
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1999 – 2004

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, May 30, 2000

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.20 a.m. on Tuesday, May 30, 2000.

PRESENT

His Honour J. M. EDGHILL, J.P. (Deputy Speaker)
Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc. (Econ.), (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs) (Minister of the Civil Service)

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Q.C., LL.M. (Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs) (Leader of the House)

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.) (Leader of the Opposition)

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN, K.A., Q.C., LL.B.

Mr. L. R. TULL, Q.C., M.A. (Oxon.)

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, Q.C., M.A., M.Sc. (Econ.)

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade)

Mr. D. CARTER (Chairman of Committees)

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, B.A., LL.B. (Minister of Labour, Sports and Public Sector Reform)

Hon. G. A. CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip. Ed., J.P. (Minister of Housing and Lands)

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY (Minister of Social Transformation)

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN

Miss H. E. THOMPSON, LL.B.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, LL.B. (Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture)

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS

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

Mr. D. T. GILL, B.Sc.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH, B.Sc., M.B.A.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY, B.Sc. (Minister of Industry and International Business)

Prayers were taken by Canon Father Ivan Harewood.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, May 23, 2000.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes for the Honourable the House of Assembly for its meeting of Tuesday, May 23, 2000, which Minutes have been circulated, be taken as read.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If there are no corrections or observations, then let these Minutes stand confirmed.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 be suspended for the rest of the day's Sitting.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to second that.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 5 – RESOLUTION TO TAKE NOTE
OF THE GREEN PAPER ON PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, this Resolution stands in my name as Leader of the House but the substantive Minister responsible for Social Transformation will lead the debate.

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me first begin by saying that I am humbled to be given this opportunity in this Honourable Chamber to introduce this Green Paper on disabilities into this Chamber.

Sir, it would be remiss of me if I did not offer my sincerest thanks to the Honourable Member for St. Philip North for his quality work with this document.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would also like to take this occasion and salute all of those persons with disabilities and those organisations who are too numerous to mention who have either researched or assisted with the preparation of this Green Paper.

Obviously, Sir, when I came into this Honourable Chamber this morning we realised that even this Parliament is not equipped at all to deal with persons with physical disabilities. Sir, I am hoping that that would not be a deterrent and that this Honourable Chamber will take notice of this deficiency and correct this imbalance in the near future. Sufficing to say also, I would hope that this lack of assistive device is not an indication that persons with disabilities, Sir, would not in the foreseeable future have an opportunity to walk up these Honourable steps to represent themselves in this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Government of Barbados, through the Ministry of Social Transformation, has committed itself to the development of policies, programmes and activities that will empower and protect persons within our society who are deemed to be vulnerable and certainly, Sir, socially disadvantaged.

In preparing this Green Paper, Government through the National Disabilities Unit, sought the advice and certainly the guidance of persons with disabilities. Through the Paper, Government intends to invite public comments and is concerned with identifying proposals to ensure that persons with disabilities, whether as individuals or collectively through groups established to represent their interest to become part of mainstream society.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, this document was developed into two stages. The first stage involved the establishment of a Multi-disciplinary Task Force which included public meetings as a major part of its strategy. As a result, a Report

with some recommendations was produced.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the second stage the National Disability Unit used those recommendations as the basis of wide consultations with the public, private and voluntary sectors of this society.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, for a long time, the rights of persons with disabilities have been the subject of much discussion in the United Nations and other international, regional and local organisations. Permit me therefore, Sir, to trace the chronological sequence and the history and outcomes of those discussions.

Sir, in 1974 based on a recommendation in the Muller Report the Cabinet agreed to set up a National Advisory Council to plan and coordinate programmes, involuntary welfare work and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities.

In 1980, a National Committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons was established by the then Minister of Labour and Community Services.

In 1982, the UN General Assembly adopted the World Programme of Action concerning disabled persons in its Resolution 37/52 of December 3rd and declared the period 1982 to 1992 as the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons.

Sir, between November 8 and 12 of 1982, a National Planning Workshop on the needs of the handicapped child in Barbados was fostered by the National Children's Home, the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) and the Ministry of Health.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the outcomes of that workshop was a recommendation for the establishment of a National Coordinating body involving all the Ministries and private agencies which provide services to persons with disabilities and representatives of the disabled community.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities at its 48th Session on December 20, 1993 (Resolution 48/96).

Sir, the ILO Caribbean Regional Technical Meeting on National Disability Policy and Legislation to Promote Equality of Opportunity and Treatment in Training and Employment of Disabled Persons was held in Trinidad and Tobago from March 21 to March 25, 1994. That meeting was attended by representatives of Governments, employers, workers and organisations representing persons with

disabilities from eleven English and Dutch speaking countries of the Caribbean including Barbados.

Sir, this meeting resulted to what is known as the Port-of-Spain Declaration which calls for regional Governments to :

1. Stimulate national awareness and action to create training and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, by organising national seminars, involving the social partners and organisation of persons with disabilities, to determine national disability policy objectives and legislative needs.

2. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, also to ratify the ILO Convention No. 159 on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons and incorporate its provisions into national legislation, Sir.

3. Appoint multi-disciplinary Tasks Forces to include representatives of employers, trade unions, organisations of persons with disabilities, as well as service-providing agencies, Sir, charged with the responsibility of formulating national disability policy, Sir.

1 1 . 3 0 a . m .

- 1.9 Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, a Multi-disciplinary Task Force on Disabilities was established in January 1996 and their Report was published in February 1997.

- 1.10 Sir, the National Disabilities Unit was established in December 1997 with Mr. Errol Best as its Director. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, one of its objectives was to prepare a Draft Policy on Disabilities. I am therefore extremely happy, Sir, to be able to present this Green Paper in this Honourable Chamber here this morning, Sir.

- 1.11 Sir, in our Manifestoes 1994 and 1999, the Barbados Government committed itself to ensuring that the "rehabilitation of disabled persons will be a national effort designed to facilitate the utilisation of their natural ability and their participation, in the world of work."

The measures, therefore, contained in this Green Paper before this Honourable Chamber today, represents Government's commitment to the provision of a strategic approach of collaboration between various agencies, in

order that all persons with disabilities, and their families, will enjoy a better quality of life. Sir, let me repeat, the measures contained in this Green Paper before this Honourable Chamber today, Sir, represents Government's commitment to the provision of a strategic approach of collaboration between various agencies, in order that all persons with disabilities, and their families, will enjoy a better quality of life, lest we forget, Sir.

Today, Sir, it cannot be said that we are at the crossroads in the development of services and programmes for persons with disabilities in this country, Sir, especially since persons with disabilities have, and will continue to be consulted by this Government, even before any decisions are made on their behalf.

Sir, I will now beg to turn to the explanations of terms and I will try to briefly define some of the definition of terms taken from the International Classification of Impairment, Disability and Handicap by the World Health Organisation.

Impairment, Sir, is any loss of abnormality of psychological or anatomical structures or functions, Sir. Disability: Any restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.

Handicap, Sir, a disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from an impairment or disability, that limits or prevents the fulfillment of a role that is normal, depending on age, sex, social and cultural factors for that individual. It describes the encounter between a person with a disability and the environment, Sir.

Prevention: Measures aimed at preventing the onset of physical, intellectual, psychiatric and sensory impairments, or at preventing impairment when it has occurred, from causing permanent functional limitation or disability.

Rehabilitation: A goal-oriented and time-limited process aimed at enabling persons with disabilities to reach and maintain an optimum physical, sensory, intellectual, psychiatric and/or social functional level, thus providing them with the tools to change their lives towards a higher level of independence.

Equalisations of Opportunities: The process which the general system of society, such as the physical and cultural environment, housing, transportation, social and health services, educational and work opportunity, cultural and a social life, including, Sir, both sport and recreational facilities are made accessible to all.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it would obviously be remiss of me if I did not explain the aim of this Green Paper today, Sir. The aim of this Green Paper is to invite wide discussion on issues relative to persons with disabilities. It is certainly hoped that this process would sensitise and educate the wider society and help them to understand the importance of the involvement of persons with disabilities, Sir. It is hoped that through this process, also, the wider society would recognise and acknowledge the rights of persons with disabilities, Sir.

A s i d e s .

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will now explain the Policy Objectives which this Green Paper seeks to achieve, Sir. I will try to go through it systematically and as slowly as possible, so that we will not miss what the P o l i c y O b j e c t i v e s a r e .

1. To create supportive environments which will favour the integration and active participation in society of all persons with disabilities, their families and persons who care for them.
2. To ensure equal opportunities in all areas of development in the lives of persons with disabilities that would enhance the quality of their lives in order that each person will reach his or her maximum potential.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I honestly believe that such equalisation of opportunities should help eliminate marginalisation and, Sir, discrimination.

3. To empower persons with disabilities and their organisations to become involved in the socio-economic development of this country, Sir. I believe that the arrangement between Government and civil society, Sir, will be beneficial to this process.
4. To provide a framework which will include persons with disabilities in the planning of programmes, services and activities, for both physically and mentally challenged persons.
5. To encourage and support ongoing research in all areas of disabilities that impact upon the lives of persons with disabilities and their families. This process has already started, Sir, at the National

Disabilities Unit by the Director of the Unit who acquired several resource materials, from an IFA meeting, that is the International Federation on Aging, held in Montreal, Canada last year, which I also attended, Sir.
1 1 . 4 0 a . m .

Sir, it will now turn my attention to the general principles of this document.

The Government, Sir, in keeping with the national development policy is committed to the following principles in regard to persons with disabilities in this country.

1. The creation of a legislative base to enhance the lifestyles of persons with disabilities to remove discriminatory practices whenever they occur.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to point out at this time that the Ministry of Social Transformation is in the process of preparing the necessary Paper to go to Cabinet which will see that the National Disabilities Unit is under a Board, Sir, and I will speak to this later as we go on as to how this will b e d o n e .

This will give persons with disabilities greater autonomy and a direct voice in managing their own affairs. I want to repeat, Sir. This will give persons with disabilities greater autonomy and a direct voice in managing their a f f a i r s .

Sir, let me say that this process is currently with the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Social T r a n s f o r m a t i o n .

2. Facilitation of Government and non-governmental co-operation in decision-making aimed at improving the lifestyles of persons with d i s a b i l i t i e s .
3. Strengthening support to non-governmental bodies concerned with disability issues, while at the same time, Sir, encouraging the development of a co-ordinating body, which is truly representative of all organisations.

Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must emphasise that this will be facilitated when the National Disabilities Unit is p l a c e d u n d e r a B o a r d .

4. Collection and dissemination of information on all disabilities in order to increase knowledge and reduce prejudices against persons with d i s a b i l i t i e s .

Sir, I am aware, that this certainly will require additional staffing for the National Disabilities Unit.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me add, Sir, that I honestly believe that there is a progressive role for the media to play in this educational process and I would like them to work in partnership with us to create the enabling environment which is so necessary.

Sir, as I look up to the area of the Press, I see only one area of the media being represented. I think that a debate of this importance should have...

A s i d e s .

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: Sir, I do not see them and that is the point I am making. Mr. Deputy Speaker –

5. The creation of a National Register for Persons with Disabilities.

This process has already started and is projected to be completed by the year end.

6. Provision of a colour-coded National Registration Card which will allow persons with disabilities to be easily identified.
7. Ensuring the right of access to appropriate community based health care, preventative and rehabilitative services in order to reduce the occurrence of disabilities and enhancement of family support to promote the development of persons with disabilities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I also wish to point out that preventative and rehabilitative services will be continually researched and will be guided by the highest international standards.

8. Enacting of a building code, enforced by the proposed Building Authority to ensure accessibility to the physical and built environment.

Sir, I am sorry that the Honourable Minister of Public Works is not here as yet, but I know that when he comes to this Honourable Chamber that he would speak to this issue.

Sir, I also want to pause to congratulate the Honourable Member for the City, who over a process of time, has been striking a strong note for the enforcement of a strict building code in this country. It is something that we have to adhere to, Sir.

9. Ensuring the right to dignity, to speak and advocate, and to make choices.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me again emphasise that this will become a reality when the National Disabilities Unit is put under a Board. You will find that I will be stressing that because I believe that persons with disabilities have a

right to decide their own future and destinies for themselves.

A s i d e s .

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY:

10. Provision for access to adequate social security benefits and a rationalisation of benefits in relation to impairments and not type of disability.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is certainly the intention of the Ministry of Social Transformation through its Disabilities Unit, to establish a committee which will involve the Ministry of Finance, the National Insurance Department and the Welfare Department, soon to be the Bureau of Family Affairs, which is to rationalise benefits for persons with disabilities.

11. Ensuring the rights of accessibility to appropriate transportation for all persons with disabilities.

Sir, I wish at this point to congratulate the Honourable Minister of Public Works and Transport for acceding to our request in the Ministry of Social Transformation. I note at this point in time that two buses which are specially suited for persons with disabilities have been purchased. I hope that when the Transport Board is purchasing their additional fleet of buses that the persons with disabilities will not be forgotten. Two buses are not enough, but they are certainly a start. I hope that the buses would be available this morning so that we could have parked them outside of the Parliament yard and assist the persons with disabilities to and from this Honourable Chamber.

A s i d e s .

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: Sir,

12. Encouragement of the adaptation of “best practices” in all areas of disability to the advantage of persons with disabilities and extensive networking both regionally and internationally.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to point out that persons with disabilities will be the persons who will determine what are the “best practices”. Certainly, Sir, provision for access to education for all persons with disabilities at all education levels in an integrated setting whenever possible. I am confident, Sir, that the Honourable Minister of Education is more than eminently qualified to speak on this issue.

13. Equalisation of employment opportunities.

Sir, perhaps the Honourable Minister of Labour would be happy to share his plans for this provision with this Honourable Chamber and I look forward to his debate on this subject.

14. Facilitating the involvement of persons with disabilities in community activities including sporting, religious, recreational and artistic activities.

Sir, I will like it to be entered into the records of this Honourable Chamber, and also want to congratulate Mr. Wesley Grant who has represented Barbados overseas, a true ambassador for this country, in sports. Recently, Mr. Grant was given the keys to the City of Ecuador and I want to congratulate Mr. Grant and persons in the Paralympic Association.

Sir, let me say also that the Research Department of the Ministry of Social Transformation has recently completed a document to be our contribution to the proposed National Policy on Sports. This document looks at sports in terms of quality and disability.

Two of the recommendations in this document, Sir, are the expansion of the Students Revolving Loan Fund to provide a facility which will benefit persons with disabilities and a separate sports fund from which sports persons with disabilities could and would benefit, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is the intention of the Ministry of Social Transformation that the National Disabilities Unit is equipped to allow for research by students, parents and certainly members of the general public.

- (18) To ensure mechanisms are in place to monitor the quality of service being provided in all the areas of support to persons with disabilities. Again, this also applies to their family or persons who take care of them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is the intention of the Ministry of Social Transformation to strengthen the Barbados Council For The Disabled so that it is able to better formulate and execute programmes and services to its members.

Sir, it must be noted that the registration of persons with disabilities will allow for programmes and services to be better planned by persons with a disability. That is crucially important.

I, therefore, would like to take this opportunity to encourage all persons with disabilities who have not yet done so to register with the National Disabilities Unit within the Ministry of Social Transformation.

Sir, I now turn my attention to legislation. The Government of Barbados will review existing legislation as it relates to persons with disabilities and also make the necessary amendments. In addition, Sir, the development of

new legislation will be enacted to eliminate discrimination and prejudice and to promote equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities as outlined in the United Nations Draft Rules for Equalization of Opportunities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the National Disabilities Unit of the Ministry of Social Transformation will engage the services of a consultant to coordinate this process.

Sir, I will now look at the area of Health as it is so critical to persons with disabilities. I am happy to announce that the Government of Barbados will ensure effective and appropriate services for persons with disabilities. These services will emphasize assessment, early detection and intervention, treatment of impairment and rehabilitation. Effective measures will be introduced which focus on prevention and rehabilitation.

It is, therefore, necessary for the appropriate posts to be created at the National Disabilities Unit so that persons who have the appropriate background in Health can be employed. Sir, this will ensure that the following proposals are properly coordinated. They are the implementation of preventative measures which will reduce or eliminate the disability effects of many impairments. The introduction of the following measures will be instrumental in the prevention process. Again, Sir, I will go through them slowly because these measures are critical to this process.

- (1) The provision of adequate multi-disciplinary (inter-disciplinary) training in early detection methods for all persons involved in the care and education of persons with disabilities inclusive of medical and para-medical personnel.
- (2) The future development and sustainment of programmes for early detection and identification of disabilities within neo-natal services and primary health care in order to prevent, reduce or eliminate disabilities.
- (3) The strengthening of the maternal and child care health programmes, counselling, inclusive of genetic counselling, family planning, family life with particular reference to sexual and reproductive health research, and rights of persons with disabilities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the National Disabilities Unit of the Ministry of Social Transformation is currently arranging to host workshops on sexuality and health this financial year. I wish to take this opportunity, and it is not a commercial, to invite all Barbadians and certainly my friends on the Opposition to attend these workshops.

- (4) The mandatory screening in order to detect disabilities, thereby allowing corrective action to be taken and immunisation of all children against communicable diseases, particularly those that cause disabilities.

5. The provision of regular developmental screening services at appropriate intervals, inclusive of screening tools, equipment and devices.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Bill entails a financial cost but it must be noted, and I always say this in this Honourable Chamber, that the development of this country cannot and should not always be measured in dollars and cents but how much we put in and how much we care about each other.

6. The development and execution of health promotion and educational programmes in proper/adequate nutrition to prevent and reduce disabilities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, this emphasizes the urgent need to create the necessary posts so that persons with training in Health can be also employed by the National Disabilities Unit.

7. The implementation of safety measures to prevent accidents in the home or workplace (inclusive of occupational diseases), leisure, sports-related and on the road activities which certainly may result in disabilities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government will shortly be placing smoke detectors in all houses built by the National Assistance Board. This is an important preventative device. A little later, Sir, I want to use this opportunity to convey my condolences to the family of the old lady who was so savagely murdered. This society sometimes baffles me at the lack of care and understanding of the needs of persons with disabilities. We know as a fact that at least 90 percent of our older persons have some form of disability, Sir.

- (8) Implementation of measures geared towards the reduction of environmental pollution, and to control the importation and use of hazardous chemicals/materials which could create (and contribute) to conditions of disabilities.

12.00 noon

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Honourable Member for St. James North for taking the visionary decision to initiate the discontinuation of the use of leaded gasoline in Barbados.

- (9) Implement measures to control the imprudent use of medication, drugs, alcohol, tobacco and other stimulants or depressants to prevent drug-related

disabilities.

- (10) Community based primary health care inclusive of diagnostic, preventative and therapeutic services should be further strengthened and made accessible to all persons in this country with disabilities. These will include but not limited to medical, dental, nursing and maternal health, counselling and rehabilitative services.

- (11) Specialised health services must be available to meet specific needs of persons with disabilities inclusive of psychiatric, psychological, neurological, orthopaedic, physiotherapy, speech and hearing therapy.

These services will be integrated so that the persons with disabilities receive whatever treatments are deemed necessary to enable them to function effectively and to reach their maximum potential.

Sir, I will now look at Rehabilitation.

Effective Rehabilitative Service to persons with disabilities is very critical in order to achieve and sustain their optimum level of independence and functioning.

To ensure the provision of such services, measures will be implemented with input from the Ministry of Health and other Ministries, departments and organisations representing employees, workers and persons with disabilities with respect to the following measures:

- (1) The establishment of an Adult Assessment and Rehabilitation Centre to conduct assessment, rehabilitation and therapy for persons over 18 years to complement the work of the Children's Development Centre.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to remind this Honourable Chamber that in our Manifesto of 1999 the Government of Barbados gave a commitment to the provision of a new rehabilitation facility.

- (2) The development of community based rehabilitation programmers, inclusive of vocational training, sheltered productive workshops and resource facilities, including counselling, health promotion and nutrition.

- (3) The provision of ongoing training of personnel in rehabilitation:-

Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Speech Therapists, Doctors, Development

workers and allied fields in intervention at all levels of rehabilitative methods.

- (4) The provision of aids/assistive devices, equipment and appliances for persons with disabilities to assist them to increase their level of independence and ability to become self-sufficient.
- (5) The continued support of NGOs and community based groups which provide preventative and rehabilitative services to persons with disabilities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, this will form part of our Resource Centre Initiative which will shortly be introduced across Barbados.

