricane Sandy - and you know, they say, oh - I heard the Member say, oh, we are not - I don't know where the Minister gets his figures from. I don't know of any way of reporting or getting reported figures about what is produced otherwise from the area where I get it.

Mr. DALLEY: You are not picking up your own numbers either.

Mr. CLARKE: I don't mek up my own numbers. I don't call Extension Officers and tell them one percentage increase I want. They tell me.

But, Mr. Speaker, just in practical terms, we had Hurricane Sandy at the end of 2012, there was no banana after that. Go on every corner in Jamaica today, bananas left, right and centre. That is something. (Applause)

Ginger production this year, Mr. Speaker, is the highest production in 20 years. (Applause)

Irish potato, Mr. Speaker...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Samuda)

Mr. CLARKE: Irish potato - and the Member from North East Manchester will bear me out - I went to visit him - I went to spend an evening with him, and behind his house he said, come, Minister, come look at Irish potato. (Applause) He said, never in my life, Minister, have I ever planted so much Irish potato.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CLARKE: I sat on his verandah, we had a drink...

A MEMBER: And eat Irish potato.

Mr. CLARKE: ...and he said to me, you know what, don't leave until you come and look again. Irish potato.

Mr. SHAW: What about the Lychee me show you? (Laughter)

Mr. CLARKE: Oh, God Almighty! Lychee! (Laughter) Production! Production! Production!

(Heckling)

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that this programme...

Mr. DALLEY: You must stop eat de food and export it, Audley!

Mr. CLARKE: ...this food security programme that we are trying to put in place, the time has come for it now. We have to strive to feed ourselves to the maximum.

And if you look through the Policy, what is it saying? We want to see how many of our people can get nutritious, reasonably-priced foods so that our people can be nourished, so that our children can be able to learn.

And I commend the Member from - my Opposition spokesperson, he is doing something, and it is commendable. We must move with that. Because what it is saying, the School Feeding Programme on which we have engaged is to make our young people begin to appreciate the quality of the Jamaican food. It is more nutritious - and bright, they will be bright like Uncle Roger. (Laughter)

So, Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to work with all of us. Because indeed, what are we about?

Dr. CHANG: Cassava... (Inaudible)

Mr. CLARKE: Don't even talk about that. What is happening is almost revolutionary. The beer people into cassava. We hear now that we want cassava for making bread - beer and bread, cassava flour, the University is about this.

Mr. MAIR: When you were sitting over here you heckled Dr. Tufton!

Mr. CLARKE: Because he told people to plant cassava, and that was the end of it. They had cassava in the ground for four years, for four years and couldn't reap! (Applause) We are saying now, go plant, because there is market for it! (Applause) That is what we are saying.

And he did not discover cassava. (Laughter) He wasn't a Carib or an Arawak! Cassava was there from Jesus was a little boy. (Laughter) So no big thing about cassava!

Mr. SHAW: What about hemp?

Mr. CLARKE: Hemp? We going grow dat, too... (Applause) ...because it has its uses. Right now as we speak, the Speaker in his constituency...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CLARKE: ...in his constituency - you know what we launched there now, caster beans. We just get from Canada - you remember aloe vera? Somebody wants 200 acres of aloe vera and we are going to be planting it.

Mr. SHAW: So if you did allow Eddie Seaga to plant it...

Mr. CLARKE: Mr. Seaga said yes, but we have the market now.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CLARKE: So, Mr. Speaker, this is the time and this is the moment, we have to seize it. And I believe that if we were able to put this policy in place, backed up by all the plans and programmes, we would have been well on our way.

The Member is talking about sugar, the flowers, and the trees and the bees, all of that.

Mr. BARTLETT: Birds.

Mr. CLARKE: The flowers and the birds and the bees.

Let me say, you are engaged significantly in apiary culture, and you have put some resources there. Keep on doing it. Keep on doing what you are doing.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for this Parliament to approve the Food and Nutrition Policy that we will finally bring to the House to put into law to deal with the Food and Nutritional Policy of Jamaica.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Those in favour?

Put to the House and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, it is really not intended to do any further business today. I therefore ask for the adjournment of the House, to resume next Tuesday, March 25, at 2:00 p.m.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the House do adjourn until next Tuesday the 25th of March, at 2:00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The House stands adjourned.

The Honourable House of Representatives was adjourned at approximately 7:21 p.m. to resume on Tuesday, March 25, 2014, at 2:00 p.m.

TUESDAY, March 25, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:25 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

MR. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House.

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing

REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, Attorney General, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central

DR. KENNETH LEIGH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, West Central

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern

MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central

HON. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern

MR. LESTER MICHAEL HENRY, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, Central

MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition

MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western

MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern

MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP), St. Thomas, Western

MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central

MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. KEITH ANTHONY WALFORD, (PNP), St. Ann, South Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. Mikael Phillips

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

The SPEAKER: Before we get down to today's business let us welcome some students and their teachers from Montego Bay High School - 30 girls; and King's Way High School. (Applause)

I hope they find today's sitting interesting.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Minister for Transport, Works and Housing will make a Statement.

The SPEAKER: Minister Davies.

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker, in keeping with the GOJ's policy to expand and modernize the International Airports, the Government through the Airport's Authority of Jamaica embarked on a programme of public/private partnerships. This programme commenced with the Sangster International Airport in April 2003, when the private operator, MBJ Airports Limited, took over the operations of the Airport from the Airport Authority of Jamaica. Since then, the new operators embarked on a drive to distinguish the facility as a centre of excellence in Jamaica. Sangster International was chosen as the first airport candidate because it is the premier tourism gateway into the country. It was in urgent need of being upgraded and expanded, and in fact, the Airport's Authority had prepared a plan master and a defined capital development programme, the implementation of which was made a mandatory requirement under the concession agreement.

I'm pleased to note that the three phase capital development programme was satisfactorily completed in 2009, at a total cost of approximately US$120 Million. Other capital improvements were undertaken which together with related costs and payments amounted to another US$60 Million.

In 2012 I gave approval for the Montego Bay concessionaire to acquire a loan for the overlay of the runway at the Sangster International Airport. This work was completed in the last quarter of 2013, at a cost of US$23 Million. This project was well needed by air carriers and was efficiently executed mainly at nights, causing minimal disruption to airport operations.

Mr. Speaker, discussions are well advanced between the Airport's Authority and MBJ for a project to extend the runway by 408 metres. This will enable flights from more distant tourism markets to operate safely and conveniently from Sangster International. Mr. Speaker, while the capital expenditure is good, in the final analysis it is in customer service that a successful airport earns its stripes with the consumer.

In 2009, MBJ Airports Limited enrolled in the Airport's Service Quality Programme that is run by the representatives' industry body of the world's airports, the Airports Council International - ACI. Based on passenger satisfaction surveys, the Programme encourages airports to plan improvements and to benchmark their customer services against their own performance as well as against that of 285 other airports around the world.

The ASQ Programme interviews a minimum of 1,400 passengers *per annum* at each participating airport and randomly conducts audits to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the data. In the early years of its participation, Sangster International faced challenges with regard to a lack of adequate facilities, restrooms in particular, and inadequacies in the ambience of the facility. Levels of courtesy at the Airport were also found wanting and there were problems with waiting time. The operator was expected to achieve both passenger satisfaction levels and target set for baggage delivery and equipment with serviceability. Customer service training was put in place for all employees and personnel working at the Airport, including staff of government agencies. Facilities were upgraded and the Airport made more user-friendly.

Montego Bay - MBJ consistently perform well on the ratings, that is, above the minimum of 70% passenger satisfaction, and has been ranked in the top five airports in Latin America Caribbean region by airport category size or region in five of the past six years, 2008 to 2013. (Applause) That on its own is an amazing achievement, Mr. Speaker, but we've just been informed that Sangster International Airport will be added to the role of excellence in 2014. Started in 2011, the role of excellence was created to recognize those airports which in the opinion of the passengers in the Airport Service Quality survey would've consistently delivered excellent services. There've only been 21 airports awarded this distinction to date, and SIA is one of only six airports worldwide that will receive this recognition this year, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

(MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear. That's right.

(MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker, entered and took his seat.)

Dr. DAVIES: These developments are taking place in tandem with other initiatives designed to ease and simplify processes that affect users of our airports. Already the process for outgoing passengers has been improved and changes are in development for the processing of incoming passengers. The Government regards the SIA public/private partnership as a successful example of engagement of private capital and expertise in managing a public asset to the mutual benefit of the parties involved. Against that background, the Government is proceeding with the public/private partnership programme for Norman Manley International Airport and we expect to issue request for proposals to prospective local and international bidders later this year.

Mr. Speaker, as you may be aware, notwithstanding the general airport private/public partnership policy, the Government had approved the plan for the Airports Authority to embark on a significant capital development programme in keeping with the Airport's 2004 master plan. To date Phase 1A which involves the building of new departure building and other significant upgrading works was practically completed and commissioned into service in 2008 at a cost of approximately $120 Million.

Mr. Speaker, Phase IB is in progress, however, the major plan projects under the master plan, including the extension of the runway, will be scheduled under the Norman Manley PPP Capital Works.

I should end, Mr. Speaker, by noting that Norman Manley International Airport has been enrolled in the Airport Service Quality Programme since 2011. This is to complement the enrolment of Sangster's. I'm confident that I'll be able to report similarly excellent performance by Norman Manley in the near future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

(HON. ROGER HAROLD CLIFFORD CLARKE, (PNP), Westmoreland, Central, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, entered and took his seat.)

