
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2013 – 2018

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, June 23, 2015

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, June 23, 2015.

PRESENT

The full list of Members present is to be inserted from the Votes and Proceedings. Members identified from the record of this Sitting:

His Honour M. A. CARRINGTON, Q.C. (Speaker)
Her Honour Mrs. M-J. M. THOMPSON (Deputy Speaker)
Hon. C. P. SINCKLER (Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs)
Mr. J. D. PAUL (Chairman of Committees)
Hon. S. A. LASHLEY (Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth)
Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE (Minister of Health) (Leader of the House)
Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE, Q.C. (Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs)
Mr. G. A. CLARKE, J.P.
Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND
Miss C. Y. FORDE, J.P.
Mr. E. G. HINKSON
Hon. D. O'N. INNISS (Minister of Industry, International Business, Commerce and Small Business Development)
Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN (Minister of Housing and Lands)

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: Good morning, honourable members. This House is now in session. I am not yet in receipt of the minutes of our meeting held on June 15th, our last meeting. I therefore ask the usual motion.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, sir, I beg to move that those minutes be taken as read and be deferred.

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, sir, I beg to move the suspension of Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42, 43 and 44 for the remainder of today's sitting.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 17 – RESOLUTION – LEASE OF CROWN LANDS TO THE ROTARY CLUB OF BARBADOS SOUTH – GARFIELD SOBERS SPORTS COMPLEX, UPTON, CHRIST CHURCH

Order No. 17 - In the name of the Honourable Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth: to move the passing of a resolution to approve, in accordance with section 51 of the Crown Lands Vesting and Disposal Act, Chapter 225, the lease to the Rotary Club of Barbados South of the parcel of land, the property of the Crown, situate at Garfield Sobers Sports Complex, Upton, in the parish of Christ Church in this island, for the construction and development of a recreation facility for children with disabilities.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Minister. Thank you very much.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of moving this resolution which seeks to obtain the approval of the House for the granting of a lease of 25 000 square feet of land located at the Garfield Sobers Complex in Christ Church for the purposes of allowing the

Rotary Club of Barbados South to create a recreational facility for children with disabilities.

The land is being provided by lease to the Rotary Club by means of this resolution under a number of conditions. The proposed lease is for a period of 25 years with an option to renew for a further term. The rent which is being charged for this public service facility is \$1 000 per annum. The rent reviews are to take place at five-year intervals. The lessee, in this case the Rotary Club of Barbados South, will be responsible for the payment of all insurance premiums, repairs and maintenance of the buildings, land, taxes, utilities and other outgoings arising from the use of the site. The lessee will also bear the cost of the development of the site and must comply with town planning and all statutory requirements. At the end of the lease, as is usual with these kinds of arrangements, the buildings, structures and other facilities and improvements, regardless of the stage of construction, will revert to the Crown for nil consideration. And Mr. Speaker, that is the resolution before the House.

This project, Mr. Speaker, has been the subject of discussion between the Gymnasium, the Ministry of Housing and Lands, and the Ministry with responsibility for Sports for quite a few years. The request from the Rotary Club of Barbados South has been given favourable consideration by all of these entities, and the Cabinet of Barbados has given its approval for these lands to be made available for the purpose for which the Rotary Club applied.

As you are aware, Mr. Speaker, the Rotary Club of Barbados, which is a member of Rotary International, is no stranger in terms of its many humanitarian activities. Rotary itself is the world's first service club organisation, which has in excess of 12 million members with about 33 000 clubs worldwide. They have over the years been involved in numerous activities designed to combat not only hunger and improve health, but also to provide sanitation, education and job training, promoting peace and eradicating polio, among a number of its objectives.

In recent years, the organisation has turned its attention to a number of critical challenges which face our children with disabilities. We are aware that many of our children in Barbados are born with a number of physical, cognitive and sensory disabilities, and that has increased over the years. But one of the most important areas that has come under the microscope is the ability of children with disabilities to play in an environment that is child-friendly, an environment in which they do not feel discriminated against. So far, we have not had such a facility in Barbados.

