
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2008 – 2013

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, June 15, 2010

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, June 15, 2010.

PRESENT

His Honour M. A. CARRINGTON, B.A., LL.B.
(Speaker)

His Honour K. St.C. BEST, LL.B.(Hons.), L.E.C.
(Deputy Speaker)

Mr. G. A. CLARKE, J.P., B.Sc., Dip. Ed.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN, LL.B. (Hons.)

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, Q.C., LL.B. (Leader
of the Opposition)

Miss C. Y. FORDE, J.P., L.C.P.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL, Q.C., LL.B. (Hons.),
L.E.C.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY, LL.B. (Hons.) (Minister of
Housing and Lands)

Dr. W. F. DUGUID, J.P., FDRCS, F.D.S., B.D.S.
(Comm.)

Hon. R. L. SEALY, M.B.A., B.Sc., (Minister of
Tourism)

Hon. F. J. STUART, LL.M, B.A., (Deputy Prime
Minister, Attorney-General and Minister of Home Affairs)

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, M.Sc C. Eng (Minister of
Transport and Works)

Hon. E. G. HUTSON, F.C.C.A., C.A. (Minister of
International Business and International Transport)

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT, (Minister of Community
Development and Culture)

Mr. J. D. PAUL, B.Sc. (Chairman of Committees)

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE, Ed.D., M.Ed., B.A., Dip.
Theology (Minister of Environment, Water Resources and
Drainage)

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY, B.Sc., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C.
(Minister of Youth, Family and Sports)

Hon. P. M. T. TODD, B.Sc., (Minister of State,
Ministry of Economic Affairs, Empowerment, Innovation,
Trade, Industry and Commerce)

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS, M.B.A., B.Sc., (Minister of
Health)

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER, M.Sc., B.A., (Minister of
Social Care, Constituency Empowerment, Urban and Rural
Development) (Leader of the House)

*Prayers were taken by Rev. Father Errington
Massiah.*

Mr. SPEAKER: Good morning Honourable
Members, this the 67th Sitting of our first session of
Parliament is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of the Meetings held
on Tuesday, May 25, 2010 and Friday, June 04, 2010.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move
that the Minutes for the Honourable the House of
Assembly for its Meetings of Tuesday, May 25, 2010 and
Friday, June 04, 2010, be confirmed subject to any
omissions, corrections and/or observations.

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

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

House A67 Sequence 1

10.20 a.m.

Tuesday, June 15, 2010

PAPERS

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. Value Added Tax (Remission of Tax) (Barbados Defence Force) Order, 2010;
2. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Barbados Sailing Association Inc.) Order, 2010;
3. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Esso Standard Oil S.A. Limited) Order, 2010.

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

Nomination Dossier on Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison as a World Heritage site.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 3 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 OF THE CROWN LANDS (VESTING AND DISPOSAL) ACT, CAP. 225, THE GRANT TO ROBYN RIHANNA FENTY, OF A PARCEL OF LAND THE PROPERTY OF THE CROWN, SITUATE AT APES HILL DEVELOPMENT IN THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES IN THIS ISLAND.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Philip North.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Resolution before this Honourable House is to approve in accordance with Section 5 of the Crown Land (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Cap. 225, the granting to Robyn Rihanna Fenty a parcel of land situate at Lot H-23, Apes Hill Development, St. James, in this island. Mr. Speaker, at a meeting on February 20, 2008, the Cabinet agreed to designate Robyn Rihanna Fenty an Ambassador for Culture and Youth of Barbados. This designation was in recognition for both her outstanding performance as a singer and her promotion of

Barbados in her career. It must be noted that the said Robyn Rihanna Fenty, since the start of her career, has received some 73 awards.

Mr. Speaker, from my research there have been a number of awards such as Grammys, American Music Awards, BET Awards, International Dance Music Awards, MTV Video Music Awards, European Music Awards, MTV Music Awards and the Teen Choice Awards. Mr. Speaker, some time ago, it was agreed and proposed by the Cabinet to make her a gift of a plot of land at the said Apes Hill, St. James. It is against that background that this Administration believes that it is only fitting that this Resolution should be brought here today.

Mr. Speaker, discussions were held with Sir Charles Williams, who identified Lot H-23 as a suitable gift for the said Rihanna. He then proposed to offer this lot to the Crown for \$100 000. Sir, it is estimated that this lot has a market value of \$1.2 million. The Cabinet also agreed that the said transaction should be completed by private treaty and that the payment of all legal costs relating to this transaction will be made by the Crown. Sir, the Ministry of Housing and Lands was requested to complete the transaction. Mr. Speaker, there are certain conditions that Cabinet placed in relation to the residential lot that is being donated. It was agreed that in the event of the resale of this lot within 15 years, that Government should be reimbursed the price paid for the land.

Mr. Speaker, this reinforces Government's commitment to persons who have placed Barbados on the map by virtue of their exploits. Indeed, when I began the debate, I mentioned the outstanding work that is being done by this Barbadian singer, who has provided inspiration for others to follow. We can mention a few, I believe Jaico, Livvy Frank and Shontelle have followed and have placed Barbados on the international music scene. I believe this provides and supports the Government's commitment to persons who have placed Barbados on the international map.

I am therefore asking that in relation to this Resolution before this Honourable House, that in accordance with provision 5 of the said Crown Land and Vesting Act, which stipulates that the Minister may, with the approval of Parliament, sell, lease, exchange, grant, assign or surrender any such land vested in the Crown, it is now proposed to seek Parliamentary approval of this Resolution to donate and thereby vest this land to Robyn Rihanna Fenty. This Resolution has been certified fit by the Honourable Attorney-General and with those remarks, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I beg to second that, Sir.

10.30 a.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am obliged. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, the Opposition has absolutely no difficulty with this Resolution and, in fact, we would want to indicate our positive support for it. Sir, Rihanna is an international star but she is a Barbadian star who has given outstanding performances. She has had some challenges along the way, but I think she stands as a messenger, not just for the world of performers but also for those people who believe that celebrity is an easy path to travel.

Rihanna is a young woman, she has many, many years ahead of her and, in Barbados, I believe we offer her up in our prayers because we have seen many young stars fall by the wayside, some attracted to the negative side of that kind of lifestyle. Some of them fall by the way through attraction to drugs and so on. It is a very difficult road for the average person to travel far less some one of such tender age. I think that Rihanna benefits from the support of her Barbadian fans not just because we are fans of her music but we genuinely and sincerely wish her well. Every time Rhianna gets another award, I believe that every teenager in Barbados sees himself or herself, some day, being in a similar role.

I noticed that the Speaker has occasion to speak during the course of the week about his days as a singer. I do not know that the Speaker wants me to tell the members of this Chamber that when I was in the campus band, the Speaker had occasion to sing with us from time to time both as part of The Cavite Chorale and also as a soloist. Sir, neither he nor I, had any dreams of getting one-tenth of where Rihanna has reached, perhaps one-thousandth, but it is certain...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I do not know if the Speaker can move a point of order but I just want to say that a man without dreams is a man without a future and, I had my dreams.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: I am glad, Mr. Speaker, that your dreams have long given way to reality. The point is though, it is not everybody who picks up a microphone or guitar who is destined for greatness and when it happens, we all have reason to be proud. Sir, another generation might well succeed where we did not manage to tread.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is also important to recognise her background in Barbados as an immigrant. Sir, Barbadians have developed a reputation within the region for being very xenophobic, and it is unfortunate that is where we have reached. I think we need to celebrate the fact that, as an immigrant, Rihanna is able to claim Barbados as her home.

Mr. Speaker, our issue with this particular item is that we cannot see any reason for the condition that has been imposed. The amount of money that is going to be repaid to the Crown is only \$100 000 and I honestly feel that if this Chamber is going to resolve to make Miss Fenty a gift, let us make a gift.

It is a parcel of land in Apes Hill, it befits her standing as an international artiste and to think that the Government is going to claw back \$100 000, if Miss Fenty should decide to sell it, I think is a little unreasonable. It is a gift that I believe the Government is giving to her on behalf of the people of Barbados and to impose a condition on it, I do not think is necessary. We should give her the land wholly and solely and if she should decide to sell it within the 15-year period, it is hers to dispose of.

Mr. Speaker, we have no difficulty supporting the Resolution and certainly, we wish Miss Fenty absolutely all of the best. We continue to pray for her success and that her star may continue to rise.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

His Ex. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I too rise to support this resolution but I could not allow the comment to be made that, "it is unreasonable for the Government to ask the young lady to pay back \$100 000 if it is sold within a 15 year period". Sir, nobody would believe that in 1981 when the Plantation Tenantry Act was passed that there is a section which states that if the purchaser sells that land within a period of time they would be punished for doing it. Sir, that is a poor person we are speaking about.

The Honourable Member for St. Joseph would give the impression that we are asking some poor person who has done well - I want to congratulate her for doing so well - that we are now doing the same thing that has been committed by his Party; when those persons who work so hard on the plantations had the right to own just a small piece of land.

Mr. Speaker, I heard that this land is valued over \$1 million, which means that if the young lady were to sell the land 15 years from now, it would probably be valued \$15 million, and the State is only asking for \$100 000 which would be minor. It would be so small that you would not even recognise it.

Sir, I want to make a larger point. I want to also congratulate not only the State for its contribution to the young lady but I want to congratulate Sir Charles Williams for his gesture. It is not too often that someone would have a piece of land valued over \$1 million and would be willing to give it to the State for \$100 000.

Asides.

His Ex. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, I am being asked where he lives. All I would say that while I was in the Opposition he moved from St. Peter to St. Lucy. He is my constituent and I have a right to defend him in this House. Sir, this is not the first time that it has been done by this honourable gentleman. It was done for Obadele Thompson, it was done for other great people, and it was also done at Lear's corner, unconditionally.

Asides.

His Ex. D. St.E. KELLMAN: It is true, he has always done it. Sir, these are the kind of people that we need to have in Barbados investing their monies. We have heard people, believing it is a crime, when you are born in Barbados to be able to have something in Barbados. I am glad that we have seen a situation where people have been able to amass wealth in Barbados and they have been able to give back, not only to the State but to persons who have achieved in this country.

Sir, I think it is a good thing because it allows other persons now to excel. Sir, that is why when Obadele Thompson got the bronze medal, I felt that this country could have done more for him and I was even more convinced of that when Ryan Brathwaite won the gold medal for Barbados because I believe it was Obadele who laid the platform for other young people to follow.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot continue to measure things just in dollars and cents but we have to look at the contribution they have made to the country Barbados. Sir, we have to lead by example and it is clear that more persons in Barbados need to do things like this. I know the Other Side would behave as if it is a crime but I am not going to go there today because this debate needs to remain at a particular level and I will keep it there, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that we have to understand that in order for people to give they must be able to get.

10:40

Sir, it is clear that this is a good case where persons have been able to gain from the State, while recognising their contribution.

Sir, on Saturday I had a Polo Magazine where this same gentleman has been acclaimed by the world for his contribution, his contribution to what he is doing at Apes Hill and other areas. I look forward to the day where that contribution is made in the parish that would make Barbados a developed country. I think it is timely, instead of people holding back their money, keeping it in the bank

and putting it in ponzi schemes and so on. It is time they used some of the money to help develop Barbados. I think the time is right for that money to be used to develop Barbados.