(Inaudible comments)

(HON. NOEL GEORGE DELANO ARSCOTT, (PNP), Clarendon, South Western, Minister of Local Government and Community Development, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. RICHARD ANTONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. NATALIE GAYE NEITA-HEADLEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sports and Deputy Leader of the House, entered and took her seat.)

(The Speaker gavels)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House, a copy of the following:

- **Ministry Paper No. 27**
  Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of The Banana Board for the Year ended December 2012
- **Ministry Paper No. 28**
  Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of The Jamaica Agricultural Society for the Year 2012/2013
- **Ministry Papers Nos. 29-32**
  Cabinet Agenda Issues dated: 20th January 2014; 10th February; 17th February and 24th February 2014.
- **Ministry Paper No. 33**
  Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of The National Housing Trust for the period April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013
- **Ministry Paper No. 34**
  Eighth Replenishment of the Special Development Fund of the Caribbean Development Bank
- The Ministry of Finance and Planning's Third Quarterly Review of The Extended Fund Facility with IMF
- Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment's Document entitled: Proposed Strategies Towards the Development of a Craft Policy.

(HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, entered and took her seat.)

(HON. ARNALDO ALPHANSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign entered and took his seat.)

(MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, Eastern, entered and took her seat.)

(HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. HUGH CARL BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Western, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I beg to recommit item, Announcements.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the recommittal of item, Announcements.

Put to the House and agreed to.

ANNOUNCEMENTS
(Recommittal)

The Bauxite (Production Levy) Act Capital Development Fund (Withdrawal) (Number 3) Order, 2014.

BILLS BROUGHT FROM THE SENATE

The following is a message from the President of the Senate:

To the Honourable House of Representatives:

"I have the honour to advise the Honourable House of Representatives that on the 21st day of March 2014, a Bill entitled:

AN ACT to Amend the Public Bodies Management and Accountability Act; and,

AN ACT to Amend the Financial Administration and Audit Act,

were passed in the Senate with seven (7), and two (2) amendments respectively for which the Honourable Senate desires the concurrence of this Honourable House, and the amendments have been circulated."

Signed: Floyd E. Morris,
President of the Senate.

The SPEAKER: Minister.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I now move that the Senate amendments to the two mentioned Bills be now considered and approved. I think they are straightforward, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: If there are no objections, then...

Put to the House and agreed to.

(HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing entered and took his seat.)

(HON. DERRICK FLAVIUS KELLIER, (PNP), St. James, Southern, Minister of Labour and Social Security entered and took his seat.)

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Health, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House, I will move to introduce and have read a first time, a Bill shortly entitled: The Quarantine (Validation and Indemnification) Act, 2014.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House, I will move: The Bauxite (Production Levy) Act Capital Development Fund (Withdrawal) (Number 3) Order, 2014, Resolution be taken.

Be it Resolved that the Capital Development Fund (Withdrawal) (Number 3) Order, 2014, under the

Bauxite (Production Levy) Act, which was laid on the Table of the House on March 25, 2014, be approved.

Mr. Speaker, I further beg to give notice that at a later stage today I will move the Suspension of the Standing Order to enable me to take this Motion.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we will commence Public Business with the Minister of Finance moving Government Business Item No. 4 on the Order Paper.

The SPEAKER: Minister Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, this relates to the Withdrawal Order (Number 3) - (Number 2), which remains on the Order Paper for the JRC, will be considered in April - some point...

But, Mr. Speaker, this matter relates to the settlement of Jamaica Bauxite Mining Limited, alumina supplier obligations to Glencore. And it involves - the sum of US$6 Million is now being requested to pay the first - Mr. Speaker, I seek suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take this Resolution at this point, as I had indicated I would do before.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the suspension of Standing Orders to allow the Minister to take the motion, notice of which was given earlier.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Minister.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, this relates to the settlement of Jamaica Bauxite Mining Limited alumina supply obligations to Glencore. And what we seek is the sum of $6 Million to pay the first and second installments of quarterly payments due to Glencore in the 2014/2015 financial year. The balance of US$23.6 Million is to be provided in equal quarterly payments with interest at eight per cent *per annum* up to the 2016/2017 financial year.

Mr. Speaker, it is well known that Jamaica Bauxite Mining entered into alumina supply arrangements in 2002 with Glencore to facilitate the borrowing of some US$65 Million. Subsequently, Mr. Speaker, in 2008, in the context of the slowdown in the global economy, and the closure of RUSAL's operations, JBM experienced severe difficulty in meeting the obligations under the alumina supply contracts, and failed to supply some 255,000 tons of alumina to Glencore. By December 2012, when the supply contract ended, Jamaica Bauxite Mines debt to Glencore was some US$33 Million.

On the basis of an agreement arrived at in 2013, the Government agreed to pay Glencore the aggregate sum of $33.8 Million owed by Jamaica Bauxite Mines, together with the accrued and unpaid interest thereon, at the rate of eight per cent *per annum*. The terms agreed were specified in a Commitment Letter of June 2013, and the commitments finalized in January 2014.

The terms involved, first of all, that the Jamaica Bauxite Mines would make an initial payment of $4 Million to Glencore by November 30th 2013. This obligation was met, Mr. Speaker. The balance of $29.8 Million

plus interest is to be paid in quarterly installments of at least US$3 Million on January 31st, April 30th, July 31st and August 31st commencing April 30th, 2014, with the final payment equaling the then outstanding balance, if less than US$3 Million.

(HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, North, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for Public Service, entered and took his seat.)

These payments are to be made from semiannual withdrawals from the Capital Development Fund, established pursuant to section 12(1) of the Bauxite (Production Levy) Act, pursuant to the Order of Parliament.

It was also agreed, Mr. Speaker, the Government will obtain approval from Parliament for the withdrawal from the CDF, no later than 30 days prior to the end of each six- month interval. The Government shall deliver to Glencore, a copy of each Order approved by the Parliament.

Should the Government or the Jamaica Bauxite Mines fail to perform or comply with any of the terms of the Commitment Letter, including if the Government fails to obtain any Order by the dates specified, the Government shall settle no later than 30 days after such failure by the then outstanding amount of the WINDALCO termination balance, by paying the then outstanding amount to Glencore in cash.

This Order, Mr. Speaker, which we seek through the House, is in fulfillment of that obligation. It is not intended that the resources will be paid now, but in the next financial year, that is to say, before April 30th before or on April 30th, 2014. But the terms of the Agreement requires that at least 30 days prior to that, the approval of the Parliament should be sought and obtained in order to fulfill this commitment.

This discharges Jamaica's obligations under the Alumina Supply Agreement and settles our outstanding debt, and indeed will facilitate, Mr. Speaker, the expansion, ultimately, of operations of JBM and its facilities with partners other than Glencore.

Mr. Speaker, in consideration of this, I move that the Withdrawal Order (Number 3) 2014, be approved.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw.

Mr. SHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the specifics of the Order itself are not controversial. It is an obligation that the Government has, and therefore, has to make good.

By far, however, the greater concern, Mr. Speaker, of the Opposition, really has to do with the future of the bauxite and alumina sector, and the ability, therefore, for us to be able to have adequate replenishment of the Capital Development Fund from the proceeds that will be due to Government.

The truth is, we are yet to hear of a definitive statement on the future of the bauxite and alumina sector in Jamaica. I am aware of a statement made by the Honourable Minister some months ago in the House.

(DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western, entered and took his seat.)

But certain events since that time, have cast some shadows of doubt as to the precise future of the bauxite and alumina sector. And I - it must be of a mutual concern in this House, Mr. Speaker, because clearly, when we speak of the prospects for economic growth, if there is no immediate place for the re-opening of the plants that have been closed, primarily Kirkvine and Alpart would be the ones of greatest concern right now, that if we are not talking about an early reopening of any of those plants, then we are really not looking at any significant growth projection in the economy. These industries are integral part of the growth trajectory of our very fragile economy.

And, the Minister of Mining made a Statement in the House, and referred it specifically to the projected reopening of Alpart. I believe Alpart, in the first place, and then at a later stage, the expectation that some time in 2016 or thereabout, we could be looking at the reopening of WINDALCO at Kirkvine. And I was wondering if the Minister could provide an update, Mr. Speaker, on that Statement that has originally been made in the House.

And I ask the question for just a couple of reasons, Mr. Speaker. Number one, it is now an absolute fact, not a speculation, that at the plant at WINDALCO - at Kirkvine, that that plant is now being scrapped, virtually on a weekly basis. Major equipment and other material at Kirkvine - Mr. Speaker, the plant is literally being gutted. And it is being gutted and shipped to, in some cases, Ewarton, to support the plant there, and in other cases it is being shipped out, reportedly, as far as Guyana in the region to support the alumina operations in those I areas.

And, on a recent television interview I observed that the Minister of Mining has publicly threatened the Russian company, RUSAL, with the revocation of its mining licences if it doesn't get up and running, in terms of its operations in Jamaica, in reasonable time, I think. I am not going to quote him exactly what he said. But he has actually publicly threatened RUSAL with the revocation of their mining licences in Jamaica.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I raise these issues because certainly, it doesn't portend well for Kirkvine - and you and I are in that parish together - and we don't know wither the future of Alpart, in these circumstances. But what we do know - the firm things that we do know are that one plant is being scrapped, and the second thing is that the Minister has threatened the company with the revocation of their mining licences.

I think in the context of our historical dependence on this industry, not just for money that comes into the budget, but certainly for the economic development contribution that is made in the country - employment and other things - that we would want the Government to take this opportunity to let us know exactly what is happening.