Studies have shown, Mr. Speaker, that any child - whether that child has disabilities or not - who is not able to be involved in activities of a physical nature in an

environment that is conducive to self-esteem, is likely to grow up with low self-esteem, lacking in confidence, and not having the ability to operate at optimum mental capability. Within this context, the Rotary Club of Barbados has come up with a project designed to create an inclusive play facility where children of all abilities can participate. While the focus is on children with disabilities, the intention is for the project to be of an inclusive nature where children of all abilities will play, learn, explore, discover and imagine together in an environment where their common experiences make for a more lasting impression than their different abilities.

This project, Mr. Speaker, has received the full blessing of the Government of Barbados because it fits very neatly within the context of our own social engineering policies, in which we have placed at the very pivotal part of our development planning the focus on societal developmental initiatives that are key to ensuring the holistic development of our children. The Rotary Club requested a site that is universally accessible - a playground and recreational centre - and identified the facilities at the Garfield Sobers Gymnasium, requesting 25 000 square feet of land from the Government to erect this facility.

It is clear, Mr. Speaker, that Barbados needs such a facility to ensure that it is socially responsible and at the very apex of the social consciousness of ensuring that all of our children are exposed to physical activity. Within that context, we have embraced this project. The Rotary Inclusive Play Project is to create a facility where children of all abilities - with a focus on children with physical disability - will be able to exist and develop in a manner that allows them to be seen as able-bodied alongside their peers, whether those peers are possessed of physical disabilities or not.

The project is envisioned, Mr. Speaker, to go a long way towards stemming the ignorance about and the discrimination against persons with disabilities. We know that within the context of not only Barbados but countries all over the world, the whole question of engaging and ensuring that our children are exposed to physical education, physical activity and physical exercise is an area that has to be given much more prominence. That is the context in which this project is being supported.

The facility which the Rotary Inclusive Play Project will have constructed will have a maximum capacity to accommodate between 30 and 40 children at a time. One of the key sponsors in this project is CIBC First Caribbean Bank, and other sponsors include Rotary Construction, Blueprint Creative, Talisman Barbados and Quartz Barbados. I want to compliment not only Rotary but Corporate Barbados, because many other Barbadian companies have indicated their support of the project and I have been advised of pledges to support by means of cash,

labour, materials and other necessary resources to ensure that the project can be a success.

The facility, Mr. Speaker, has been designed as an indoor recreational facility that will facilitate indoor sports, cultural activities and educational activities for the children who are targeted as the prime beneficiaries. It would include a sensory room with light and sound stimulation, a soft padded room, a half-regulation-size basketball court, and a playground comprised of approximately 15 play events such as slides, swings, tunnels, play tables, bell rings and so forth, that will facilitate activities by both the disabled and able-bodied. I want to stress that because the model put forward by Rotary, though intending to benefit and to send a signal of inclusive response to our disabled children, is designed to bring together in one location a facility that can benefit not only differently-abled children but those who have not been born with any physical disabilities. It will also include a food preparation area, meeting rooms, a first aid station and other multi-purpose rooms.

As I said, the project is the brainchild of the Rotary Club of Barbados South, and this organisation has over the years spearheaded a number of community projects which have benefited Barbadian society. The Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, Sir Hilary Beckles, who is an honorary Rotarian, has consented to be the patron of this Inclusive Play Park.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that this project falls squarely in line with the policies of the Democratic Labour Party Government. In fact, in our manifesto of 2013, we pledged, as part of our socially balanced policies - namely Pillar One - to expand the range of recreational activities available to differently-abled persons. You will see that on page 19 of the manifesto. We felt that had to be a key plank of our policies designed to ensure that all members of our society can feel included.

The project is critical for Barbados because there is no specialised, barrier-free facility in Barbados, as I speak, to accommodate children with disabilities. This particular facility will very neatly complement the existing facilities at the Gymnasium site. It is fully supported, as I said, by the Government and the Cabinet. The National Disabilities Unit has signalled its support, and it remains a project that I believe will take Barbados to even higher heights.

In addition to outlining what the project is designed to do, I also want to look at the wider utility of the lands for which the Gymnasium Limited has responsibility. This is the first time that lands at the Gymnasium Limited complex have been earmarked for such a facility, and I believe that this is a particularly important development. We have lands that have been earmarked at the Gymnasium for a number

of sporting organisations, and there is a master plan which has been used over the years.