- (6) Provision of adequate support facilities including:

- Respite care for all care-givers
- Semi-supervised homes
- Supervised homes
- Incontinent-care training and services
- Assistive home services.

I must admit, Sir, that this certainly will be a massive task but the needs are very evident. This will require an urgent review of the present staff complement at the National Disabilities Unit.

- (10) The employment of a suitably trained technician to enable the continuous research into available new rehabilitative technology to ensure that rehabilitative services are current. The technician should also ensure the servicing and maintaining of all types of assistive devices. Again, this shows that the creation of posts for the National Disabilities Unit is urgently needed.
- (11) A Directory of Services which would provide information to persons with disabilities, their families, care-givers and professionals. The Barbados Council for the Disabled will play a key role in the establishment of this Directory.

I will turn my attention now to another important area, that is, the area of education and training.

Sir, access to education should be a right for all citizens and particularly those citizens who have disabilities. It is, therefore, necessary to revise the Education Act to ensure the 'right' to a quality education for persons with

disabilities, in all Educational Institutions, realising that initially specific schools may be adapted, with the others to follow within an identifiable time frame.

Sir, all new school facilities should be accessible. The provision of an equipment/resource library at schools and other educational institutions to allow students with disabilities to loan assistive devices/equipment in a similar way as book loans should be mandatory.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the following provisions are meant to assist in achieving that 'right':

- (1) Provisions of decentralised early intervention services up to age 6, for all persons with disabilities or those at risk of developing a disability.

1 2 . 1 0 p . m .

- (2) Adequate mechanisms and provisions will be put in place to identify disabilities in children at the earliest possible age in order that remedies and/or follow-up activities could be commenced.
- (3) The inclusion, as far as possible, of children with disabilities in regular school settings with adequate and appropriate support services beginning at nursery and preschool level.

It is necessary for integration into our educational system.

- (4) Children with special needs will be educated in the least restricted environment as far as possible with adequate support services.
- (5) Special schools/programmes will also be developed whenever feasible for children who cannot be integrated into the mainstream education system.
- (6) The provision and construction of ramps, rails and other suitable structures in all schools and facilities making them accessible to children with special needs within a certain time frame.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Minister of Education must be congratulated for the work done at the Pre-Vocational School in the Pine. I will take this opportunity to say, Sir, in my constituency, which is equipped with these facilities –

- (7) Parents should be involved in the education process of their children at all levels.

Sir, I honestly believe that it should be mandatory that the parents of children who are hearing impaired be provided with courses in sign language. There needs to be this communication between parents and children. Against that background, the National Disabilities Unit of our Ministry is arranging to host two courses in sign language at the Pre-Vocational Centre.

- (8) All persons working with special needs children should be provided with at least basic knowledge to enable them to cope effectively.
- Braille machines and books in braille, large print, audio tapes, braille and speech computer programmes, recording facilities and the latest technology will be provided in all educational institutions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would now like to take this opportunity to enter this document in braille into this Honourable Chamber.

- (10) Persons with disabilities should be exposed to a variety of skills and teaching/learning strategies.
- (11) The development and teaching of modules in the curriculum at all preschools, primary and secondary schools to instil in school children respect for, acceptance and tolerance of the limitations being experienced among persons with disabilities.
- (12) Ongoing training and refresher courses should be provided for all personnel, including development workers and day care providers working with persons with special needs.
- (13) The upgrading of teachers training and other programmes at Erdiston Teachers College, to include courses that address the needs of persons with disabilities, teaching methods and materials, curriculum and instructions, practical experiences and behavioural management for special needs children.
- (14) Sign language will be taught to all children in primary schools and should be widely used as the official language for communication with deaf persons.

Again, Sir, I want to congratulate the Honourable Minister of Education who has already begun to put this provision in place.

- (15) The development and implementation of appropriate curricula to include vocational, educational and training, work experience, daily living and functional skills.

- (16) Provisions will be made for the addition to an adaptation of existing curricula and new curricula should be developed where necessary.
- (17) Provisions should be made for free post-secondary education and training for persons with disabilities to allow for appropriate community adjustments.
- (18) Ensure that a fair percentage of public and private early intervention facilities, pre-schools, primary schools and institutions of higher learning facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities. In addition, Sir, all new Government and private schools must be – I repeat, all new Government and private schools must be accessible to persons with disabilities in this country.
- (19) Arrangements will be made for the assessment of children with special needs during and towards the end of their schooling and for monitoring their post-period activities.

The National Disabilities Unit has made provision for a psychologist who will ensure that parents of children with disabilities who are unable to pay, will still be able to have their children assessed.

- (20) At the end of the period of compulsory education and training, provision should be made to assist children with special needs in their independent adult life as far as possible.
- (21) To provide specialised support for all children with disabilities especially in the following areas such as:
1. Special educators.
 2. Guidance counsellors/workers.
 3. Teachers aides.
 4. Physiotherapists, Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists.
 5. Psychologists will be school based covering a number of schools within a particular geographical area. In addition to providing student assessment, they will also provide students with individual and family counselling and convene staff consultation meetings with teachers.

6. National Development Scholarships will be awarded for training in physiotherapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, educational psychology and psychiatric pediatrics and interpreter training.

Sir, I will now focus on employment and training. Mr. Deputy Speaker, over the years persons with disabilities have developed the view, and rightly so too, that they are often discriminated against when seeking employment even though in many cases they are adequately trained and qualified. This Paper recognises that persons with disabilities should enjoy equal opportunity and treatment in respect of access to, and advancement and remuneration in employment for which they are qualified.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, measures will, therefore, be implemented to facilitate the productive and gainful employment of persons with disabilities. In order to implement the following measures there is a need for co-operation between the public sector, trade unions, private sector and among non-governmental organisations including those community based organisations as alluded to earlier in my presentation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the suggested measures are:

- (22) A Public Sector Employment Policy which will promote integration of persons with disabilities into open employment and will also create a favourable working environment by making available support mechanisms such as personal assistance, interpreter services and assistance technologies.

It is at this point in time that I would like to compliment and congratulate the interpreters who are here this morning who have given of their time and effort to be here to interpret for this special occasion.

Sir, this would obviously require the creation of additional posts at the National Disabilities Unit in order to provide the necessary support. You realise that I have punctuated the necessity to provide adequate posts at the National Disabilities Unit so as to get the appropriate services for persons with disabilities in our community.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in addition, the present qualification barrier which now exists for entry into the public service will have to be reviewed in order to facilitate those persons with disabilities.

- (23) Co-operation between Government, the private sector and organisations of persons with disabilities to create appropriate training opportunities for persons with disabilities. Special focus should be on skills training including daily living skills.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the National Disabilities Unit has

already held an employment workshop and sensitivity training with the private and public sectors.

- (24) Encouragement of the private sector to improve employment opportunities for persons with disabilities and to develop public awareness programmes for all their employees, designed to overcome negative attitudes and prejudices concerning workers with disabilities.

Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the National Disabilities Unit is working in partnership with the PAHO on an attitudinal survey which will provide a better understanding of the transformation which is required.

- (25) The provision of sheltered employment such as production workshops and self-employment schemes for persons who are unable to compete effectively on the open market.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is unfortunate that at present no such Government run facility exists. However, the number of young adults leaving the Pre-Vocational School and other similar facilities each year without access to further training makes the need for a sheltered workshop most critical.

It is, therefore, essential for such a facility to be constructed and properly staffed to enable persons with disabilities to become productive members of our society.

In relation to the self-employment schemes, Sir, the National Disabilities Unit will be hosting workshops on Self-employment for Persons with Disabilities, Sir, very shortly. It is anticipated, Sir, that these workshops will commence in the month of July this year.

5. The provision of loan schemes designed to encourage persons with disabilities to become self-employed.
6. The redesign of existing loan schemes to address the needs of persons with disabilities, e.g. flexible repayments to accommodate fluctuations in the income due to the persons' impairment.
7. The provision of concessions where possible, for those organisations involved in the importation of goods and/or the production of services for persons with disabilities.

Sir, the Blind and Deaf workshop is an excellent example. This explains, Sir, why our Ministry has given that

organisation \$75,000 to assist with its Mops Programme, Sir. I should like to take this opportunity to do two things, to encourage all Barbadians to support this organisation to buy more mops and buy them locally, Sir, and encourage the Government of Barbados to ban the importation of mops.

8. The encouragement of Trade Unions, firstly, to review their rules and regulations, to allow membership of Persons with Disabilities into unions and; secondly to ensure equitable recruitment and promotion policies and employment conditions for persons with disabilities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish at the same time to congratulate those unions who now have persons with disabilities employed on their payroll.

9. The establishment of a job placement agency equipped with a comprehensive register of skills and abilities of persons with disabilities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the National Disabilities Unit is, at present, working with the National Employment Bureau to register the skills of persons with disabilities.

10. The reviewing of entry criteria to employment in both public and private sector organisations where there is discrimination against persons with disabilities who are capable of performing the tasks related to certain jobs.

Research has shown that persons with disabilities are very productive and can be an asset to any employer in this country, Sir.

11. The encouragement of employers of persons with disabilities who become disabled on the job to retrain and make the necessary physical alterations to the workplace, including adaptive technology, to allow such employees to continue employment.
12. Educational opportunities to employees on the work and possible adaptability of persons with disabilities should be made available.

The process, I must say, has already started. The sensitivity workshop held by the National Disabilities Unit for the public sector employees, Sir.

- (13) Persons with disabilities wishing to embark on self-employment ventures including cottage industries should be given the relevant support. The programme, Sir, that I spoke about earlier,

demonstrates this Government's commitment to this position.

- (14) Working environments should be adapted and modified to facilitate employees with disabilities.
- (15) Persons with disabilities should be afforded equal opportunities to work for equal pay provided they have skills and qualifications for the job.
16. The promotion of community-based rehabilitation programmes and other income-generating projects will be a feature of the proposed resource centres throughout Barbados.
- (17) The provision of management opportunities for persons with disabilities in facilities for sheltered employment.

It is therefore important, Sir, that persons with disabilities are not only considered for low order jobs but also jobs in positions of management providing that they are qualified.

18. Opportunities provided for persons with disabilities made to be represented on the appropriate Boards and Committees throughout Government and the private sector.

This explains the point again that we are swiftly moving to place the National Disabilities Unit under a Board, Sir. It is so important that persons with disabilities are given the necessary autonomy to manage their own affairs.

Sir, I now come to the section Supportive Environment. As I alluded to when I first began the debate, it is unfortunate that this Honourable Chamber is not built to accommodate those persons with physical disabilities but I do not want Honourable Members to create a grief lump because there are none but they have time to correct the problem and make it an adaptable environment.

Asides.

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: Sir, I now turn to the creation of supportive environment and note that the building code should be enacted and enforced to provide total accessibility:

- (A) The Government can help with this accessibility that I am speaking about by:
 - a. individual housing
 And I will speak to housing later.

b. low cost group/family housing.

c. parking spaces .

(A) The mandatory provision of adequate parking spaces including public and private car parks should be reserved for persons with disabilities.

Drivers or riders with disabilities must be provided with permits to allow for the utilisation of these parking spaces.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to give this Honourable Chamber the assurance that the Ministry of Social Transformation will be contacting the Ministry of Housing and Lands to have discussions on this matter and already notice has been given to the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

ii Public Health Buildings such as the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Educational Institutions, Libraries and Polyclinics should provide special parking spaces for persons with disabilities.

iii Periodical surveys to assess the compliance level of the general public.

Consideration should be given to the co-ordinating body for persons with disabilities carrying out this function.

Sir, I will now turn to the public transportation and I want to repeat :

1. A minimum of 10% of public transportation in this country should be made wheelchair accessible and the appropriate storage space for wheelchairs should be provided.

This process, I noted earlier, has started.

2. Special seating should be designed or reserved for persons with disabilities on all public transportation .

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, even though some seats on public transport are reserved for those persons with disabilities, it hurts me that some able-bodied members of the public refuse to give up their seats on buses for persons with disabilities. I have to ask, Sir, are we truly and really a caring society ?

A s i d e s .

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: You cannot ask me how I know that because I travel on Transport Board buses, minibuses and ZR vans when time comes for me to do such, Sir, so I

know what I am talking about .

3. Introduction of legislation to ensure Government agencies involved in transportation of clients have at least one suitable...

This is the Government that I am talking about, Sir.

...have at least one suitable adaptable and accessible vehicle .

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must announce to this Honourable Chamber that \$185 000 have been provided in this year's Estimates for the National Disabilities Unit to purchase such a vehicle .

A s i d e s .

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: I should however, like to take this opportunity to appeal to all departments of Government who will purchase new vehicles or replace existing ones to kindly remember persons with disabilities.

4. The Access Symbol should be displayed where appropriate to indicate that provisions have been made for persons with disabilities.

This is very, very important.

5. The design of public phone booths, letterboxes, passenger lifts, parks and children's playgrounds should facilitate persons with disabilities .

Housing, Sir, and I am glad that the Honourable Minister of Housing is coming in at the appropriate time.

Ten percent of new Government housing and apartments should be allocated for persons with disabilities and that is at a minimum .

Similar allocations should be made in respect of houses refurbished by Government agencies.

Pavements and pedestrian crossings should also be constructed/adapted as to enable use by wheelchair users, people with poor mobility and the blind. Pedestrian crossings should have devices which enable hearing and visually impaired persons to use them .

Sir, the time has come when we have to take a critical look at roads and pavement systems particularly in urban Barbados. Too many persons with disabilities in my view, are invisible in this society and we say we are caring people.

Private transportation, Sir, and this one is for the Honourable Minister for Finance. Government duties and taxes should be removed from specially adapted vehicles purchased by individuals for public and private use.

Ancillary Services, Sir, support should be given to the establishment of a coordinated network of services to assist persons with disabilities and their families to effectively manage their disabilities.

Sir, again with the assistance of the Barbados Council For The Disabled, the National Disabilities Unit is in the process of setting up a telephone support service for persons with disabilities. This will include home based care, respite care, day care facilities and institutional care to meet the diverse needs of persons with disabilities. The creation of additional posts at the National Disabilities Unit to manage these services is extremely essential and critical.

Sir, I will turn to access to communication and information. It is amazing, Sir, and it is essential to the growth and development of an individual. In fact, Sir, every effort will be made to ensure that information is accessible to persons with disabilities to enhance their opportunity for personal growth and fulfilment. In particular, Sir, the following agents will be encouraged to collaborate in the ways indicated.

- (D) Libraries and public offices to present information in a manner which is accessible to persons with disabilities. For example, in Braille, large print and tape for the visually impaired.

Similarly, Sir, appropriate technology should be used to provide information for persons with other forms of impairment or comprehension difficulties.

- (B) Telecommunication Services should be installed, as well as special devices and units for the hearing and visually impaired.

There is the need, Sir, to ensure that these devices are available. Sir, the National Disabilities Unit is in the process of acquiring the necessary devices for persons who are hearing impaired. Now this brings me to the most important point, Sir, and that is the media.

- (1) Information: The media should present information in a manner accessible to persons with disabilities.
- (2) Dissemination of news broadcasts and public service announcements using sign language and the use of 'close caption' in movies and documentaries.

Sir, all Government Information Service programmes

should be 'close captioned'. It is unfortunate, Sir, that CBC only shows three minutes of a one-hour news production in sign language. Sir, this insensitivity clearly ignores the fact that persons who are hearing impaired are also interested in the rest of the news. Let us use a scenario, Sir. What if there is an impending hurricane coming to Barbados? When you get to the weather news, there is no sign language. Do you understand the point that I am making, Sir?

Sir, you must be more sensitive when we are dealing with the needs of persons with disabilities. When we are depicting persons with disabilities in situations which highlight their potential and achievement, it should be presented as a further effort in promoting their further integration and acceptance into the community.

- (3) Non-Governmental organizations and community-based organizations should be better programmed to teach the basics of sign language to children with hearing impairment, their families and also to persons in the community where they live.

These programmes should be transmitted via the media. Sign language interpretation services will also be encouraged to facilitate communication between persons with hearing impairment and others.

- (4) A central location/facility for TTY Exchange – I will explain that because I circulated these and I am sorry that I did not put copies on the Opposition's desk, that was just an oversight, Sir, and support to deaf persons in acquiring TTY machines for use between deaf and hearing persons. Similar facilities should be available at hospitals, fire and police headquarters and at convenient locations.

I will enter this into this Honourable Chamber, Sir, but just let me clarify the terms TTD and TTY. They mean virtually the same thing. These are telecommunication devices called Text Telephones that are used by people who cannot hear or see the telephone. In using this small terminal, a person can type and read a conversation. It is estimated, Sir, that there are potentially 25 million TTY users in the United States alone and many more who utilize TTY to communicate with them. I just wanted to introduce that, Sir.

I will look now at technical devices and equipment, Sir. Technical devices and equipment are essential tools for persons with disabilities to assist them in enhancing their levels of independence in their daily living and to exercise their rights. In order to assist persons with disabilities with these devices, the following measures will be introduced where feasible:

- (5) The production of simple and inexpensive devices by local organizations utilizing local resources.
- (6) The removal of all taxes or the provision of soft loans and related measures to enable persons who have disabilities and their families and rehabilitation centres and workshops to acquire personal aids for certain devices, training material, and equipment.
- (7) The provision of tax concessions where possible for organizations involved in the importation of goods or production of devices for persons with disabilities and the establishment of a monitoring mechanism to prevent abuse of this provision.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Ministry of Finance will be asked to play a monitoring role to facilitate this process.

- (4) Appropriate foreign agencies should be contacted for assistance in obtaining equipment and assistive devices for persons with disabilities in cases where such devices are expensive on the local market.
- (5)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I should like also to recommend that the National Disabilities Unit be used as the facilitating agency in this process.

- (6) The employment of a suitable trained technician to ensure the monitoring, servicing and maintenance of all assisted devices.

Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I must highlight the urgency for the creation of posts at the National Disabilities Unit to assist in this process. I will now turn to Income and Social Security, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Income and Social Security:

The Government of Barbados recognises its responsibility to ensure the provision of social security and income maintenance schemes for persons with disabilities, therefore, measures will be adopted which will include the following:

- (1) The encouragement of private organisations to implement disability benefit programmes for employees who become disabled. This is a very critical point, Sir.
- (2) The mandatory development and implementation of disability benefit programmes, by both public and private sector organizations for their

employees who become disabled.

- (3) The review of existing social security programmes to assess their adequacy and necessary restructuring of such programmes to ensure that they meet the needs of persons with disabilities. This will include the equalisation of benefits among all persons with disabilities and between the National Insurance Department and Social Benefits Agency.
- (4) The modification of programmes to provide incentives for persons with disabilities to seek employment in order to enhance their income-earning capacity. Such programmes will also contribute to the organization, development and financing of vocational training and placement services.
- (5) Provisions will be made to allow persons with disabilities on National Insurance or Social Assistance Benefits to supplement their income up to at least minimum wages without losing their benefits.

Sir, as it stands at present if a person who is receiving benefits starts to work, he or she loses those benefits so that when he or she stops working, they have to go through that process over and over again.

- (6) Provisions of the same levels of compensation to those persons who are deaf with speech and those persons without speech.
- (7) Persons with mental and intellectual disabilities should receive the same consideration for Social Security Benefits as persons with other types of disabilities.

Sir, I would just like to give a brief definition of mental retardation. It is a condition which originates during infancy and is characterised by sub-average intellectual functioning.

Sir, I now turn to Family Life which is very critical. The Ministry of Social Transformation could be referred to as a ministry of family and social services. When you really examine the Ministry critically, Sir, you can see it in that light.

Sir, family also plays a key role in the life of the disabled members. The Ministry of Social Transformation therefore intends to facilitate the full participation of persons with disabilities in the family environment through the following approaches:-

- (8) The provision of family care services, financial and other assistance inclusive of counselling and information services and respite care, intended to enhance the capability of families to respond to the needs of their disabled members.

- (9) The ensuring of respect for the rights of persons with disabilities to start families and experience p a r e n t h o o d .

Sir, that speaks for itself. In other words, respect for the reproductive right of persons with disabilities. This Honourable Chamber is seeing some very beautiful ladies in this building. I am sure the Honourable Member for St. Lucy would be encouraged by this beauty.

10. The provision of assistance to family planning organisations so as to facilitate the accessibility of family planning information, advice and service to persons with disabilities.
11. The encouragement of the establishment of support groups for families of persons with d i s a b i l i t i e s .

