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LUCK RUNS OUT ON ILLEGAL CASHPOT SELLERS

Five men and one woman were arrested on Saturday, October 30, in a Watson Hill home in Lititz District, St. Elizabeth, for possession and selling of illegal CashPot tickets; allowing premises to be used for unlawful gaming; and taking part in unlawful gaming. These offences of the recently amended Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Act, when combined could attract penalties of over \$1 million.

Acting on information, a four month long investigation began in June, resulting in a raid being conducted by members of the Enforcement Division of the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Commission, supported by police personnel from the Mobile Reserve Division. The main suspect, Mr. Ralph Francis, age 59 of Watson Hill, Lititz District in St. Elizabeth, was apprehended and charged with illegal bookmaking and operating illegal gaming on his premises.

His accomplices, all residents of St. Elizabeth, were apprehended during the operation and charged for possession and selling of illegal CashPot tickets: 62 year old Samuel Thomas, a Farmer of Warminster; Grace Douglas, aged 42, a Bar Operator of Watson Hill; Larkon Biggs, 42, a Labourer of Four Roads, James Powell, 84, a Retiree of Brinkley District; and Peter White, 45, a Farmer also of Brinkley District.

During the operation several books with carbon copies of illegal bets and over \$70,000 in cash were seized as exhibits. The accused persons were taken to the Junction Police Station where they were charged, placed into custody and offered bail to appear in the Black River Resident Magistrate Court on Wednesday, December 15, 2010.

Amendments to the BGLA, which came into full effect in June of this year, introduced a schedule of fixed penalties for various criminal breaches of the Act, designed to turn the tables on illegal gaming in the nation, and protect the interests of law abiding citizens. Fixed penalties will now be issued in a manner similar to the issuing of traffic tickets. The crime of carrying on

pool betting or book making without being authorized or licensed is \$500,000; and allowing unlawful gaming on one's premises attracts a fixed penalty of \$375,000.