We are in interesting times. The publicity that has been given to Barbados by Rihanna, is fitting, and nothing we can do in this Parliament is too good for her. I think that young people in this country must recognise that this Government is quite prepared to go overboard and to ensure that whenever they do something worthy, we are prepared to do things to help them. They need not fear. They need not think that we are here to do them anything wrong. The message must be that we will reward them for doing good, and even when they do wrong, we will convert them and try to put them on a good footing.

Sir, we believe that the future of this country belongs to the young people of Barbados, and we will do everything within our power to ensure that the young people of Barbados have a foundation and something to depend on.

Sir, as I said before, I want to congratulate the young lady. She is also fortunate to have a sister who lives in St. Lucy. I am also happy to know that the person who is contributing to her this morning is also one of my constituents. I hope that the constituent from St. Lucy will continue to do the good work he has been doing, he, his brother and his family. They could have taken the money and invested it elsewhere. The important thing is, they have invested in Barbados and they continue to invest in Barbados, for which I am grateful. Sir, I cannot call him a "too few" because the records will show that this gentleman has invested his money from St. John, St. Lucy, St. James and St. Joseph. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph should know, even though it might have been before his time, that J201 is also a number belonging to the honourable gentleman.

Sir, it is regrettable sometimes that - I am hearing that the debate is about Rihanna, but it would be foolhardy of me to only deal with that aspect without recognising that we need to bring more persons on board to ensure that when young people do well, they can contribute to them too.

I know some of the other Members of Parliament might be jealous that the honourable gentleman does not live in their constituency. It is not because he lives in my Constituency that I speak. It is because of the contribution to this young lady that I speak.

I look forward to when the Honourable Member for St. Joseph can be given the same praise if he too contributes to the beautiful parish of St. Lucy.

I thank you, Sir.

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

Hon. S.A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to associate myself with this Resolution which seeks to recognise the significant contribution of a young lady in the person of Miss Robyn Rihanna Fenty and the tremendous contribution she has made and continues to make at a very tender age, to Barbados. This Resolution is a vote of confidence, in my submission, in the kind of talent that is symbolic not only of Rihanna, but certainly of young Barbadians who aspire to be a part of the developmental process of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to certainly congratulate the Honourable Prime Minister. This idea would have originated from the Office of the Prime Minister in recognition of the significant gains, and certainly the kinds of acclamation that Rihanna has been getting all over the world.

Sir, it is important also from the perspective that what you have embodied in this Resolution is a partnership between the private sector and the Government to boost the image and to show support for the youth of Barbados. I think we need to see it in that light because, certainly in relation to the Government showing its commitment to the development of young people, this is an example of that kind of effort on the part of the Government to connect with the development of the youth.

Rihanna, in my view, represents the evolving youth talent in Barbados. I believe what our focus, and certainly with the Ministry of Youth, Family and Sport, the focus will be not only to support this young Barbadian, but to ensure that the platform is prepared for other Rihannas who are emerging and who will emerge in Barbados.

It is very important because many young people in Barbados see entertainment as an emerging industry, one in which they can demonstrate their entrepreneurial skill and talent. It is a global multibillion dollar industry which has the potential to take a number of our young people to higher places. We should not be surprised, certainly the emergence of Rihanna ought not to have taken Barbados by surprise.

I believe for many years, we have been seeing raw talent displaced both at the community level and certainly in many of our national shows across Barbados. That raw talent always needs an outlet. In the case of Rihanna, she was fortunate to have been discovered by one of the most influential promoters and handlers in North America. What, in my view, we need is to set the stage for those persons who may not be as fortunate in terms of being

discovered. The focus will now be on ensuring that we can create the pathways for young people for achieving brilliance at the highest level.

Mr. Speaker, Rihanna's achievement - she has been nominated for six Grammy Awards and was successful on her very first occasion. That achievement is what is embodied in this Resolution. Sir, the fact that she was successful on the very first occasion as a young Barbadian female, who in one motion was able to propel Barbados on to the international stage.

Sir, it always pleased me when I am travelling across North America and Europe, particularly in some of the major department stores in those countries before Rihanna came to the fore, you would usually hear music being piped through the stores of other artistes. It pleases me to hear Rihanna's music being played across some of the major store chains across North America and Europe.

10.50 a.m.

It is obvious that her music is the preferred music of choice. I think that is a credit to her and it is a credit to Barbados. Many young people in Barbados look up to Rihanna when she comes home. Certainly, this particular act that we are putting in place, this Resolution, this gift means that no matter where Rihanna goes in the world, whenever she comes home to Barbados, Barbadians have signalled by this plot of land that she has a piece of the rock, which she will always certainly hold dear.

She continues across the world in a promotion to link herself with Barbados and in her role as Ambassador for Culture and Youth for Barbados, it is certainly the intention of the Ministry of Youth, Family and Sports wherever possible to utilise the talent of young Rihanna.

As you know, we are about to launch the National Youth Forum on Sunday at Sheraton Mall and it would have been good to have Rihanna there but, of course, Rihanna is indeed a very busy person but we hope at some time in the future as the youth's fora are actually in place that we can have Rihanna speaking to our young people, in relation to how she has benefitted from the kind of entrepreneurial zest that she has, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, in supporting this Resolution as well, I am aware that Rihanna resided within your Constituency before moving abroad. I know that you wish her well. I know that within the context of your role as Parliamentary Representative that you would also wish to acknowledge and certainly identify with this Resolution.

Sir, Rihanna has resided at Westbury New Road, I believe she lived there for approximately two-and-a half years before she migrated and her mother also continued to

live there until recently. It is fitting and I have your permission, Sir, certainly in knowing your consent to say on your behalf that it would be indeed a fitting gesture if we could rename the Westbury New Road after Rihanna, as another act of acclamation and certainly recognition of her immense talent.

Mr. Speaker, this is something I certainly would support. I believe my colleagues would also look at that with favour because it is also within the heart of her hometown. We would have symbolically ensured that Rihanna's name is etched and continues to be seen as part of a symbol of excellence, by renaming that Westbury New Road, perhaps, the Rihanna Drive or the Rihanna Avenue. I believe that she would be very pleased with that and I feel that all young people in Barbados would embrace, not only this particular Resolution but certainly any act, especially in her hometown where we can rename that road after Rihanna.

I have seen it across the world, Mr. Speaker, where people such as Rihanna who, by hard work have risen to such heights so that even in her hometown we do more, in terms of not only developing that area where she lived but to add a touch of Rihanna so that any time anyone ventures into Westbury New Road, there will be no doubt that this is the home of Rihanna. Sir, that is something I think we can certainly look at and in my view, once young people continue to do well and to demonstrate an interest in excelling that I believe we need to acknowledge it. Sir, it is to the credit of this Government that we did not take very long to actually make a decision. I believe the decision was taken very quickly to recognise Rihanna.

Certainly, one of the biggest events, as I said, which will occur for young people in Barbados is the launch for the National Youth Forum which takes place on Sunday at 6.00 p.m. at the Sheraton Mall Car Park.

Asides.

Hon. S.A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, this Youth Forum is indeed a demonstration of the Government keeping faith with the young people of Barbados. We have talked about engaging young people in our Youth Manifesto and we have now come to that stage, where along with all of our partners across Barbados, we have moved very rapidly in establishing and launching a National Youth Forum, whereby young people all across Barbados will, for the first time, have an institution, Mr. Speaker, by which they can engage not only between themselves and discuss issues that impact on the youth but that Youth Forum, Mr. Speaker, will be the place that the proposed National Youth Policy will be looked at, debated and fine-tuned before it is placed before the Cabinet of Barbados for vetting and approval.

Mr. Speaker, I believe when we look back at the whole concept of this National Youth Forum, we will see that it is actually empowering our young people, in the same way that we are seeking to empower Rihanna.

Asides.

Hon. S.A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, we are empowering them so that they can be partners with the Government in shaping the future development of Barbados, and that is the strongest affirmation of the faith of any Government in our young people.

Too often, Mr. Speaker, we deride and ridicule our young people but when our young people are doing so well, the majority of them continue to do so well and shine. We have to join with them and work with them in realising their full potential.

I want to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, in this debate as I acclaim and recognise the contribution of Rihanna as a young person, to extend an invitation to all young people in Barbados to be at the Sheraton Mall Car Park on Sunday, June 20 to be part of this signal historic development, the launch of their own National Young forum which begins at 6.00 p.m.

I would also like, Mr. Speaker, to extend this invitation for this Forum, which is for young Barbadians. There are young Barbadians in every Constituency across Barbados and I would also like to take this opportunity publicly, Mr. Speaker, to extend invitations to members of the Other Side.

Asides.

Hon. S.A. LASHLEY: They can bring their young people to Sheraton Mall on Sunday to be part of this launch. I have done it on the Floor of this House so that no one can claim they are not aware of it. I want to see Members of Parliament on This Side - I know they will be there but, again, I also want Members of Parliament on the Other Side to come with the young people of their constituencies to Sheraton Mall on Sunday to be part of this event.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that we demonstrate by our actions that we are linking hand in hand with our young people.

11:00

We have moved beyond talking and we are acting to ensure that our young people understand that this Government is moving with them and for them to empower them to ensure that they are brought to the centre of the development of Barbados.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that we would have the entire Sheraton fully subscribed. This is a developmental activity. This is not about entertainment. We are going to be highlighting the contributions of many of our young people in Barbados who have made significant contributions as entrepreneurs, musicians, cultural ambassadors and youth ambassadors. All of these young people need to be held up because they are the examples of excellence in Barbados, and that is what we would be doing at the launch.

After the launch, Mr. Speaker, we will be having business sessions where we will get down to work on working with our young people on developing Barbados. They have a voice and we are going to ensure that they have a say in the development of our country.

As I join, Mr. Speaker, in acknowledging Rihanna who is but one of the young bright sparks of Barbados, I recognise that many of our young people are heading in that same direction and, therefore, I think that this Youth Forum would be the centre of excellence for Barbadians and would help to inspire our young people to reach for their goals and for the limits of their endeavour. Mr. Speaker, we will ensure that the necessary resources are placed at the disposal of the National Youth Forum to ensure that it is a success.

I do not believe, Mr. Speaker, that developing our youth in Barbados has any dollar figure attached to it. We are investing in the future of our country and therefore when we get narrowed into dollar figures and to link and restrain the development of our youth in accordance with narrow issues, that is doing our youth a disservice.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity on the Floor of this House to congratulate the hundreds and thousands of young people who have so far demonstrated that this Youth Forum is a move in the right direction. On the website www.nationalyouthforum.org on Facebook, we have many volunteers from all parts of Barbados coming forward to be part of this National Youth Forum. Mr. Speaker, I have been humbled by simply putting this idea before the Barbadian youth and I have been humbled by the significant response by the young volunteers, by corporate Barbados and by the non-governmental organisations. All of Barbados are on board on this very special national project. Mr. Speaker, I feel very happy to be the Minister responsible for youth at this stage to be part of this very invigorating historic event which would be held.

Mr. Speaker, with those few remarks, I would like again to voice my support for this Resolution and to echo once again that it is symbolic of the determination of this Government to connect with young people, to hold them up and to certainly move with them and encourage them in their respective endeavours.