I believe, Sir, that PAREDOS can play an important role in this respect. I should also like to take this opportunity to invite members of the public to contribute generously to the PAREDOS Building Appeal Fund.

12. The provision of family care services, inclusive of counselling and information services intended to enhance the capability of families to respond to the needs of their disabled members. Parents/Relatives/Carers will be trained in areas where it is necessary to improve communication between the family and the person with a disability and the community at large.
6. Training will be provided for parents of children with disabilities, where necessary, attitudinal changes in parents/guardians.
7. Day Care facilities with special educational programmes for children with disabilities will be established to help the children with their personal development and at the same time assist the parents to go out to work.

Sir, the Bonnetts Resource Centre will be a venture for the first pilot of this programme. Similar facilities will be established for adults who need care and stimulation for their own development, while allowing parents/caregivers to w o r k .

8. Couples with disabilities who wish to adopt children will be assessed in the exact manner as would non-disabled applicants.
- I now turn to Recreation, Sports and Culture.

Sir, Government will ensure that facilities are established to enhance participation of persons with disabilities in community life. This will however require support from the pertinent Government Ministries as well as n o n - g o v e r n m e n t a l o r g a n i z a t i o n s .

Sir, the following measures will ensure achievement of t h e a b o v e o b j e c t i v e s :

1. The encouragement of persons with disabilities to utilise their artistic and intellectual potential for their own benefit and certainly for the enrichment of their communities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on December 1 this year this island's school children will be invited to the Gymnasium to see persons with all types of disabilities perform. On December 3, there will be a Gospel Concert which will feature performances by groups with disabilities.

Let me say, Sir, that in this grouping there is a tremendous amount of talent. I would urge Honourable Members that whenever the persons with disabilities are putting on these types of activities that we should all attend.

2. The adaptation of all public entertainment areas such as beaches, gym halls, theatres, cinemas, hotels, restaurants and museums where possible, to facilitate accessibility to persons with d i s a b i l i t i e s .

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the National Disabilities Unit will be working in partnership again with the Barbados Council for the Disabled to establish, and I want all Honourable Members to note, a National Hall of Fame for Persons with D i s a b i l i t i e s .

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3. The adaptation by private entertainment organisations of their facilities to accommodate p e r s o n s w i t h d i s a b i l i t i e s .
4. The expansion of adequate opportunities, facilities and equipment, for sporting activities.
5. The provision of appropriate sports equipment in schools where feasible, to accommodate children w i t h d i s a b i l i t i e s .
6. The organisation by travel agencies, hotel and tourist authorities, of recreational activities and travel opportunities for persons with disabilities.
7. Schools to encourage students with disabilities to participate in the various sporting programmes and art forms as far as possible.

I am talking about an integrated approach to sports.

- (8) Schools should also plan alternative recreational and sporting activities, which allow for participation by students with disabilities e.g. draughts, dominoes, chess or other similar recreational activities, and musical programmes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform this Honourable Chamber that the National Dominoes Association of Barbados will be working with the National Disabilities Unit to bring on stream a national dominoes competition not only for older persons but also that competition will include persons with disabilities.

9. Special programmes should be designed to develop the artistic skills, talents and creative potential of persons with disabilities.
10. Persons with disabilities should be included in the decision-making process with regards to programmes for family life education, recreation, sports and culture.
11. The inclusion of persons with disabilities in cultural activities such as music, dance, theatre, painting thus will allow for their contribution to community enhancement.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, later this year the Ministry of Social Transformation will stage a production which will include persons with disabilities directed by persons with disabilities, written by persons with disabilities, acted by persons with disabilities and this will be staged at the Daphne Hackett Theatre. The name of that production is: "I, She and Me." This production, Sir, looks at the life of persons with disabilities. That is critical.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will now deal with transportation in detail. Access to transportation for persons with disabilities is absolutely necessary to enable individuals to move freely and independently throughout communities in Barbados, thus experiencing what I spoke about earlier, social integration and development.

The following provisions should be made to ensure that adequate transportation throughout the island and equal access to public facilities and services. I alluded earlier that 10 per cent of public transportation should be wheelchair-accessible with improvement and adaptation of pavements, pedestrian crossings. I want to speak to this point, Sir.

I am aware that the Barbados Council for Persons With Disabilities is working with the Ministry and we are at the embryonic stage of planning to establish a special taxi service for persons with disabilities. Disability is not

inability. I wish to assure the President and the members of the Council for Persons With Disabilities that they can count on our fullest support.

The ongoing monitoring of parking spaces which I spoke to earlier. I spoke about periodic surveys and providing specialised agencies.

I now turn to housing, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Unfortunately, the inadequacy of most housing developments in this country deter persons with disabilities from acquiring homes. To effectively address this situation, input will be required from the appropriate Ministries and organisations.

The following suggestion could address the housing needs of persons with disabilities:

1. Undertaking assessment of housing needs for persons with disabilities and their ability to acquire housing units and also lots.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the national registration effort initiated by the National Disabilities Unit certainly could assist in this process.

2. The allocation of a proportion of specially adapted housing units for persons with disabilities, in new housing developments.
3. The establishment of facilities to house persons with disabilities, whose families are unable to cope, or to meet the financial costs of caring for such individuals.
4. The provision of low cost group living facilities, and family-sized Government subsidised rental facilities to allow for the promotion of independent living opportunities for persons with disabilities.
5. All houses of persons with disabilities should be suitably adapted to meet their needs including the provision of indoor bathrooms.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to congratulate CAMROD, the Ministry of Housing and Lands and if I seem a little curt at this point in time I would also like to thank Mr. Cecil DeCaires of Life of Barbados who is in the process of finalising plans for phase one of construction of a housing programme for persons with disabilities.

I must also allude to the fact that the Barbados Council for Persons With Disabilities also put forward these proposals.

I will now deal with public awareness. Sir, there is a critical need in Barbados for us to undertake studies focussing issues which affect the lives of persons with disabilities and their families. Government will encourage and support research efforts into the following areas with a view of establishing a comprehensive data bank on persons with disabilities providing data on areas such as causes, types and incidences of impairment and disability, the economic and social conditions of persons with disabilities.

1 . 1 0 p . m .

- * the economic and social conditions of persons with disabilities
- * the economic and social impact on society of persons with disabilities remaining unemployed
- * Development of assistive devices for persons with disabilities
- * assessment of the needs, skills and potential for training of persons with disabilities
- * statistics on available services and programmes
- * stimulate informal research by teachers (especially of infants and at primarily level) through the provision of guidelines which focus on:
 1. observation of pupils to assist in early identification of persons with disabilities
 2. encouragement of students to be open; discuss and explain problems, limitations, inclusion of "persons with disabilities" as a data group in formal and ongoing research activities, e.g. labour force surveys, gender oriented surveys, national censuses
- (a) open labour market participation rate of persons with disabilities .

Sir, I alluded to a National Survey on Persons with Disabilities currently being conducted to determine the exact size of the group and the different types of disabilities. All the relevant Government agencies will be called upon to assist in this area .

Sir, I spoke about policy planning and I will finally turn to Regional and International Co-operation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Government fully supports a collaborative approach. To this end we will endeavour to participate regionally and internationally in issues of concerns with persons with disabilities. Wherever appropriate, Sir, Government will introduce disability issues in general negotiation concerning standards, information exchange, development programmes, *etcetera*. Measures to enhance collaboration include:

- ii the encouragement and support of the exchange of knowledge and expertise among non-governmental organisations, research institutions, professional and national bodies concerned with persons with disabilities and national coordinating committees .
- (b) the active participation and support for regional and international activities dealing with disability issues .

Sir, finally, Government will undertake to ensure that the appropriate machinery will be introduced to ensure continuous review and evaluation of programmes pertaining to persons with disabilities to ensure their continued relevance. Such evaluations will seek to foster overall efficacy in meeting policy objectives.

Sir, in conclusion, I want to say to this Honourable Chamber and to all Members of this Honourable Chamber that no obstacle is greater than the cause.

I thank you, Sir.

SUSPENSION

Hon. D. A .C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 2.30 p.m. this afternoon .

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to second that.

The question that this Honourable House be now suspended until 2.30 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

1 . 1 5 p . m .

RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I welcome this opportunity to speak on this particular Resolution. So important is this Resolution that I honestly believe the television cameras should have been here to allow the rest of Barbados to recognise the importance of this particular Resolution .

When I looked at the public gallery this morning, I was very happy to see the number of people within the public gallery and it was very difficult to determine the particular type of persons seated within the public gallery. It does not make sense, Sir, for us to get involved in a debate like this

when the people that we need to educate cannot hear this particular debate. All the persons who have attended this session are quite aware of the particular problem that they are confronted with and they know exactly how to deal with the particular problem.

The general public of Barbados is the grouping that we should be trying to educate. They have to know how to deal with people with disabilities. Do not care what we say in this Parliament, if we do not educate the public of Barbados, everything that we set about to do we will not achieve, Sir.

I was extremely happy to hear about the proposals but I must also be serious. I do not believe that, in the year 2000, we will be importing two buses or 10 buses or even 20 to deal with people who have a particular problem. If a person is disabled, our whole transport system should be in such a way that any person can leave their homes and get on any bus and that bus is compatible to suit the particular condition of the person.

I would really like someone to tell me how you are going to operate two buses and in which areas you are going to put them to deal with the particular problem we are discussing. I am saying that we need to look at this from a holistic point of view and recognise that throughout Barbados there are people who suffer with disabilities and we need to take a 100% approach to this particular problem and not a 2% approach.

We also must recognise that if we are going to come to Parliament and we are going to say that because someone is disabled, we are going to build a school and we are going to put them in a special grouping, it is an admission on our part that we have failed. I am saying, and this is my personal view, that we need to get to a stage and whenever we get to this particular stage that I am about to talk about today, I will say to myself that we have gone somewhere. I do not believe that there should be any special schools. I believe that our school system should be such that anybody can go to any school but we will put corrective measures to deal with the particular problems.

I do not understand why anybody, and let me use my constituency as an example, that has a particular problem cannot go to school at St. Lucy Secondary School and they must get on a bus and go somewhere in Bridgetown, St. Thomas or Christ Church, when we can easily have a system where they can go to the school, but the prerequisite personnel is put in place to deal with the particular problems.

How can we judge the ability of these students when we take them from one grouping and put them in a special group and do not allow them to match their abilities next to one that is being called the able-bodied. I am saying that if

they are allowed to remain within the normal school pattern, you are better able to judge their abilities by allowing them to stay within that particular classroom and give them the opportunity to see how they adapt, and how they develop within the system, than to take them and put them in a different setting where you cannot truly judge them. I throw out these considerations for those who know better to judge and to be given an opportunity.

We in Barbados believe in a system of the divide and rule, but we must see this as a community where we need to bring everybody together. This is a particular debate that I would expect that at the end of the discussion that consideration be taken and that we recognise that it is not what we are going to say in here, but it is exactly what we will have to do to make sure that we uplift and provide a better life for those who suffer with various disabilities.

I am hoping, Sir, that with the two or three buses, that we move away from that mentality, and say to the Transport Board that as a matter of policy that each bus be provided by the Transport Board should be a bus capable of carrying someone with a disability.

I am also saying, as I have said during the Estimates, that the Disability Unit falls under the Social Transformation Ministry, that Social Transformation cannot be a ministry and it cannot be a statutory board, it has to be a policy. I sat in my seat this morning and heard the Minister beseeching some of his comrades to come on board with his policy, which tells me that the Minister understands quite well what I am saying and that social transformation or any policy dealing with the disabled cannot be pushed into one ministry, but it must be a natural policy of the whole Government. Every Minister must understand that it is his or her role to play a part in making sure that life of those who suffer with disabilities, that his or her Ministry impact on his or their lives and provide for betterment for those people.

We must understand that if the Government is not prepared to recognise that they must be a policy, that society on the whole will not be prepared to do likewise. Government must set the trend and they cannot criticise the society and the private sector for not doing certain things when the Government has not done the things that they should have done as leaders in this particular situation.

I would also like to recommend the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party on this particular matter, especially the one on transportation, page 20. I also would like to inform the Honourable Minister, my friend, that this Parliament was prepared to deal with people with disabilities and that is why there is an elevator in Parliament.

I just want to correct him on this small matter that it was the Democratic Labour Party, not playing politics, that had the vision and recognised that it can happen to anybody, that is why they put an elevator in Parliament.

A s i d e s .

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, one must recognise now that we are in the year 2000 that we cannot have anything that puts anybody in a worse position than they were in the 1960s to 1990s. To come to Parliament and tell me that you will be making special provisions, as good as it sounds, is a backward step.

I would like to see a situation that when I am driving on a Transport Board bus or any other situation that nobody can point a finger at anybody and say this is an able-bodied person or this is somebody that is suffering from a disability or anything like that. You must feel that you are all one Barbados and that there are no special services. If you are going to be prepared to provide special services then you will have a situation where people are able to identify certain people. We must see people for what they have to offer society. We must be serious about whatever we are doing.

Sometimes you can have the best idea in life, and the way you put it over, it can sound as good as you want, but the truth is, it is the end result that is important. I want to use this example. I heard a former Minister of Health say, and I think that it is Government policy too, that they would like to see the day, when they would like to see our senior citizens back into society.

When that point was made and I heard what was said today, I asked myself, why would you want the senior citizens to come back into the society and be able to live among their people, and because someone has a particular problem you would like to put them in a different area? Just think about it. They are sending a double signal. You cannot have one policy for your left hand and another policy for your right hand. When you look at the situations they are the same. What we need to do is to have a total Barbados and not look at a situation through one eye and when you come to another look at it through the other. We have to be consistent in what we are doing.

I am glad to see that the Opposition has been able to provide 100% support for this particular Resolution. The mere fact that the two Members of the Opposition are here shows the seriousness of the Opposition and this particular

A s i d e s .

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN:...and for the whole debate. To tell the truth I honestly could have said the same for the whole Parliament. It is true that there are some that can hear us and some that you cannot see that will be hearing in their

room, and you have to acknowledge that they might be here listening too and they are part of the debate.

The truth is, we need to carry out a serious educational programme to educate Barbadians on how to deal with their own and this is the biggest problem in Barbados. We do not know how to deal with our own and as soon as somebody has a particular problem we are quite prepared to move away from them, and we want to cut them off. No, what we need to do is to develop a society that is prepared to bring along everybody. The rich, poor, do not care what you say, we need to have a one society.

We are going into a serious era where we sometimes behave strangely, in one breath we say that we want to have one Barbados but in another breath we do things to say that we want to divide Barbados into different groupings and that is not fair. We as a Parliament must look after the underprivileged in our society.

Our biggest command must be that particular commitment to those less fortunate ones who need our help, but at the same time in trying to do that we cannot put them in some special grouping and isolate them, so that when people see them they can easily be identified. We want to see them operating within our society so that when they become part of the society, we can say at least we have total Barbadian society, and not one situation when you are dealing with certain issues, you are prepared to integrate some people and when you are dealing with another you do not want to do likewise.

Sir, we can have the best road systems, the best transportation systems, but if we are not prepared to put those policies in place that will help and uplift the lives of those people who need us, we will be failing in everything we do. When you are dealing with a ministry and a matter as important as this then, you then have to start identifying ministers. Whereas if you had a policy, I can easily see the policy of the Government. Now you have a situation where the Minister of Social Transformation must be asking the Minister of Housing, the Minister of Public Transport and other Ministers, whereas he could have said this morning that this is our policy, and he could have easily done that without creating jealousy on the Frontbench.

The mere fact that some people responded to what I said they thought I did not know that jealousy was being created by the Minister of Social Transformation. The problem was that I never thought the Honourable Member for St. Thomas would have been involved in that.

A s i d e s .

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, one must recognise that in the year 2000 we should be at a stage where we should not have to ask the private sector, neither should we have to ask those who operate in the public sector, to provide certain provisions for people who suffer with disabilities.

Our educational system should have been so updated that these things should have been natural to us. But imagine in the year 2000, we still have to be beseeching people to recognise that the society is not only 80% but it is 100% and that 80% might be provided for and 20% not provided for. We then brag that we are a caring society and that we have the interest of everybody at heart.

We must seriously ask ourselves, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when are we going to come to this Parliament, hear a proper policy statement from the Government dealing with total Barbados and also including those who suffer with disabilities.

A good example of this, Sir, is when we will hear from the Government when they are prepared to open the Eye Care Unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital because you cannot come and tell me that you care so much about people with disabilities and at the same time you have the Eye Care Unit at the QEH which has been there for over six years and those people who need it most, cannot get the services that that particular unit should have been providing.

Sir, in terms of job creation and employment, I do not see why we should be providing special jobs for anybody. I believe that once someone has the ability and it is obviously that they do, the Government should be leading by example and the Government should be able to tell us how they have provided for those people who are suffering with various disabilities. The truth is, I do not think that the Government has a policy on this particularly.

I am glad to hear the Honourable Minister for St. Michael South East highlighting the particular problem. He said that this is his Manifesto and I hope that this Manifesto would be carried to the Cabinet of Barbados and that everything requested in this particular Manifesto would be approved by the Cabinet of Barbados so that the ones who need it most will be able to get what they need. I do not expect to hear a year or two from now that these proposals are not accepted, considering the importance of the particular document and considering the importance of the particular issues.

We would expect that the necessary amendments that are needed will be made and that a Cabinet decision will not take any longer than about two months and that the natural implementation of these particular measures, whether they

will be financial or otherwise, will be put in place to make sure that all that is required to make the lives of the disabled much happier is implemented.

In terms of the financial cost, we cannot consider that. We must look at the end result and whatever it takes to make sure that these proposals are implemented, the necessary supplementary should be brought before Parliament to make sure that this particular Green Paper is implemented.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have no intentions of speaking any longer on this particular topic but...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: As I said, I do not have any more to say. It is not the length of the speech, Sir, it is the quality of the speech.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Philip North.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very proud to make a contribution to this discussion and debate. My grandmother always told me that whenever anyone tells you, thanks, you say, you are welcome. Therefore, I recall earlier in the debate when the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East and Minister of Social Transformation said that the creation of this Unit was due in no small measure to my initiative and, therefore, to him I say, you are welcome.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: It is a fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the discussion on the Disability Unit took place in 1995. In fact, we were preparing the Estimates and we had the discussion and then we had money allocated for the setting up on the Unit. A task force was appointed in 1997, I think, and made a report on the Unit.

I want to begin by saying that during my tenure as Minister responsible for Community Development, there were a lot of new initiatives which came into being. I recall at the National Assistance Board, we decided that the Board should show a human face and we always had things like the persons going on board the Bajan Queen and what we call 'freeing-up'. Then, we had things like activity centres around Barbados for senior citizens, where they could go and do their crafts and other handwork and make themselves useful, rather than stay home and fossilize.

We also had the Bereavement Support Services set up where we taught families and individuals how to deal with grief and the loss of loved ones. There was also the older persons drama group where they had their productions and these were very successful and it was for the first time that Barbados was seeing a lot of these things.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we also had overseas tours for some of the older persons as well.

Sir, one of the initiatives which I remember quite well, too, was the fact that we had a building which we did in conjunction with the Rotary Club and that was for the mentally challenged persons at Canefield, St. Thomas. I am saying that a lot of these were programmes which were new to Barbados.

This Disability Unit I have to say was one such new programme. I said during the debate in the Estimates that I believe that it is one of the best things which we ever did in Barbados. Certainly, for the lives of those persons who are challenged, I believe that it is one of the best things which we have ever done for them. But I do not want anyone to get the impression that this Unit was the brain child wholly and solely of yours truly. Indeed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have to single out Mr. Errol Best who was the person who came to me and said, "I think this country should have a Disability Unit." He said that these are the types of services which this Unit should render to those persons with disabilities.

Mr. Best supported a proposal for the setting up of the services for persons with disabilities and I made arrangements for him to visit Florida and examine the services there and to examine a unit similar to the one which we had in mind. At the same time arrangements were also made for an expert from Florida to visit Barbados so that he could also give some much needed advice.

As I said, the Task Force came into being in 1997 and they supported this initiative of setting up the Unit. I remember, Mr. Deputy Speaker, going to meetings in the Caribbean to deal with persons who have disabilities. A lot of fellow Ministers at those meetings thought very highly of the type of unit which we were putting in place.