We have lands that have been allocated to the Barbados Olympic Association - approximately 0.412 hectares - and members will recall that the headquarters of the Barbados Olympic Association is located on that spot. They have been able to construct a very impressive sports museum showcasing a number of athletes, those who have excelled over the years, their performance records at all major sporting events - the Olympics, the Pan Am Games and other championships.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, what we have done and signalled as a Government - and this I know has been a continuation from the last administration - is that the Garfield Sobers Complex will continue to be developed as the key node for sporting activities on the island. Within that context, we embrace this particular facility which will add to the complement of the utility of the existing lands at the Gymnasium.

We have also had the Barbados Aquatic Centre, which has been allocated 1.099 hectares, and they have developed a major Olympic-sized pool. This is adjacent to the Barbados Olympic Association and that facility includes a starter swimming pool, spectator seating, and under consideration has been the installation of a photovoltaic system to assist that particular association with energy costs. We have pledged our support for that activity.

Swimming, of course, Mr. Speaker, has emerged as one of the most successful sporting activities in Barbados, and I want to take this opportunity to compliment the Barbados Aquatic Centre and the Barbados Swimming Association for the consistently high level of performance by their athletes, particularly in the CAC Games and the CARIFTA Championships. Recently we had the honour of hosting the CARIFTA Swimming Championships in Barbados and we did exceedingly well. They should be commended.

One of the things we have heard from the Barbados Swimming Association is that we do not only need one Olympic-sized swimming pool. We currently have one at the Aquatic Centre, but they have indicated that there is a need for at least one more Olympic-sized swimming pool, and we are working with them and with the Ministry of Housing and Lands to identify appropriate lands on which that second Olympic-sized swimming pool can be built. I would say to the House that Barbados is exceedingly well placed in terms of its competitiveness in swimming, and we should do everything possible to ensure that we can provide the necessary facilities to assist our swimmers in excelling in this sport.

We have also allocated at the Gymnasium complex 1.171 hectares of land to the Barbados Tennis Association. If you visit that facility, you will see that they have made very adequate use of the allocation of that land. Barbados is again recording exceedingly high performances in lawn tennis, and that is because of the determination of the association, the application of the coaches and the dexterity and determination of the players. We have done exceedingly well, as you have heard recently in the Davis Cup. Barbados has the ability, in my view, to produce international-class athletes. At the Gymnasium, there is one international-class tennis court and facilities with provision for upwards of three courts, including the office of the Barbados Tennis Association. They too have recognised that to bring international competition to Barbados, there will be a need to enhance those facilities.

We know that in the era of sports tourism, the capability is there to place Barbados at the centre of attracting sports tourism. It is therefore very important that without adequate facilities, Mr. Speaker, we cannot obtain the gains that we say we want to obtain - particularly in relation to advancing the cause where sports is being placed at the centre of economic activity and as a key area of the growth strategy of the Government. There must be a recognition on both sides that we have to have in place the necessary facilities to ensure that this becomes a reality.

We have also had allocated at the Gymnasium 1.61 hectares of land for the Barbados Hockey Federation. We are aware that currently there is a plan to upgrade the AstroTurf. There have been a number of representations made by the Hockey Federation and we have seen the deterioration of the AstroTurf at the Gymnasium. But I am happy to report to the House that their voices have been heard. There is a very advanced plan to upgrade the facility through a syndicated funding arrangement facilitated through the Barbados Olympic Association, the Pan American Sports Organisation - otherwise known as PASO - and the National Sports Council. The current upgrades will see the water-based pitch, which is currently there, being replaced by a sand-based pitch. In the second phase of that project, the work would include the office of the Secretariat of the Barbados Hockey Federation.

When this project is completed, Mr. Speaker, I am sure we will see the return of a number of hockey activities. We have heard of the hockey festival that has brought significant value added to Barbados over the years. Many teams from all over the world have been journeying to Barbados and the impact on our sports tourism product has been phenomenal. We need to return to that point, and therefore the investment and support - which is, as I said, at a very advanced stage - to replace the turf at the Gymnasium facility is most welcome.