And at the same time, the Minister - if he is able to - it would be good to find out if the

servicing of the various obligations to Alcoa for the operation of the partnership and the ongoing obligations that are racked up, and bills that are sent to CAP, whether these obligations continue to be serviced on a timely basis. It would be good to know that as well.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let me acknowledge that the Opposition Spokesman and the Opposition presumably are supporting the Resolution, as he indicated, and we are pleased that that is so.

Let me also respond to his last point first, because I think he would not want to develop the reputation of being a "Jeremiah", so to speak, always looking at the negative potential in life. The obligations of the Government of Jamaica to Alcoa are being met, have been met, and are being met on a timely basis. And, indeed, it is because the Government has been able to enter into an agreement with noble enterprises, which are in fact, taking off product - alumina - as part of an agreement with CAP, that we have been able to meet all our obligations with Alcoa, and indeed, that plant, the JAMALCO plant is operating at capacity at this point in time.

It is also the case that the Ewarton plant is operating, and indeed, it is an energy solution which I believe has been reported to the country by the Minister, is an integral part of the Ewarton production operations and the expansion of those operations.

I would also - the Minister will, at an appropriate time during the debates at the start of the financial year, give a full update on all the other aspects of the sector that include the Alpart and the Kirkvine operation.

I would point out that RUSAL has indicated that they are in Jamaica to stay, that there are other prospects. And quite the contrary to the analysis or the implications of the analysis offered by my friend opposite, I would say that bauxite alumina has a healthy future in Jamaica, which will only get healthier as the world economy picks up and moves into a period of growth.

I wouldn't say that the best days are necessarily before it, because in a sense the earliest days, by definition, when you were a teenager, were...

A MEMBER: Long time ago.

Dr. PHILLIPS: That's what I am saying - were probably very good days. But the fact of the matter is that there are significant prospects, production has picked up.

(MR. JOLYAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western, entered and took his seat.)

Indeed, this sector, bauxite alumina, grew annualized in the Q3, that is to say, the October to December quarter, and the January to March quarter have grown annualized at 15 per cent plus. So, the momentum has started and is gathering, in relation to that sector.

Mr. Speaker, with those observations, I move that the Capital Development Fund (Withdrawal) (No. 3) Order, 2014, Resolution, be approved.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable us to take Private Members' Motions.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the suspension of the Standing Orders to allow us to take Private Members' Motions.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we will commence with Private Members' Motion No. 2, by the Member from North Central St. Andrew, and then we will move to Private Members' Motion on the Order Paper, No. 20, by the Member from Central Clarendon.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Samuda.

Mr. SAMUDA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this Resolution was - or this Motion was put on the Table of the House sometime ago. Since then events have overtaken us, whereas, when it was laid there were certain aspects to the North-South Highway that needed to be elaborated on and for us to receive full information about it.

What I would like to indicate, however, Mr. Speaker, is that the Highway which was undertaken, or the portion of it that was not completed - and this Highway should have been completed and commissioned I think somewhere about 2011 - the portion that could not be done was because of what I am advised was a subterranal (sic) fault, as it were.

Dr. DAVIES: What's the word?

Mr. SAMUDA: Subterranal (sic) (subterranean) fault.

(Inaudible comment from Dr. Davies)

Mr. SAMUDA: My language.

But the fact is that the original design was faulty and required great engineering ingenuity in order to get the project back on stream.

Fortunately, an agreement was struck between the Government and CHEC, China Harbour Engineering Company, to undertake the project not only to correct the fault, but also to build out the Highway from Ocho Rios to Spanish Town, or the Highway, Mandela Highway.

Mr. Speaker, it is obvious from the work being undertaken by China Harbour, that the proposal that they brought to the table was far more extensive, a little more expensive, but a stronger proposal than was originally on the table.

I am advised that they have gone into the drilling of major piles. Unfortunately, one of the Chinese workers lost his life, because in constructing it he fell into one of the foundation provisions and died.

(HON. ROBERT DIXON PICKERSGILL, (PNP), St. Catherine, North Western, Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change, entered and took his seat.)

But it has developed now to a stage where the vast majority of the work has been completed, and as we heard, it is expected to be commissioned just prior to independence, August 6 of this year.

Mr. Speaker, I think we must be very appreciative of the fact that the Chinese bring a level of expertise...

Dr. DAVIES: Hear! Hear!

Mr. SAMUDA: ...and has enabled us to get to this point that we have all longed for,

where we can be driving from Moneague, bypassing Mount Rosser, through to Treadways. And what is encouraging is the fact that simultaneously, they are undertaking the full construction. Instead of just focusing on one area at a time, they are doing everything simultaneously. It is clear that the Chinese have learnt the fine art of walking and chewing gum at the same time, much to the benefit of Jamaica.

And while I am on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I would like to indicate the extent to which that section of the Highway that is from Treadways to Spanish Town - I say Spanish Town for convenience, everybody knows - that section is going quite quickly. And, whereas before, it was speculated, and in fact, it was said at one time that they would have to close the Bog Walk Gorge in order to complete the Highway across the Gorge, that I understand is no longer the case and construction has been started at the area known as Dam Head, and we can see signs of work continuing beyond that, over on the way to Kingston or to St. Catherine - through St. Catherine, Southern St. Catherine.

Mr. Speaker, this Highway is going to open up a level of opportunities for economic development that is going to make an enormous difference to the future of our country. But I have a grave disappointment and my disappointment lies in the fact that here we are experiencing this tremendous piece of engineering, this tremendous Highway that is going to link North with South and where the Highway is exiting onto Mandela sits the finest piece of land that could satisfy the construction of an economic zone, Caymanas, and yet, the Government has not taken advantage of the existing infrastructure that is there.

I have said repeatedly and I will say it here again today, they are causing themselves to get deeply involved with the notion, this grand notion of a Logistics Hub that, Mr. Speaker, will take no less than 15 years to get up to the stage where we can be recognized as one of the great Logistics Hubs of the world. They are doing this at the expense.....

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. SAMUDA: Fifteen (15) to 20 years.

And we must be careful because you know the Chinese, they plan for 1000 years, so 15 years is like yesterday for them, but for us time is not on our side. And I have said it repeatedly, why don't we crawl before we walk? Because here we have land that has basic infrastructure making it even more so when this Highway shall have been completed that will begin to see the dreams of the former Minister of Transport, this multimodal concept where we…

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Davies)

Mr. SAMUDA: My colleague from Central Clarendon.

....where you will now be able to link sea, air, land. And, Mr. Speaker, I might add, the Caymanas Enterprise Zone lends itself ideally to the resuscitation of our rail that would link Southern St. Catherine and Clarendon with the Port of Kingston; everything is laid out ready to go. Not only is everything laid out, ready to go, but to begin with, 200 acres was acquired just at the point where the Highway, the

North-South Highway is coming out, 200 acres was acquired from the UDC by Factories Corporation. And it was acquired for the purpose of creating a mixture of ICT requirements, manufacturing and warehousing as a precursor to building out the rest of the land to satisfy the requirements of a modern economic zone.

The Government came in, the plans were there, we might have produced the idea, but we didn't do the design work, all the civil servants, all the technical expertise put together to create a design to actualize the concept. It's not only a question....

Mr. SHAW: Raymond, a hear Kern come bak fe im seat! (Laughter)

Mr. CHARLES: Run buoy run, owner man a cum.

(Laughter)

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, my....

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, you must excuse me, I have been having a throat problem, I don't know.

(Laughter)

So I'm not going to be my usual self.

(Laughter)

I'm not going to be my usual self, but this is such a serious matter that I think, Mr. Speaker, the Government should take a serious reassessment of the opportunities that faces them in developing the Caymanas Enterprise Zone as an immediate action.

(MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central, entered and took her seat.)

The Goat Islands development is something that is going to be obviously very contentious. Caymanas does not pose that level of contention and it gets us up and running. The Kingston - Port of Kingston when dredged with the lands adjacent to it forms a perfect combination of physical assets, physical assets that can be used to develop or to start the concept of an enterprise zone. We have none in Jamaica and that's the first place to start. And it would also compliment whatever is done anywhere else in the island.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Pickersgill)

Mr. SAMUDA: Because if you are going to talk about Jamaica being a Logistics Hub, it's not one place, it has to be all around in the island following the infrastructural development with roads and so on.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is not a resolution that is as current today as it was when it was first presented to the House, so I am not going to delay the process today other than to say, other than to say that I would like the Minister in response to give some indication, although he's not the only Minister, but the one that is supposed to be here isn't here, the Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, to give some indication of the level of seriousness that is being paid to the concept of billing out the Caymanas Enterprise Zone so that we can start the process of giving our young people in the community of Southern St. Catherine and Kingston and St. Andrew an opportunity to gain employment and create wealth.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Charles.

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, the Member from North Central St. Andrew has outlined certain admiration for this project. I spoke to the Minister some time ago about a matter in which I have the responsibility to speak on the subject, which is employment on the projects. The Minister has gracefully responded and I don't think it would be out of place to state that he has invited me to have discussions with him on the employment matter.

It has been brought to my attention, Mr. Speaker that we need to look at this matter urgently, because right now the Member from that part of St. Ann might be able to advise the House that there is some difficulty. I just want to say to the Government, take my advice urgently to educate the Jamaican worker of the importance of these projects when major, when a large quantity of foreign workers, Chinese workers are identified on these projects where Jamaicans are available to work, but because of the policy and the contractual obligation between Jamaica and China or the contractors and the Jamaican Government, the Jamaican is unable to get the job there.

We understand, we understand that the project is important to Jamaica, but there can be no importance when the culture of the Jamaican - the Jamaican worker is damaged and allowed to damage the relationship between Jamaica and China because of a lack of education and a lack of information.