I think, Sir, that it was a milestone for us when we officially opened that Unit on December 3, 1997. Again, I have to say that it was due in a large measure to the ground work provided by Mr. Errol Best to bring those ideas to fruition. I think, Sir, that it was fitting that he was named as the first Director of the Unit. Indeed, I believe that this Green Paper which we have before us today is fitting testimony of the commitment, knowledge and contribution which Mr. Best has made. I believe that in time to come this nation will indeed come to say that they owe a debt of gratitude to him for ensuring that persons with disabilities in Barbados were

indeed empowered.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say just a few words on the whole question of education where persons with disabilities are concerned. When the Minister responsible for Social Transformation was speaking this morning, I could hear coming from him, in the way he was speaking, that he seemed to be asking some questions and searching for answers and at the same time making recommendations which the Green Paper was putting forward. How can we remove the existing barriers to learning with respect to children with disabilities? How can we provide the best possible education for students with disabilities? How sensitive are we to the educational needs of students with disabilities? Even before that child gets to school and even before we put those measures in place, the child's education begins at home.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to commend very heartily those parents who see their child with the disability as being part of their home. I want to commend those parents particularly, because you can see some of them who are here with their children, staying close to those children and for nurturing them along the way.

I believe, Sir, that there is no better place to see how the child with a disability feels about himself and to see how that child interacts than at home. Therefore, I again commend those parents who promote interaction between themselves and their children. On the other hand, Sir, I am sorry to say that my experience has been that there are some parents who never connect. They do not even know the child's aspirations. Some parents are totally unfamiliar with the wishes of their children. One thing that I have always been saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that I do not know how you can be a parent knowing that the method of communication for your child is through sign language and you yourself never make any attempt whatsoever to learn the sign language and to communicate with that child. I do believe that parent has a duty to learn the language as well through that medium.

There are some parents who see children with disabilities as being burdens and to my mind, Sir, there is not enough partnership between those parents and those children with disabilities. We have an association of parents of children with disabilities in Barbados. I can safely say that it is within my knowledge there are hundreds of children with disabilities in Barbados. But if you were to judge from the attendance of those parents at those meetings, you would believe that there are only twelve children with disabilities in Barbados, because the faithful dozen will keep coming to meetings and there are others who simply will not.

I think that where our education is concerned the parents too have a role to play. I am a firm believer in the

view that children with disabilities should be encouraged to learn alongside able-bodied students. I do not believe in the concept of throwing all of the children with disabilities together. I do not think that we should create a colony of children with disabilities. I do not believe that we should create a nation of children with disabilities. I do not believe in that. I believe in integration.

I think that when we put them together it is very inappropriate. I think they pick up inappropriate habits from those around them and the more we prevent them from mixing the more distorted their sense of what is normal becomes. That is my belief. I will stick to that view until I die. When they do not interact with able-bodied students, both groups, the able-bodied students and the disabled students remain ignorant of what is to be expected from both of them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe in the integration of the disabled with able-bodied peers. I believe that wherever possible they should be in classrooms together once they are cognitive and by that I mean once they can reason and think and understand, they should be together.

We have classic examples of it. I recall there was a young lady who went to Combermere, a blind girl, and did extremely well. She went off to university. I believe, Sir, that that is the way forward for us. I recall, Sir, another youngster, Gregg Nurse, who did extremely well. He was put in a classroom alongside the others. I went to school with a young chap called Shepherd. I remember that he was in a wheelchair and you could not want a brighter person.

You see, Sir, we always have to bear in mind that we are preparing that child for an independent life as well as preparing him for the world of work and therefore the child must be confident being in the company of the normal. I use 'normal' obviously in inverted commas because they too are normal people. If they do not work alongside and go to school with these 'normal' students then they are going to feel very intimidated when they enter the world of work.

I feel that our schools should provide proper educational services for students with mental and physical impairment. I see nothing wrong with the schools providing hearing aids, all the services. In this regard, I have to commend the Minister of Education who, only recently, I heard make the point that under EduTech there will be specialised teaching for children with special needs. This is the type of thing that I am speaking about when I say that we need those services.

I am also happy – I think it was last Cabinet or the one before – that we approved for some persons from the Disability Unit to go off to Canada and to the United States to see how a lot of these services, the adaptation and so on, can be made so that when they come back to Barbados you will have some ideas as to the type of services we can have

at our homes and institutions and schools.

There are a lot of innovative ways of teaching persons with disabilities and I believe that if we care, then we will get up to date on these matters.

I believe that principals and teachers must be up to date on these changes and these new trends in the field of education. I believe that ongoing training is a must. Our teaching styles will have to change once we have the integration of disabled people in the schools. Our teaching styles will definitely have to change.

I recall reading about an academy in the United States of America where they use the hearing aids that I was speaking about where the textbooks, the set books are in braille. There are two teachers standing before the class as we are having now. One teacher is doing what I am doing and the other teacher is doing what the person with the sign language is doing. Do you know what that school proved? It proved that the children with disabilities got better grades and some parents were even making the point that the school was more caring towards the disabled than they were towards what we would call the 'normal' children. The other argument came up that what happens is that because the disabled got into fewer distractions and had more time to do their homework and look after this and that, that that is what made them get better grades. In all they were more focussed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you have to realise that we have disabled persons at both ends of the spectrum. We have some persons with disabilities who are slow and we have some with disabilities who are very bright. I spoke to you just now about people like Mr. Gregg Nurse and the young lady who went to Combermere.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is going to be a real challenge for our teachers if we start towards complete integration. Ask the teachers in Barbados and a lot of them will tell you that they feel inadequately prepared to teach students with disabilities but if we are moving towards inclusion, then training programmes, new curricula, emergency medical training and medical techniques will be a must and they will have to be taught as part and parcel of general teaching training.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I could not allow the time allotted to me to go without actually mentioning the whole question of employment.

Aside.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I may resume to before I was interrupted. If I could just

speaking on the whole question of employment. It was said in here this morning, and I agree with it wholeheartedly, that there are some members of that fraternity, students and persons with disabilities, who have very good qualifications. They have qualifications but they have never worked and they have the same qualifications as many who are working on the strength of their qualifications and nothing else, yet we have persons with disabilities and with the same qualification not working.

I believe that one of the things which would be absolutely necessary is that there should be training programmes to make that transition into the world of work easier for the persons with disabilities. I think we owe it to them to have them trained first. A lot of them want to work, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because they have never worked before and I believe that training period would make sure that they will keep their job.

We are going to need money, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to finance this work experience and in my discussion with the Minister of Social Transformation he told me that they are thinking about a similar programme that will come from the Poverty Alleviation Fund. Obviously, I am very happy to hear this. During the work experience programme I would expect that there would get some stipend whether it be \$150 a week or whatever, but we have to do whatever is necessary.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also have to say that when the Disability Unit was set up, they made sure that there were some persons working there with disabilities because they had to set the example. Also, they went out and looked for places in which they could put other persons with disabilities.

The ones who are in those jobs are doing alright.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Yes, they are doing O.K. It is true that there are some who we do not see but the pressure for jobs for persons with disabilities is very great. We may not see the ones in the higher echelons of the society because people might be able to look after them by bringing in people and so on and they would not have any need to work but the ones that put pressure on the Unit, then we see them. They are the ones who really and truly want to work.

What is true too is that some of them who cannot actually go to work, somebody else has to stay home with them and that person is not working either. There is the situation that because of a single disability there are two persons who are not working.

In some countries, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a benefit system called a carer's allowance. As long as the other person stays at home the person gets a carer's allowance.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: The problem that we have is one of registration because we do not even know up to now the number of persons with disabilities. Sir, before we embark on this type of initiative we will have to do a costing to find out exactly the level at which we should pitch this allowance. I think it is a good scheme, it would be a terrific scheme in Barbados but the thing is to do a costing to find out whether we can afford it and if we can afford it, to what extent.

Society, Mr. Deputy Speaker, feels that persons with disabilities should work. Even employers who have to pay them will tell you that they believe they should be working. We have to sensitise those employers who feel otherwise to the needs of persons with disabilities. What is true is that a disabled person hardly ever loses a job because they know that it is going to take them a greater effort than the other person to find a new one and they hardly ever lose their job. Absenteeism where they are concerned, is virtually nil.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: That has been the experience of the Unit, that those persons are always there. There is a young lady who worked so well that she has been described to me as the most versatile worker in the Unit because she works so well. She is not distracted whatsoever because she has a hearing impairment and she is an excellent worker who has never been absent since she was working.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You have two minutes more.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, you are only giving me two minutes more but the truth is that I wanted to make a point concerning another type of disabled person. It is the whole question of persons with HIV and AIDS in the workplace. The Caribbean – and Barbados is part of the Caribbean – has the second highest number of AIDS and HIV victims in that 15 to 49 age group.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: We are only second to Sahara Africa. It is a serious concern of the Ministry of Labour because it is like a termite. AIDS is really gnawing away at what should be our most productive and our most reproductive age group. That is what is happening. That is

the age in which people save money to look after their children and themselves.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, some people who we have trained are dying. The cost of treatment right now is a terrific drain on the Barbadian economy and on the Caribbean economy generally because my concern is not really limited to Barbados. We are losing a sizeable chunk of our generation of workers. There is no AIDS funding from the UN to the Caribbean. They have by-passed us and they have given it to Latin America and because of our small population and our size they tend to disregard us. Our main problem in the Caribbean is the access to treatment.

There are some pharmaceutical companies now in the world who have decided to bring down the cost of medication and so on and we are hoping that we could benefit from that but it is something which has concerned us. We think that medication now has actually reached the stage where AIDS can be managed almost like diabetes but the cost is still really and truly upstairs and we may not be able to reach that.

As I have said, it is a concern for the Ministry of Labour. We need a massive injection of funds.

One of the reasons why I mentioned that as part of this discussion is because in the ILO Conference which is going to begin on Monday in Geneva, one of the topics to be discussed is the impact of AIDS on the work force in the world.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member your time has expired.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very grateful to you and I welcome the opportunity, as I have said, for making a contribution to this debate.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am much obliged to you. I would wish to begin, Sir, by congratulating the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, Minister of Social Transformation. I want to congratulate him very warmly for bringing this Green Paper to the Honourable House of Assembly. Through successive administrations, Sir, I think it is fair to say that in Barbados we have given some, but not nearly enough, attention to the needs of those who are disabled, handicapped, mentally or physically challenged, whatever language you chose to use.

But never before, and I have been in here a long time, Sir, has a Minister brought to the House as comprehensive a policy package as this Green Paper for the Disabled. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it speaks volumes. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East has been a Minister just

over a year.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Yes the Honourable Member for St. Philip is putting it correctly, he was wasted on the Other Side. It just shows you the talent that can be unleashed once you are sitting on this Side.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I want to give him the highest praise, because as a Minister, of many years standing, Sir, I know that it is not easy to pull a policy together to the point where you can bring a Green or White Paper onto the Table in this House. It is no mean achievement and he must be much lauded for it.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I recognise that you neither hear nor see other than Honourable Members in here today but it is a warming experience and I am privileged, I think, to be one sitting in this Chamber on this day. There is hardly a family not connected in some way to somebody who is disabled. There are those who will argue, Sir, that each of us is disabled in some way or the other. Some of us do not necessarily want to acknowledge our disablement, some of us will rise above our disablement. It is the minority, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, who allow themselves to be overtaken by disablement and I believe that everyone in this Honourable Chamber today is one of those who will rise above disablement however it manifests itself.

This Green Paper, Sir, is comprehensive. It speaks to almost every aspect of what a policy would be expected to address. Indeed, in my judgement, Sir, the Honourable Minister of Social Transformation has said virtually all that there is to be said on the subject but I will still have little more to say, Sir.

I want to congratulate him, and I know that he does not do these things by himself. We know that sometimes he is at his desk, I gather that he is at his desk at 6 o'clock some mornings. Most people do not like to believe that. I do not know what they think about the kind of jobs that we do. He is one who goes early to work, I am one who is late at work. We all work variously. But he has brought to good resolution the burning of the early morning lamp. I want to give my congratulation too, Sir, to those in the Ministry of Social Transformation and elsewhere in the world of NGOs. It is not only Government, Sir. I started in the world of the NGOs and in the years when I am not in Government, I always go

back to base in the NGOS, and I know that they have had their input here as well.

I am one, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, who believes, and I want very much to support and agree with my colleague, the Minister of Labour, that those of us who are obviously disabled are better integrated into our society than segregated in it. After all we are integrated within our families and there is no good reason why we should not be integrated within our communities and within our society, so I am one who belong to the school of integration.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to focus my remarks on the way in which the new technology of the early twenty-first century. It is already a boon to the disabled and to the handicapped and those who are mentally, physically and otherwise challenged. The way that we are going to work and live in the early twenty-first century, in the new millennium, is going to be spectacularly different from the way in which we have lived and worked in the twentieth century. We can see the beginning of it already. It is already happening in the world here at the tail end of the twentieth century. Even in a little country, 14 by 21 like Barbados, it is plain for all to see the direction in which that is going.

I will tell you why I say that it would be a boon to those who are disabled. There is a lot of talk nowadays about globalisation, certainly on this Side of the House, Sir, about trade liberalisation. I think that in Barbados everyone is beginning to understand, after all, the technology is all around us. We see it on the television, we hear it on the television and radio, we are reading it in journals, newspapers, everywhere, and you cannot help but understand that we are into the era of globalisation. And there is another side to globalisation. In fact some people would even describe it as a backlash against globalisation but I prefer to put it that there is another side to globalisation and that is the rise of individualism.

If globalisation were untamed and were allowed to go relentlessly along its own way, we would all be homogenised, and we see that happening in our lifetime already. Blue jeans is the wear every where in the world. Sneakers! You go to Africa to the most remote village, as I have done, and you will see African Chiefs in all their beautiful regalia and they are wearing sneakers. Even underneath their robes they are wearing blue jeans. It is said that every where in the world, except Barbados, there is a M a c D o n a l d s .

A s i d e s .

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: And that is a cause for celebration in Barbados.

We can see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, this effect of globalisation on our society. Everybody wants to look the same, everybody is aspiring to the same things. But...

A s i d e s .

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: No it does not mean that scruff is in. In your generation scruff would not be in. It goes by generations too.

A s i d e s .

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I do not believe that looking scruffy is really appropriate.

A s i d e s .

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: It is just the Honourable Member is a little old fashioned, but so am I.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. At my age and I have just, a few weeks ago reached a landmark. I am entitled to be like that, Sir, at my age.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: And we approve of it, Sir. He is sartorially correct.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the natural human reaction to this then, is that the individual within us will struggle to rise above this great movement and to be heard. It is only natural. 3 . 5 0 p . m .

As I see it, those of us who have been described according to this Green Paper as disabled are coming to as even a playing field, and I do not believe in even playing fields, but as close as you can get to it so in the early 21st Century in my judgment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, everywhere in the world – and in Barbados, I think that we are ahead of the game and I know that the Honourable Minister of Education is going to speak to that because EduTech 2000 is the vehicle which will take us there – everywhere in the world, Sir, the new technology is going to allow individuals, irrespective of abilities or disabilities to realise their full p o t e n t i a l .

The individual, I believe will triumph in the early 21st Century. We are beginning to see it already. We see a man like Bill Gates emerged in these closing years of the 20th Century. There is going to be a lot of that in the early 21st Century and people who today are described as disabled will be among those who will triumph as individuals in that way. You are not going to just get the odd person. Everybody will have a chance to triumph in that way.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the world of work is going to be quite different. It is happening already. There will be no time boundaries. People are not going to work forty-hour weeks like they did in the 20th Century. Already France has legislated a thirty-hour week. Partly to help to cure their unemployment problem and partly in recognition of this fact of which I speak. People are not going to be necessarily working a forty-hour week and they are not necessarily going to work an eight-hour day. They will work in modules of work and they will choose when to work.

In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs flexi-time already exists. You can go into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at midnight to two o'clock in the morning, there is always somebody working. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is expecting by the end of the year 2000 to be a paperless ministry. In self-defence I had to learn the computer because there are people walking about declaring, "send me no hard copy," and I am saying, "excuse me please, remember that the Minister needs a hard copy." I cannot go on saying that forever, so in self-defence I had to learn to deal with other t h a n t h e h a r d c o p y .

Mr. Deputy Speaker, people in this new century are going to work from home. It is happening already, once you have a computer and they are going to become everyday objects. We are told – and let us hope that we would get beyond that materialistic mode in which we are in the Caribbean and here in Barbados as well – that very soon all those basics like a fridge, a stove and a computer will become basic household objects but that will be the lifeline.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, people will work, therefore, in different places. We are told that in the United States, for instance, they have not quite caught up in Europe, that by the time a young person of today has reached the age of 32, they have already gone through six or seven jobs. Now, when I was a teenager, even when I was a grown woman and you heard that a fellow had six or seven jobs within a ten-year period, you will begin to wonder about this fellow's confidence; "What happened with him? He cannot keep a job? He cannot stay in a job?"

We have lived and see that has now come full circle where it is a plus on your CV, depending of course on what jobs you undertook, but that you could move so swiftly because the technology is improving and increasing in its diversity so quickly that you can move with great speed. It is allowing people to work any place in the world. You can sit down in Barbados and supply materials to somebody in Europe, somebody in Africa or somebody in Asia and in a minute's time, the blinking of the eye, quicker than it is even to make a telephone call, as we understand it today, i n f o r m a t i o n i s t r a n s p o s e d .

Sir, people whose hands are not disabled in anyway and people whose brains are working, even if we call them disabled, if they can manage a module of work, could become a millionaire more than once in a life time, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is happening already now. So what I am trying to say is that as I see it, the early 21st Century will present such tremendous opportunities, such tremendous hope, such wonderful openings for those who today feel that I am tied to this wheelchair, I am tied to home and because I do not have a motor car, I cannot do this or that, the world will very soon overtake these physical disabilities once the head can conceptualise an idea. It is not given to all of us to be brilliant. If you have one wonderful idea in your life, you are thought of as bright, if you have two, well you are known a s b e i n g a n o b l e l a u r e a t e .

Most of us live our lives without any brilliant ideas but we can think, we can care, we can love. I heard the Honourable Minister of Labour in his presentation speaking of the way in which one disabled person, if you look at it in cold hard statistical facts, can equal two disabled persons because then you need a caregiver.

Again, in my judgment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the new technology is going so able the caregiver that far from multiplying the disability, you are now going to be in a position where you can multiply the ability. The new technology is becoming so much more easy. Things that are huge now, things that this Green Paper is calling for, the technology, the way in which we are going to have our built environment to accommodate, all of those things will come very quickly and naturally in a few years' time.

So that that kind of physical accommodation disability will become minimal but people will have this wonderful opportunity to touch the entire world without moving from their seats. They are people who are perfectly able-bodied today, who are working from their drawing rooms, a corner of the kitchen, wherever you can properly accommodate a good computer, you get the printer, you get a scanner and so on, you will have access to all the libraries of the world. It is no excuse that you cannot get to the library to read or to do your research. Not only libraries but every resource base will be available to you. All the news will be available to you. All books written will be available to you. People are already shopping. You would no longer need a caregiver to come to take you to the supermarket. This does not only apply to the disabled. It will apply also to the aging population such as the o n e t h a t w e h a v e i n B a r b a d o s .

People already shop by the computer. My sister lives in Atlanta and for years she has been doing it. She hates shopping. You roll up on the computer for your supermarket, it shows you where the discounts are and all the specials, you tick what you want and they deliver for \$15. That is the end of it. Even the technology and I am a

great believer in it, the basic necessities to which we have been accustomed are now being tailored to the needs of those who are disabled.
4 . 0 0 p . m .

The Prime Minister and myself were in China last week, as I think all of Barbados know, and we went to three cities in five days. It was gruelling but it was a great education for us all. One of the cities that we visited was Shanghai and in Shanghai they took us to a huge district. Barbados can fit into it many times. It used to be open farm land because China is a vast country. It is now known as the Pudong District with huge hi-tech parks, endless housing estates and whatever you can think of. Skyscrapers and everything were there and this was all done within ten years. What it showed me is that we just take too long to do everything in Barbados. Because the nucleus of everything that we saw in the Pudong District is available here in Barbados, but it would just take too long to get to the point and to do it, and to give priority where priority is due. That is why I am lavishing such praise on the Minister of Social Transformation because he has identified this priority quickly and has brought it to the highest committee in the land, this House of Assembly.

Sir, in the Pudong District, one of the factories to which we were taken was the Sharp factory. They make television sets and they make everything now. We saw them putting together a fridge by automation within minutes all on a conveyor belt. Human hands did prepare this and this is again whether you are disabled or not, but particularly if you are disabled life will be easy for you, and the component parts were labour intensive. The component parts are put together and it did not matter whether in somebody's backyard, garage or bedroom or wherever it was convenient for you to work that it was brought to the conveyor belt and that is the process which was automated.