We have also had, Mr. Speaker, 3.12 hectares of land allocated to the Barbados Football Association. One of the two lots has already been developed to include a football field of the AstroTurf type, along with the official office of the Barbados Football Association and player facilities. Spectator seating is also being constructed. The second field is also proposed for the adjacent lot. So football has its home at the Garfield Sobers Gymnasium complex as well.

Of course, we have the Gymnasium itself, which is allocated 3.490 hectares of land. That particular facility has been in place for quite a number of years and has served a multi-purpose function including sports. We know that we have had many outstanding cultural activities at the Gymnasium.

There are also, Mr. Speaker, a number of proposed uses which are currently under consideration. Part of that includes the purpose for which this resolution is before the House this morning - the land which is being leased to the Rotary Club of Barbados, which has been incorporated as part of the master plan of the Gymnasium. There is also under consideration land to be allocated to the Barbados Cricket Association, some 3.41 hectares. And there is also a plan, Mr. Speaker, which is at a very advanced stage, to construct a major skate park at the Gymnasium. That particular skate park is being funded by the Marion Holder Trust, and I have to compliment that organisation for continuing to do such yeoman work in Barbados and supporting vital activity. The skate park, as you know, is designed to bring Barbados in line with many of its competitors.

Skating and the BMX biking has emerged as a major sport over the years in many other jurisdictions. And we believe that the development of a skate park which will also be designed to include BMX biking will bring a new dimension to sports in Barbados. One of the features that we have asked to be incorporated into the skate park is to include a facility for road tennis. And we know that road tennis, as our only indigenous sport, has grown leaps and bounds over the years and we have seen a tremendous amount of public support for the growth and development of road tennis. We believe that we are at a stage, Mr. Speaker, now, where we need to place road tennis squarely within the ambit of our development strategy as it relates to sport. And therefore we have asked, and I believe that favourable consideration has been given to incorporating into the skate park facilities for road tennis and so that we are able to engage at a very high level where Barbados can move to hosting a world road tennis tournament and to engage the region as well in having tournaments in Barbados, having regional road tennis tournaments in Barbados. And also there is a plan to have a major world road tennis tournament in Barbados next year. So hopefully

once this facility can be completed, of course we'll be able to take road tennis to even a higher height.

Of course, the skate park - we know that many of our youngsters are very much involved. They're very enthused about roller skating around Barbados and to some extent some persons have complained about the use of the roller skates on our buildings and so on. We believe that by having this particular facility that we can move that energy and tailor that bursting energy of our young people into a safe environment and to also bring with it as well to Barbados major international competition in terms of skating and BMX activity.

The total land area - Mr. Speaker, I decided to explain to the House, of course, the master plan in relation to the gymnasium so that the House can fully appreciate the context in which this particular resolution, which is intended to provide by lease approximately 25 000 square feet of land to the Rotary Club for an activity that will complement the existing plan to have the gymnasium complex be seen as an international hub for sports in Barbados and the region and certainly in the western hemisphere, and to ensure that the major sporting activities are housed and accessible there at the gymnasium. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that is a tribute to where we need to go within the context of transforming sports into a major industry in Barbados and to ensure that sports can become a key value-added activity to help to transform and to broaden our economic base.

So we have a total land area of 26.48 hectares and so far approximately 10.89 hectares have been allocated to date. Under consideration for allocation is another 5.459 hectares. And the remaining amount of land, after we have looked at all of that - after we have looked at what has been allocated, what is under consideration - the remaining amount of land there at the gymnasium is still quite a bit: 10.1270 hectares of land is there. Remaining lands are estimated to be adequate, Mr. Speaker, for accommodating upwards to five projects similar in nature to the existing allocations.

Mr. Speaker, the plan has always been, and I believe a former cabinet has already agreed, that the lands at the Garfield Sobers Pavilion are to be vested in the Gymnasium Limited. And those efforts, as I understand, are on the way. But one of the things that have actually prevented that from happening, Mr. Speaker, is a number of encroachments that have been discovered over the years where persons who would have built close to the border of the lands allocated to the gymnasium have encroached. There are not complex encroachments; there are minor encroachments. But nevertheless, of course, as we know, in order to finalise arrangements to vest those lands, the encroachments would have to be sorted out. And I believe I am advised that the Ministry of Housing and Lands are

currently working on ensuring that particular matter is sorted. So I believe that once that is sorted, we'll have the divesting of those lands in the Gymnasium Limited.