I am obliged to you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: I thank you. The Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to support this Resolution before this Chamber and to join with those who have spoken before me in congratulating Ambassador Robyn Rihanna Fenty for the tremendous achievements which she has been able to accomplish to date as an international recording artiste. I am very proud of her achievements as a young person and I would wish to take this opportunity to make a humble suggestion in terms of the utilisation of her fame to propel the Barbados tourist product.

I remember a few decades ago, if you may recall as well, Mr. Speaker, that the regional tourism effort recruited the services of the Beach Boys such that one of their very famous songs was reworded, in a contractual agreement with the Beach Boys, to promote the Caribbean as one homogenous tourist destination. I do not know the official name of the song. In the new lyrics with the same traditional melody, but of course keeping the rhythm and the melody of the original song, it talks about Kokomo, Montego Bay, Jamaica and The Bahamas. I do not remember Barbados being mentioned because obviously all of the countries could not have been mentioned in the song but it was used to promote the regional tourist product.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that we have a superstar, a Grammy Award winner and so on in Rihanna. I look forward to a similar exercise being undertaken to the mutual satisfaction of both Parties where the lyrics of one of her famous top 10 songs could be used to promote Barbados. I think this would be a tremendous boost to our tourism product because Rihanna, as you know, is very proud of being a Barbadian. Wherever she is interviewed she always makes the point in her good Bajan accent that she is from Barbados and so we as a people must demonstrate to her that we are equally as proud of her attainments.

Mr. Speaker, we should not seek to be too harsh on her and must remember that she is a human being. Regardless of how famous or prominent we are, we are all human beings and we are all sinners in the face of God. We should not seek to judge others. We obviously have certain expectations of our role models but we must give them support and we must pray for them so that they would be able to do their best to uplift our country and their image in the view of the public.

Mr. Speaker, we must be supportive of them because it is very easy to point fingers. Even in the Bible where the condemned person was about to be stoned, the Lord talked about letting those who are without sin cast the first stone.

We must realise that we are all sinners and we need to support each other and give people the due respect which they deserve as human beings, for example, the right to have a private life. The right to choose particular ways of doing things that may not necessarily be ways that we would adopt ourselves. Mr. Speaker, given that there is a need for diversity of human existence, we must respect people.

Mr. Speaker, I would wish to discourage the older members of our society from condescending and painting all young people with the same brush, and for saying that all young people are up to no good and are doomed to failure and so on. Sometimes people say those things without realising that the young recipients of this criticism could easily internalise this and really have low self-esteem.

Mr. Speaker, I have been a teacher for many years and several thousand students have passed through me. I taught at about seven or eight different institutions. I remember teaching Toni Norville who is now blossoming into an international recording artiste in her own right at Codrington High School. I also taught Maria Williams at St. Leonards' Girls. She was able to succeed in calypso in Barbados a few years ago. I also tutored Ambassador Ryan Brathwaite.

Mr. Speaker, we must encourage these young people and not seek to condescend towards them and assume that because we are older and more experienced that it gives us the right to condemn young people if they are struggling to go along the straight and narrow.

11.10 a.m.

We should seek to be role models and to encourage them. We should also seek to respect their right to differ from our particular *modus operandi*, be it in terms of the way they speak or the way they dress. Sir, they are at the stage where they are seeking to develop their own personalities and so as adults we must obviously seek to guide them. We should not hold them under such tight reins as to suggest that if they do not adopt a certain lifestyle which the adults say they must adopt, that they are otherwise wrong.

Mr. Speaker, the youth must be given the leeway to be able to be creative and innovative. Sir, for example, we are here in the Caribbean but let us remember that Christopher Columbus had to defy the status quo, which suggested that the world was flat and that you could not venture too far into uncharted waters. Christopher Columbus defied that and was able to reach the world and to bring that kind of development that occurred thereafter. Therefore, when it comes to creativity, be it in the performing arts, science, technology or business

development, we must encourage the young people to think outside the box so that they can be innovative, creative and can propel human kind forward in this new millennium.

Mr. Speaker, I would wish to congratulate Robyn Rihanna Fenty and, as I said, I look forward to young people being involved in small business development, science, technology and innovation. I look forward to young people being able to create, for example, patents, trademarks and copyrights.

Sir, in talking about utilising Rihanna's fame, it is quite feasible that we could enter into an agreement with her, for example, to create a line of local souvenirs, be it Rihanna's dolls or textiles. Let us remember when she had the popular song "Umbrella," I believe that a popular umbrella chain was able to enter into a strategic relationship with her, in a symbiotic deal in which their umbrellas would be promoted in Rihanna's song.

I am saying that Rihanna is Barbadian and that we should not allow this opportunity to pass by, in terms of developing a relationship with her, that would see Barbados, Barbadian products and services being propelled in a commensurate way. Sir, the international conglomerates are taking advantage of her fame as we speak and we must take this golden opportunity to seize the moment, to ensure that her success can translate into the success of Barbados as a country and certainly the Barbadian economy.

Sir, I was thinking of an entertainer we have within the City of Bridgetown named "Daddy Plumes" who has an infectious laugh. I say that, for example, a product like that which is intrinsic and unique to him can be utilised in the animation film industry or advertisement, or in video games, where you have this laugh being highlighted in a creative way.

Sir, the sky is the limit and we must really encourage not just the young people but each and every one of us to appreciate that we should have the self-confidence to believe in ourselves, to keep dreaming. Sir, too often as young people dream and say they want to be this or that they want to be that; there are other people who would wish to tell them that achievement is not realistic. Instead, we must encourage these young people to believe in themselves and to think beyond the edge of the envelope. We must also realise that with the new technologies that are emerging, what may not have been feasible in the past is very feasible in this new reality. I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I need to make a small intervention and to support this Resolution. I believe

I am the only female here today and, therefore, where kudos are to be offered to either male or female, I want to lend my support. Sir, I want publicly to congratulate Robyn Rihanna Fenty for her extraordinary performances. She is an ordinary Barbadian who has performed extraordinary feats in the international arena and therefore I think she should be highly commended for such performances and for putting Barbados on the world stage, as has been done by many others, some of whom have preceded her. Sir, I look forward to many others following in her footsteps.

Mr. Speaker, Rihanna's full potential may not have been fully recognised while she was at school but when I listened to the comments made by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central, about the Department of Youth Affairs. The Honourable Member was trying to make the public of Barbados believe that the Department of Youth Affairs was only generated in January 2008. It bothers me in the light that so much has been done in that department over the last 15 or 17 years, that I think that department of Youth Affairs, as it is now and as it was in the past, that all staff members and recipients who have passed through the system should be fully recognised for their outstanding performance.

I speak to some areas with which the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central may not be familiar. It is easy when one gets to public life, to push ideas. Previously we heard absolutely nothing coming from the Democratic Labour Party in the time that the Barbados Labour Party was in Government, except criticisms after criticism. Sir, I am happy, now that the shoe is on the other foot, that the Honourable Members on the Other Side have recognised that excellent work was done through the Department of Youth Affairs. Mr. Speaker, I can say that Rihanna may not have benefitted by the PEACE programme within our schools, as she would have gone overseas by then, but there are hundreds of young people who have received formal training.

His Ex. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House. Sir, clearly the Honourable Member should have remembered that it was the Honourable Member for St. John who started the National Youth Service programme. Sir, that is only one small example but I will speak to other matters in other places.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I did not say that nothing else was not done by any other Honourable Member or by any other Administration, I was speaking about the Department of Youth Affairs, over the last 15 to 17 years. What happened before that? Sir, I am happy that those projects have started. I am not here to condemn in that respect, I am here to lift up and to edify.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to make the point that despite the fact that we are talking about Rihanna this morning, we know that there are many others who have come through the system, who have made their mark on the national stage. We know too, that there are others who are gravitating towards the international arena. Sir, this is very good for Barbados, not only for our cultural development but for tourism and other aspects of development.

Sir, before I was interrupted, I was making the point about the Department of Youth Affairs and about the excellent work that has come through from that department. We can speak of the National Youth Awards, and I am happy that continues because I believe that the youth in any society, whether in Barbados, Jamaica or Aruba are the future. Therefore, we should continue supporting and encouraging them and offering them opportunities to go to the next level.

Mr. Speaker, when I was a child, nobody really recognised culture in schools. We could not sing calypso on a Sundays; my parents called it "banja". We could not go to Fair nor dance to anything because that was the system. We did Mathematics and English because we were looking more at an academic area.

Sir, since performing arts has been added to the school curriculum, we have seen an unfolding of those innate abilities that Barbadians have, not only the young but persons in my age group who have just begun to write poetry. Some have now become authors of books. I think the Minister of Education and Human Resource Development has done his own writings and publications. He did not do it as a young boy. It is only about three or four years ago that he has started and I want to highly commend him for making that effort as well.

11.20 a.m.

I believe that it is the incorporation of performing arts in schools through the Ministry of Education and, of course, the support systems from the Ministry of Culture and other agencies within the communities that we have been able to rise so high with our people and their performances.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I also want to refer to the Youth Orchestra that is also doing excellent work in Barbados. I want to speak about the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme and, of course, the venture by the last Administration for the YES Juniors, children in primary and secondary schools who have an interest in becoming entrepreneurs who have been given the training. I know that continues because I listen to the news, and we get a lot of that on CBC now so that you cannot help but know that it is continuing.

Mr. Speaker, I also speak of the Youth Achieving Results Programme where young people, who never had the opportunity to do voice training, play the guitar, play the violin and other instruments, got the opportunity, through the Youth Affairs Department and the Youth Achieving Results Programme.

Again, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will praise the Youth Commissioners for the excellent work they did during the time of the Barbados Labour Party. I know they are still performing. Sir, if they were not performing, as the Honourable Member for St. James South is saying, it meant that they would have been sent home like the folks from the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission, so it means that the Youth Commissioners are still performing. Sir, I am happy about that because they are young people who are the eyes and the ears of the communities that will direct that information through to the Department.

Mr. Speaker, let me get on with the Resolution. I still recognise, as many other Honourable Members do, the rich talents of our young people both in the schools and in communities. I know of the drumology that has been done by the folks in the Haynesville area in St. James South by Mr. Peter Skeete and others. I know of the good work that is happening by a lot of young people who are dancing, writing, engaging in drama and so on. Rihanna is one of our idols and we must keep holding her up to the rest of the world as a good example of a proud Barbadian, who came through the struggle but amidst all of that, has been able to excel. Sir, I know a lot of young girls in Barbados are trying to emulate her and I wish them well because they are out there modelling and doing all kinds of important things to help them reach that level.

Mr. Speaker, I want to encourage Barbadians as well, many of them who are extremely critical, and some of them who forgot they were once young, that they would have been influenced by style and fashion as we all were when we were growing up. Sir, I can talk about the hot pants, the hipsters, the manes on your foreheads, the flip in the hairstyle, the Afro jacks and wearing of a big afro because we were following the styles of Barbados but more so, the styles from other countries in the western world, therefore, Rihanna would be caught up in the attire and whatever it is that goes on stage.

Mr. Speaker, our performers here are dressing in a “nippy” way too and perhaps, that is what comes with being on stage. I have never been on stage so I do not know too well, and I do not plan to be in my old age but I still ask for Barbadians to be a little less critical and probably send her an e-mail if they think her attire is not appropriate.