(HON. PETER MURDCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester Central, Minister of National Security, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western, entered and took his seat.)

And I am calling on the Government again to make sure that the Jamaican workers are educated and they understand the contractual obligation between the Government of Jamaica and the Chinese Government to avoid conflict on these projects. We have an obligation to the Jamaican worker to seek jobs for them and they are not going to be happy seeing foreigners working on these jobs and they are not getting the jobs. And so, whatever the obligation is, we have to find a way to explain it to them and to advise them, because we have to have the project, they want to have the jobs, we have to have a way to let them know what is the policy of the Government and how both can work, the jobs and the project so there can be peace on the site.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Dr. Davies.

Dr. DAVIES: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Let me begin by indicating that following a debate in the House, I was struck by the points made by the Member from North Central Clarendon. And as he indicated I wrote to him and I intend to meet with him shortly, because the issue of good labour relations on the various sites is of critical importance for obvious reasons.

But just for the records, let me indicate

that in preparation for the debate on this Motion, I got the figures currently and the agreement for the construction of the North-South link speak explicitly to a maximum of a one-to- one ratio, but at no time has this obtained.

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Dr. DAVIES: Yes, one-to-one. But, at no time…

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Shaw)

Dr. DAVIES: This is a higher level of mathematical expression.

(Laughter by all including Mr. Shaw)

Dr. DAVIES: That's my profession so I accept it. And he's one of the people. And by and large the ratio has been 60/40, which is 1.5 to 1.

In preparation for this debate I asked for the data, the latest data on a particular site and NROCC, NROCC sent a team to do an actual count of the numbers expatriates. And the expatriates are not all Chinese National versus Jamaican workers. And on this particular site, a total of 138 Jamaicans and 97 expatriates were counted. And these audits will be - a part from being abreast of the numbers through the Ministry of Labour, we would be doing physical audits and these will be continued.

But, Mr. Speaker, as the projects grow, it's imperative that we provide the information to the population, to the unions, and these actual audits will be the medium by which we can provide data.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when I listened to the presentation from the Member from North East - North Central St. Andrew, I went for the Order Paper to figure whether I had prepared for the wrong debate. (Chuckles) So, I came to the…

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Shaw)

Dr. DAVIES: Yes it was. I congratulate you on your tolerance in this.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Shaw)

Dr. DAVIES: (Chuckles) A multi-faceted, multi-modal presentation.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Multi what?

Dr. DAVIES: Multi-modal and multi-faceted.

Mr. Speaker, in all seriousness I would indicate that I've had nothing but constructive support from the Opposition in terms of this project, in particular, as well as any of the other projects which we are examining. And I would like just to provide for the record, I wouldn't want for the preparation for this Motion to go to waste, and I just want to indicate that this project is going well in terms of - and the cooperation between NROCC and China Harbour is also going well. We are producing - one of the interesting things, Mr. Speaker, is that although there is a specified scheduled by which the land should be delivered, CHEC has been moving faster than the anticipated rate of implementation and so they have been asking for land ahead of the agreed schedule. To date a total of thirty-five kilometres of the highway, the land for that construction, has been delivered. The total length is forty-eight kilometres. No one would have anticipated given the length of time it takes to travel from Kingston to Ocho Rios that we are actually - the highway will make that distance much more tolerable and we are dealing with thirty miles in total compared to

what we now traverse. And as I indicated thirty-five kilometres of the land has been delivered and it is anticipated that all the remaining lands will be delivered by the end of July this year.

As regards section two - this is only for section one and section three - as regards section two all the land had been acquired during the previous arrangement with Bouygues. So the focus is on sections one and two. Mr. Speaker, lands are being acquired through a combination of compulsory acquisition as well as through private treaty and this is going well.

In terms of the environmental permits, to date we have received twenty- seven permits from the various parish councils and from NEPA. So again, that is proceeding. As regards the various sections, Mr. Speaker, the section one, Caymanas to Linstead, construction started last October and the planned completion date is January 2016, and we will do that in celebration of the next massive victory later in 2016. (Laughter/Applause) In that section one, Mr. Speaker, I would like to restate the point made, and I want to reassure all my colleague MPs who were concerned, there will be no blocking of the Gorge at any stage during the construction. (Applause) There will be none. I don't know where that rumour started. The highway will cross the Rio Cobre near to Dam Head and work has already started in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, there is just one issue either the beginning of the section one, which is by Ferry, the original design which was approved by NEPA. We have had a second look at it. CHEC has come back to me with a proposal for a design which will not only deal with traffic over the next twenty years or thereabout, but for the foreseeable future. And it will require, if we agreed to it, a sharing of the expense. There is a straightforward solution which they have, which means coming off on the westbound Mandela Highway and overpass over the Highway, but this doesn't deal with some of the challenges, in particular, a situation if someone is returning from the North Coast and then there would be in the northern section of Mandela Highway, question is, if that person is living in Christiana..

(Cross talk)

...then if he's coming from Ocho Rios then he would have to head west to find the most convenient place to turn around to head east, back into Kingston.

(Cross talk)

Right. Yes, but "clover leaf" cost money. So we are actively assessing how we can reallocate some funds in...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Samuda)

Dr. DAVIES: Well, you had the highway as a plan too, but what I found was nothing...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's true. That is correct.

(Applause)

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker, in terms of section three from Moneague to Ocho Rios construction started in October of last year...

Miss HANNA: Hear, hear!

Dr. DAVIES: ...and construction is ongoing as we speak. And, again, in

anticipation of the celebration in 2016, it will be completed in January 2016.

(Cross talk)

(Referring to Opposition Member) The next time you must pay your light bill. (Applause/Laughter) You must pay your light bill. You must pay your light bill or else I won't allow you to come to the stadium and play again. You must pay your light bill.

Government MEMBER: Pay your light bill.

Dr. DAVIES: You must lead by example. Pay your light bill.

(The Speaker gavels)

Yes, sir.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Shaw)

Dr. DAVIES: But he wasn't paying it from your time. (Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, in terms of section three this is between Moneague and Ocho Rios, the designs have been finalized and the connection to the North Coast Highway that has been agreed that it will be located just west of Dunn's River, and in keeping with the discussions with UDC this alignment will not impact on the UDC's Top Forte property.

Mr. Speaker, although this Resolution is dated virtually - I suspect this lead the Opposition Spokesperson not to speak to the Resolution, but all the issues...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. D. Smith)

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Warmington)

Mr. D. SMITH: The motion was never ready.

(The Speaker gavels)

Dr. DAVIES: As I was saying before that mumbo jumbo by the Leader of Opposition Business, all the issues have 5, been answered (Laughter) and Be It Resolved that this Honourable House call on the Minister of Transport, Works and Housing to give a detailed explanation...

(Cross talk/Laughter)

Is mi fren now. When all a oonu di betray him I was his fren. Ask him. When all a oonu neglect him, I was his friend.

Mr. D. SMITH: Was, was.

Dr. DAVIES: I learnt better. (Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, the project is on stream. We'll be having the opening of section two by - it will be completed - practically completed in June, but we'll be having the opening in August and the other two sections are on stream.

Mr. Speaker, let me really congratulate us all for continuity. This is an issue which transcends party divide. I tease the Opposition Spokesman on Finance that in reading the files I discovered that he had signed the agreement in August 2011, but then not atypical of the performance of that Administration nothing else was done. But he signed the agreement and there were some factors which inhibited us. We're beyond that and I think we are united.

As regards to the reference to the economic zone, my colleague Minister, I was looking to see whether he was here, but these are not competing activities.

(Cross talk)

These are not competing activities. My colleague Minister will give a full report on progress on the Caymanas Economic Zone. We share active task and at the appropriate

time I will provide a full report on the proposed port and economic zone to be located in Southern St. Catherine. But let me say that the timetable, which was outlined, is being adhered to and sooner, rather than later, there will be a signing of the nonbinding framework agreement and I will certainly keep colleagues of this Honourable House fully informed.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Henry.

Mr. HENRY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

It would be remiss of me not to enter this section of the debate. I do so against the background of history and continuity of governance as spoken to by the Minister. For, indeed, as the then Opposition we supported fully the concept of Highway 2000, which was part of the economic development that was important to Jamaica, and this is a continuity of Highway 2000 in its continuity of the development of moving the road network to connect all and I can use the word multi-modal forms of transport. I, therefore, congratulate the Government in its continuity. The continuity rested in the fact that it took two and a half years of planning and again to have the Chinese make the first investment in the Caribbean instead of alone to build this North/South Highway, not North Shore as you said in here. And that North/South link is very important, but it also reflected the need that in building highways you have to build the economic development along the highway to increase the amount of transportation to make it economically viable and to grow. Hence Highway 2000, which we inherited as far as the Vineyards, was extended in a one-B-one to the rest of Clarendon to continue - to connect with the Milk River and take you on to Williamsfield.

Indeed, the importance for me of the North-South and the negotiation that I was involved in was the fact of the availability - and I didn't hear this explained fully, was the importance of leaving economic zones along the North-South that would be developed to provide employment. Therefore, that is why - and I have to congratulate the Chairman of the then Toll Authority, Mr. Ferris Zaidie, in the full negotiations that we had to make we had to ensure that land was made available along that Highway, which could be used for whatever purposes the economy demanded, that the traffic would increase and the movement of people relative to that.