There we saw that Sharp was making refrigerators, stoves and other products. I saw there in China what I had already seen in North America. The refrigerator – a common, ordinary, everyday appliance of the 20th century is not going to be the refrigerator of the 21st century. The refrigerator is no longer one unit. There are several units. You pull out a drawer here and it really is a frozen food drawer at waist level for those who cannot easily bend. You pull out another drawer somewhere else and that is the chill drawer. You pull out another drawer and that is a warmer drawer. You cook food and wait for somebody to come home and you put it there and warm it.

Yes, the refrigerator now is broken down into component parts. Why should it not be? There is nothing which says that it has to be one big object stacked up in the kitchen with the freezer at the top and the fridge at the bottom. In fact, in all the years I have never liked it that way. I always have a fridge with the freezer at the bottom because

I do not go down there often so I bend down less than when the freezer is at the top. I always had the freezer at the bottom. I did not have to wait until I get to be an old woman to do that.

But we saw a very interesting fridge in the Sharp factory. One was with a door that opened both sides. It had a handle on both sides. If you are at the kitchen sink and you open to pull out something, then you can stand up out there where you have your dining table and if you want water or juice you can open it from that side. It operated from the principle of two pins at the top.

What I am saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that the technology of the early 21st century and particularly the technology is now geared to making life easier for those who are disabled. We are seeing motorized wheelchairs. They do like airplane seats now. They turn into beds, bathrooms and all kinds of things. Oh, yes! I saw one in the newspaper a few weeks ago where a man had imported a motorized wheelchair. He is now liberated. He does not have to depend on everybody to do everything for him. Those things are going to become very common place and it is going to happen very quickly.

So that in the early 21st century disabled people will be more self-reliant. They will be in a position to be more self-sufficient and self-sustaining and have access to work. This is key because their ability to work and to be self-sustaining will bring all of these other good things.

Many years ago when I was in the Ministry of Education, there was a lot of talk then and I know that it is not talk now because we have the Green Paper. The Minister of Social Transformation knows that hundreds and thousands of people are going to walk about with this Green Paper and, if he does not deliver, I say no more. But, Sir, I am saying here that many years ago when I was at the Ministry of Education there was a drive. You know from time to time you have a drive which can be a dangerous thing. It is always a dangerous thing to raise people's expectations and hopes if you are not going to deliver. It is a bad thing and it can be a dangerous thing to do. But in those days people were trying their best and they were doing the best they could do at the time. I do not blame them for what they were doing and I entered into the spirit of it. There was a great movement abroad. I think that it emanated in the Ministry of Labour. Employers both in the public sector and private sector should be looking to employ more people who are disabled. They actually set themselves percentages. It did not go very far, but I tried.

There was a young man in my constituency in the City of Bridgetown, who is dead now, in a wheelchair scruffily dressed as the Attorney-General would put it. In my moving

around the City, I discovered that he had the most beautiful voice. I see someone who is not an Honourable Member in here. You cannot see them, Sir, but I can and he may remember this. Sir, this young man was helped. He was first helped with a stick. Then he was helped with crutches that we got through Collins and then it got to the place where we could afford to get him a wheelchair. But he had a fantastic voice and he had a command of English and this man who begged on the road, you would have never thought he had this wonderful skill.

I brought him into the Ministry of Education. I did not bother with Personnel Office and the Ministry of the Civil Service and all of that. The staff fell in love with him immediately because the Lord always balances out things and he had a fantastic personality. He came into the Ministry of Education and I told him that he would be the Receptionist for a few weeks. We will try this for a few weeks. Because when you pick up the telephone and call the Ministry of Education nobody can see that you are crippled or sitting in a wheelchair or that you are dressed scruffily or that your fingernails are dirty. Nobody can see that. All they hear is a wonderful voice speaking beautifully. People then started to call the Ministry and they complimented us on this wonderful and new voice on the telephone. Things were so bad that we had to arrange to give him lunch and stuff like this.

It could not last because when the powers that be speak...well, that is so much for that. Some people think that because you are a Minister you have all this power. You do not really. A Minister cannot hire or fire anybody or put a salary in anybody's hand. I cannot sign a cheque and that is a good thing that Ministers should not have that kind of immediate power at their fingertips. I think that is on the plus side rather than on the minus side.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, for over 18 months I struggled to get a posting for this person. I even said to the Ministry of Labour: "You have set this up. You have raised the expectations. You have raised the hope and here is a person with a skill. You cannot deny it." People are calling in and speaking to it but it never came to pass that that person got a job.

I will never forget the experiment as long as I live and he never forgot it. He never held it against me or all those of us who tried to help him, but in the end it was not successful. It was something which he treasured. It was a period of his life, an experiment that he treasured for the rest of his life. I will not go on to tell the rest of the story, which is a sad story, of how he eventually came to his end because how he came to my attention and how I decided in the first place that we would try this experiment is that life had become very hard. I will not go into any detail about that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I am trying to say is that time and circumstance have now brought us way beyond that and indeed, with the right attitude, which I believe this administration has, and with the right Minister in the right place, which I believe this administration has, and with the assistance of the new technology to which we have access, then the access of disabled people to anything in the world can be possible as far as they are able.

I am not trying to persuade any disabled person that they can go beyond what is their true capability because that is true for each one of us. I think I know what my ceiling of competence is. Some people may disagree with me. My detractors may not agree with me. They may think I do not have any competence at all but, at least, I have that sense of confidence in myself that I feel that I know how far I can go.

There are some of us, I admire them, for whom there is no horizon on their ability and their competence but the majority of us know where we can go. We do not always get as far along the road as we would like.

I would like to say, Sir, that in my 24 years in active politics, this is a Green Paper that I will keep because I think it gives a quality of hope. I was a Minister of the House in here when I brought a Bill to introduce the National Drug Service. On that occasion I think it was a record. I spoke for 5 ½ hours in the introduction.

And indeed.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: It was a big thing then. The doctors were fighting. They were saying that everything was wrong with generic drugs. They were saying that I should not buy in bulk every step of the way. There is no Government which will ever discontinue the Drug Service of the day. They cannot touch it, especially the special services to asthmatics, diabetics, cancer patients and hypertensive patients, people with heart diseases and so on.

This, I think will be like that. This will come to a place in the history of Barbados where no administration would dare to try to reverse what the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East has set rolling today. I thank you, Sir.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not going to be as long as those who spoke before me because they are very much persons who are well informed and experienced in this society and in this House of Assembly.

This morning the discourse which was given by the Minister of Social Transformation was so extensive and relevant that it leaves very little for anyone to say. My duty, since I also work within the Ministry with the Honourable Minister, is to just put a little icing on the cake. The truth is

that many people live through history and are unaware of the importance of great social changes.

I would like to draw to the attention of the House of Assembly today this important social and philosophical change that will have a severe impact on the psyche and understanding of Barbadian people and not allow historians 20 years from now to be able to see the value of these proposals which are before us today and to remain unconscious of the importance of them.

Why I want to speak to the unconscious mind is because these proposals have a common cord running through them, a cord of integration. If you analyse each provision within this national policy you will sense there is an element of integration, so there should be no doubt, no misconception in the mind of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy about the importance of pulling the society into one solid organism. That is what it is going to be. What we are doing is having a mainstream approach where we pull people from the periphery into the mainstream of civil society and that is what it is all about.

I am sure that the Honourable Minister was extremely conscious when he began to compile the information that led to this document. He made sure that there was wide consultation and he accepted criticisms and made all the necessary arrangements and alterations with all the parties that were involved.

This is an admirable thing about him. He listens and includes persons, not only the official members of a political party, or the Civil Service, but he brings those persons who were also marginalised before, the NGOs in the society, into the total governance of the Ministry and the State. That is what is new about him. It is new and it is fresh. It is a different model, a different approach. That is why when we talk about the politics of inclusion it is no vague claim. If it is a vague claim for anybody on this Side or that Side, it is no vague claim for the Minister of Social Transformation. It is incisive.

In Western thoughts we have had all types of strange personalities who formulate concepts and impose them upon society. Those persons still exist. Man has not changed. There are men of credit and there are sinister individuals in the world.

All through the 20th century we struggled with the Adolphus Hitlers, the Mussolinis. We witnessed western thinkers like Sir Francis Gatherer who preached eugenics as far back as the last quarter of the 20th century in South Africa.

Under the apartheid system we had leader after leader who spoke about the supremacy of one human being against another and thought that as a consequence of blood relations

and genes that certain persons were born with supreme qualities and had the right to rule and dictate to other persons of lesser nobility. Race and class have suffered discrimination and so did the disabled, not only in those countries, because the philosophy was very clear, but other countries moved subtly. Some people do not even understand when a philosophy influences their mind.

The Arian race, for example, led Hitler to kill over 100 000 persons because he felt they were disabled and lacked the capacity to produce in a maximum manner as ordinary people. That was because there were political scientists and thinkers in the society in Germany who made him think that way. He got rid of human beings who could have been productive as a consequence of misinformation coming from the intellectuals in that society.

Sir Francis Gatherer, who I spoke about felt that people born with genetic factors can pass on from one generation to the next through their genes supreme qualities; and black people were not included in that. They were perceived as marginalised and inferior human beings and they felt that positive qualities would come out from persons with supreme genes and the thinking of those did not include the disabled and that is why this is important, because it shows a human component that you have not seen manifesting itself in the person I spoke about. That is very important in this regard.

In Barbados, you can say for sure that the Minister of Social Transformation by his presentation this morning clearly demonstrates to all of us that he is a man of sound egalitarian qualities. That is what is important. It is a very important social prescription for change.

I am hoping that as a result of these ideas being translated into action through various forms of education and interaction that we will see a complete revolution of the psyche of Barbadians or Barbadian people because they are not always thinkers. There are people in this society who – that is why I make the point – out of ignorance and a sense of unconsciousness, if you want to put it that way, relegate their own offspring to the backroom because they believe that they are not socially equipped and suitable to interact in the upper part of the house with their friends. They abandon their fathers – I witnessed it – sometimes their brothers and sisters because they have an inhibition that they cannot endure or even appreciate that these things can happen at anytime to anyone of us, including those sitting in here today.

Some of us are handicapped in a sense but do not want to recognise that when you have an optical problem, like this, that you are in some sense disabled. You might not be as

severely disabled as some but even the fact that you wear glasses means that you, too, must be categorised in the same way as a disabled person. There are many persons in this society who, because of the lack of consciousness do not even realise that they also suffer from certain inhibitions.

What the Ministry is attempting to do through these policies is to bring the disabled, as I indicated before, into the mainstream of the society and we are going to put the necessary provisions in place through educational programmers, through providing skills. In order to do that and make it successful, there has to be a transformation of the psyche because the Barbadian businessman, at the end of the day, believes that if you are physically challenged, although the nature of your disability might not be relevant to his form of production, that you are unlikely to produce as well as an able-bodied person.

His psyche is so confused and wrapped up in monetary gain that he does not take into consideration the human component that here are our brothers and sisters and friends with the skills. So I am talking about people with the capability, with the skills to do the job but he bluntly refuses to allow them the opportunity to be part of even the work force.

This programme which will emanate from the policies will not only cater to disabled persons or physically or mentally challenged persons becoming part of the workforce, as we have heard from previous speakers who made presentations but we want to give people the opportunity to be part of the policy making bodies in the private sector and in the public sector. We will have to start with a very intense programme within the public sector in order to allow the private sector to know that we mean business.

As indicated before, it is no easy task. We do not believe that we are involved in meaningless poetry in here, just saying things that sound nice. We recognise that it is going to be a difficult task. As clearly indicated before, the philosophy of individualism and the imposition of policies which displace labour intensive business is before us, and we are now having businesses that are moving towards automation. We are aware of all of that.

We intend to use units like the National Vocational Training Board, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic to help us in this exercise. We will try even in advance to persuade them to have a system within these institutions where persons with the capability to do a particular task would gain a scholarship into these institutions and be allowed to develop their skills so that when they come into the workforce – these are those who are without skills but there are people who are physically and mentally challenged that have skills but those who are without skills will be given

that kind of opportunity at those leading institutions.

We know that we have to be dealing with human beings and attitudes and changing value judgments. We understand that well. So the Ministry is hard at work and the Minister is taking the lead in giving direction to his Ministry. I want you to understand clearly, Sir, that we have a very clear rationale for bringing this policy before this Chamber.

We also understand the importance of sensitizing and mobilising the general public in this regard. That is not going to be an easy task. You are talking about centuries of unconsciousness. That is what I call unconsciousness, that you have people on the periphery marginalised and you are so blank in relation to their concerns that you do not even recognise that your indifference towards these persons also reflects an injustice. The fact that you see these people on the street every day who are your brothers and your sisters and you understand their plight and you walk on by without paying any serious attention. The fact that we wait until the first year in the twenty-first century to have to bring an extensive document when disabilities were always with us is a clear example of indifference and unconsciousness in the society of the problem which the mentally and physically challenged have faced.

I want to compliment the Minister for the work which he is doing. It means that in Government buildings, in schools, in churches, within the trade unions, all the required facilities must be put in place. All the appliances to make it comfortable for them to be mobile must be put in place and it must not be put in place as a form of accommodation. It must be put in place as a right.

The unfortunate thing in this society is that we always believe that we are accommodating somebody. Nobody wants to respect the right of a person who is mentally or physically challenged. They are indifferent to their concerns. We have to put in place facilities that are available for them. For example, there was some concern about two buses being available but we have to start somewhere. We started with two buses but we are not so naive to believe that all disabled persons live within the same bus route. Do not even go on that premise. We understand that initially we will have to use the buses for special events but it is a positive gesture that ought to be complimented.

4.30 p.m.

The Minister also indicated that he would encourage the Government in all the Ministries to ensure that there is a vehicle in almost all the Ministries, especially those which are relevant to the development of the lives of the disabled. He clearly indicated that he intends to persuade and where possible, give the directive within his Ministry to make sure

that buses, vans and vehicles are well equipped with the required appliances for assisting our brothers and sisters.

Ramps, for example, will be put at the side of houses. The appliances in bathrooms and kitchens will be made available according to the particular need of the disabled person. The thing about disability is that there is no standard disability so to speak. It varies and sometimes the type of technology and apparatus that must be used must be adapted to suit the type of disability that the person is experiencing.

A s i d e s .

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: It is not an easy task. We will set a period of limitation for the implementation and the success of the programme and a reasonable period after analysing the situation, looking at the finance available and putting the personnel in place to make sure that the programme can get off the ground. We are going to look at all of that.

The mention of the Ministry of Housing and Lands is irrelevant. How can you put everything that is relevant to disabled persons under one partition? Mentally and physically challenged persons face many different problems – these relate to education, health, agriculture and law so you cannot put it under one Ministry. What a myopic way of t h i n k i n g ?

The Minister must have a mechanism, either an inter-departmental mechanism or some type of inter-ministerial mechanism that he can relate to the other Ministers and have the provisions in place that would assist the disable in being able to move smoothly into the appropriate position.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, take for example, the Ministry of Housing and Lands. We were building units for considerable time but with no provisions in those units for the disable. It is not because of indifference but there is now an awareness and therefore, my recommendation would be that all of those corners units downstairs in the National Housing Corporation should be reserved for people who are physically challenged. The ramps could be put in place and the disable can be facilitated like any other human being. T h a t i s w h a t i s n e c e s s a r y .

Sir, I want those persons who are challenged also to understand that as a pressure group in the society those who are capable of agitating for change that it is also their right to do so. This struggle is not a partisan struggle. This is about the rights of people. They have to get involved in self-advocacy. They have to promote themselves and demonstrate a capability. They have to talk to the media when they have to talk to the media. When they have to see the Minister about a problem that is relevant to their lives, they should see the Minister. When you want to see the Prime Minister about a problem that is relevant to your life, make a demand because h e i s a l s o y o u r s e r v a n t .

A s i d e s .

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: That is what we are talking a b o u t .

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I addressed CAMROD which is an umbrella body in the Caribbean responsible for non-governmental organisations which deals with the quality of life of persons who are physically and mentally challenged. I observed at that function at Grand Barbados Hotel, a number of young men who played the National Anthem. They played it – I am not talking about some men who when you go into the hotel circuits you find people beating the pans – I am talking about the melody and the manner in which they played the National Anthem. It was a surprise to me. That is why I say that although you believe that you are aware of some things, when you witness the quality of a person who you are not too confident that he can do it as good as those who think that they are better, those who call themselves normal and who sometimes possess more abnormalities than the people who are abnormal.

A s i d e s .

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: I was surprised at the quality of the music and it tells me that they have talent that can be used in the area of culture. You have Teddy Pendagrass who still sings. You have great people who play the piano, steel p a n s .

A s i d e s .

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: You have Ray Charles, Stevie Wonder and a whole set of persons that are involved in c u l t u r a l a c t i v i t i e s . . .

A s i d e s .

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: There are people who are involved in the Arts in general. People with disabilities can dance and social activities can be put in place so that, they can come to a good social and enjoy a good dance. They feel the same love and ecstasy as ordinary people and their t a l e n t s c a n b e u t i l i s e d .

Sir, I believe that the only way to reach the optimum national capacity of this state is to involve persons in all constituencies of life who can produce something that is of value to this society. A person who is physically challenged might turn out to be one of the best musicians in the Eastern Caribbean or in the world, given the opportunity. Institutions in Barbados must open up and make it a special programme, just as we put quotas in place for women's rights, UNICEF and Government across the world push for children's rights then we must also push for the rights of the so-called mentally and physically challenged persons within our

society. That must go on the national agenda on par with the rights of all other people within the society.

I believe that as the Minister moves forward with this programme and clearly demonstrate that he is not a supporter of the Charles Darwin theory of natural selection or that only the fittest will survive, that he understands that all people are people and ought to be respected as people. That there are no inferior beings and superior beings and that everyone has a right to live within a just society.

That is clear coming through from the provisions of the proposals. If we can advance and develop a society that see life in that manner, we would have accomplished through social transformation what this Ministry sets out to achieve.

4 . 4 0 p . m .

Sir, I told you that I was going to be very short because I am not that knowledgeable on the subject matter, but I want to assure you, Sir, that in the weeks ahead the Ministry would be looking at all the different facets of life that are related to the senior citizens. We will make sure that the relevant committees in the Ministry will continue to consult and coordinate programmes with all the NGOs organisations, whose programmes are to uplift the quality of life and to assure care for those persons who are physically and mentally challenged. Out of those programmes, I want to assure you that Barbados would be perceived as one of the leading countries in the Eastern Caribbean that recognise the importance of having programmes which are people-centred and are humane.

I want to thank you very much, Sir, for your patience.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I am grateful to participate in what I consider a historic debate in this Chamber, because our democratisation process as a country and a society could never be complete, Mr. Deputy Speaker, unless we were capable to commit ourselves to policy as outlined in the Green Paper that has been laid by the Honourable Minister for Social Transformation, The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East.

I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, that we have an opportunity today to commit ourselves to ensuring that the persons who have previously not benefited from the full expenditure of the State may now do so by reason of the commitment, not only of the line Ministry, Social Transformation but indeed, of all Ministries of Government to implement policies that would inure to the benefit of all persons who might be facing disabilities of whatever character.

Honourable Members in here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have already indicated that all of us in some form or fashion have some form of disability, and, therefore, to determine that we should treat persons whose disability may be a little

more acute than others different, could not be right in a society that over the last 60 years has fought so hard for the principles of social, economic and political justice.

I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the attitude which informs the general public as to how to treat persons with disabilities is absolutely critical. If you would forgive me, I will refer to a personal example because most people may not be aware but one of the persons who helped to raise me is my aunt who does not speak and cannot hear. She grew up at a time when her father believed that it was the will of God and, therefore, did nothing to encourage her when natural abilities allowed her to become independent and to be able to move forward with the capacity to learn and provide for herself. At the end of the day it was a disability, perhaps, a little more acute than somebody wearing glasses, but at the end of the day a disability that would not prevent her from living full life.

The approach taken today, the children who have hearing or speech disabilities or impairment stand in stark contrast to the approach that would have informed my grandfather in his handling of his daughter's disability and I think, therefore, that we have come a long way. Because we recognise now that these persons deserve to be fully integrated into our society and that they must have the opportunity to benefit in all ways. I, therefore, want to spend a little time here speaking to you on a matter that is perhaps very closely integrated with the Green Paper itself and that is, the question of the provision of education for persons suffering from special needs.