Sir, even when she came here and went to the beach and so on, the newspapers had it flying all over the place

and people criticised her bath suit and who she was with. Sir, she needs to be given an opportunity to mature. I do not think we are doing enough of the positive to be able to help her to continue to carry the flag of Barbados in the way that she has.

Mr. Speaker, she will not hear me, or hear us in here today, but I know her father is just next door and he may be hearing our voices. I wish to advise her to stay away from drugs; to keep that Barbadian training she would have left here with. To be a strong personality, to be a person of strong character and to take these things with her wherever she goes.

It is very easy in the performing world to be encouraged to dress nippy. We see how a lot of artists have been destroyed as a result of their engagement in alcohol and drugs. I would wish for our Rihanna to be able to mature from one level to the next, that she can continue to be the beacon for our young people who want to aspire to reach the level that she has reached.

I believe that encouragement from other mature women and men in Barbados would help her to be able to reach that level that we are looking towards. Mahalia Jackson was an international person, but she was not of the era where the glitz and the glamour would have been in one's face as it is now with Rihanna and the other young people who are singers and performers in the whole international arena.

I also wish to advise her to make wise choices, not only wise in what she wears and what she sings but wise choices of partners because I think that is important too. Sometimes you find partners who are very supportive and would help to guide you down the straight and narrow. Then we find other partners who, because of envy and how we excel they then direct us in another avenue that would lead to destruction. So I want to advise her to continue to make wise choices. I believe that her parents, relatives and friends are very proud Barbadians today as a result of her achievements. I want to congratulate them for the efforts that they have made to help to project her and to give her the encouragement to be able to walk the walk and to talk the talk and never to forget Barbados and that is one thing that blesses my heart about Rihanna. Whenever we see or hear her, there is some souvenir about Barbados. Something about Barbados that she always brings to the fore that the rest of the world knows that she is not a Chinese nor an American nor any other nationality but that she is a proud Barbadian young woman. I trust that she will continue.

I commend the Government for the effort it has made in honouring Rihanna. I said it softly so I can say it loudly, Mr. Speaker, that we on This Side were really disappointed that we did not even get a simple invitation,

but that is the past. I am not going to dwell on that now, except to say that Rihanna needs to be further recognised as is Obadele Thompson whom we recognised, as was Ryan Brathwaite whose performance and his achievements came last year during the current Government's reign. We are all happy for these Barbadians who are stepping up to the plate and making this country very, very proud. The Honourable for St. Philip North is asking me about Sunday. Mr. Speaker, I would prefer to refrain from it except to say that in harsh economic times when we are talking about cutting back in jobs so that government offices are being told "do not send in any new workers, do not replace them with any substitute or whatever. Resources are being cut back. A lot of departments are not pursuing projects in the way they had envisaged and we understand and respect that.

Then to come with a Youth Forum in Sheraton Centre on Sunday evening in a time when we are saying cutting back and we have accused the people of Barbados of being a "fete society" - the Honourable Member for St. Michael South would know that - he keeps saying this is a "fete society", every minute there is a fete and then for a fete to be taking place in Sheraton Centre on Sunday. I would like to know the cost of that venture, Sir.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: On a Point, Mr. Speaker. The Honourable Member is misleading this House. The National Youth Forum is not a fete. If the Honourable Member for St. Thomas believes only in fetes then she can believe in fetes, but the National Youth Forum is an enlightened institution which is being developed for young people. The launch will be looking at highlighting the talents of young people, but if she wants to cry-down young people and say that they are engaged in a fete then by all means do that.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, Sir I would not even draw it to your attention that the Honourable Member is not speaking from his seat which we said is the policy here, but I am going to let that fly.

The young people of Barbados know me very well Mr. Speaker because I am not a fly-by-night politician.

11.30 a.m.

I am not a fly by night community worker, so they know of my involvement with the youth from my inception many years ago. I am not decrying the Government for the project on Sunday. I am asking, at this time in an economic situation, what is it costing the taxpayers of Barbados for this project?

By extension to that, I would say it is tangential, was it in the budget of the Youth Affairs Department or is a private entity or the corporate sector assisting with the project?

Hon. S.A. LASHLEY: On a point of order. Again the Honourable Member is misleading the House. She is also indicating and showing that she obviously still has the ears of certain people within the Departments of Government. As she well knows, these projects can never be put in place unless they are properly budgetted and allocated, so I do not know where she is getting her information from. I would also want to indicate to the Honourable Member that the project she is seemingly down-crying has been embraced even by the young people in her own constituency.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, just a minute. I just want to refer Honourable Members to the provisions with respect to relevance. This is not a debate about youth policy. Of course we will tolerate passing reference to youth matters. Rihanna of course is a young person. Just let us see whether we can focus on the substance of the particular matter before the House. Thank you.

Miss C.Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to know that the young people of St. Thomas are part of it, but I just want to remind this Honourable Chamber that the people of St. Thomas are taxpayers too, and the youth of St. Thomas are so accustomed to being engaged in youth activity and I expect that will continue whether this Administration of the Democratic Labour Party is the Government, the Barbados Labour Party Government, or any other Government of the future. At the end of the day, it is Barbadian youth and that is what is the hallmark of what we are saying.

Mr. Speaker, as I close, I want to congratulate Robyn Rihanna Fenty...

Hon. S.A. LASHLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is again misleading the House. She is misleading the House on her position on this National Youth Forum. Is she saying that she is against it, while her constituents are for it? What exactly is the Honourable Member saying?

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I find no point of order. Please continue Honourable Member.

Miss C.Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank you very much.

As I conclude, I want to say how pleased I am that corporate Barbados is continuing to lend support to various ventures. I know of Sir Charles William's contributions over the years, and indeed many other private entities that have given generously, not only to Rihanna's situation, but indeed in the Ministry of Culture. Every year private entities offer substantial donations so that we can continue to develop the product.

Therefore, in this particular instance, for the lot at Apes Hill, I want to highly commend Sir Charles Williams for his efforts and generosity. It is not only towards Rihanna. I can speak of his generosity in the Hill House Project, at Dunscombe Hill, St. Thomas, and a number of other projects he would have undertaken to make sure Barbadians are well served.

Therefore, as I close, I wish to speak about Rihanna's and say that song "Umbrella" which is popular among young people. I was off the island two weeks ago, and I heard a Spanish-speaking person humming the 'ela ela ela'. It has caught on with Barbadian children, and my four-year-old grandson hums the. "ela ela ela". He cannot say umbrella so well. It only goes to show the popularity she has generated in her performances and the songs that she sings. I trust the other young people who are aspiring to reach that level and even higher, would be able to reach their goals as long as we give the kind of input and necessary support to climb to the next level.

Mr. Speaker, I support this Resolution.

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

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Mr. Speaker, I rise to join the Honourable Member for St. Thomas in giving full support to this Resolution before the Honourable House today. Of course, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph who also gave full support to this Resolution. Sir, what we are doing today, to my mind, is a small token of appreciation for the outstanding work that Rihanna Fenty has been able to do, particularly in terms of raising the profile of Barbados in the international arena, and certainly performing as an outstanding symbol of all Barbadians and young people.

Sir, let me make it abundantly clear because some people would want to raise the issue of the value of the land or the cost to Government. Sir, \$100 000 of taxpayers' funds to support this particular matter is a small price to pay for the contribution that Barbados has been able to gain in return, particularly as we reflect on the fact that through her own initiatives, performances around the world, many who perhaps may not have known of Barbados are today seeking to come to our shores, or certainly make a contribution to Barbados in other ways. This is certainly a small token of appreciation for the outstanding talent that Rihanna has been able to bring to the table, and the tremendous benefits that Barbados stands to gain, and has gained to date.

Sir, I have always held the view that Barbados has always had an abundance of talent, particularly among young people. Sometimes it takes the emergence of an individual like Rihanna Fenty or Obadelle Thompson, or other young athletes and performers to remind us of this

abundance that permeates this society. That is why often times it saddens me when I hear individuals, who should know better, behaving as though young people in Barbados today are the worst things on God's earth. We know that is not true. There are very few things that our children are doing today that we did not do when we were young people.

Sir, right now in Barbados there is this issue of gangs, for example. It amazes me how an individual or two could just pop out of the sky, rant and rave and talk about 150 gangs around Barbados with no empirical evidence whatsoever. Every time six young people gather under a street light to congregate, they are not a gang. We need to stop this kind of reprehensible behaviour permeating society and portraying our young people as vagabonds, rift rafts and goons, as the Honourable Member for St. Peter once called Honourable Members on This Side some time back. That is not the case.

I am satisfied as a Parliamentary Representative, I am satisfied as a father, I am satisfied as a young man in society that all young people in Barbados are not bad. The majority of them are good and are deserving of our support. Sir, I am not getting on any "wishy-washy" bandwagon giving labels to them and crying them down at every step of the way. They need to be encouraged.

Sir, what Rihanna Fenty has been able to do as a young lady from a humble background is, to my mind, great testimony of what many young people in Barbados can achieve. Not everyone will reach that height, but we have as Parliamentary Representatives and as outstanding men and women in this society to give support to them wherever possible. Government cannot do it alone.

I have seen in my Constituency, and the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, I must commend her for recognising the outstanding work of the young people in Haynesville, in terms of their skills in drumming and performing, the Haynesville Youth Group. They have performed throughout Barbados, St. Lucia and Dominica, and they must be commended. They are not young people who have been getting any support from Government. The Youth Commissioner in that particular area and the young people in the community have joined together and worked.

I have seen in Husbands, in my Constituency, a young man who not only is an excellent musician, but who has also written music books. They may never get the kind of recognition like Rihanna Fenty, but certainly are deserving of our full support. The youngster who practise the steel pan at National Cultural Foundation, in my Constituency as well, may never get to perform in New York City, or do a concert in Toronto where the Honourable Member for Christ Church West occasionally goes to concerts, at the Performing Centre, but certainly

there are young men and women who are deserving of our support in this community.

11.40 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, it really pains me when I hear Members in this Chamber, particularly on the Opposition Benches who get up and always want to ask what is the cost of these activities. I am not straying from the Resolution before us but I am simply making the point that we must stop attaching a dollar value to every programme that Government engages in, which benefits the young people in this country.

Asides.

Hon. D.O'N. INNISS: There is a cost to the programme but there is even a greater value that is gained by the society at large, based on the small investment we make in our young people. When this Democratic Labour Party Government came up with the summer camps programme the same question was asked. Where is the money coming from?

Mr. Speaker, when all the money was flowing between 1994 and 2007, you were not hearing about any such innovative programmes for young people. Sir, you were hearing about a prison being built to house them and this is the legacy that the Barbados Labour Party left for the young people in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I am not straying from the point.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, just let me remind you of my directive earlier and I will determine whether or not you are straying. Please, let us keep it relevant.

Hon. D.O'N. INNISS: Thank you, Sir.

I noticed your movement. I was not sure whether you wanted to applaud or chastise, Mr. Speaker.

The reality about it is that we need to ask ourselves where will the next Rihanna Fenty come from and that could only be achieved, if we really and truly come up with innovative programmes that allow our young people to achieve their full potential. It is not going to happen if we continue to be negative about young people all the time. Sir, negativity breeds negativity.

Asides.