Now, within the context of the Garfield Sobers complex itself, the gymnasium - I would have announced in another place a major initiative to refurbish the gymnasium. And that refurbishment, Mr. Speaker, has now been concretised into an agreement with the Government of the People's Republic of China. Letters have been exchanged with the Chinese government who has graciously consented to undertake a major China-aided project which would see a full renovation of the Garfield Sobers Gymnasium. The design of the project has been awarded to the China Northeast Architectural Design and Research Institute Co. Ltd. by the Government of China. And as part of a two-week mission to Barbados in May this year, the design contract for renovations was executed by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth.

We have to note, Mr. Speaker, again, because I think over the years we have constructed sporting facilities in Barbados - what we have not done a good job at is to ensure that these facilities are appropriately maintained. And we have had in the presence of the Gymnasium Ltd. this facility was opened in 1993, November to be precise. And since November of 1993 there have been no major renovations of the gymnasium. And while in looking at the gymnasium you might see a facility that looks intact, those years of not having in place those renovations have had their toll on the facility. And therefore we have made the decision to ensure that those renovations are made so that the life of the gymnasium can be expanded. In effect, therefore, this particular agreement with the Government of the People's Republic of China has set in motion the process for the execution of those major renovations to the gymnasium.

And those renovations will include the installation of a 150kW photovoltaic power generation plant, which should result in an approximate 20 per cent energy reduction cost for the facility. And we have seen over the years, certainly the rates that have been charged at the gymnasium have been primarily to recover the very high cost of electricity at that facility. And with this photovoltaic generation plant, we will see a substantial reduction in those rates. We will also, as part of the renovations, Mr. Speaker, install approximately 60 new LED lights across the grounds of the gymnasium. The external grounds of the gymnasium, the external areas, continue of course to be used by several persons who walk, who exercise. I believe I've seen some members of the House taking their paces, going through their paces at the gymnasium. And that is to be encouraged because we want to ensure that our nation continues to be a healthy nation. We have been talking a lot about the non-communicable diseases. And in order to move beyond that talk, we have to encourage our citizens

to engage in physical activity. And therefore we believe that enhancing the lighting around the gymnasium complex will be very key to promoting those healthy lifestyles. And I really want to compliment those Barbadians who are out there on evenings who are becoming physical and who are going through the paces, and to encourage more Barbadians to be a part of this rather useful activity. Therefore, the lighting that will be installed as part of this major renovation will help to add safety as well as to allow for better visibility around the gymnasium.

We will also, as part of the project, Mr. Speaker, install a fire alarm and video monitoring system at the gymnasium which will improve the security arrangements for the facility and also allow for off-site monitoring of the facilities at the gymnasium. The project will also see a full renovation of the roof and supporting structure in relation to the roof of the gymnasium. Mr. Speaker, we have seen - particularly those who would have gone to events at the gymnasium - we would have seen that there is a problem with the roof. There have been several areas of leakage. And of course, the worst thing you can ask for is in the middle of a major activity, whether that activity be a sporting activity, a cultural activity, or even a particular event such as official funerals and so on - you don't want to see rain coming through the roof of the gymnasium, and that has been a major bugbear for patrons utilising the gymnasium. And therefore we have determined that as a key part of this project, the entire roof and supporting structure of the gymnasium will be changed to make sure that problem no longer exists.

The project will also see, Mr. Speaker, the replacement of all external and internal doors, the full renovation of the floor, and in relation to the floor of the gymnasium, what will be done with that floor is to ensure that the floor is of the standard - international standard - that will allow Barbados to attract some of the major basketball and volleyball teams in the world, whether for exhibition matches or whether to entice those teams to have competitive events here in Barbados at the gymnasium. Currently, the existing floor does not allow for that to happen. We have also been working closely with the Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc. because part of the marketing of Barbados in terms of sports tourism, as I said, must be supported by having the facilities. And therefore, a key part of this renovation will be to change the entire floor to make the floor an international quality floor to be able to attract those major events.