We, in the White Paper of 1995, established a committee to look at the provision of education for persons having special needs, and I will come to the definition of special needs very shortly but suffice to say that it includes with disabilities as one of the main categories. That Committee was Chaired by Ms. Felicia Inniss and comprised persons reflecting of other state owner groups across the society.

When the report was submitted, we also had an expert in Special Needs Education out of Florida. A Dr. John DeWitt prepared another document and we were fortunate enough to have, as well, Dr. Garry Quinby who was stationed, in fact, between Erdiston College and the University of the West Indies, who also prepared a third report. We were, therefore, capable of distilling these three reports to develop the Special Education Policy for Barbados without even knowing that this debate was going to be debated this week. We, in fact, in the Ministry of Education signed off on this Special Educational Policy last week Monday, I think that would have been the 22nd May, for its submission to Cabinet. I am, therefore, very happy to announce to this Honourable Chamber that Special

Education Policy would shortly be submitted to Cabinet for Cabinet's approval before its wider public dissemination.

The policy is based, very simply, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on recognising what in fact is Special Education. We believe that Special Education refers to the provisions designed to meet the needs of children who are described as having special needs; recognising that any student at any given time may have a special need owing to social, emotional, physical or learning difficulties or from serious illness or trauma.

When this Government was elected in 1994, one of the first things that we did, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was to recognise that the only way that we could improve the educational systems was by seeing what were the various reasons why children were not learning in the system. We recognised that some maybe as the result of persons being physically disabled, some maybe as a result of them being mentally disabled; some maybe as a result of them having learning disabilities from dyslexia, dysarthria, dyscalculia to other forms of difficulties, some maybe as a result of emotional trauma, where someone in the family died or someone was divorced and invariably that child went through trauma to the extent where they were no longer learning as they used to.

In the Ministry this new Special Education Policy recognises pursuant to that strategy that we have been employing over the last six years, that there are various types of special needs. There are special needs of the mentally challenged; there are persons with mild learning difficulties, and as I just pointed out, there are some who are learning disabled; there are some who are physically challenged; there are communication difficulties which can variably relate to speech impediments *et cetera*; there are hearing or visual impairments; there are emotionally or psychologically disadvantaged persons and that last category is one that we as a society have not learned to deal with persons, largely because the process of being able to diagnose that a person may be emotionally or psychologically disadvantaged is not as advanced as it should be.

4 . 5 0 p . m .

Our philosophy is a premise on five grounds, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and if you would permit me to read those five grounds :

- "1. All children must have an equal right to access to receive education which is appropriate to their individual developmental needs."

May I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the new Education Act which is currently being drafted, the policy that is currently being settled on, I should say, will include this commitment to ensure that all children have an equal right to

access tertiary education.

- "2. Every child should be given the opportunity to acquire skills that will enable him or her to gain maximum benefit from learning which should form the basis for the pursuance of further training for independent living."

The theme of the White Paper on Education Reform and the theme that continues to govern the work of the Ministry has been: "Each One Matters." We chose that theme then and stuck to it now because for too long too many persons have fallen through the gaps in our systems, largely because the philosophy that guided education in the past essentially was one that sought to produce enough persons to man the Governments and the mercantile community and the church but did not recognise that the purpose of education should not relate simply to the needs of the society or the economy it should relate to ensuring that the child should benefit to the maximum of his or her ability. It should recognise that each child will have different abilities but whether the ability is up there or here, there must be a commitment to take the child to the maximum of his or her ability.

Mr. Deputy Speaker,

- "3. Every child has the right to be part of the main stream of education to the extent to which is beneficial to the individual child."

Sir, we have not traditionally dealt with the issue of mainstreaming in Barbados as people understand it. The Ministry however, has been pursuing over years a policy that looks at three levels of integration.

1. Location integration
- (B) Social integration
- ii Class integration.

Location integration is the one that perhaps all of us is most familiar with that you place a facility dealing with children with special needs on the same compound as a primary school but there is no contact between the children at the special needs facility and no contact with the children at the normal primary school. That has been the policy which the Ministry was pursuing for years that worked, whether it is at Erdiston, Charles F. Broome, or whatever. We felt that this could not be the sum total of the Ministry's participation for a special education policy and we moved certainly during the last six years to a commitment of social integration. Schools like All Saints which was recently opened in January of 1998, reflect that commitment of social integration where there maybe, in separate classes, but they

come together for lunch, they come together for games and they come together for all other forms of school activities.

The third type of integration which is where we want to go is class integration. Do not get me wrong, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are currently persons with disabilities in the mainstream of Barbadian educational institutions, whether with cerebral palsy or a whole host of other disabilities, there are children in the normal primary school. But we want to commit ourselves by ensuring that wherever possible, once it is beneficial to the individual child in the school that mainstreaming should take place as a matter of policy and not as the exception.

Sir, to do that, it means that adjustments have to be made to the school plant because you have to build capacity before you can accept the persons there. Persons may for example, be in a wheel chair and need to access ramps. Persons may need access to braille printers. Persons may need access to types of software in order to have whatever particular interest they may have.

I am happy to say that the EduTech policy has as its premise that every school which is being refurbished, and it has already happened in the 15 schools that were year one, and the design for the year two 25 schools are now completed, that every EduTech school has been provisioned with ramps, has been provisioned with full access bathrooms and has been provisioned with computer labs on the ground floor, ensuring that it is capable of access by every person who is intended to go to that school.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: By the time the EduTech Programme is finished all 103 Government public, primary and secondary schools in this country will have those physical details so that the issue of providing full access to all children in this country cannot be reduced to the issue of physical accommodation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the third premise, we have said to the extent that it is beneficial to the individual child or school largely because there may well be one or two children who may not, with the best intention in the world, be able to fit in with the social sector of a school environment and therefore when we are drafting, we have to be able to accommodate all eventualities. To that extent, while we have put that as a caveat, we expect that the majority of children over the next five years will in fact be able to be mainstreamed in schools in Barbados throughout the Government public education system at the primary and secondary levels.

4. The programme we are planning for the schools should reflect respect for the work of the individual, respect for the differences between individuals in

ability, in psychic, in physical appearance and in personality.

When we talk about discrimination, very often the discrimination against those who are challenged is only seen in the very extreme cases but there is a lot of discrimination that takes place on a daily basis because of how a child looks, because of how a child handles himself or herself on a playing field, because of how a child speaks, because of how a child behaves in terms of his or her personality. We as a country must commit ourselves to ensuring that we recognise that it must be ingrained in each of us, a level of tolerance that recognises that as human beings, while we have the same physiological make up, there are differences that separate each and every one of us and that those differences can be distinct as the DNA fingerprint which we all know makes each of us unique in our makeup.

Our new curriculum will have a focus on seeking to engender tolerance among children in our school population for persons with disabilities or persons with basic differences.

Fifthly, "Persons with disabilities should be consulted wherever possible on matters pertaining to their own needs and educational development." 5.00 p.m.

One of the difficulties that we have found is that very often people make decisions for persons who are disabled without consulting them as to what their needs are and what their wishes are. While we may not always be able to meet those needs or wishes in entirety, we believe that in the same way we will not make a decision on a child's future without consultation with their parents in a normal primary school that we should not seek to make decisions for persons who have disabilities without consulting their parents and where possible the persons themselves if they are capable of making those informed decisions.

All of this leads back as a philosophy to the development of our policy statement. Our policy statement once again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is based on four premises and they are:

- (4) that all children have equal rights to receive education which is appropriate to the individual's developmental needs;
- (5) that schools are responsible for the education of all children;
- (6) that schools must adhere to the Ministry's stage referral process procedures for children with special education needs as set out in the manual;

(I will come back and talk about the stage referral process shortly.)

- (4) that every school in this country must develop a special needs policy.

As I said, emotional and psychological disabilities may come to a child who looks normal, behaves normal for the most part up to that point but who all of a sudden develops an emotional and psychological disability that we cannot account for. Now that meant that we have had to recognize that persons must be trained. All teachers must be trained to recognize the basic symptoms of persons with special needs.

I am happy that the Ministry of Education has already published and released a handbook for parents and a handbook for teachers which defines the various special needs that children may have, what are the symptoms that define these special needs, and who are the agencies that you can go to for assistance for these children.

We have also completed all of the workshops for all teachers in primary schools and these were funded by the Caribbean Development Bank in conjunction with the Ministry of Education. We are now to do the workshop for all secondary teachers to be able to help define when a person is clearly showing symptoms that require the implementation of a special needs programme.

We are cognizant that the critical areas that will need to be examined in this special needs policy will be teacher training. May I say that this Government started the process of allowing short courses for special needs educators at Erdiston under the EduTech Programme. We have a detailed form of training which can go as high as a Masters in Special Needs Education at the University of the West Indies, along with the diploma course and certificate course being offered and also the degree course being offered eventually at Erdiston, in conjunction we believe with a distance education university whose name I do not want to announce yet since we are in the middle of discussions with them but it is one out of Canada. We recognize that the implementation of a systematic referral process will be key, to that extent, we have sought in this policy to establish a formal structure of referral for students, to Student Services and to provide adequate resources also for that to happen.

What happens now? There are *ad hoc* referrals that take place at Student Services. Many teachers and many parents are unsure of what to do for children who have need of special education. Very often there is no record of the interventions that have taken place and very often there is little or no accountability of what has transpired.

We want to be able to move to a situation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where there is a systematic referral process, where we reduce the number of referrals to Student Services and

where teachers and parents become more informed and there is greater collaboration and where we keep records of the intervention that has taken place, because the intervention records are key to be able to provide for that person whatever else it may need. There are four stages to the systematic referral process.

At Stage One, the teacher becomes aware of the problem and intervenes. This is usually in the context of the classroom. At Stage Two, the teacher consults with a key person in the school who will be designated as the Learning Needs Coordinator and may I say that we are now about to apply to the Ministry of the Civil Service for the capacity to designate a person in each secondary school and a person within a cluster of primary schools as a Learning Needs Coordinator. There is no way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we can implement this new policy without decentralizing the skills in respect of persons who can recognize when children have special needs.

At Stage Three, there will then be the requirement to consult the external agencies – Children's Development Centre and psychologists at the Ministry of Education or privately. There is a whole network of professionals that can be and should be consulted at this stage for the more in-depth work to be done and to more effectively diagnose the difficulty that that particular child may be experiencing at that point in time.

The Fourth Stage is to refer the child as well as the reports from the record of intervention to the Ministry who then under the new Education Act will have a duty to place that child in an appropriate educational institution so that child's special needs can be met.

I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that once we are able to implement the systematic referral process over the course of the next year that we will see a significant difference in the manner in which we treat the issues of special needs education. Equally, I am indicating that other critical issues in this area are needed such as building a capacity in schools and we know that programme is underway. That is the EduTech Programme for the physical accommodation. Then there is the issue of transportation and the Minister for Social Transformation spoke partially to the issue in terms of how they intend to be relating to the Transport Board to provide special facilities. But we do hope that in addition to the two buses that there will be a recognition by the School Bus Transportation System, that we will have to make some special provision for those children who are being made mainstream in order to be able to get to school.

5 . 1 0 p . m .

Equally, we recognise that the Ministry of Education must hire psychologists to meet the needs of the system. We have provision now for three posts from the one that I found when I became the Minister of Education. The reality is that those three cannot, with the best intention in the world, service the needs of a school population. Granted three are better than one and we may argue that there has been a 300 per cent increase, but those sterile arguments in statistics are for people who are not suffering the particular problem and have the particular need to consult at a particular time. Therefore, we have to recognise as a Government that there must be a capacity to meet this need urgently if we are to effectively meet the needs of persons in the system.

I want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that as I indicated at the opening, this is an essential component in the completion of the democratisation of what I call the post-1930s revolution for social, economic and political governance in terms of ensuring that persons who previously were not seen by the system of government have now the full opportunity to benefit from the delivery of services and the access to opportunities without feeling that a special case is made for them. It must be as a right.

We recognise that while Government in decades gone by may not necessarily have had institutions effectively meeting the needs of these persons, private institutions grew up, and it is for this reason that the Ministry of Education in 1996, in the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure and ever since then, increased the allocation to the Learning Centre and the Challenor School and, in fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, took a decision to wipe out all of the accumulative debts of the Challenor School and the Learning Centre because we recognised that they were providing a service that Government could not provide for itself.

We continue now to give increased allocations in recognition of their critical role in the educational system. Equally, we believe that our work at the Government institutions that have traditionally provided dedicated educational opportunities has to broaden both of these schools that are located in the Pine and are in fact part of the E d u T e c h p r o g r a m m e .

I am happy to say that after thorough consultation with the parents, the staff, the Members of Parliament and the Ministry of Education there is now a recommendation which I have accepted to rename the school which was previously known as the School of the Deaf and the Blind, the Irving Wilson School after the first principal of that institution. This recommendation will also be going to Cabinet because I think that at this point in our development it is anathema for us to be referring to a school as the School for the Deaf and the Blind, like any other school it deserves a proper name.

The other school that is next door to it which has previously been known as the Pre-Vocational Centre and which focusses more on the implementation of a modified curriculum for persons who are physically or mentally challenged – not the extreme cases – I am seeking to provide them with opportunities so that they may earn a living and still have life skills. That school which was previously known as the Pre-Vocational Centre, it has been recommended to me and I have accepted to carry on for further recommendation to Cabinet, that that school should now be known as the Ann Gill School in recognition of the sterling work done by Ann Gill.

I want to make the point that the Irving Wilson School, only Friday, the Leader of the Opposition and myself toured the facilities of the Irving Wilson School and we were given very detailed instructions as to the kind of work that was done physically to the building. The principal of the school clearly pointed out that we have a small rubber type flooring. In fact, when you are on it you almost feel as though there is wet paint on the ground because it tends to take the imprint of your shoes and the weight of your body. That rubber flooring is specially developed for persons who have hearing impairment because it is recognised that it is the more sound acoustic material for the floors. When combined with a special acoustic tiles we now have rooms that have been clearly designed and built specifically to offer the best level of tuition to persons with hearing impairment.

We have also included in the Irving Wilson School in the hall a special wooden floor which is specifically built to take vibrations. So whether it is music and rhythm or whatever, the children can still be able to feel what is taking place around them. For those who have visual impairment we have painted all of the frames to doorways and windows in red and the first and bottom step so that there is a clear demarcation for persons who have difficulty in terms of their capacity to move around the school.

Equally, we have bought equipment which is akin to FM receivers that allows each child to move around the school compound but to still receive communication from his or her teacher irrespective of whether the teacher is in front of them or not. It operates on the same principle as radio FM frequency so that the children have this special piece of equipment which will allow them to hear instructions from the teachers even if the teachers are not in front of them.

In the Ministry of Education's primary education vote, we have also for the last three or four years provided money for the purchase of hearing aids for those children who, out of the programme that we started in 1996, where we test each primary school child for hearing and speech impediment and sight impairment, when they are found with a hearing impediment they can then be referred to us and if they are

unable to get a hearing aid themselves we purchase the hearing aids and give them because there is no sense providing education for a child and it cannot hear what is going on in the classroom. Then you would hear that they are 'hard-ears' or that they are 'duncy' when in truth and in fact the child is having just a problem in being unable to hear and articulate clearly what is being said in the classroom.

The most significant thing about that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that those tests, because the idea is to test five and seven, reflect that at least six to eight out of every hundred children have a hearing or speech impairment or official impairment. It means that over the years we had children going through the school system not recognising that they had a hearing problem at the point where they could not hear at all without realising that these children had difficulty and we were not able to provide for them because we would turn around and say they were 'hard-ears' or 'duncy' or whatever derogatory comment we used to hear in schools. I am happy that not only has that programme been successful but it has now been written up by the University of Nova in Florida, which is recognised as the leading special education university throughout the whole of North America, as being a programme unique throughout the entire hemisphere where a country is committed to testing every child for hearing, speech and sight impairment. We have also ensured that those who are visually impaired will now have access to braille printers at the school and they will have access to special software so that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you and I go on a computer where we click the mouse and use the mouse to carry out our instructions, these students will now have software, if they are visually impaired that will allow them to speak to the computer and say, file, open, open x file, print, whatever and they will get, not only a braille speech of what they are printing off the Internet or off the computer but also it prints for the teacher a normal copy.

5 . 2 0 p . m .

Equally, for those who are hearing impaired there are adaptations to the computer and software which will also allow them to be able to effectively benefit from surfing the Internet or using the computer technology to the maximum.

The sum total of what I am trying to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that we know all is not well in Macedonia yet but we have inherited a system that was not designed to accommodate persons of all ranges and abilities but we, in 1995, as a Government, came to this Honourable Chamber and laid a document on the Floor of the House called a White Paper on Education with a theme that perhaps speaks more in three words to anything else I can say in half of an hour, that "Each One Matters". It did not say each child without a disability, it did not say, each child with x, y or z profile, it said "Each One Matters". We committed them to a programme, with the will of the people, that would likely extend over a ten-year period to be able to implement policies that we felt would allow each child to benefit to the maximum of his or her ability.

We are at a stage today where we have started to see the changes. We have started the training for special needs educators. We have started the retrofitting of buildings in the EduTech programme with the ramps, full access bathrooms and with the computer labs on the ground floor. We have also committed to ensuring that those private educational institutions working in this area have benefited to the maximum without having to worry about carrying the kinds of bills that they were carrying in the past.

We have ensured now that this special education policy, glimpses of which I have given you today, will go to Cabinet and will now be available for wide dissemination, not from an overnight formulation in the Ministry but from wide consultation starting with the Advisory Task Force on Special Education and the input of two independent consultants and experts in this area. We have done all of this, cognisant that we have responsibility, perhaps more than any other Ministry, to work with persons who have disabilities. When you have a disability it affects the extend to which you can be independent. We recognise that the purpose of our education is to make people independent. Therefore, any educational policy must be so crafted to be able to accommodate all of the variables that may stop us from making a person independent. We recognise that it cannot be done single-handedly, that a co-operative partnership between the non-governmental organisations in this area, between the parents, between the Ministries like the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Transformation, the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Finance, all are critical to be able to achieve these objectives.

I would like to say that I believe that with the continued systematic implementation of what I have discussed here this afternoon, that the plight of any child suffering from any form of disability in Barbados within five years time will be substantially different from what it has been for the better part of the 20th century.

We recognise that education is a gradual thing and that it does not come like that overnight but by the same token, we believe that by the implementation of these policies now and by the systematic implementation of the measures supporting the policies that we can make a difference.

I only would like to end, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by congratulating the Honourable Minister for Social Transformation, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, for leading the way in bringing this Green Paper to this Honourable Chamber and for ensuring that those who matter most by this implementation have been here to listen to the Government programme but better, that they will be in a position soon to benefit from the policies contained within the Green Paper.

I also would like to congratulate the previous Minister who had responsibility for this, the Honourable Member for

St. Philip North, whose work and commitment over a protracted period of time ensured that the Minister of Social Transformation was able to move as swiftly as he did in bringing this paper to this Honourable Chamber. I want to simply say that I sincerely hope that this Government would recognise that this is an unfinished part of the business of the 20th century democratization progress in Barbados. Let us move with alacrity to ensure that we correct those wrongs as
s o o n a s p o s s i b l e .

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will be very short as I did not want to encroach on the other persons who wish to speak but I think that I should lend my voice to the substantive Shadow Minister on this matter and to start by saying, as did the Honourable Member for the City, that both political parties in Barbados identify quite extensively in their last two Manifestos a programme for the assistance and the empowerment of the disabled in Barbados. The Democratic Labour Party devoted an entire page – page 20 of its 1999 Manifesto and the Barbados Labour Party in its Manifesto also set out some recommendations and some pledges and both together cut across party lines in the sense that they coincide and are very supportive of each other.

The purpose of a Green Paper is to elicit discussion. As I understand it, a Green Paper does not represent Government final policy, it raises issues which then go into the making of what is then called a White Paper and based on that White Paper which then is Government's policy you then draft the necessary legislation or introduce the
m e a s u r e s .

I am going to start with the shortcomings of this Green Paper in that while it says what will be done, and I agree that it is very good at that and as it should be, there are two areas that it is lacking in and were it not for this debate, those questions would not have been answered. The reason why the two areas need to be answered is because to speak to an audience of Barbadians who fall under the category of physically challenged or disabled is not the audience that needs to be convinced that resources need to be provided and that the society needs to direct its attention to reform of policies. It is, in fact, to the wider Barbadian with whom persons with disabilities have to interact on a daily basis that we need to get the message out. While the Green Paper on disability, as it stands, said what will be done, what is lacking in the Green Paper is why it must be done.
5 . 3 0 p . m .