Hon. D.O'N. INNISS: Mr. Speaker, as the son of a fisherman, I could not come to this Chamber if I was surrounded by negativity all the time, neither could the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, nor the

Honourable Member for St. Thomas. People had to give us some kind of encouragement, some kind of positive guidance and that is what young people in Barbados have been asking for, Sir. They will make mistakes along the way. None of us are perfect. Let us stop this crying down of young people in this society and portraying them all the time as a bunch of rift-rafts and goons and vagabonds, as the Honourable Member for St. Peter, who is hardly ever in his seat, used to refer to us on This Side sometime ago.

This Administration was the first political party to come out with a Youth Manifesto.

Asides.

Hon. D.O'N. INNISS: Our recognition of Rihanna Fenty and what we are doing in this Honourable Chamber today, in terms of this Resolution and giving her this piece of the rock is certainly in keeping with a commitment of this Administration, as reflected in this Youth Manifesto to recognise the talent of young people and to reward them accordingly.

Asides.

Hon. D.O'N. INNISS: Sir, we have always been about empowering people. We have not been about a lot of song and dance and wishy-washy ideas. We are about a genuine commitment to young people and making it work for them. The lawnmower and weedwacker days of the Barbados Labour Party are over. It is about making young people a valuable asset and giving them the necessary intellectual and other resources to achieve their full potential.

Sir, a lot of the youth programmes that I heard the Honourable Member for St. Thomas refers to, which really have just been sitting on files around Ministries, whenever some of them that came to fruition, seemed to be so politicalised that you really could not speak of them being effective youth programmes.

Instead, under this Administration, even next Sunday, we are having a National Youth Forum, the first of its kind, where young people are able to come together.

Asides.

Hon. D.O'N. INNISS: I invite the Honourable Member for St. Thomas to bring her grandchildren to that gathering next Sunday, and see "real" young people at work, engaged in a very positive scenario and exercise.

Mr. Speaker, I really and truly have to fully support this Resolution. As I said at the very beginning, the contribution of Rihanna Fenty is hard to quantify but we know it is humongous in this grand scheme of things.

Wherever I travel in the world and say I am from Barbados, people ask if that is where Rihanna is from. She has been able to place Barbados on the world map in a way never ever done before.

Sir, what is more important is the symbol and the message that we as a Government are sending to young people, which is that we have faith in them. Sir, we will also create all the necessary mechanisms and an enabling environment that allows young people, first to enjoy their youth and secondly to reach their full potential. Sir, it is an investment that we are making for our future and for a better Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Asides.

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

Hon. S.D. BLACKETT: Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a brief intervention. First to congratulate the Government for granting this tract of land to Ambassador Robyn Rihanna Fenty and also to commend Sir Charles Williams for his continued displays of philanthropy here in this island.

I want to say that Robyn Rihanna Fenty, to my mind, is the single most recognised internationally acclaimed Barbadian and I daresay of all times, especially in entertainment and in any other spheres of activity. Some might very well advance the argument that Sir Garfield Sobers is equally as recognised but I daresay it is only in Commonwealth countries that cricket is played and therefore his acclaim is confined to the Commonwealth countries.

Therefore, Rihanna Fenty stands out in my mind as the single most internationally acclaimed Barbadian of all time. She certainly is the embodiment of contemporary musical excellence in Barbados and around the world. She seems to have the "Midas Touch", whatever she touches regarding her productions, turns to instant gold, and in a very short space of time. She was of course taken from Barbados at a very early age, recognised with some talent by the talent scouts at that time and she has certainly proven herself well.

Rihanna has, of course conveyed tremendous pride to Barbados over the last number of years, where she was recognised on the international music scene. Sir, very shortly she came to be awarded the Grammy at a very early age and in a short time in her music career, Sir, and for that she must be commended and congratulated.

Mr. Speaker, through Rihanna's foray into the international musical scene, she has certainly opened the doors for several young Barbadian artistes in Barbados, where they have been recognised for their musical talents. We can speak of people like Hal Linton, for instance, Kitorah, Jaico (alias J-Co), Livvy Frank, Peter Chambers and Shontelle in recent times. All of them have managed to break into the international scene and they are making a name for themselves in that international arena.

Mr. Speaker, certainly, through the cultural industries, we will very shortly lay out a number of plans and a number of programmes and policies that will enable other Barbadians to also access the kind of international recognition that those names I have just mentioned are now experiencing.

Rihanna has had, of course, her first share of criticism and some controversy. In a recent interview I saw on the ABC Network, she is maturing into a really fine young woman I believe that the fires she has gone through will certainly hold her in good stead in developing her into a sound and solid young woman. Mr. Speaker, I also want to support, from the point of view of culture, the National Youth Forum which is being held on Sunday. I know that we are not focussing on that but, certainly, I see this as a good opportunity for our young people to be brought starkly into the limelight and, of course, if there is one fundamental philosophical divide between the Barbados Labour Party and the Democratic Labour Party, it is that the Barbados Labour Party always seem to be attaching figures and numbers and they are looking at the economy.

Certainly, if there is a fundamental philosophical divide between the two parties it is that we in the Democratic Labour Party are focussing on the society, as articulated by our Prime Minister and certainly by our Acting Prime Minister. Sir, if that is the fundamental divide between the two parties, let it be known to all Barbadians, so that all who have ears to hear, hear exactly where the divide between these two parties occur.

11:50:12

Again, I want to congratulate the Government for the foresight that it has had and certainly Sir Charles Williams for his wonderful act of philanthropy to grant this tract of land to Rihanna. I hope that it would be used to her benefit. If other talented individuals bring to Barbados the international acclaim that Rihanna has, I am certain that we would equally be as generous to them.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

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

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I certainly want to congratulate the Honourable Minister for bringing this Resolution before this Honourable Chamber. When we talk about Rihanna, we are talking about excellence in youth and excellence in culture. All of these are embodied in one personality.

Sir, we are also talking about a global icon in entertainment. We are talking about the number one recording artiste on planet earth, a Barbadian. We have never had in our history a person in the entertainment business that has reached the status of Rihanna as the number one recording artiste on planet earth. For this, in my mind, all Barbadians must certainly feel proud.

Mr. Speaker, from time to time, I have always said in this Honourable Chamber that the development of this country cannot and should not always be measured in dollars and cents. Any investment in the development of this nation's youth is a very worthwhile development. We cannot be talking about youth development on one hand and then questioning the monetary input into that development on the other hand.

Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the Honourable Minister of Family, Youth and Sports for the vision that he has in bringing the National Youth Forum to Barbados. I am saying that because time and place is important. At this particular juncture in the development of this nation, it is critical that we pay special attention to our investment in this nation's youth. I have never seen so much talent, so much energy and so much creativity existing in my lifetime in this country as I have seen by our young people, and I am not two mornings, I am an old man now.

Mr. Speaker, while we are having this level of development, we have another extreme broad-base of criticism of our young people. There is a very strange paradox that sometimes tantalize my mind. Rather than talking about the investment in our youth, like the Government is doing, and rather than praising an institution like the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports and the programme of the Youth Forum, sometimes we go astray and lend criticism that is certainly not necessary.

Mr. Speaker, if any criticism is to be shed, it is to be shed on those persons who were raised up across the communities in Barbados who in some instances get rich and switch, who forget the young people and who do not return to the communities. That has led in some instances to the way some of our young people are.

Mr. Speaker, show business is nothing you can rely on for a lifetime. Yes, we have recording studios and all of that that you could make royalties from but it is a business of fluctuating fortunes. Sometimes you would be number one and sometimes you would disappear off the radar in

show business. Mr. Speaker, the kind of talent, the energy and the creativity that is being exhibited by our young people... There are a number of things that as a Government in terms of our creativity that we are going to seriously look at and make a reality.

In every parish in Barbados, our young people are bursting with energy and creativity. Sir, it is against that background that I want to make a second call in this Honourable Chamber for us to transform some of the resource and community centres and pavilions across Barbados in part into community recording studios to give our young people an equal chance to record their music at relatively affordable prices or at a cost to the taxpayers of Barbados.

I am saying that because here it is that one small country of 166 square miles could be producing artistes for the entire world at such a level that it would be tremendous. There is a saying in sociological terms at the United Nations that Barbados is a country that is batting and pounding above its size and weight. Sir, this country at this point in time is exploding with youth talent and we have to channel and harness it and then turn that energy into production.

Sir, in also supporting this Resolution brought by the Honourable Minister of Housing and Lands, I want to make another call that when the Empire Theatre is finished that we create a national entertainment legends hall of fame for the entertainers in Barbados. Imagine that we have the Rihannas, the Merrymen, the Toni Norvilles and all of those great artistes that we would produce over a period of time in one single institution similar to the cricket legends hall of fame at Kensington Oval, where we can go and recognise their work and worth. It is against that background that we have to make sure that our investment in this nation's youth is one that is worthwhile.

Sir, too many persons in this country do not give the youth of Barbados the credit they deserve. Sir, this debate is bordering on a number of areas. It is bordering on culture. It is bordering on youth development and at the same time it is paying a homage to the number one recording artiste in the world. Sir, our investment in our youth today will certainly bear fruit tomorrow. Mr. Speaker, if we really examine and feel the pulse of our young people, we will know that they are very much into entertainment.

12:00 noon

Mr. Speaker, I am also saying that because of the number of artistes, entertainers, actors and persons engaged in show business that at the secondary school level, Parkinson Secondary School should become a hall of excellence in the area of cultural development, drama, et cetera.

Mr. Speaker, it is against that background that I want to commend the Minister of Housing and Lands for bringing this Resolution. Sir, I want to say that we cannot be talking about an investment in this nation's youth, while at the same time questioning the cost of this investment. Sir, over the years I have always said that the development of this country cannot and should not be measured by cash only. Sir, I am reminded by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that the youth is the foundation of this country and that any investment in our youth today is an investment in the future of our country.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the Honourable Member and most of the staff - not all of them - at the Ministry of Youth Affairs for doing a good job. Sir, I speak frankly, I do not have any axe to grind because I am there and I know exactly what happens. Sir, I am saying that a proper, hardworking and dedicated group of community practitioners, working in conjunction with Government, could transform the youth and social landscape of this country.

Mr. Speaker, the hypocrisy and deceit as it relates to the youth of this country has to stop or has to be greatly diminished almost immediately. All of us in this Honourable Chamber know of the challenges that are being faced by this country's youth. All of us by our election and elevation to this Honourable Chamber have made a commitment to help solve the problems that are confronting us as a nation, as it relates to our young people.

Mr. Speaker, as there is no divide on this Resolution before us, I would like to know that after this Resolution has been passed that on Sunday all of us would trek to Sheraton Car Park in a show of solidarity to this nation's youth; in a show of solidarity with this new initiative brought by the Honourable Minister of Youth, Family and Sports, in a show of solidarity with the Government of Barbados which has now placed a further investment in this nation's youth.

Mr. Speaker, as I close, I want to congratulate the Government for this Resolution. Sir, I would want to say too that Rihanna has something called star power. Sir, only a few weeks ago, I read in the newspaper that Rihanna had a bottle of Mount Gay Rum while she was going to a party. Sir, the following week I read that the sale of Mount Gay Rum had escalated. Sir, that is serious, that is what you call star power, and Mount Gay is a local product. Sir, when we talk about star power, that is star power.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Honourable Member for St. Philip North for bringing this Resolution before this Honourable House. I thank you.