We will also see the installation of air-conditioned equipment and of course we are going to address the internal acoustics in the gymnasium. And therefore there will be major work done to the internal acoustic walls to ensure that the gymnasium can be utilised for those very high quality events that require sound to be of pristine quality. In addition to that, if you look at the external of the

gymnasium, you recognise that there is a need for attention to be paid to cleaning the entire side walls of the gymnasium. And therefore the project will include the entire power washing of the external walls and the replacement of those tiles that over the years of course have come loose. And of course there'll be replacement of tiles on the building as well as the external floors as well. The project has identified, in addition, an earmarked replacement of some of the mechanical and electrical equipment; the building decoration materials and the pipes, where necessary, will be replaced within the gymnasium.

This project, Mr. Speaker, is being done at a cost of some 18.4 million Barbados dollars, which is a gift to the people of Barbados by the Government of the People's Republic of China. But the value of the project is 18.4 million Barbados dollars and I would want to take the opportunity as well, Mr. Speaker, in this House to thank the Government of the People's Republic of China for continuing to partner with Barbados in a very profound way through the investment of major sums which will redound to the benefit of not only sports, but of course, the multidimensional activities which will use the gymnasium.

The proposed start date for the construction, Mr. Speaker, is April of next year. And of course, what that will entail, given the major works to be done, is that the gymnasium will have to be closed for the duration of the project - some 14 months. The gymnasium will have to be closed and not available for any activities to allow for those works to be done. The magnitude of the work, Mr. Speaker, is such that you cannot have part of the gymnasium being used and part being closed. It has to be - based on the advice given to us by the technical team and the engineers who will be working on the project - that it will require a total close-off of the facility over the period of time. The management of the gymnasium have already engaged in a number of dialogues and discussions and are looking to see what alternative arrangements they will put in place, and some of that, Mr. Speaker - those contingency plans - will allow for events that would usually be hosted at the gymnasium. The prime purpose is to ensure that as far as reasonably possible, we can remove any inconvenience that will be caused as a result of this major work.

As I speak, the gymnasium has for an extended period been the home for upwards to 22 annual sporting and entertainment events. Discussions are ongoing to accommodate these clients while the facilities are being upgraded as follows. The Armstrong Warehouse at Fontabelle has been earmarked for hosting of rescaled sporting events and accommodating match practice sessions for groups such as the volleyball and basketball associations. A second warehouse, Mr. Speaker, is under consideration and consensus supports the retention of the facilities thereafter as mini sports centres to support the high demand for indoor sporting facilities by local

federations. So while this contingency, Mr. Speaker, will allow for us to utilise at least two warehouses, what we do plan to do is to retain these warehouses after the gymnasium has been renovated - to retain these warehouses to be used to provide for those federations that require indoor facilities.

The pavilions of the National Sports Council have also been identified as specially designated centres to support some of the practice sessions which of course the federations would have to continue to do. Mr. Speaker, of note too is that Kensington Oval - note has been taken of the successful hosting of entertainment events at Kensington Oval. And a cost-sharing arrangement is under discussion for redirecting entertainment events at this location. And up to 16 of the 22 annual events hosted at the gymnasium we believe can be accommodated at the Kensington Oval with special arrangements being done for the stage. Those discussions have been ongoing and of course the intention is to ensure that we can shift those events to the Kensington Oval.

The grounds of the Garfield Sobers Complex - discussions today are very supportive of creating a temporary amphitheatre arrangement on the sloping lands at the gymnasium to allow for those outdoor events to be held still at the gymnasium. And therefore, we are looking at all the possibilities. And of course, the Gymnasium Limited will at least be hosting about two major town hall meetings to engage in client dialogue in efforts to support the continuation of those events. We are aware that the renovation of the gymnasium is absolutely necessary. We are also sensitive, Mr. Speaker, to the fact that federations and sporting organisations will be inconvenienced. And therefore we will do everything that falls within our power to do to ensure that we can have minimum dislocation of those events that will usually be held at the gymnasium.