Therefore acreage was made available as part of the agreement with China as an investment, and I believe I heard that some of that is being identified. The discussions I had with them was whether we build factories, houses, the concept I had was economic zones that you could build smaller concepts and zones that would spread the workload into the interior of the country and link it by the speed of how you communicate. I haven't heard how far we've reached. I think I've heard recently in a release that some of that land that we made available to be bought by the Chinese for the development process may be used in housing, I don't know, I expected some of it to be used in factories to create jobs. So

basically, as the motion demands, it says that, a manner consistent with the plans initiated.

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. HENRY: The plans I discussed with the Chinese Development Bank when we show them to make this investment...

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. HENRY: ...was related to economic zones along there, of which land was made available. That is why we recovery the funding that has already been spent, and I think the last administration should be congratulated, in that we recovered the $120 Million already spent, and that was needed to be corrected in the old geotechnical study that wasn't done. And it would be remiss of me not to put this in the context of continuity and in the context of what is asked here. And I trust that the land we've made available, will not only be used for housing, but will be used for factories to provide employment along that corridor, which will increase the traffic, make it economically viable and by extension, relate to the whole multimodal connectivity that relates to road, rail, sea and air.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the Members who have spoken in this debate - contributed.

Dr. DAVIES: Yes.

Mr. SAMUDA: Some have spoken others have contributed.

(Laughter)

Dr. DAVIES: And some would mumbo jumbo. (Laughs)

Mr. SAMUDA: I decided, Mr. Speaker, as you will appreciate, I decided to accede to the request by the House Leader...

Dr. DAVIES: A short notice.

Mr. SAMUDA: A short notice.

...out of respect for him I said I would do it. But I recognize, as everybody else would, that a Resolution laid in the House on January 24, 2012, is being debated two years and two months later on what we have declared in here to be one of the most important projects undertaken in this country. So I could not give up, lose the opportunity to expand and elaborate somewhat. (Applause)

Dr. DAVIES: Hear, hear. Good sir, good sir.

Mr. SAMUDA: You couldn't expect me to go and say what I would've said two years ago, so I have to put that in context.

Mr. Speaker, I can see this Highway under construction from my home. I sit on my verandah and I see the hill being carved across; that's when I knew the thing was moving quite apace. So I'd like everybody else in St. Catherine - in fact in all Jamaica - to be very happy and anxious to see this completed because it's good for our country.

(Inaudible comments by Dr. Davies)

Mr. SAMUDA: Yes, they can come there and see the bright lights when they open it and when the sirens go off when the Minister is driving you can enjoy that.

(HON. NOEL GEORGE DELANO ARSCOTT, (PNP), Clarendon, South Western, Minister of Local Government and

Community Development, entered and took his seat.)

(Inaudible comments by Dr. Davies)

Mr. SAMUDA: The earthwork is finished through some of the large properties that they have to traverse, but there is no money paid for the land yet. They've given you - I know of three large landholders - I won't call their names, everybody knows who they are...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Samuda is one.

(Laughter)

Mr. SAMUDA: ...that you have had access, you've been given permission to use the land, but there has been no formal agreement arrived at yet. Which, I say it in here, Mr. Speaker, we must thank them for their cooperation in the national interest.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Thank you, Samuda.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Samuda for you.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Shut yuh mouth! Yuh seeking friend?

Mr. WARMINGTON: Country man.

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, I look forward, I look forward to the completion of this project, but I'm not going to allow the opportunity to pass and not reiterate what I said earlier.

(Cross talks)

Mr. SAMUDA: There is no country that can succeeds….

(Inaudible comments by Dr. Davies)

Mr. SAMUDA: Hold on.

...there is no country that can succeed... By the way, Mr. Speaker, we have in our audience they're now leaving, some of the children are going downstairs; they've come here to listen to us and I counted eight conversations taking place when the Member was speaking...

Dr. CHANG: The best school in Jamaica, Montego Bay High.

Mr. SAMUDA: ...full-blown conversations while the Member was on his feet, talking about something that is going to impact their lives. The least we can do is be courteous to those who've come to listen to us. And, Mr. Speaker, I implore you...

Mr. PARCHMENT: Tame your own a voice.

Mr. SAMUDA: ...I implore you to use your gavel generously when such an occurrence takes place.

(Cross talks)

Mr. SAMUDA: I hope that we all recognize that there is no country that can succeed economically without infrastructure. I say again, it is a pipedream when we speak of a logistics hub without simultaneously speaking about infrastructural development. And we must all enjoin with those who are engaged in undertaking it now, in the spirit of unity and cooperation for the completion of projects of this nature; very important.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: And what do you….

(Cross talks)

(The Speaker gavels)

The SPEAKER: What do you propose?

Mr. SAMUDA: Oh, I don't close my case. I would also like to indicate, Mr. Speaker, that the Member from Central Clarendon is quite correct.

(Cross talks)

Mr. SAMUDA: The Member from Central Clarendon is quite correct.

(Cross talk)

Mr. SAMUDA: The Member from Clarendon Central is quite correct, it's not North Shore Highway it is the North-South Highway.

Mr. PARCHMENT: It's a typo.

Mr. SAMUDA: I know it was a typo.

(Heckling)

Mr. SAMUDA: I move that the Resolution standing in my name be approved, or the motion, standing in my name be approved as stated.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, unlike the motion that was just completed, the next motion will be part heard today. The Member from Central Clarendon will commence the debate. There are already a number of speakers who would wish to participate when the session - when the Parliament resumes, including of course, the Minister of Culture. And I should just alert the Member that the Cabinet has now signed off on the Report from the Reparations Committee and when the Minister comes to speak she will address that in a fulsome way. So we will commence the debate today.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Henry?

(Applause)

Mr. HENRY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much, House Leader. And, Mr. Speaker, can I have permission to speak from a chair other than my own?

Mr. DALLEY: Permission granted.

(Heckling)

The SPEAKER: You may proceed.

Mr. HENRY: Mr. Speaker...

(Cross talks)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. HENRY: ...I wish to thank every single Member of this House for the privilege I have today to again present an argument for reparations from Great Britain for chattel slavery. I reemphasized my position, Mr. Speaker, reparations against Great Britain for chattel slavery.

The motion I moved, Mr. Speaker, I think in itself speaks volumes to an issue that we need to address and which I've advocated over so many years. And before I go further in making that speech, there are some people in the audience that I would pay my tribute to, one specifically, Bunny Wailer and the others here, who are here... (Applause) ...in respect of a fight they have long led. I wish I could call them all by name, but if I'm the vessel by which we have to move this matter forward, so be it.

The motion I move, Mr. Speaker, speaks in detail to the issues that I think that need to be addressed. And a lot of this has taken on wings in the last few months, as the reality of some of what we have advocated in the past, speaks volumes to what is needed to be addressed. I've waited long and I'm still awaiting the final report from the Reparations Committee. But as the House Leader has said, this is the opening of the debate, I trust as many people will speak on this very important subject. I will not try to rehash all the things I

have spoken about over the last 15 or 20 years, but move tomorrow where I think we need to look at things in removing from our minds, the concept of the white Anglo-Saxon protestant, which has made us failed to believe in ourselves, and I do so in no aspect of reality of history.

So as I rise again today to seek the remedy and reparations for victims of gross human rights violations, I start by visiting the words:

- Remedy: To put or set right, straighten out, resolve, correct, repair or amend errors of the past.
- Reparation: To make amends for a wrong one has done, keeping those who have been wronged and enhancing that by financial reparation to victims, making restitution, making redress and atonement.

The aspect covers a global area of what we can do.

- Human Rights: The moral principles that set out certain standards of human behaviour that are regularly protected and is an argument about every issue that we see in the Press today.

(The Speaker leaves the Chair at 3:53 p.m. and the Deputy Speaker presides)

The practice of slavery, Mr. Speaker, indicates chattel slavery has always been rooted in political and economic considerations. So too was emancipation and the train is true for reparations. Moral considerations evolving over generations of changing social mores and political realities have given rise to the views that have strengthened the imperative for reparations. The best known would be of course, the Holocaust.

Whatever the motives however, Mr. Speaker, the realities are inescapable...

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. HENRY: ...that injury was done, that relief is justified, and since the injury cannot be reversed, one wouldn't thought that money mattered. The monetary compensation is the only true and lasting available relief that can be adjudicated. This view, Mr. Speaker, leapfrogs the unnecessary arguments of whether injury was done, and takes us straight to the point of how to make best use of the relief provided by monetary compensation.

(MR. PAUL LENNOX BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Andrew, West Rural, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. Speaker, slavery started with economic and political considerations: the British, the Spanish, the Dutch, and the Portuguese, among other imperial powers in the New World perceived slavery along these lines of political and economic imperatives. Emancipation was acceded to on a political line, with economic considerations being the forefront of the discussions.

This is evidenced by the actions of the British Government in the early 19th Century. Slave companies were formed; shares taken up by tailors and traders; ships hired and

staffed; insurance companies and religious bodies involved, all leading to slave trading companies of that country.

It is therefore inescapable Mr. Speaker that a search for justice through reparations be founded in political considerations by way of political decisions, required of the Sovereign Parliaments of the injured nations, and in the economic demands which can be the only true measure of relief that ensures benefit to the generations ahead.

Mr. Speaker, these considerations allow for reparation for injuries from crimes of war, inflicted in the forced removal of people from their native homeland, from the human rights abuses of the Middle Passage, and the plantation process which ensued, and for the wholesale abandonment of the newly freed chattel trade turn humans, embodied in the emancipation proclamation.