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, as the Honourable Member who has just taken his seat has said, there is no divide over this Resolution to approve this land for Robyn Rihanna Fenty. Sir, however, I would want to make a few observations and to ask a few questions.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the former Attorney-General has pointed out to me that private treaties under the Land Acquisition Act, Cap. 225, do not have to come to Parliament. I was told, however, that this Resolution is a two-part Resolution, one of which is the vesting process, that is the vesting of land to Robyn Rihanna Fenty. Sir, that is important.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make the observation because only this morning someone called me to ask why was it that Government was purchasing land for someone who has earned a tremendous amount of money over the last two years. Therefore, the Government needs to explain to this Honourable House what this Resolution is about. It is not about the act of Government giving the land. Therefore, one has to ask the question whose idea was it to give the land to Rihanna Fenty. I think that from what the Minister has said - and the Minister did explain that it was the idea of Sir Charles Williams - that the Government paid the sum of \$100 000 for the land.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House by giving the impression that it was not Government's idea. Sir, it was indeed Government's idea. The parcel of land was donated by Sir Charles and therefore the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I think the idea needs to be clear because I thought it was Sir Charles' idea to give the land at Apes Hill. Sir, the question I want to ask is this, when land is being donated to persons who have performed well, persons who have done their best to society.

Sir, of course, this is not the first time that land would have been donated to persons who have performed well, either in sports, music or in some other aspect of social or economic life. Sir, for example, in 2001, Sukie King was given land at Cottage, St. George, his birthplace. Sir, land was donated by Cottage Estates to Sukie King. Sir, many people do not know about this because a lot of hullabaloo was not made. Land was conveyed by the Ministry of Housing and Lands to Sukie King.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, just a minute, you mentioned the concept of hullabaloo. That is not with reference to the matter before this Honourable House? If it is, you must withdraw the statement.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I am saying that we did the conveyance without any hullabaloo, without any great public relations campaign.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, so you are not referring to the matter before this Honourable House as hullabaloo?

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: No, Sir, I am saying that in 2001 land was not only conveyed to Sukie King but to other persons as well. Sir, I am being told that it was Government's idea to donate the land. I am also being told that the idea of giving the land came from Sir Charles. Sir, I want to thank Sir Charles because he has been able to donate land to a number of Barbadians who have done well. There are also other white Barbadians who have done well economically, who have contributed to the social life of those persons who have done well in our society.

12.10 p.m.

I think that if persons could donate 28 000 square feet of land and the Government paid only \$100 000, one must congratulate the donor of the land. The Government's contribution to this act of giving is very minimal indeed.

I think when Government gave the ambassadorship to me, that was an act of good governance, being an ambassador at large, for a person who has done well, to me is a great feat. Therefore, one has to congratulate the Government of the day, who has given something, not necessary tangible that you can see but something that will go a long way in helping that person.

Sir, in lots of articles written on this subject, the question is, having been given the ambassadorship for Barbados, what is the person doing for Barbados? I want to explain that when this person was given the ambassadorship for Barbados she was also helping the United Nations' Children Fund in creating an awareness for cancer across the globe. For example, she was able to do a lot of work in Germany, she was able to do free tours and free concerts in Israel, Malawi and other countries around the world.

I would hope that this ambassador, some day, would get around to raising funds for the people and children of Barbados as well. I would hope that this ambassador for Barbados would one day select Barbados as beneficiary for the young people we have spoken about this morning. I would hope that ambassador would soon get around to helping our people in this Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, one has to ask the question. I am sure if it were the idea of the Government why they would select Apes Hill? I want to ask the question again...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, just one moment. Mr. Clerk, I have lost track of the time on this speech? How much more time does the Honourable Member have?

His Ex. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the House the impression that the land at Apes Hill is too good for Rihanna.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I am not saying that, I was asking a question. I started by saying that land was given to Sukie King at his birthplace, that land was given to persons who have contributed like Sir Frank Worrell and we were able to buy the home at Bank Hall and the question is, if it were not a chance idea, the Minister when he gets up can tell me this, why Apes Hill and not Westbury Road, why Apes Hill, and Government has land in St. Philip that the Minister just came here and vested. I am asking if it were the idea of Government because I am of the view that Sir Charles has been one who has pushed the idea of giving lands to Barbadian who have contributed significantly.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

His Ex. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member is giving the impression that Sir Charles has given land to the Government of Barbados and then has asked the Government of Barbados to pay him \$100 000 for it. Sir, I do not think that should go out, that someone is giving land and then asking the Government of Barbados to give \$100 000.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I am asking the question because my view is that this Government says one thing and does something else. This Government, on one hand says that it belongs to the people of Barbados, that it is a socialist Government, yet it seems to me that the Government, by its act, is portraying that here you are giving this person, who is an icon, who Barbadians must look up to, and I understand that it is the idea of the Government to give the land at Apes Hill.

Sir, the land at Apes Hill is valued at \$1 million but the land at Apes Hill cannot be fetched by the ordinary Barbadians. The ordinary Barbadian will not be able to go and see Rihanna's property because it would be a gated community. I am asking if it was the Government's idea? I am asking why Apes Hill? I am of the view...

His Ex. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member is giving the impression that the previous Government had never given land in a

gated community. Sir, everybody knows that Millennium Heights is a gated community.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. George North, please continue.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Sir, not that there is anything wrong with giving land but the Government cannot and tell this to the people of this country. Sir, I remember distinctly at the last Elections, the Opposition of the time was trying to portray that land on the West Coast, and land in these developed areas, would not be set aside for those few people, that Government would try to look at zoning, and it was not clear to me. Sir, I am of the view that by giving this land at Apes Hill, valued at \$1 million, where the ordinary person would not be able to see the structure that is built there. It would have been better for me, if the Government has bought and set up an edifice or something in the remembrance of this lady but the Government has given the land and we would have to support it.

We are not objecting to it. Government must come out clear and say to the people that the land was donated by Sir Charles and that it is paying a small sum for it. It must be clear to Barbadians. It must not look as though the Government has gone and purchased the land directly from Sir Charles because it was given by Sir Charles and the Government is only conveying it the person and paying a small sum of \$100 000, which is not the full value. The condition of 15 years, before the person can to sell it must also be looked at.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the Honourable Member for St. Lucy talking about conditions. Sir, conditions have always been set for land. We set four years for the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act but land in those days was ten cents per square foot. Sir, the Government by setting 15 years, I think, is a bit onerous, even though the land is valued at more than \$2 million.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Yes, it is really a gift. It is a gift from Sir Charles. The State is providing \$100 000 plus legal fees but yet the State not only wants it back but the State is trying to portray that it is not such a big thing. Sir, that is why I ask myself the question why all the hullabaloo, when Government is only providing one-tenth of the value of the land?

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, withdraw the statement about "hullabaloo".

12:20

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. George North were ordered expunged from the record by Mr. SPEAKER.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I warned you about the statement already. Honourable Member, withdraw the statement about hullabaloo and have it struck from the record.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, as you wish, I will withdraw it.

Sir, I want to say that there are other gifts of land which I hope the Minister can bring before this Honourable House. For example, I am aware that the Barbados Farms Limited has donated a set of land to the people of Flat Rock, St. George. I have not seen that come, a donation of land. The Crown...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I do not think that is relevant to the matter under discussion, and you should move on.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Sir, I am saying that Sir Charles has donated lands to Miss Fenty. I am asking about lands that were donated to the Ministry of Housing in connection with sports, the National Cultural Foundation, land for recreational facilities. There are other lands, I am aware, that have been donated to the Crown that over the years we have not seen it. Since 2004 lots of land have been donated and we are waiting on the Chief Surveyor to survey the land so that they can come before this Parliament.

His Ex. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that this Government has been in office since 2004, and we are dragging our feet on a matter that should have been dealt with over the last six years.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Sir, lands donated to people and charities - the Glebe is not a donation as such. I am aware that even though it has taken this time, most of the time we hearing about the conveyance...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, less than one minute ago I directed you that the question of other lands donated to the Crown was not relevant to this debate. Please move on, otherwise I will have to exercise my judgment under the relevant Standing Order of the House. Please move on Honourable Member.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, since I am only allowed to speak on the Resolution for Rihanna, it seems to me that we have supported the Resolution of providing

land for Rihanna, and it is Government's wish to purchase the land at Apes Hill for this exercise. The public at large will support it. I am sure that the debate will continue over time why Apes Hill and not other parts of Barbados, and if this person, in due course, builds a home, an office, or something that the people of Barbados can see. We look forward very soon that this individual, Rihanna, and we are very happy for her, will produce something that ordinary Barbadians can visit and be proud to be part of.

Sir, this will be a donation, as I see, to the young people of Barbados and we look forward in the nearest of time for her to convey it to the people of Barbados.

I am obliged, Sir.

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

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: I beg to move that this Honourable House be suspended until 1.45 p.m.

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

The question that the House be now suspended until 1.45 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

12.30 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: The Sitting of this Honourable Chamber is resumed.

When the Suspension was taken, we were on Order No. 3 and with that, we will continue.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Hon. F.J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to delay the House on this matter but I think that the situation requires that I make an intervention on this Resolution before the House by which the Government commits itself to donating, as it were, this parcel of land at Apes Hill to Robyn Rihanna Fenty, who has shot to stardom internationally because of the God-given talents which she has been exploiting and is being encouraged to exploit. If proof were needed of the fact that even though a country may be small, it can produce world greats, one only has to look to the Caribbean to note that a very small region composed of very small islands have impacted on the world scene in a way that in many respects shames countries much larger than those in the Caribbean.

Mr. Speaker, recently, at the last held Olympics, for example, our sister island of Jamaica took the world by storm with the performances of its male and female athletes. This was the kind of advertisement that Jamaica could not otherwise afford to pay for internationally. Every country on earth today, knows that there is a place called Jamaica and it really has nothing to do with how much money the Tourist Board of Jamaica has spent. It has more to do with the fact that a highly talented athlete put his prowess of talents on display for the world to see, and did it successfully, with breathe-taking performances at the Olympics.

There are many other examples, of course, as I believe the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central mentioned today, this small island of Barbados produced the greatest cricketer the world has ever seen but the point was appropriately made that cricket is a Commonwealth sport and does not to necessarily attract universal attention in the same way that track and field would and certainly not in the same way as entertainment would. Sir, that is why the performances and the prestige and the renown of Rihanna Fenty is so important to Barbados and to the advertisement of Barbados, as a place in which high quality talent can be found so the Government has to be applauded for this gesture.

I am aware that a previous administration has done similarly in terms of Obadale Thompson when he performed credibly at the Olympics. Of course, what we have to be careful about - and I say this well meaningly but by way of caution - is that while we applaud those who performed credibly and we highlight the fact that they are deserving of the gratitude of the nation, the impression must never be conveyed that the way to the top is easy and that renown, fame and so on, once got, represents a final achievement. It is not only getting to the top that is difficult but it is staying at the top that is difficult. It is when persons reach the top that they really need the encouragement and the assistance of the countries from which they come, and in this case we speak of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, we observe Robyn Rihanna Fenty and we are made to feel proud by what she has done for the image and reputation of Barbados.