The overall plan - because, Mr. Speaker, part of the forward-thinking approach of the government has been to look very carefully at the operations of the Gymnasium Limited, the operations of COMY as well as the operations of the National Sports Council, and to move towards integrating these organisations over a period of time. In fact, the attention of the Ministry is now focused on coming up with an integration plan - an integration plan for the gymnasium, COMY, and Kensington Oval within the context of the already publicised policy framework of ensuring the maximum efficiency of the parastatal organisations and their operations within the context of achieving efficiencies. And I must say, Mr. Speaker, that the board and the management of the Gymnasium Limited, and of course the Sports Council and COMY, have been working very closely towards achieving this objective. But in particular, the board of the Gymnasium Limited have already come up with a number of innovative approaches to ensure that the product at the gymnasium can be

appropriately diversified to create the kind of creative reconfiguration of the facilities that are being used.

We recognise that presently the facility comprises a higher than desirable square footage of unused spaces. And a key part of the plan is to ensure that those spaces can be turned into revenue-earning spaces as opposed to what currently exists where within the gymnasium these spaces have just been there and they have not been put to use. The board has looked at it and they have concluded that these spaces consume at least 20 per cent of the monthly energy and maintenance cost, but they continue to contribute absolutely no revenue to the gymnasium. In effect, Mr. Speaker, there are unproductive, non-performing elements of the rental asset segments of the facility that we need to transform now into revenue-earning activities.

We recognise, Mr. Speaker, as part of the transformation of the gymnasium in collaboration with the integration plan in relation to COMY and the National Sports Council, that we have to proceed to unfold a dynamic plan that within the shortest possible time will see the full utilisation of the facility. Certainly, once the gymnasium is fully renovated, we will see a facility that is placed in optimum use to ensure that all segments of the gymnasium can be utilised in a manner that brings the greatest benefit to Barbadians. The gymnasium, Mr. Speaker, of course, is part of the plan in terms of the government's approach to ensuring that the statutory corporations can contribute to the national treasury and not be burdens - not be burdens to the Consolidated Fund. And therefore, I really have to compliment the board for being innovative in this regard to try to move the gymnasium to the point where it can actually contribute some money into the treasury and not rely solely on a government subvention.

Now, part of this, Mr. Speaker, will see a shift. I have heard some complaints, Mr. Speaker, from some of the sporting federations that they have not been able to utilise the gymnasium in a manner or as frequently as they would wish. And therefore, I have asked the board of the gymnasium to address this particular matter. And what will happen, particularly once the facility is renovated, is that the gymnasium will move in a direction where more hours are made available to the sporting federations to do their craft, to practice their craft, to train. Because I believe, Mr. Speaker, that notwithstanding the fact that the gymnasium must be multifaceted and multipurpose, the prime reason for having a gymnasium is sport. And therefore there will be some reconfigurations and some changes to ensure that particularly those federations that are in training for international and regional competition can have the usage of the gymnasium in a more structured way as obtained in the past.

There are a number of important projects that I would like to mention, Mr. Speaker, as I have the opportunity in this debate, which has focused, of course, on the lands that are being made available to the Rotary. But it affords me an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to give a fairly comprehensive report on what is planned for our major sporting facility, the Garfield Sobers Gymnasium. And of course there are two key projects that have been earmarked by the board of the gymnasium which will be implemented once, of course, the gymnasium is renovated.

Among the several opportunities for shaping a more viable gymnasium is the conversion of a northern segment of its facilities, earmarked as the meeting room, into what the gymnasium has earmarked as a sports café and networking centre. And this will be designed to do a number of things. The gymnasium will manage this facility structured in a particular way. There will be facilities for serving and accommodating breakfast and so on to the general public. There will also be a healthy snacks and drinks centre, a quarter-circle seating facility for small private meetings. And we have seen a tremendous demand for small private meetings, particularly from federations. They have complained of not having facilities to have meetings. And therefore we believe that incorporated in the gymnasium can be a small private meetings facility. To be able to answer this, we're going to look at approximately four areas for this particular activity. And of course the target will be the business community in particular, where they can have private lunches and breakfast, as well as the federations.