The stupidity of the argument, Mr. Speaker, of the well-treated and educated slaves, and the beneficial heritage of an education system, a justice system, and a civil service bureaucracy, proffered by many as a mitigation, must not be allowed to dignify the classing of humans as animals - chattels, and the horrors of slavery, nor must it be diluted for demands for relief. The claim must be pressed, not just on behalf of the ghosts of the past, but on behalf of the generations yet unborn.

It has taken nearly 200 years to reach this position on reparations as a people, and as a political policy. The time is here for the reconciliation of the moral, social, political, and economic accounts between the injured and those who inflicted injury. This reconciliation must, however, be between parties acting, not from individual positions, defensible or indefensible, but as Sovereign nations acting in moral and political unison.

The generations over the next 200 years must be the beneficiaries of our collective actions now. Reparations must not provide a lasting patrimony for the generation of the future who will see that on both sides. Their future, unlike the past, was not impacted on individually by us, or them, but was secured by we, who acted collectively in the spirit of moral rectitude and political will.

It has always been my view, Mr. Speaker, that reparations is due from Great Britain for chattel slavery, and more specifically for the economic exploitation of the slave labour used through various economic means by the slave trading countries, including the African countries, all of which transcended every form of violation of human rights, from the forcible removal to alien countries by trickery, kidnapping, coercion, and the subsequent acts of murder and rape, miscegenation, *et cetera.*

I quote from my book '*Many Rivers to Cross':*

> *"I refute, from a personal perspective, any arguments that they, the British, gave us educational structure."*

But, Mr. Speaker, what they gave us was an elitist model, meant to educate along the divide-and-rule concept, an educational context which carries with it content that did not reflect us or our solutions, and failed to impart the dignity of our African ancestry and their achievements, but left us looking outside

of ourselves for ancestry, a concept and belief, still subscribed to until today, and manifest in the coverage and support we get from the entrenched planter class.

Mr. Speaker, you cannot give me something which is my right to own. For indeed, what they said was by the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread, rather - and that we were hewers of wood and drawers of water. What about the concept of saying to us, you can think your way out of poverty? What about the point of saying to us that we can be able to also earn from the creative elements of our minds, rather than merely from sweating in the fields as slaves.

The Office of the United Nation High Commissioner for Human Rights website states:

> *"All human rights are indivisible, whether they are civil and political rights...'"*

such as the right to life...

> "*equality before the law and freedom of expression, economic, social and cultural rights, such as the right to work, social security and education are collective rights. The rights for development and self determination are indivisible, interrelated and interdependent. The improvement of one right facilitates advancement of the others. Likewise,* Mr. Speaker, and colleagues, *the deprivation of one right adversely affects the others*."

Over the years, the right to reparations for Jamaica has been denied to all of us as victims - many forms of contrive barriers. Who is responsible for settling the debt? Is it the State of Great Britain, or the direct beneficiaries, *i.e.,* the citizens who traded? It was a law, so how can we speak... present day citizens to pay?

But, Mr. Speaker, and colleagues, that is now passé. At one time we didn't know who benefitted from slavery. Now we have, in many books written, and in the research done - if you all punch on your iPods and your phones, what Professor Draper is researching, *ucl.ucac.uk.lbs*, you will find out who benefitted from slavery. You will find out what the research is.

Indeed, all this in my many speeches in Parliament, Mr. Speaker, I recorded. As I have said early, how the arguments have been proposed as to benefits retained for chattel slavery. One such argument is, we have given you a language. I concede that English is a benefitting and economic language, but with the social structure of my country right now, we even have arguments recently in the educational structure of what is written in a book for English. We now have the British wanting to return to set up the British Council to teach us English again. Well, value it. Tell me what the value is and take it off the bottom line for reparations.

I am told that I have got jurisprudence. Mr. Speaker, I ask us all to look at justice today. I ask us all in our minds to reflect on that jurisprudence we were given, and I ask us to speak to the masses of Jamaicans as to whether they really think justice and jurisprudence which was handed down to us, reflects what is reflective today. But, I said, let us value them. If you owe me $200, and we value that at $90, take off the $90 and pay me

$110. Every one of these has the aspects on which you can value them.

So my approach Mr. Speaker is steeped in the political and economic decision taken by the British Government in their Parliament in 1833, when they politically admitted that slavery which was banned in their country also extended to chattel slavery in the Caribbean, as it was inhumane, and abused the human rights of the slaves. Yet, they fail to apologize. The arguments are there. And the arguments clearly indicts the whole abuse of rights, in what is the greatest abuse, for me, of human rights, exploitation of labour, man's inhumanity to man.

For, in the act of abolition, the Caribbean slave owners - just like you will have a hurricane and you get a Minister of Agriculture is to go and assess how many pigs you lost, how many goats you lost, what has been blown down. They loved it. And they said to the British Government, you sold me the slaves; I now need compensation from you in the sum of £20 Million for the loss of the economic benefits which we have invested in these people, these slaves, these cattle.

So, Mr. Speaker, what is my response? The slaves receive nothing, except a reprimand to be good boys and girls. Grow what you need to eat in free villages. Don't become vagrants. Mother England will take care of you, as will our absentee landlords.

For me then, as the world now focuses on human rights of all kinds, and as Great Britain fails to apologize and settle the debt itself, or through its identified citizens - and I will name some -1 have been asking for years for a simple political decision, the same political decision that was taken to set me free, I am asking an elected Parliament of Jamaica to make a political decision that we are entitled to seek reparations.

Opposition MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. HENRY: I ask for no less and I ask for no more. And if we voted no, matter rest; if we voted yes, then let us move forward in checking to see if the world agrees with us. (Applause)

So I need a political decision by our Parliament that we have a right to a remedy and a right to this claim. There has never been a political decision by the Caribbean Parliament. This must come through a political decision. Our Committee of Reparations has not yet had the Report. CARICOM has taken some decisions and some of this I will deal with now and in future.

But, Mr. Speaker, I do not want to get lost in the obfuscation of all the slave trading countries. So, I want us each to leave here and recognize what chattel slavery is and was, and recognize that it was only the Caribbean plantocracy from six to eight countries that received funds for this chattel slavery. Let us narrow the political point to the real legal argument.

So Mr. Speaker, the British chattel slavery in the Caribbean and the indisputable historical fact that it was Great Britain's Parliament which abolished slavery in 1833 and responded to a political lobby on behalf of the Caribbean plantation owners who based their arguments that it was Great Britain who

legitimize chattel slavery for economic and political reasons, even though they knew it was wrong in their own country, who now said to the planters, you must now free the slaves. They gave others, the newly free class, a right of their own. In fact, they even sought to deny them right to politically vote, because it was part of that time that the Adult Suffrage... if you couldn't read and write you couldn't vote. You'll remember you couldn't be a member of the Legislative Council if you didn't own land, and if you couldn't own land, being free... how many of our people then? For this, the slave owners demanded and got their compensation.

But, as one of the persons in Great Britain, one TV Chef, Ainsley Hyatt, who had slave owners in his family on his grandfather's side, said, he was shocked by the amount paid out by the Government to the slave owners. He went on to say: "You would think that the Government would have given at least some money to the freed slaves, who needed to find homes, start new lives. It seems a bit barbaric. It is like the rich protecting the rich." That is from the Independent Newspaper of February 24, 2013 - Britain's Colonial Shame: Slave owners given huge payouts after abolition.

I have argued and advocate that the countries of descendants of the slaves are entitled to receive the same amount of money. But, at today's value - I understand that there is an estimated value by the Reparations Committee we set up. I saw in one newspaper article, billions of pounds. This is on behalf of the descendants of slaves. I have requested that it be paid to the Government of Jamaica, for the people of Jamaica. The matter which is now being taken up by the CARICOM brings the other five Caribbean countries into the Claim, with a requirement for them to make a political decision.

Mr. Speaker, over the period of time I have made this presentation and requested a vote, I have always been told you couldn't get the vote, let's bring CARICOM in, let's bring everybody together. Now that CARICOM has said they are on board, now that CARICOM has said all independent countries in the Caribbean should make their political decision, I hope we do not resile.

And I have noted and I congratulate and thank the Prime Minister recently for her words that, let us seek it but not in a confrontational style. I trust that what I have said here is not confrontational, it is a reality which we must address.

With such a political decision made, Mr. Speaker, it opens the door for Jamaica and other Caribbean countries to take the matter to the International Court of Justice. I am convinced by the legal advice I have, that we can win in the British forum on the main chattel slavery alone. If we want to open the door, or if it's not heard there and go to the International Court of Justice, but you cannot go there without a political decision. CARICOM is not a political body, therefore, we, here are who would stand in the way of any person, or people or collective body taking this matter to an International Court of Justice.

Mr. Speaker, Claims against all the countries who were involved in the Slave

Trade, for genocide, rape, murder, the host of abuse of human rights - I am not sure what the monetary value would be. I have heard it rumoured from billions to two point two trillion. Perhaps it's the audacity of the Claim. How dare us wanting to challenge a country that refuses to even apologize! That astonishes me.

And so Mr. Speaker, I rather think what our question should be is, how will we coalesce around this matter as a conscience approach? How will we accept payment? How do we use it to transform the society? What must we, the people, put in place for even a referendum as to what we would use this money for? It will certainly eliminate our debt, that's very easy. Would the people want it to be used for education, land titling, health, national registration, infrastructure?

One thing I know I will fight for, Mr. Speaker, that must be built into this is repatriation to Africa.

(Persons in the Gallery applaud)

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. HENRY: The economic pundits are saying...

The Deputy SPEAKER: Just a moment, Mr. Henry.

I must ask the persons in the Gallery to desist from making any - I understand your emotions, but this Honourable House cannot tolerate that.

Thank you.