The Honourable Member for St. Michael East sets out his vision of why it must be done, I think the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East and some others in their presentations did it, for those who are here and have the benefit of hearing why it must be done but the why aspect of any policy is the most difficult component. Why basically

tells you where you are now, analysing the present and telling you why you must change and that is why a Green Paper on disabilities is so essential and I hope that every effort would be made by the Ministry of Social Transformation in producing the White Paper and in carrying out its advocacy on behalf of the disabled to deal with the question of why it is necessary to introduce that policy.

The second shortcoming of the Green Paper has now become almost mandatory in relation to both Green Papers and White Papers in the system of Government that we practise in and those countries that produce them, the only countries that produce them with great regularity are countries like the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and other Members can, perhaps, point to some others. One of the things that has become almost mandatory, is a statement as to when a particular policy is going to be introduced because, at the end of the day, if the Government commits itself to introduce certain specific policies on behalf of the disabled, these simply rest as pledges and nothing more unless the disabled community in Barbados is able to hold Government to some kind of accountability.

Now that may not be relevant if your Minister is an action man, as the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East pledges that he is but the policy is not made for him only, he is designing it, he may never implement it. Somebody else may have the honour to implement it but he would have made his contribution by designing it. The Honourable Member for St. Philip North has designed it but
h e i s n o t i m p l e m e n t i n g i t .

Our greatest commitment in this debate would be to indicate, quite clearly, the time frame in which these measures would be implemented, or some of them. As I say if Members would have a look at even the White Papers produced in recent times by the Barbados Labour Party Government, and they have produced quite a lot, they have set out quite clearly the anticipated time frame in which they will introduce the policy, the cost of the policy, so that in a very real sense you can also help the Opposition, where they are your allies, and our colleagues on the backbench because they are the people who are supposed to make Government most accountable to ensure that the relevant resources are made available, because the Minister often speaks of
r e s o u r c e c o n s t r a i n t s .

Lack of money: The best way to solve that would have been to come in here and say, gentlemen, the bill for this is \$300,000,000 over 10 years. Are you willing to commit yourselves to these resources? And separate the men from the mice and assist the disabled community in Barbados in seeing that we are serious about implementing policies on

their behalf. Therefore, when the Minister takes the Green Paper back to his desk, with his officials, I hope that he would address that question of why these policies are necessary.

As I see it, as it stands, while very helpful, useful and even heart-warming to the disabled community as an action plan, he does not speak to the persons, as I say, who in the vast majority needs to be sensitized to and to understand why policies like these are necessary, and why priority has to be given to the needs of the disabled at this time and why empowering them is so critical to our national development and to our concept of our social justice.

Unless this Green Paper is written from the background of international conferences, task forces and so on and has no political component, which would be the reason why he would only identify the specific action, then I think that element needs to be addressed. I believe that time frame and the resources that the Minister wants, I think that Ministers have to be more aggressive, to my mind, in identifying the real needs to the implementation of a policy and do not assume that by saying that you are happy to see the Minister of Housing in here, that means that even if the units for the disabled are going to be built in the next five years, we need more than that. We need a solid commitment, quotas, allocation of resources and all of the other steps that would bring life to this Green paper, rather than at the end of the day it becoming a document which catches dust or does not get the kind of support which is going to be vital.

We on the Opposition give our full support to initiatives which would improve the quality of life and the standing of the disabled in Barbados. Avoid the vague aspect of it, any detachment, and be very clear in what the policies seek to achieve.

The second point, which needs to be emphasised, the point made by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, and I think reinforced by the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, is that important consideration about integrating to the extent that is possible and feasible for persons who suffer from disabilities into normal activities. The normal school activities, normal work environment, and in particular for Government to provide incentives, both tax incentives and other incentives, to encourage the private sector to create more jobs for the disabled in Barbados. That is very important.

In the Democratic Labour Party's Manifesto of 1999, we indicated that we felt very strongly that in an attempt to create jobs for the disabled it was necessary through incentives to the private sector as well as training, and placement in entrepreneurial programmes to provide those new jobs.

We also indicated that priority be given to transportation needs, including the issuing of bus passes, regardless of age, the improvement of roads and sidewalks

in Barbados, purchase of specially equipped buses for public sector agencies which service the disabled and also to develop and maintain a public education programme to inform the public about the disabled, their needs and concerns, and eradicate some of the myths about the disabled in our society.

It touches economic policy, social policy, it touches the work of political parties as institutions and every aspect of our life and our environment, including, as the Honourable Member for the City mentioned, the fact that we have to recognise that the use of technology in many cases is going to make members of the disabled community in some cases far more competent at certain tasks than persons who are not disabled.

We have seen many examples throughout the world in the years of technology. I remember only recently reading in a book about a lady who lost her legs in an accident and viewed that not as a disability but when she had to sit in a wheelchair and realise how immobile she was, she got together with some friends and designed a more effective wheelchair and then opened a company which is one of the most successful in the world now. I do not remember the name of it. It made a new technology to those people in the disabled community and in her case, made her an extremely wealthy woman and a woman who has done much better than people who have their own legs to be able to walk around and presumably whose focus should be on improving their own lot and position in life, but regrettably have not been able to do so.

It is against that background that I agree with much of what has been said. I also agree very firmly and this is the last point that I will make, about the need for the disabled community in Barbados to also themselves start to push down some barriers. There are many funding agencies throughout the world that have used the plight of the disabled and persons who, in conditions of famine and starvation could raise millions of dollars to pay high executive salaries to officials who have benefited significantly from using either the sympathy or the support which other persons who have resources would want to give to causes like those of the disabled.

We can think of organisations some of which have done very well and some of which have used and misappropriated millions of dollars by using pictures of the disabled to raise funds which very often do not even get back to help the disabled in our community. Yet, the disabled community itself is very often not able to use many of those same methods to champion the cause of the disabled. I think that the Honourable Member for St. Michael East was touching on this point when he basically suggested that they start to push down barriers and make sure their advocacies

are strong. Do not withdraw, do not give up, keep pressing on for those changes that you think are desirable.

As we come to doing the Green Paper, I urge the disabled community, as I am doing it today and will continue to do, to get some specifics from the Minister on the amount of money that is going to be spent, the time frame in which he is going to introduce... in which the Government, not him, because as I say, it is not a personalised scenario, the time frame in which the policies are going to be introduced, so that all of us can feel happy that this debate has been an important exercise in national development and, not a situation as some may feel, where we are simply looking at a situation, coming up with a few suggestions and exploiting a scenario to give the impression that we are doing something that we are really not doing. Let us put some strong commitment and resources behind the pledges that are made in this Green Paper today, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church East.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise first of all to congratulate the Honourable Minister of Social Transformation for bringing this important document of draft public policy to the attention of this Honourable Chamber. I also would want in the same spirit in which the Honourable Minister of Social Transformation proceeded to congratulate his predecessor responsible for the portfolio, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, who like John the Baptist would have paved the path on which the Saviour was able to thread.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to support this Resolution. I am also pleased that we have come to this age of enlightenment. It is not very long ago, Sir, when it was not considered proper and acceptable in Barbadian society to discuss matters in relation to disability. It was not considered proper and indeed, Sir, many families considered it a stain to have had any of their members who suffered from disability. In fact, it was not uncommon for one of them to live in the same district as the family and not know that there was a member of the household within that district who had a disability, because quite frankly, in some cases they were simply withheld from public view.

It is therefore pleasing, Sir, that we have reached this stage where the human rights of the disabled are no longer denied in the way how in the unfortunate dark past those rights were routinely denied.

Sir, it is also pleasing to note that we going beyond the stage of mere recognition and openness, but we are also as a Parliament and as a country moving to the stage where we are seeking to give positive interpretation to those rights.

I want to locate this Green Paper before us within the context of a wider public policy framework. Sir, we can take comfort in the fact as we proceed to implement these policies that the social partners have themselves given a commitment to singling out persons with disabilities for special treatment. I refer to the protocol for the implementation of a social partnership, Protocol Three, 1998-2000, now extended for an additional year.

In that Protocol, as you would recall in terms of the statement of intent: The Social Partners agreed in the statement of intent and I quote:

“The Social Partners desired through their association in a Social Compact to create a modern, efficient economy which is able to produce high and sustainable economic growth accompanied by increased employment, to establish true low inflation an equilibrium between prices and incomes, and to achieve a society which enjoys a greater degree of inclusiveness in all its facets and where a conscious and deliberate effort is made to distribute equitably the benefits of economic growth.”

Sir, that was the general statement. Speaking to the desire to be inclusive in our policies to ensure that every aspect and every facet of our society had a place at the table, recognising that all in this society have something to contribute and also that all will be able to benefit from the fruits which are produced in this country.

It therefore follows on, Sir, to give some meaning to that, Sir. In section 12.1, it dedicated a specific section to deal with persons with disabilities and by doing that, Sir, it committed the Government, it committed the private sector and it committed the trade unions to ensuring that they created within their individual spheres of influence, policies and programmes to give effect to the commitments which were jointly made in this document.

Sir, they went on to state:

“The Social Partners agree that there should be no discrimination in employment against persons with disabilities and they pledge to play their part in ensuring that disabled persons enjoy their rights and are aware of the initiatives which are being taken to assist them in securing employment.”

A sound and solid commitment and it resolved that this document was laid before this Honourable Parliament. Sir, this matter of a commitment to securing employment rights for persons with disabilities is of fundamental importance.

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Employment, Sir, means the ability to earn and participate. It is important not just as a means of providing for oneself or family but also it effects a person's pride, self-worth and general psychological well-being. If that is important to those who consider ourselves normal, Sir, you can understand how important it is to the disabled, that feeling of inclusiveness, that right and opportunity not to be cared for but to be able to care for oneself and to care for others. You can understand, Sir, that we are truly empowered. Those in the community with disabilities are empowered when you give them the opportunity for employment and the social partners have committed themselves to that in the tripartite arrangement and we have to stick to our commitments.

It went on, Sir, to indicate that the social partners agree to promote a code of practice on the employment of people with disabilities and in setting targets and time frames for increase in employment for disabled persons in the private and public sectors. The Honourable Member can rest assured that he has the commitment that has been made by Government as employer, private sector employers and public sector employers to assist him in implementing his programme.

We also, Sir, pledge to support a number of policies which are in the Green Paper even before there was a Green Paper. They had given specific commitment to one of the policies in the Green Paper, that is for the collation of a national database and the full extent and types of disabilities, respective skills, formal education, training and job experience of the disabled. Of course, that will help with the identification of employment opportunities and the like.

It is against this background, Sir, that I want to set this paper. This is just one other example of Government's commitment to give meaning and tangible expressions to generalized commitment such as this.

So this Protocol on the social partnership is not a document of high standing and "highfalutin" claims and general intent, Sir. It is a document which section by section and unit by unit, the Government through its Ministries and Departments is expressing its commitment. This paper today, Sir, really speaks to the Government's commitment to what we have decided on in 1998.

Sir, I want to make the point that in discussing this matter of persons with disabilities we always have to bear in mind that persons may come to that point from two directions. First of all, those who are unfortunately born with these disabilities and secondly, Sir, those who may develop them at any stage in their life – some at an early stage and some at a latter stage.

The Green Paper speaks quite properly to the issue of prevention. It commits itself through the Ministry and Government agencies generally to working on several

programmes to prevent the onset of disabilities which maybe preventable. For example, there is the whole matter of healthy lifestyles and avoiding those lifestyle situations which can lead to the onset of disabilities resulting in the loss of vision and limbs. Both can be induced as a result of diabetes and paralysis as a result of various medical conditions. We also have the phenomenon of accidents whether in the workplace, motor vehicles, sports or otherwise.

So that it is incumbent on all of us, Sir, even though today we may think that we are okay and even if today we are of a benevolent spirit and believe, Sir, that our role in life is to help those who are not okay. We do not know how the wheel of fortune may turn and how by some unfortunate spin we may find ourselves as a disabled. So that the wider society, Sir, not only has to act with an intent but to some extent enlighten self-interest to ensure that as a society we commit ourselves to the provision of adequate facilities for the disabled, to support any programmes of early detection or prevention which can either eliminate, mitigate or prevent the onset of some of these difficulties. We should use whatever information technology to ease the situation. Take for example, Sir, unfortunately there has been because of the incidents of diabetes a relatively high rate of lower limb amputation, for example, in 1996 there were some 94 and the figure was in the eighties for 1994 and 1995. I do not know what they are now.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: They run about 100 a year. I am advised by the Honourable Member for St. James South. We have to consider that aspect of the society as well. These persons previously would have been making a full and active contribution to development and growth of the society. We have to ensure that our policies and programmes are such that they are able to be restored to full function or as full function as is possible. Therefore, it is important for us to ensure not only that we have the infrastructure and facilities, but things like using the latest in artificial limbs. Nowadays, Sir, based on the science programmes that we see, it is possible to have multi-functioned legs and arms for sports and many times they are almost as good and some people may argue that for specific functions, better than the real thing.

Sir, it is important for us, as have been indicated by some Honourable Members earlier, to ensure that full mobility by the use of some of the more advanced and sophisticated wheelchairs and other devices to mitigate whatever deficiency they may happen to be. I would, therefore, want to make the call, Sir, for us all as a society to commit more resources and develop more programmes to make the opportunities available for the disabled community by whatever cause to be able to benefit from such.

I also want to make the call, Sir, in support of the Green Paper's recognition of the need for public infrastructure to be user friendly to persons who are disabled. It is no secret, Sir, that in Barbados, one is not able to find enough public conveniences for the wider section of the community let alone the disabled. Sir, we need as a society to recognize that we cannot truly consider ourselves as advanced or as developed until we take care of some of those very basic necessities. You go to public places not only to offices and other places to do business but places of public entertainment. There are nightclubs and restaurants and whatever else and when you want to find a bathroom, you have to go around the back and pass the kitchen or sometimes around the paling in order to find the facilities. Not one of them, Sir, in many cases is even wheelchair accessible.

We have to move, Sir, if we truly want to consider ourselves as a developed and a caring society to insist that our public code, which we place on establishments purporting to offer services to the public, be upgraded such that members of the disabled public will not be denied their rights to be able to go out and enjoy a night on the town as well, Sir. Those are some of the basics. It has to go as basic a level as that, yes, employment, yes, education but the other finer aspects of life have also to be catered to.

Sir, there are enough statements of intent that, if all sectors of the community, the general public and the private sector, trade unions and Government were to implement only half of what they have indicated that they are willing to do, the disabled in Barbados would truly have a better situation.

I am confident, Sir, that this administration will more than play its part in honouring the commitments which we have made. I am confident that we will commit adequate resources to the fulfilment of these commitments which we have made.

I want to take the opportunity of this Parliament to urge our partners in the private sector particularly to put their money where their mouths happen to be by way of the commitments made in the Protocol to ensure that we are able as we go to the various offices, to the various other places of business to recognise that the facilities and accommodation are made for the employment of disabled persons; to ensure that private sector companies, in the same way how they adopt various sporting groups, schools, various environmental projects, will also adopt various programmes and initiatives within the community of the disabled not only by throwing their money at the projects but also lending of their time and having their people become intimately involved.

For example, Sir, entrepreneurship and other self-development programmes within the community of the disabled could benefit substantially not only from private sector injection of funds but from mentoring, where experienced private sector practitioners would be able to help the young and fledgling entrepreneurs in the community of the disabled in Barbados to realise their full potential of independence to be able to earn and support themselves and their families and to have pride and industry like all the rest of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am grateful.

Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased today in the course of this debate to lend my support to this Green Paper which has come before this Honourable Chamber for discussion and then for dissemination to the wider public and for implementation.

Having read it, it seems to me to have the core features which represent, in my view, an instrument of social engineering particularly in relation to the disabled. In this regard I think the Barbados Labour Party is to be congratulated for once again being in the forefront at the attempt at social engineering and the attempt at making sure that those persons who represent the vulnerable groups in our society do not fall through the cracks.

In time, as this particular Green Paper is implemented, in my view, it will come to stand with other pieces of legislation which also mark the breaking of new ground in terms of how particular groups were seen and treated in the wider society. We can think, perhaps, of the role played by the Family Law Act in making sure that women have certain rights. We can think in terms of the Succession Act in the way that children who were born to a father, who was perhaps not married to their mother, or indeed even the husband of another woman, were then able to get access to rights and benefits from his estate and to be recognised as the child of that particular man.

We can think in terms of the way legislation was used to outlaw the whole concept of the bastard socially and in law because of the horrible stigmatisation with which persons were labelled bastards had to live their entire lives and the implications of that socially and economically for them because they could not have access to the fathers' estates and so on. I am seeing this particular Green Paper which is before this Parliament today as analogous in terms of its wide-reaching effect to those particular pieces of legislation.

It comes against the background where persons with disabilities had a high degree of personal shame because they were made to feel different in a negative way. They did not

feel that they had rights and indeed they did not feel equal or even similar to those of other citizens. Indeed, their quality of life was so compromised by reason of their disabilities and the attitudes that people had toward them that they did not enjoy comparable lifestyles to those of us who take for granted the ability to see, to hear and the fact that our two feet are both the same lengths, things that we do not normally

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It only strikes home to you the impact that a disability can have on an individual when your own bodily integrity is compromised. If you strike your hand or knock your finger or even have a toothache, you can become so adversely affected in the way you function normally that you recognise forcibly what it must be like for an individual to live every day of their lives without hearing, without the ability to walk, or with even graver disabilities or, perhaps, even with the combination of all those particular disabilities.

If we are to have a Barbados which provides a safety net and a social net for every citizen of every class, of every colour, of every persuasion and every single type, then we must have the kinds of initiatives which we are seeing laid out in such detail in this Green Paper for members in our community who for too long have been overlooked.

We have been a society who have, for whatever reason, because of past attitudes condemned many of our disabled people to live out their lives at the Psychiatric Hospital even though they have no mental disability, condemned our disabled people to live out their lives in the District Hospitals mingling with geriatrics with whom they really have nothing in common, and confined to bed without persons with the appropriate skills to care for them, with little or no rehabilitative programmes to ensure that they are able to enjoy something of what is available, of the beauty that God has put on this earth and of the benefit that all of us who live outside of these institutions usually take for granted.

Even though persons who are disabled may have tremendous skills and talents, by alienating these people from a wider social life, Barbados has failed to maximise the full extent of its resources, of the skills available, of the talent available because we have not nurtured these people and sought to have them developed in a way which will harness their skills and in a way which develops and enhances those skills. I am satisfied that this Green Paper provides the basis for it. It represents, in my view, a proactive approach to disabilities which will not only deal with how the society interacts and interfaces with persons with disabilities but it will forever help to define the way that these persons view themselves in the wider community. When you are by virtue of your disability alienated from the wider society then you cannot feel like those persons who do not have disabilities. You cannot feel that your country is giving the best to you nor can you feel like a valued and valuable member of the wider society and that, itself, going through life seeing

yourself as a second class citizen prevents these persons from giving of their best and from enjoying the best that life has to

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We must seek in this to ensure that it not only comes, and in this regard I must agree with the Leader of the Opposition, but we have to ensure that whatever is necessary for the implementation of the recommendations in the Green Paper is implemented, whether it is affecting structural change, whether it is to ensure putting in place the necessary financial resources, whether it means training — and that has to be a significant component of dealing with people with disabilities. The training not only of these individuals to fit into jobs and to fit into the mainstream of life but we must train persons and give them the special tools and skills needed for them themselves to train persons who are disabled or to work with persons who are disabled in various kinds of social settings and various kinds of institutions.

I am glad to see, when I talk about the institution, that the paper seeks to move away from the institutionalisation of persons with disabilities because it has become the easy solution in many societies to drop persons who have disabilities into institutions whether these institutions are adequately equipped or staff are there for them or not and leave them there. Once they are there, we can forget about them and go on with the rest of our lives. We must move away from that and I think that this programme here today moves away from that and speaks to mainstream life for the disabled and to move them into the mainstream of national life. It is important, therefore, that the paper looks at broad spectrum planning to the approach of persons with disabilities; that it recognises that there must be a multi-sectoral approach from various Ministries, whether it has to do with housing to facilitate their living needs and other accommodations, whether it has to do with the training and education or whether it has to do with health.