House A67B, Sequences 1 & 2, 1:55:08

Tuesday, June 15, 2010

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, we observe Robyn "Rihanna" Fenty. We are made to feel proud by what she has done for the image and the reputation of Barbados but we face squarely the fact, as has been observed on both sides of the House today, that she is still very young and still capable of making mistakes and we just have to give her all the support she needs and hope that

her mistakes are not sufficiently costly as to make nonsense of what this Parliament is doing today. We are placing a very heavy responsibility on her shoulders by the gesture to which this Resolution relates.

Mr. Speaker, when we debated the exploits of the great Barbadian hurdler, the point was made that he too needs our sustained assistance and all the encouragement that he can get because these people are still very young people and can still be hijacked as it were and can make mistakes that can turn out to be very costly for them.

Mr. Speaker, when we point our young people to them as role models, as persons whose dedication and whose tenacity they should emulate, we also have to make the point that we all have different aptitudes and different talents and that ultimately the proof of what we have within us, the proof of our strength of character, has to do with playing the hand that life has dealt us. Whatever talents we have and whatever aptitudes we have, we must not compare ourselves with others and wish that we had their talents, what we need to do is to look at what we have and work with what we have been given and try to develop those talents and those aptitudes to the fullest.

Mr. Speaker, it is important too that we do not convey the impression to those who achieve that one or two performances or one or two good performances represent all that one needs to do in order to be crowned with laurels by the countries of their birth. There are many persons who have preceded Rihanna, Ryan Brathwaite and many of our young sportsmen and great performers, who toiled long and hard in their own vineyards and who to the end of their careers were not able to benefit from the gratitude of Barbados in the same way in which Rihanna is benefitting from it today yet their exploits were great.

Mr. Speaker, while we therefore remember them with gratitude, we have to remind our youngsters that it is not one or two performances that will do it, that their commitment to excellence and the pursuit of the highest possible standards is a lifetime endeavour and therefore that once they have been rewarded by the nation, it does not mean that they sit back and begin to rest on their laurels because they have achieved and there is no more Everest to climb. There are always Everest to climb and there are always higher standards to be pursued.

Mr. Speaker, countries like Barbados of very limited land mass and with no natural resources really, have to rely on the only real resource that they have, which is their people, therefore, we have to look to our people to always perform at the highest possible level so that we can make our own contribution to the treasury of human civilisation and to the development of mankind.

Rihanna's achievements, as is the case with the achievements of all those who have preceded her, are just signals to all of us that we though born in a small country have a whole world to exploit and to conquer and that we just use the country of our birth as a springboard for the pursuit of the loftiest achievements of which human capabilities will admit.

Mr. Speaker, I want to support Government strongly in what it is doing today, I think it is a positive gesture, but I also want to caution that there are inherent risks in giving young people the impression that one or two achievements are all that they need to register in order to attract the full bestow of the favours and the approvals which a country has to offer. So far with Rihanna, the country has been made to feel proud. Of course, she has had her challenges as has been highlighted by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph in his speech this morning. She is young and still exposed to those thousands natural shocks to which human flesh has always been known to be aired and therefore she needs the support and the encouragement of the nation as she moves from strength to strength and from height to height.

I want to therefore thank the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, the Honourable Minister of Housing and Lands for the introduction he has done to this Resolution today and of course to say how proud I feel to be part of a Government that is the actor in the pursuit of a gesture such as that reflected in the Resolution at present before this Chamber.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I just want to signal to the House that this Resolution has my wholehearted support.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I rise to associate myself with the comments that have been made on both sides of the Floor with respect to this Resolution. We are all very happy to see that the promise that was made in Independence Square back in 2008 has now finally come to its conclusion and that we can have the land conveyed to Miss Robyn "Rihanna" Fenty. Mr. Speaker, she was on that day designated Ambassador for Culture and Youth. I think that is very significant because I think we have to recognise what we are doing today in the context of all of those young people out there who need to be assured that we do want them to excel and to excel in whatever they are doing.

Rihanna's chosen field is singing and she is doing extremely well. In fact, she is now basically at the top of

her game and so we are very happy for her but I think the important and the wider point is that we are sending the right signal to the youth of this country.

I know that the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central is putting a lot of attention on our young people, their development and all of their concerns and needs and on the development of the youth policy and the hosting of the National Youth Forum, which I am sure he will talk about because we understand that we have an important role as a Parliament to develop the future by focusing on our youth.

House A67B Sequence 3 & 4

2.05 p.m.

Tuesday, June 15, 2010

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, when we look at how well we have been doing as a very small nation in the world of entertainment, I also think this initiative with regards to Rihanna's accomplishments says a lot about Barbados that we need to put on the record of this Honourable House. I believe the Honourable Member of St. Michael Central spoke about this but since Rihanna has signed onto Def Jam in 2003, we have a signature to a major record label every year, up to 2010. This is amazing, there is no small country in the world, along with many larger countries that can say the same thing. It went from Rihanna to Shontelle, to Hal Linton, to Livvy Frank, Vida Chambers, "J-Ko", "Kitoro". Sir, even prior to that, Edwin Yearwood has been signed onto VP Records for quite a while. He is the only soca artist who signed onto VP, another major label. Of course, "Rupie" has also been signed onto a major label for a long time, and so Barbados has a lot to celebrate in this area.

Mr. Speaker, we need to enter those things into the record of this Honourable House because there was a time when you were talking about singing as a career, basically you would have been hoping to get two nights a week on the hotel circuit. Sir, that was all, we now have entire careers that are being developed. Sir, there is also a whole industry that is being created.

Sir, people are talking about Barbados, Billboard was down here doing a story on all of this wonderful talent we have here in Barbados. BET did a feature on "Rising Stars" and spoke about Hal Linton and persons of other talents that are coming here. Sir, from the tourism side of things I was interviewed, and so people at talking. I think this initiative we are doing here today has to be looked at, to be able to encourage not only those who have made it and have been signed onto labels but also all of that talent that is coming up.

There is a lot of wonderful talent that is coming up. There are very good entertainers and others who should feel very encouraged insofar as looking forward to a career in music. Let us remember it does not have to be on the stage, there is songwriting, producing, artiste management, events promotion, among others. I feel that it is really a very important thing that we are doing here, from a developmental perspective as well, both the entertainment and buttressing it against all the determination to have a proper programme for our young people.

Mr. Speaker, I would want to associate myself fully with this effort and to properly enter into the record of this Honourable House all of this tremendous work that is being done by our other ambassadors; those who may not be formally recognised but whom as cultural ambassadors are doing tremendous work for this country.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the Acting Prime Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South making the point that we could not possibly pay for all the work that is being done by the topnotch ones, the Rihannas and the Shontelles but by all those other artistes who are working the region. There are so many of them that do so much work that redounds to the benefit of Barbados from a cultural and economic perspective as well, for example, there is Red Plastic Bag, Gabby, et cetera.

Mr. Speaker, let me also assure this Honourable House, because it has been alluded to as well, that we are in discussion with Rihanna's handlers insofar as how she could be deployed to help advance our interest from a tourism point of view. It is not totally unknown that she has done work previously for the Barbados Tourism Authority and is very keen on doing further work and so we are quite happy that we can make that happen.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard about in the other destinations that have been able to employ their own. There are a number of success stories, for example, Usane Bolt's advertisements promoting Jamaica. Unfortunately, all of those advertisements have been pulled temporarily but as I understand it, by talking to Minister Bartlett last week, from as early as next week they are doing a promotional drive, trying to mitigate against the whole situation from what has been happening in Kingston and they will resume their very creative artistic campaign.

What I am saying is that we are prepared and will use not only Rihanna but Ryan Brathwaite and all of our Ambassadors to promote the island, of course, time allowing. We would appreciate that the schedules that many of these world-class sportsmen and entertainers have can be quite demanding, the fact is that we are keen to work with them. There are some destinations that use celebrities who are not even from the particular country. For example, the Commonwealth of Bahamas has

designated someone who was not even from the country. Under a previous leader in the Turks and Caicos Islands, the First Lady was the face of their tourism industry and she was an American citizen.

Sir, the point is the whole idea of leveraging celebrity status in the context of destination promotion is something that is done quite a bit. At the World Travel Market in November, apart from Barbados having its cricket legends, as you move around that facility, you see a number of celebrities helping to market and to promote a number of destinations. Therefore, we will be prepared to continue working with Rihanna and others. Hal Linton has also worked with us and we are talking to some of the handlers of the other entertainers.

Mr. Speaker, I would assure the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown that it is not that we are forgetting the homegrown talent because they have served us well. Sir, we are very serious about that, we cannot underestimate the value not only in terms of entertaining the tourists who are already here but when they are touring the region. We cannot underestimate the value of the work that these local entertainers do to help promote this destination, for example, in encouraging people to come to Cropover every year.

Sir, recently we had a number of artistes from Barbados going up to Canada to promote tourism and so we continue to work with these artistes who can help to promote the destination. Mr. Speaker, what we are also going to start to do is that even when some of these performers are on their regular tours or on their concerts abroad, we will work with them to help promote Barbados. Sir, I think it is a good thing in promoting Barbados. Sir, a number of Barbadians have actually moved on, for example, Madam Yvette Wilkinson, who has recently passed away. All of them must really feel good to see where entertainment has now come to in Barbados. Sir, entertainers are no longer barely eking out a living, they are now quite comfortable, careers and industries have been spawned. Therefore, it must be wonderful for those who went before to see what has become of the industry, to see what this whole music realm has become. It is a very wonderful thing and I hope that we could continue to develop it.

2.10 p.m.

Tuesday, June 15, 2010

Hon. R. L. SEALY: It is a very wonderful thing and I hope that we can continue to develop it. Also, I would want to put in a plug for my colleague, the Minister of Culture, the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central. We had inherited a draft Cultural Industry Policy from the last Government but we revamped it totally. We put our

own finger prints on it and we looked very much at that whole issue of careers within the context of the cultural industry.

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Do not mind what no Owen tell you. We looked at it at Economic Policy Committee...

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, the reference to Owen is not a reference to any member of this House.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: No, Sir, it was an aside.

MR. SPEAKER: But it was very loud.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Sir, it was an aside. I apologise for my aside because it was a little loud. (14:16)

MR. SPEAKER: Of course, the comment is withdrawn and struck from the record.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Well, it was supposed to be there in the first place so thanks. (14:16:25) (14:19) I am happy that we have got to this point and I look forward to this initiative along with the other initiatives that will create success stories like this one in the field of entertainment, yes, but in whatever endeavour, whatever trail you decide to blaze, as a young person, you need to understand that this Government is standing shoulder to shoulder with you and is determined to see that you achieve whatever goals you set.

Mr. Speaker, I support this Resolution.

Sequence 8

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Housing and Lands.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to wrap up this debate and first I want to thank all Honourable Members for their contribution to this debate. We have had some outstanding contributions throughout this debate and the one that remains outstanding to me is the contribution made by the Honourable Member for St. George North. It is outstanding, Mr. Speaker, because of certain statements that came from the mouth of the Honourable Member for St. George North.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. George North was indirectly asking the question...