Mr. HENRY: I will ask them to let the emotions flow through me, but I understand the years of servitude and…. (Inaudible)

The economic pundits are saying that much of the world's projected growth is predicated to be out of Africa. One can see this. Because you know, Mr. Speaker, I have to tie that back to the mind and the mis-education. Because I am convinced that deep within every heart, when we speak of Africa we don't think of the South Africa we know that's growing, we think of some village where everybody is walking barefooted and carrying water on their heads.

Mr. Speaker, are we aware that the greatest number of migrants from Spain right now is back to the Spanish colonies that they once had, because they lack engineers, they lack doctors, they lack the very unemployment that's taking place in the European countries today?

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HENRY: Mr. Speaker, the economic downturn in Europe and other things that are happening, the skilled engineers, the architects, the university-trained, are part of the growing unemployed now relocating to the opportunities of the former colonies.

Therefore, as I speak in closing this section, Mr. Speaker, I must read into the record Britain's colonial shame, slave owners given huge payments. Because so many of us hide behind the fact of why should the present taxpayers of Britain pay for something that was a law. How many of us remember that, you know, even our pirates were glamourized by a queen when they were robbing and pirating? I quote:

The true scale of Britain's involvement in

the Slave Trade has been laid bare in documents revealing how the country's wealthiest families received the modern equivalent of billions of pounds in compensation after slavery was abolished. The previously unseen records show exactly who received what in payouts from the Government when the slave ownership was abolished by Britain - much to the potential embarrassment of their descendants. Dr. Nick Draper from the University College, who has studied the Compensation Papers, says as many as one-fifth of wealthy Victorian Britons derived all or part of their fortunes from the slave economy. As a result, there are now wealthy families all around the UK, still indirectly enjoying the proceeds of slavery that have been passed on to them. There was a feeding frenzy around the compensation. John Austin, for instance owned 415 slaves and got Twenty Thousand Five Hundred and Eleven Pounds (£20,511) a sum worth Seventeen Million Pounds (£17M) today.

Academics from UCL spent three years drawing on the 46,000 records. He added that the database's findings may have implications for the reparations debate.

Mr. Speaker, I quote:

Among those revealed to have benefitted from slavery are ancestors of the Prime Minister, David Cameron, former Minister Douglas Hogg, authors Graham Greene and George Orwell, poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and the new Chairman of the Arts Council, Peter Bazalgette. Other prominent names which feature in the records include scions of one of the nation's oldest banking families, the Barings, and the second Earl of Harewood, Henry Lascelles, an ancestor of the Queen's cousin. Some families used the money to invest in the railways and other aspects of our industrial revolution. The British Government - George Orwell's great-grandfather, Charles Blair, received Four Thousand Four Hundred and Forty-two Pounds (£4,442) equal to Three Million Pounds (£3M) today, for the 218 slaves he owned.

I skip and go on.

A total of Ten Million Pounds (£10M) went to the slave-owning families in the Caribbean and Africa, while the other half went to the absentee owners living in Britain. The biggest single payout went to James Blair (no relation to Orwell), an MP, who had homes in Marylebone, central London and Scotland. He was awarded Eighty-three Thousand Five Hundred and Thirty Pounds (£83,530) the equivalent of Sixty-five Million Pounds (£65M) today, for 1,598 slaves.

Mr. Speaker, the article covers all of the various persons who are known, who have their properties, who have their issues that they can be dealt with. So that kills the argument about whether it's the taxpayers of Great Britain having to pay on behalf of another era.

Mr. Speaker, the importance of this vote for me is to speak to all the agony and all the

issues we have… (Inaudible) In my paying of respect to the Rastafarians for having carried this fight, and many other persons, it would be remiss of me not to call Dudley Thompson's name in this presentation again. The continuity of this fight is so very important, not necessarily for what it's going to bring or relief, because indeed, I will again quote on the Rastafarian's reproach, who wants to swap an island for a continent. But, indeed, I also in my presentation spoke to the role the Africans themselves may have played. And when I hear people say that, can Britain afford it, I smile. I am sure the Bank of England is worth more than Seventy Trillion Pounds (£7T).

I remind my colleagues that at one time Cayman was a dependent of Jamaica and so was the Turks and Caicos Islands. Maybe I grew up in the wrong time. But I have not lost the belief in my people and in the country, and I do believe, as I appeal to the heart and conscience in this the opening position of this debate. And I will come back to the fact that we have already passed in this House, repatriation. So that was passed in this House, and I will speak from **Hansard** the approval that was given for repatriation.

We have Jamaicans in Ethiopia that would be in need of some of these funds for them to be able to develop and recollect with their history. And I have a lot more that I could add to, but I want to keep this on looking at the future for today.

Because, Mr. Speaker, the appeal I make - and I make it to the House Leader and to the Government, and to my colleagues in Opposition - all we need is the political decision, the will to realize that we must overcome in our minds that mis-education which made us not believe totally in ourselves and our African ancestry. I think we owe it to our National Hero, who was martyred - more than one of them. And I am asking my colleagues and I am asking the Government as we await the Reparations Report which I have yet - and I am hoping I will get a copy very soon - I urge us, make this a conscience vote, make this a vote on behalf of the future generations who are still battling with the issues that slavery had left in scarring us.

I have spoken to some of this in my own lifetime. It might be worth repeating that I used to go to school and wonder what a Red Ibo was, until I read and found out that they were a tribe of Africans that were Iboes that were red. Or when I recognized that the first Jews were black and Falasha Jews.

So Mr. Speaker - and I am not speaking of slavery as a way of life which exists in a social structure, I am speaking to chattel slavery. That exploitation and that reparation that we still need to make to Rastafari for their continued fight which we have abused in our own way of approach by misunderstanding the reality of ourselves.

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. HENRY: So, Mr. Speaker, I have spoken enough at this juncture. I will say more in closing as I listen to everyone, and hope as many people wish to speak.

I thank the House Leader and the Government for the presentation today, which is long overdue. I sincerely hope that we recognize on behalf of future generations, we

need to address this matter, we need to balance the issue, so to speak, and really move the country forward in a belief in ourselves, and remove from us all the colonial taints that restrict us in development and growth. (Applause)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we want to thank the Member...

Mr. CLARKE: All right, Jah!

Mr. PAULWELL: ...for his relentless campaign in this matter, and to seek approval for the suspension of this debate at this time.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that this debate be suspended.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker...

Mr. SHAW: Raymond, what you going sey 'bout dis ting now? What a prekeh now, sah!

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Shaw! Mr. Shaw!

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move for the recommittal of the item Notices of Motions Given Orally.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that there be a recommittal of item Notices of Motions Given Orally.

Put to the House and agreed to.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY
(Recommitted)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move the following motion:

Be it Resolved that this Honourable House of Representatives appoint a Special Select Committee comprising the following Members:

Mr. Peter Bunting
Mr. Julian Robinson
Mr. Fitz Jackson
Mr. Arnaldo Brown
Miss Denise Daley
Mr. Delroy Chuck
Mrs. Marisa Dalrymple Philibert
Mr. Derrick Smith

to sit jointly with a similar Committee appointed by the Senate, to consider and report on a Bill shortly entitled, The Integrity Commission Act, 2014.

Mr. Speaker, I further beg to give notice that at a later stage today I will move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take this motion.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Labour, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move to introduce and have read a first time a Bill shortly entitled: The Employment (Flexible Work Arrangements) (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2014.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker, if we can revert to Public Business. I now move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take the motion, notice of which I gave earlier.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the suspension of Standing Orders?

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the matter relates to the Integrity Commission Act. There is going to be a Special Select Committee comprising membership from both Houses. I think the Senate has already determined their Members and this Motion is seeking to determine the Members from the House of Representatives. I so move.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, it is intended that we table another Bill, which is en route to the Parliament I gather and I am therefore going to ask for suspension of the Sitting for 15 minutes?

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Sitting of the Honourable House be suspended for 15 minutes?

Put to the House and agreed to.

(The Sitting of the House of Representatives suspended at 4:27 p.m. and resumed at 4:40 p.m.)

RESUMPTION

The Deputy SPEAKER: Please be seated. We are about to resume. This Honourable House now resumes its Sitting.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move for the recommittal of Item, Notice of Motions Given Orally.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is for the recommittal of Item, Notices of Motions Given Orally?

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker on behalf of the Minister of Finance and Planning, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move to introduce and have read a first time a Bill shortly entitled, The Banking Services Act, 2014.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move the following Motions:

Be it Resolved with reference to the undermentioned Committees, which are appointed in the current session of Parliament, but have not completed their deliberations that further consideration of the Bills, Motions and Reports before them be suspended and that in the new session of Parliament, the House be empowered to enable these Committees to proceed with the issues referred to them from the stages reached before prorogation.

1. Sessional Committees:
   a) Economy & Production
   b) Human Resource & Social Development
   c) Infrastructure & Physical Development
   d) Internal & External Affairs
   e) Public Accounts
   f) Public Administration & Appropriations.
2. Joint Select Committees set-up to consider and report on:-
   a) Diaspora affairs
   b) The Operation of the Independent Commission of Investigation Act relative to a review of the legislation

c) Private Member's Motion No. 11 of 2012 as amended, by the Member of Parliament for St. James North Western regarding the need for a comprehensive review of climate change projections and approved by the House of Representatives on the 10l day of September, 2013.
d) The Integrity Commission Act, 2014
e) The Bankruptcy & Insolvency Act, 2013.