The Honourable Member who spoke immediately before me mentioned the fact that diabetes is a predisposing factor to disability. It is not just the diabetes. About 25 per cent of Barbados population is affected with diabetes and that means that they are immediately predisposed to loss of digits, loss of limbs, loss of sight, the breaking down of all major organs. It also relates to all of the chronic diseases and it was in that regard that two years ago I established a national advisory committee on chronic diseases which was supposed to report back to the Minister on a broad policy framework for the prevention and control of chronic diseases.

I was confident at the time that too many people, and I gave the statistics just now to the last Honourable Member, about 100 persons per year which is a very high figure suffer lower limb amputations in Barbados. That does not include the persons who lose toes usually or fingers. We do not

know the statistics in relation to those persons who may suffer blindness or if not total blindness severe loss of eyesight, those persons whose kidneys are affected or whose other limbs are affected. Therefore, that helps to demonstrate the need for a broad based multi-sectoral approach founded on all the Ministries.

I would like to recommend that as part of the implementation process of this Green Paper that the Honourable Minister has a workshop, a seminar with Permanent Secretaries and senior officials from all Ministries to make them understand the implication for the labour force when a man loses his sight, to make them understand the implication for a family when a breadwinner is pulled off a labour market because he is no longer able to work as a result of injury or disability.

Every Permanent Secretary and senior official at the administrative level of the Ministries will understand that this Paper affects them, that it has implications for their lives and that it has implications for the economic well-being of Barbados and the quality of life not only for those affected but for all of us, because when you see persons in our society who are not as physically or as mentally well as we are and the only thing that we can do for them is to ostracize them, it says something about the nature of the society that we are and the fact that we are prepared to be barbaric at this stage and not care about what happens to our brothers and sisters. In this regard, something needs to be done.

I welcome this new and proactive approach. I think too that it is important and again I echo the Honourable Member for St. John, with great reluctance. I think that it would have been useful to know what cost there would be to the implementation of this programme. We must not fool ourselves that this can be done cheaply. There is going to be high cost to it. In this regard, the Ministry of Finance is going to have to start to analyse these recommendations to determine what are the cost implications for the transportation system, what are the cost implications for the infrastructure at the national level, what are the cost implications if we are going to effect these changes in our health institutions, in all schools, in all public buildings, in the private sector. It must have a cost too for persons in the private sector.

We do not often recognise how disability unfriendly Barbados is but I invite persons to try for instance walking up Broad Street and thinking about it. Very often we walk some place and we do not think about it, we take it for granted. Walk up Broad Street and if you see the number of sidewalks of various sizes and various heights, with all kinds of dents and ups and downs and indentations and curbs that a person whose vision is either very poor or non-existent would find it extremely difficulty to negotiate. Simple variations in grade, that a person who has a wheelchair

would find it very difficult to come out of CIBC bank for instance and get to Cave Shepherd, something that somebody who can see would take for granted, or to move from Dacosta's Mall to Cave Shepherd a really very short distance of a few yards and yet a virtual obstacle course to a person with certain physical disabilities.

In our physical planning we have to think about these kinds of issues which really we do not consider any more. In several places you can see the blind tapping along with their canes where there is no sidewalk at all, where it is very difficult for them to be able to discern exactly how close a car can be to them and there is no provision for sidewalks for us who have sight furthermore for those who have disabilities. So our whole physical planning has to be changed.

In this regard, it would be interesting to see when the new building code that has been talked about for so long will ever come on stream because it is badly needed. If we are to effect the kind of fundamental changes that will help to carry out the very recommendations of which we have been speaking.
6.20 p.m.

I would wish to see too, that we come to the stage in Barbados where at our primary health level that for every pregnant woman, in the same way now that we screen and are able to give medication like AZT for prevention of AIDS of the newborn, that we start doing the kind of comprehensive screening, assessments and diagnostic testing which would be able to pick up disabilities in the womb because when you pick up those disabilities, it tells you better how you need to plan in your school system, how you need to plan in your health care system and what you need to plan for in terms of your budget.

In that regard, I would wish to ask a few questions that at this stage have not been made entirely clear to me. What level of education and training do we want to give to disabled persons? It is easy to say, the best possible level or the highest possible level but even in saying that, I would wish to caution, that has tremendous cost implications because you have to deal, when you are training the disable, with more personalised care. You cannot necessarily lump them into a classroom the way that we do 28 children now and push them toward the Eleven Plus examination. You have to determine what are the peculiar sensitivities or sensibilities of every individual and the rate at which that person will assimilate and how that person can be equipped to be functional.

Some people will never be totally functional. Some, we will be able to make them functional but others can go on to

be a Stevie Wonder or a Ray Charles or an Andrea Bocelli. I do not say all musicians because Beethoven, another person who was recognised as a genius had a hearing disability. Beethoven for all of his wonderful music, could not hear and if we are to identify in our society the Beethovens, the Bocellis and the Stevie Wonders and so on, then we must put in place the kind of training programmes which allow these persons' skills and talents to emerge which allow us to identify who they are and which gives them the confidence to act on their native talents. Sometimes these people become so embarrassed about their disabilities that they stifle the talents which exists within them for fear that if they let people know, they will be thought of as being more peculiar or they would not be accepted and so on. Part of what we do must give them confidence.

What level of education and training would we wish to give to persons in our society who are disabled? If we answer that question then that will determine the kinds of persons we are going to train, what skills we will need to import or invest in our own nationals and what cost we are going to give to that training.

What level of support would we want to give to the individual who is disabled? What level of functionality would we wish to give to persons with disabilities because that too has cost implications. What kind of Government care centres are we going to build in the future? We have places like the Learning Centre and the Children's Development Centre but these do not begin to tap or reach the need of the persons with the myriad disabilities that exists because very often we cater to children with disabilities but do not cater to mature persons with disabilities. Very often, by the time you are fifteen years of age, once you have a disability there is very little training and very little catering that the system does for you because it just does not have the kind of resources or the kinds of facilities to take you to the next level so there is a terrible press of people who want access to the Children's Development Centre but cannot get in. They need to broaden the programmes but there is no physical space. These are the kinds of issues which we are going to have to take on in our future planning if we are really going to be giving more than lip service to what we are coming to do today.

This is only the first step but we really have to be willing to walk the rest of the journey with our disabled brothers and sisters if we are to make them feel like the other Barbadians in our society are made to feel.

In this regard, I would wish to urge that consideration be given to the establishment of a respite centre. I feel very strongly that persons who have disabilities are not the only persons who we have to care for when we have a policy for the disabilities but we have to have regard for the caregivers. We see it with several types of persons; the elderly, where a

child may be looking after a parent who has become aged and infirmed or perhaps crippled by arthritis, lost a foot from diabetes and senility may have set in so that child has to rush home everyday from work and his or her whole life is structured around the delivery of care to that individual.

A person who has disabled relatives for whom they care, their whole life become fixed and determined by the hours, patterns and life of the person for whom they care. We must have centres where persons with disabilities or even elderly persons can come and be cared for, whether it is overnight so that the woman who is caring for her disabled child can have a date like anybody else, dress up and put on some nice clothes and perfume and go out with a man who tells her she looks nice because that is important too. The persons who deliver care to the disabled, they too become by extension disabled as a result of having to deliver that kind of intensive care almost on a 24-hour basis, certainly even if not while they are at work, as soon as they get home.

There must be a respite centre so that these persons can come and be properly cared for when caregivers have the opportunity to socialise in a normal way, to move outside of that close circle of friends because their life become like that. They spend all of their times with other persons who are disabled and other persons who are caring for persons with disabilities and they must be given the opportunity to go to the cinema at night or to go jumping on Kadooment Day and to do the things that the rest of us do and take for granted.

The establishment of a respite care facility, therefore, is absolutely critical in the delivery of any programme for the disabled in Barbados. I wish really, to give strong support to the establishment of such a facility in the shortest possible time.

I did not hear, during the course of the Honourable Minister's comments anything in relation to public education but, in my view, when seeking to make a paradigm shift, to move from one regime, if you will, to another, it is often necessary to effect attitudinal change at the wider social level. That can only be done by putting in place strong and effective public education programmes so that the average citizen is made to treat the disabled person with more sensitivity; will get up and give a disabled person a seat on the bus when seeing a blind person coming will step aside quickly and say, you have to step down now; or can I help you? An employer, for example, when a person comes to him and his hand is not absolutely straight, cannot straighten to the length that yours and mine might, that they do not feel so contemptuous or uncomfortable with that person that they do not want to have them in their work environment and for that reason alone would refuse them a job. These kinds of attitudes, these negative attitudes that have become engrained

in our society over time can only be changed if we have the necessary supportive programme to effect attitudinal change by way of public education.

6.30 p.m.

May I also say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, that if we are to have large numbers of disabled persons working in the private sector that one way to do it would be to offer employers who take on disabled persons some kind of tax incentive. I am not in my mind fixed on how it could be structured, but I think that it is entirely possible to say to the private sector, if you have persons with disabilities working for you, that we are prepared to give you some kind of tax incentive or some kind of concession and, since employers and business understand money and the profit margin, in my view there could be no more powerful incentive for getting them to bring people with disabilities into the work place. Saying to them, 'Cud dear', please employ a disabled person, that is not necessarily going to have the impact that we want. Therefore, they are going to have to be made to understand what are the financial implications for them, how it is going benefit the management, the operation of their business. The best way to do that is by offering an actual financial incentive.

I believe that the initiatives outlined in this Green Paper are worthy of our support and that they will redound, not only to their benefit and their caregivers, but to the wider society as a whole and our standing *vis-a-vis* the international community and the Caribbean region. I think that this is going to put us, again, in the forefront of our social engineering and our social policy planning and implementation.

I am truly happy to see this Green Paper come today and to give support to what I think is a more practical and sensitive approach to the plight of the disabled in our society, and how in fact they can be made to feel not disabled but whole Barbadians and whole people. I would wish to compliment the former Minister and the present Minister for work that has been done in respect of bringing the Paper to this stage and to say that in so far as it is at all possible for me to go, that I am keen to walk with you as we seek as a Government and as a people to implement this wide ranging and sensitive policy.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to lend my support to this, I am going to be brief. I think that in lending the support to this Green Paper, as someone who has had an opportunity to live with a parent who, at the late stages of her life became disabled, I know what it is to be in a home of someone who had lost their sight and who had become an amputee. In lending my support to this Green Paper, I do believe that the Barbados Labour Party Government should see this in the light of the adult suffrage that was brought to this country by the Barbados Labour Party in the early years. When this has become full

legislation and is working, it will not benefit the disabled people of today but most likely will benefit the disabled people in years to come.

It is quite unfortunate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that during my lifetime, and like a lot of us here, we have seen some close friends of ours, who were active in their life, enjoyed the things that we enjoyed, and were part of what we were doing but for some reason or the other fate took its toll and they became disabled. You start to wonder what the future holds. You start to look at your future and become very serious about your lifestyle as well.

I personally believe that this debate that we are witnessing here today will be lost, and I say this carefully, because of what is likely to be taking place tomorrow, which is the Constitution Review Commission debate. I believe that this debate, as serious as it is, is going to lose its steam come tomorrow because of the coverage that is going to take place in relation to this Commission Report.

I think that a debate like this should be carried on television. I heard the Honourable Member for St. Lucy say that and I support him on that. A lot of us in Barbados come face to face with disabled people on a day-to-day basis. My suggestion here is that we can put all the words together, in this Honourable Chamber, but if we do not have the word called love, I think love is the essence of it all. Love is the essence in sharing our lives with those disabled people.

Those of us in this community, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who are fortunate to have our vision, limbs and everything that God had provided us with, must also be in a position, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to share the love.

Too many of us have overlooked the fact that there are disabled people in the community. Too many of us are seeing disabled people as people who have problems and are always begging and that type of thing. That is not really so. I have had the privilege, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this Chamber, I can say that I have been fortunate, in my lifetime, in being a friend of some international artistes who are blind. For example, Stevie Wonder. I can put on record that Stevie Wonder had been and is still a friend of mine. On his visit to Barbados, many years ago, on his last visit to Barbados he made a pledge to the then Prime Minister of Barbados on a visit to Ilaro Court, that any assistance that he could give to assist the blind people of Barbados that he will willingly do. This was an international star.

I also had the privilege of dealing with Jose Feliciano, who happens to be a blind Puerto Rican. I had the privilege of talking with him and finding out how he feels to be

handicapped, how he feels being disabled and can still be as successful as he is. I also had the privilege of talking to Clarence Carter, who came to Barbados to perform. He also made a pledge. I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you were also associated with him at that time, Sir.

I am saying that Barbados has good friends in the area of international artists who are prepared to assist with disabled persons as far as Barbados is concerned.

I personally believe that as I look in this Chamber, and I am going to ask leave for it. Only a couple weeks ago I had the privilege of dealing with a friend of mine who owned a business in town. Unfortunately, with a snap, like a piece of cobweb or cotton, he is now disabled. I have a friend in this Chamber who has been helpful to me in my promotions, who has done several things. He is sitting in this Honourable Chamber with us today, who has been helpful at a call, that gentleman was always willing to help, always willing to give back something to Barbados. He is not a Barbadian by birth, he is a St. Lucian by birth but he has given Barbados something that I think that Barbados should be proud of. I would like to say a thank you to him, Mr. Cleveland Mayers who is sitting in this Honourable Chamber with us.
6.40 p.m.

This goes to show that you can be good today and tomorrow you could be disabled. These are things I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we need to look at and I think this is a matter entirely for the Attorney General.

Asides.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: One of the things that we should look at that it is extremely important is that some legislation, and I believe progressive and protective legislation, should be brought on so that people should understand that people who are disabled have not put it on themselves, whether they were born disabled or whether it happened to them later in life. Some hard things were done to them by people who should know better and I believe some form of protective legislation should be put on the Statue Book of Barbados to assist these people and to prevent them from some of the harassment that they normally get in their day-to-day lives.

I also believe that there should be legislation in Barbados in terms of the Building Code of Barbados so that some provision would be made in the buildings that are coming on stream in Barbados for the disabled people of Barbados. Too many lavish buildings are going up in Barbados and no consideration is given for the disabled people. I think that some law should be placed on the Statue Books that there should be a building code that whenever/wherever a building is being erected in Barbados and it happens to be a business oriented place that it should

include some sort of assistance for the disabled people of Barbados.

I also believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that when you look at the position as far as the disabled of Barbados are concerned, and I say this in relation to the Ministry of Education and Culture, that they have got a role to play too for the disabled people of Barbados. This is to say that the assistance that the disabled people in Barbados need that there should be an annual event.

We have Crop Over, we have the Oistins Festival and we have several other festivals. I heard that the Honourable Minister mention that come December, there is going to be a presentation for the disabled people in Barbados. I believe that with the assistance of the National Cultural Foundation, we could have on our annual calendar an event, a presentation by the disabled people of Barbados, in the same way that the Police have the Police Week, the prisoners have what we consider to be the Prisoner's Week. I believe that the disabled of Barbados are talented. I have seen them perform before and I know that there are lots of talented people among the disabled folks in Barbados and it should be an annual event with the assistance of the National Cultural Foundation making it possible for these people to display their talents for the Barbadian public to see.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that I do not want to prolong this debate, but I could also say that when you look at the contribution made by some disabled people, even when you look at the Committee that was set up for the Constitution Review Commission, there was someone on that Committee who in truth and in fact has lost his eye sight. So there is a role in this country for disabled people.

I personally believe that a lot of the problems facing the disabled people in Barbados, is the fact that a lot of us do not understand carefully that you can give them everything, a lot of material things but it is distressing when you pick up the newspaper and you see somebody receiving a wheelchair as a gift. Somebody wants a promotion because they are giving a wheelchair to some person who is a paraplegic or something like that. I do not believe that is doing the disabled person any favour. I think it is putting them at a disadvantage and I think we need to understand carefully that they need to be loved and we should provide the love that they need. Some of those children who are at the children's homes in Barbados who are disabled, I believe that some weekends some of us responsible citizens in Barbados should be able to adopt that child for a weekend.

We have got a responsibility as citizens in this country to show what love is and if some of us decide that we are prepared to adopt one of these children to spend a weekend

with us or to take them out and/or drive around the country that is showing that child love. I think love is the answer to a lot of the things facing the disabled people in Barbados.

We could provide all of the necessary legislation, have the Green Paper, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we could have everything but if we also need to provide them with the love that is necessary. I heard the Honourable Member for the City today talking about the gentleman whom I knew was a singer that she found a job for. He sings at Karaoke. That was a gesture of love and it was showing him that there is an opportunity for him to succeed in this country. I think most of us as Barbadians, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have to offer that to some of these disabled people.

I am going to at least give way because we have been going long and there are some people in this Chamber who have to get on. I say to the Minister of Social Transformation that this Green Paper is going to become a landmark in the history of Barbados, probably in another ten years, where we will see the fruits of this Green Paper which has been laid here in this Chamber today where those people, the younger ones who are coming up now will benefit from it.

I thank you, Sir.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that further consideration of this Resolution be postponed.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

ORDER NO. 6 – RESOLUTION TO RESCIND THE RESOLUTION PASSED BY THIS HOUSE ON THE 9TH MAY, 2000 AUTHORISING THE BORROWING BY THE GOVERNMENT OF BARBADOS OF SUMS OF MONEY UP TO \$100 000 000 IN THE CURRENCY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA FROM CREDIT SUISSE FIRST BOSTON

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, a Resolution was passed on the 9th May this year authorising the Government to borrow up to US\$100 000 000 from Credit Suisse First Boston by the issue of securities on the international market.

At the time of the passing of that Resolution, the information given to the Government about the lending agency was Credit Suisse First Boston. However, since they started the loan and at the stage of judicious judgment, it has now become necessary to change the name of the bank, Sir, and that will be the subject of the next Resolution. It is not Credit Suisse First Boston, but it is Credit Suisse First Boston (Europe) Limited. In the circumstances so that we get

it absolutely right, I beg to move that the Resolution providing for the rescission of that Resolution on the 9th May do now pass.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

ORDER NO. 7 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE BORROWING OF THE SAID SUMS UP TO \$100 000 000 IN THE CURRENCY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON THE INTERNATIONAL CAPITAL MARKETS BY THE ISSUE OF SECURITIES THROUGH CREDIT SUISSE FIRST BOSTON (EUROPE) LIMITED AS LEAD MANAGER FOR THE PURPOSE SPECIFIED IN THE FIFTH PARAGRAPH OF THE RESOLUTION; AND TO APPROVE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SINKING FUND FOR THE REDEMPTION OF EACH ISSUE OF SECURITIES MADE UNDER THE SAID ACT AND THE MONEYS NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN AND SERVICE THAT FUND

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is now the substantive Resolution that would give support to the Government's application for the approval of this House to borrow on the international capital market through the issue of securities and the lead Manager for the purpose of financing the Government's Capital Programme in respect of this loan is Credit Suisse First Boston (Europe) Limited.

On the 9th of May this year, I gave an exposition for the circumstances leading to the Government's decision to seek this loan at this time and I would be in breach of the rules if I sought to repeat what I said then, Sir. I am just to ask the House to approve the borrowing of the said sum up to US\$100 000 000 on the international capital market by the issue of securities through Credit Suisse First Boston (Europe) Limited.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on behalf of the Barbados Government, I want to extend our warm and sincere congratulations to the management and players on the West Indies team for their nail-biting and exciting victory in the series against Pakistan recently

concluded and at the same time, Sir, to wish them all the best for the up and coming series against England.

Thank you, Sir.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to offer words of congratulations as well but in this case to the Barbados Horticultural Society which for the third year in a row has won Gold at the Chelsea Flower Show. I was fortunate enough to be in London last Monday on the day when previewing was permitted and Mrs. Jean Robinson together with Mrs. Mona Walker, Mrs. Hetty Atkinson and several others who were responsible for putting together the Barbados Exhibit allowed me to view it. Of course, I had the opportunity to view the rest of the Flower Show as well.

The Barbados Horticultural Society has been winning Gold and other high awards at that Flower Show for many years and it too often goes unremarked. They in their way are

bringing great credit to Barbados in this way and I would like the record of the House to show that we are deeply appreciative of the award of Gold on this occasion.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, that concludes Government Business for today. I beg to move that this Honourable House be now adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, May 31, 2000 at 11.30 a.m.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the House be now adjourned until Wednesday, May 31, 2000 at 11.30 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.
6.53 p.m.

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