Asides.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: In fact, he asked directly was Apes Hill for Robyn Rhianna Fenty, suggesting to me

directly that Apes Hill is too good for this young Barbadian and, to me, it was one downside in this debate that the Honourable Member for St. George North would be questioning why we are looking at land in Apes Hill for Rhianna and why not Westbury.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member went on further and said that one one called him or someone asked him why Government was paying millions of dollars for land for someone who is making millions of dollars in the entertainment industry. Sir, again this was another downside in the debate and I believe that by all members on this side, have actually acknowledged the contribution made by young lady. Sir, the Honourable Member St. Michael South Central said in his speech that the Barbados Tourism Authority is working in association with the handlers of the same Robyn Rhianna Fenty to promote Barbados but the former Honourable Member sat in a Cabinet that wasted taxpayers' money on things that were promised and never came to fruition and there was no protest. Sir, here we are now supporting a young Barbadian that was actually able to penetrate the American music industry...

Asides.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Sir, it is not easy to penetrate the American music industry because a lot of Barbadians have tried before. Sir, I know a number of musicians and entertainers who actually went into the studio after getting offers from agents overseas, in some instances they sent a demo tape, who promised they would get you into the industry, that we had all their contacts but to this day we are still waiting to get back the same demo tape. Sir, here is a young lady now breaking into the American music industry, paving the way forward for other young aspiring entertainers and the Honourable Member for St. George North, in this House, had the audacity to get up and question why this Government is making a contribution and rewarding a young Barbadian for her efforts.

Asides.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, then the Honourable Member for St. George North went on again in full "hullabaloo", using his term...

MR. SPEAKER: What is good for the goose is good for the gander. If he could not use the term, you cannot use it. Please withdraw it and let us move on.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Sir, I withdraw it. Let me say, Mr. Speaker, in his full confusion he was trying to find out if the land was donated by Sir Charles Williams, or whether it was donated by the Government.

H/A67B/14:25 Sequence 8

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Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: ...he then was corrected, the Government made the decision and the proposal for a gift to give a piece of land to Robyn Rihanna Fenty. Sir Charles Williams was approached. It was clarified the first time. In confusion again, he got up and said that Sir Charles Williams donated the land and came up with the idea, when it was the Government that came up with the idea. Sir, he was in total confusion.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: On a point of order. I asked a simple question. Whose idea it was for the land, and whether it was the Government's idea or Sir Charles' idea. I asked a question, why Apes Hill and not Bushy Park or St. Lucy. That is what I asked. I asked a legitimate question. Why did the Government go to Apes Hill if it was the Government's idea? That is all I was asking.

Mr. SPEAKER: No point of order. Please, continue.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, is Apes Hill too good for Robyn Rihanna Fenty?

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I never said that Apes Hill is too good for anybody. All I asked was, why Apes Hill and not Busy Park or St. Lucy. The Honourable Member has to explain why did the Government choose Apes Hill. That is all the Honourable Member has to do.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Cabinet made this decision in February 2008. It is only two weeks ago that I came to this Parliament in relation to acquiring Bushy Park.

Sir, I am saying that the Honourable Member for St. George North probably has a snobbish attitude.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member would have to withdraw that statement. All I was doing in this House is asking the question. The Honourable Member is now saying that Apes Hill is better than Bushy Park, which is in his own constituency.

Mr. SPEAKER: You cannot raise that on a point of order. Continue Honourable Member.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, the problem with the Honourable Member for St. George North is, if the singer is probably carrying a certain family name, then he would say yes, Apes Hill is suitable. That is the problem

with the Honourable Member for St. George North. I will move on.

Sir, the general tone throughout the debate is, that the actual singer has provided inspiration for young aspiring entertainers to develop their art form. When you look around Barbados everyone wants to be a singer or entertainer. Before, the youngsters would lean towards the traditional professions, doctor, lawyer, engineer or whatever, but now a lot of the young people are saying they want to get into the entertainment industry. They are actually creating home studios, arranging songs almost every day, meeting in groups, and looking at ways and means of how they can develop or come up with a hit song. That is the ambition of a lot of these young and aspiring entertainers to get into the local and international entertainment industry.

Sir, the Acting Prime Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, made an interesting point when he said that it was not about getting to the top but, it is staying at the top that is the most difficult. Of course, he is very true in that respect. We have to really encourage and support Robyn Rihanna Fenty because we know the nature of the entertainment industry. We know you can develop overnight and you can go down the ladder overnight. You have to be consistent. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas mentioned that she wants these entertainers to stay away from the hazzards. That is quite true. There are a lot of temptations out there.

Sir, this lady has actually been brought up in the true Barbadian family tradition, along with the values and morals, we know that Robyn Rihanna Fenty can withstand any hazzards in the entertainment industry, and particularly the international industry.

Indeed, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central mentioned that the Barbados Tourism Authority is working with the said entertainer to promote Barbados. I know that the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown mentioned another entertainer from his constituency, 'Daddy Plume'.

Asides.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: That is his entertainment name. I do not know his real name. I am saying, yes, he has talent, but I believe we must support him at the local level. I believe we can put systems around him to move moving forward with his career. There is talent there and I believe the day will come that some association or organisation, like the Barbados Tourism Authority, will work with him to assist propelling his career, or, indeed, even on the international music scene one of these days.

Sir, again I want to congratulate all the speakers for their level of debate, and the fact that the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central used the opportunity, quite rightly, to mention some of the positive programmes coming out of his ministry, and, in fact, on Sunday, the historic launch of the National Youth Forum. I want to congratulate him for such a programme.

Sir, I do not believe that any right thinking member of this society should question the establishment of the National Youth Forum, or question Sunday's event, because it is a positive event to promote and to assist the young people in this country.

Sir, I was a little annoyed when the Honourable Member for St. Thomas started to question Sunday's event. You cannot measure any programme that is going to assist and develop the future of this country in dollars and cents. I know that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas will be there up front and center on Sunday. The Honourable Member for St. George North said that he will be there too. I want to congratulate the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central for his forward thinking and positive move in the Ministry of Youth Affairs.

I was also made to understand that he is also working with the young people in the area of sports, and there are some programmes that will be coming to the public very soon to further develop young people and to enhance their future in sports. That is something that is worthwhile. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central will continue. He must be encouraged, and I that know the programmes the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central would be bringing to this Parliament, will be completely supported by the Opposition. I do not think there will be any dissenting voices from that side, because they too have young people in their constituency.

Sir, I know that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas will be sending down her young people in droves, although she is not in full support of the National Youth Forum, I know that the young people of St. Thomas will be coming down in droves on Sunday.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all Honourable Members for their contributions and beg that this Resolution do now pass.

SA67B 14.35 p.m. Sequence 9 & 10

Tuesday, June 15, 2010

House A67B, Sequences 11 & 12, 2.35 p.m.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all Honourable Members for their contributions and I want to beg that this Resolution do now pass.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Asides.

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

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

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, this brings us to the end of Government Business for today's Sitting and I beg to move that this Honourable House do now adjourn until Tuesday, June 29, 2010 at 10.00 a.m.

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

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, June 29, 2010 was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

House A67B, Sequences 11 & 12, 14:36:08

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FORDE, Miss C. Y. (St. Thomas)

INNISS, Hon. D.O’N. (St. James South)
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LASHLEY, Mr. H. F. (St. Michael South East)
MARSHALL, Mr. D. D. (St. Joseph)
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SINCKLER, Hon. C. P. (St. Michael North West)
STUART, Hon. F. J. (St. Michael South)
TODD, Hon. P. M. T. (City of Bridgetown)

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

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

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

Q2. Opening. The Speaker describes the sitting as ‘the 67th Sitting of our first session of Parliament’. No session line is printed (see the query above); the wording is printed as in the source.

Q3. Order No. 3, Mr. G. A. Clarke. Mr. Clarke refers to ‘private treaties under the Land Acquisition Act, Cap. 225’; the Resolution itself is made under the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Cap. 225. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Order No. 3, spellings. The grantee’s name appears once as ‘Robyn Rhianna Fenty’ (Hon. M. A. Lashley’s reply), and the alternative site is given as ‘Bushy Park’ and ‘Busy Park’. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Order No. 3, value of the lot. The lot is said to have ‘a market value of \$1.2 million’ (the mover), to be ‘valued over \$1 million’ (His Excellency D. St.E. Kellman) and ‘valued at \$1 million’ (Mr. G. A. Clarke). Printed as in the source.

Q6. Order No. 3, Hon. F. J. Stuart, take-slip about 1.55 p.m.. Either side of the take-slip the sentence ‘we observe Robyn Rihanna Fenty and we are made to feel proud by what she has done for the image and reputation of Barbados’ appears twice (about 25 words). Both are printed as in the source.

Q7. Order No. 3, Hon. R. L. Sealy. Time references ‘(14:16)’, ‘(14:16:25)’ and ‘(14:19)’ are run into Mr. Sealy’s speech, and ‘12:20’ stands alone as a paragraph during Mr. Clarke’s speech. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met on Tuesday, 15th June, 2010 at 10.15 a.m., with the Speaker, His Honour M. A. Carrington, in the Chair, who described it as the 67th Sitting of the session. The Minutes of May 25 and June 4, 2010 were confirmed. Hon. F. J. Stuart laid three Orders, among them the Value Added Tax (Remission of Tax) (Barbados Defence Force) Order, 2010, and Hon. S. D.

Blackett laid the Nomination Dossier on Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison as a World Heritage site. Standing Orders were suspended.

The only business was Order No. 3, the Resolution to approve, under section 5 of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Cap. 225, the grant to Robyn Rihanna Fenty of a parcel of Crown land at Apes Hill Development, St. James. The Minister of Housing and Lands, Hon. M. A. Lashley, explained that on February 20, 2008 the Cabinet had designated Miss Fenty an Ambassador for Culture and Youth in recognition of some 73 awards, that Sir Charles Williams had identified Lot H-23 and offered it to the Crown for \$100 000 against an estimated market value of \$1.2 million, that the Crown would pay the legal costs, and that the Government was to be reimbursed the price paid if the lot were resold within 15 years.

Mr. D. D. Marshall gave the Opposition’s support, spoke of Miss Fenty’s background as an immigrant, and argued that the condition to repay \$100 000 on resale was unreasonable for a gift. His Excellency D. St.E. Kellman defended the condition and congratulated Sir Charles Williams, his constituent. Hon. S. A. Lashley spoke of entertainment as an emerging industry and invited Members to the launch of the National Youth Forum; Miss C. Y. Forde supported the Resolution but criticised the Department of Youth Affairs, which led to points of order from Hon. S. A. Lashley and Mr. Kellman and a reminder from the Speaker that the debate was not about youth policy. Hon. P. M. T. Todd, Hon. D. O’N. Inniss, Mr. Blackett and Mr. H. F. Lashley also supported it.

Mr. G. A. Clarke supported the Resolution but asked whether the idea had been the Government’s or Sir Charles’s, why Apes Hill had been chosen rather than Bushy Park or St. Lucy, and recalled land given in 2001 to Sukie King; he was directed by the Speaker to withdraw the word ‘hullabaloo’, which was struck from the record, and was told that other land donations were not relevant.

After the suspension, Mr. Stuart cautioned that young achievers needed sustained support and should be reminded that excellence is a lifetime’s pursuit. Hon. R. L. Sealy recalled the promise made in Independence Square in 2008 and withdrew a loud aside, which was struck from the record. In reply Hon. M. A. Lashley rejected any suggestion that Apes Hill was too good for Miss Fenty, saying the Cabinet had taken the decision in February 2008; he too was required to withdraw the word ‘hullabaloo’. The Resolution was passed without division, and the House was adjourned until Tuesday, June 29, 2010 at 10.00 a.m.



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