3. Special Select Committees set up to consider and report on:
Private Bills namely:

a) An Act to Amend the Baptist Mid Sessions in Jamaica Incorporated Act, so as to change the name of the Act and for connected matters.
b) An Act to Amend the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World of Jamaica Incorporation & Vesting Law.
c) An Act for the Incorporation of the International Missionaries Societies Seventh Day Adventist Church Reform Movement, Jamaican field and the Vesting of Property in the Body so Incorporated
d) An Act for the Incorporation of the power of Faith Ministries International and the Vesting of Property in the Body so Incorporated.
e) Proposed estimates for constituency projects submitted to the Constituency Development Fund by respected Members of Parliament, and to commend for approval
f) To keep under continuous review the number of constituency into which Jamaica is to be divided and the boundaries of such constituencies.

And Be it Further Resolved that the compositions of the above and undermentioned committees, appointed in the current session of Parliament remain unchanged except when necessary by further Motions taken and approved by this Honourable House.

a) The House Committee
b) Standing Orders Committee
c) Ethics Committee
d) Regulations Committee
e) Privileges Committee
f) Committee on Tax Measures
g) Constituency Development Fund Committee
h) Joint Select Committees to consider and report on (1) Diaspora Affairs.

Be it Resolved with reference to the undermentioned Bills, Motions and Reports, which are included in the order of business in this session of Parliament for which deliberations have not been completed, that in the new session of Parliament the House be empowered to proceed with them from the stages reached before prorogation.

1) A Bill entitled, "AN ACT to make provisions for the implementation of the agreement establishing the Caribbean Court of Justice and for connected matters".
2) A Bill entitled, "AN ACT to amend the Constitution to make and provide for the replacement of appeals to Her Majesty in Council. The new provisions for appeals to the Caribbean Court of Justice as Jamaica's final Appellate Court and for connected matters".
3) A Bill entitled, "AN ACT to Amend the Judicature Appellate Jurisdiction Act".
4) The Bauxite Production Levy Act Capital Development Fund Withdrawal No. 2 Order, 2014 Resolution
5) A Bill entitled, "The Quarantine Validation and Indemnification Act, 2014.
6) A Bill entitled, "The Employment (Flexible Work Arrangements) (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2014.
7) A Bill entitled, "The Banking Services Act, 2014".
8) Report of the Committee on Tax Measures on our deliberations on the Fiscal Policy Paper for the financial year 2013/2014.
9) Report of the Committee appointed to examine and recommend for approval proposed estimates for constituency projects submitted to the Constituency Development Fund by respected Members of Parliament for the year 2012/2013.
10) Report of the deliberations of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee of the House of Representative for the period July to December 2013.
11) Report of the Economy and Production Committee on our deliberations on Private Members' Motion No. 6 for the replacing of section 37 of the Agricultural Produce Act, and the combination and review of the Praedial Larceny (Prevention) Act and the Agricultural Produce Act brought by the Member of Parliament for St. Elizabeth North Western.
12) Private Members' Motions No. 13, 14, 16, 17, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, 34 and 35.

That includes, Mr. Mair's motion?

And 20.

Mr. Speaker, I further beg to give notice that at a later stage today I will move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take this Motion.

Mr. Speaker, I move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take this Motion?

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that we move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to take the motion?

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I now put the motion.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Motion be approved.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, as we come to the close of this session of Parliament, I think we in this Chamber can be justly proud of some of the accomplishments of this parliamentary year. You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that at our final Sitting in December, of 2013, I highlighted the fact that in that Calendar Year, we passed a record 40 Bills. Of that number, Mr. Speaker, 29 were passed since the beginning of this legislative period.

In addition to that, the Criminal Justice (Suppression of Criminal Organization) Bill was passed in this quarter and it is anticipated that today, as we move to approve the Senate amendments, which we have already done, to the Public Bodies Management and Accountability Amendment Act and the Financial Administrative and Audit Act, the number has now increased to 32.

But, Mr. Speaker, not only have we made significant strides in the passing of legislation, several Private Members' Motions were also approved by this Honourable House. We are dedicated to resolving the practical issues that affect our constituents. That is why, Mr. Speaker, in this parliamentary year, we approved a motion by the Member from St. Catherine Southern concerning charges and fees being imposed by financial institutions. The Motion was referred by the Economy and Production Committee so that it could be fully debated and various stakeholders would have the opportunity to contribute to that debate. We also passed a motion by the Member from Kingston Western calling for a review of the resources allocated to the Jamaica Fire Brigade.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, in order to address the plight of our farmers some of whom suffered great losses at the hands of persons who deprive them of the fruits of their months of sowing and watering and weeding and watching and praying, we approved a Motion from the Member St. Elizabeth North Western for an examination of the Praedial Larceny (Prevention) Act and the Agricultural Produce Act. The Motion was referred to the Economy and Production Committee and will take it in the next session of the Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the Motions above, this Honourable House did approve a Motion for the renaming of the Throne Speech. I'm to report, Mr. Speaker, that the Cabinet has decided not implement this proposal at this stage and instead, Mr. Speaker, we, in this Chamber, and the other Chamber we will now have to work closely to look at the issues concerning our sovereignty, the sovereignty arrangements and the measures required for us to make the full transition to Republican status (Applause). And I do believe that there is at this time based on my own assessment and query, that we are closer to having agreement on Jamaica moving towards full Republican status and let us try to do that, I am urging Members in the new legislative year.

Mr. Speaker, we also very early in the new legislative year will sign off finally on the prayer. We do intend to have a meeting of the

Standing Orders Committee to enable us to address - the Cabinet itself has already deliberated on this matter.

Mr. Speaker, open dialogue on a variety of issues has been facilitated when Members of Parliament asked and received answers to questions. In this quarter alone we answered seventeen questions and we did not shy away from controversial issues, even though sometimes the question for clarification seemed expansive. And it covered a range of issues that we are all familiar with.

Our Committees were very active as well, Mr. Speaker. Our single Special Select Committee, the Constituency Development Fund Committee held a total of nineteen meetings and I want to salute the Members from St. Elizabeth North Western and St. Catherine South Western who had perfect attendances (Applause). Nine of the thirteen Standing Committees met at least once; the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee met twenty times. No Member managed to attain perfect attendance, but I have to single out the Members from St. James East Central and St. James Central who were absent only once.

The inactive Standing Committees were the committee of Privileges, the Regulations Committee and the Constituency Boundaries Committee. We also didn't meet as a Standing Orders Committee.

All of the six committees appointed to sit jointly with committees from the Senate held meetings during the period. The Joint Select Committee on the operation of the Independent Commission of Investigations Act met most frequently having had a total of thirteen meetings.

In total, Mr. Speaker, sixteen Select, Special Select and Joint Select Committees held a total of one hundred and eight meetings and submitted no few than twelve Reports to the House.

Mr. Speaker, earlier I alluded to the renaming of the Throne Speech issue, but this is in no way indicative of a weakening of our commitment to the Commonwealth of Nations. In fact, our Parliament remains a very active member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and on March 10, we held a ceremony and walked to commemorate Commonwealth Day. The Parliament was represented by the Speaker of the House, also the Honourable Arnaldo Brown, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, the Member from St. Elizabeth North Eastern, Mr. Pryce. Also among those in attendance were His Excellency David Fitton, British High Commissioner, and the Deputy High Commissioner, students and others from schools around the area.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, all in all I'm of the view that it has been a very productive legislative period and I look forward to working with Members again from both sides and I want to acknowledge the work that Leader for Opposition Business has lent to this effort of trying to assist in making the work of this Chamber seamless. So I want to thank him

along with all the other Members for enabling us to have a relatively successful parliamentary year.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Miss HANNA: Very well done House Leader.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Smith.

Mr. D. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, listening to the House Leader there is no doubt that at the second half of the year, which is now coming to a close, the Parliament did get very active and passed a few bits of legislation.

Miss HANNA: Yes, yes. (Applause)

Mr. D. SMITH: However, I would have hoped that the House Leader would have mentioned that a significant amount of these Bills started - had its birth with the former Government. And, in fact, they just had to finalize - dot 'I's, cross 'T's and complete these Bills.

(Cross talk)

I also would have hoped that the House Leader would have extended commendation to the Opposition for the high level of cooperation which they received in the months of November and December where we went beyond what is the custom by dealing with Bills tabled and within one hour passed or two hours passed in this House.

(Applause) (Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, on the matter of Private Members' Motion we note that seventeen Private Members' Motions that the House Leader mentioned were passed in the period, but you know when you look at one which was debated today, which the Member from St. Andrew North Central highlighted, which has been on the Notice Paper here from the 24th of January 2012, it means that there has to be some tremendous improvement taking place in the new year.

(Cross talk)

I'm dealing with facts, my brother, so you can run *yuh* mouth. I'm just dealing with facts on documents here. And there are others as the Member from West Central St. Catherine is highlighting. There are others. And we look at the Question Paper and unfortunately we have some questions, the Member from St. Catherine Central asked of the Prime Minister answers were due from the 18th of March, which we have not yet got. So I'm just highlighting that everything is not perfect and we are looking forward to perfect the operations of the House in the New Year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, let me not omit because it's a very important part of the work here, the staff of this Parliament, for the tremendous work that they continue to do.

(Applause)

Miss HANNA: Hear, hear!

Mr. PAULWELL: The **Hansard** Writers (Applause), the Clerk and her team and of course, our friends from the media who continue to report on our activities here.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, it is not intended to do any further business. So I'm moving for the adjournment of the Parliament *sine die.*

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that this Honourable House adjourns *sine die.*

Motion put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) This Honourable House now stands adjourned.

The House accordingly adjourned at approximately 4:59 p.m., *sine die.*