There'll be a lounge area for relaxed conversation and networking, and we have two areas for that. Of course there will also be the use of big-screen televisions and of course to provide video recordings and cable shows. There'll be a sports video games and pool table area. And there'll also be an "I Was Here" board - a large board for posting of business cards and photographs. The benefits of the sports café and networking centre will be the optimisation of revenue-generating activities and opportunities for the gymnasium, the creation of a unique opportunity for after-event revenue, relaxing, light dining and entertainment, and the further diversification of the Garfield Sobers complex towards the realisation of a unique hub for a wide range of sports, entertainment and related activities - and the satisfaction, Mr. Speaker, of a demand for those business entities who require breakfast and lunch facilities in a pristine

environment. And of course the opportunity to cross sell other aspects of the gymnasium to potential clients.

The second project, Mr. Speaker, which has been earmarked by the gymnasium is perhaps the most exciting because it will place at the forefront of what is intended, paying a lasting tribute to the contribution of the only

surviving national hero, the Right Excellent Sir Garfield Sobers, whose name has been etched in history in terms of the name of the complex and at the Garfield Sobers Gymnasium. But I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we have to do more to record our appreciation for the signal and significant contribution made not only to Barbados, the Caribbean and the world, by the Right Excellent Sir Garfield Sobers, who remains among us. He lives in Barbados. A very humble man, but a man that has given all of his life, dedicated all of his life to the development of cricket. And even although he has been accorded the highest privilege by being named a national hero, we believe that within the context of the building that carries his name, that this second project, which is a Sporting and Entertainment Wall of Fame, should be so done that it pays tribute in a profound way to the contribution of Sir Gary Sobers.

So the Sports Café and Network project is another project earmarked by the board which presents an opportunity for creating even greater interest in the facility and the opportunities for diversifying and creating further revenue for the establishment of this facility - the Sporting Wall of Fame - which will comprise photos of sporting icons and celebrities who have performed at the gymnasium. But a specific area, Mr. Speaker, is intended to be designed to highlight the contribution of Sir Gary, his contribution both locally and of course to international cricket. And that will be a major part of that Sports Café and networking centre. And the Sporting Wall of Fame will certainly highlight the contribution. And primary among these is planned a life-size statue of Sir Gary which will be designated to the Sports Café as well.

This is anticipated, Mr. Speaker, to significantly enhance the aesthetics of the facility and the marketing appeal of the gymnasium, particularly to corporate and visiting public. And of course, by focusing on the contribution of the work of Sir Gary, we believe that not only will it be seen as an educational resource for our young people, but certainly persons who visit Barbados from all over the world can actually go to the gymnasium and experience the contribution of Sir Gary Sobers.

So, Mr. Speaker, that in a nutshell - I thought I should give a very holistic perspective of what is happening at the Gymnasium Limited as I got the opportunity to look at the land which is being designated to the Rotary Club South for a project that I believe will add to what is already being planned for the gymnasium. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, with those words it is my pleasure to move that this resolution be read a first time.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. James North. Today is Friday. Thank you.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Madam Deputy Speaker, the opposition in principle supports this resolution. You know, anything to do with advancing the cause of children with disabilities and within the wider context, persons with disabilities, will be supported by this party.

I would first, however, want to commend the Rotary Club of Barbados for this initiative in advancing the cause. I know of course there are a couple of members of this Parliament who are Rotarians. My colleague, the Member of Parliament for St. George South, I know is one. I believe the Member of Parliament for St. Michael Central is also one. The Rotarians have to be commended for this. It is a service organisation that has done yeoman service internationally, regionally and locally as well. Similar service organisations have done the same - the Lions, of which I am a proud member; the Kiwanis, for example. Other members in this House are members of Kiwanis. And all of this helps advance the cause of governance and to advance the socio-economic development of our country. A government - we all accept - cannot do it all by itself. And the spirit of volunteerism has to be promoted and encouraged in any society, especially in a small developing country such as Barbados.

In fact, a study in Canada about three or four years ago came to the conclusion that about 7 per cent of the gross domestic product of Canada is related to voluntary service of organisations such as these organisations and other non-governmental organisations, especially in areas of education and health and in sporting activities.

I would also want to commend the partners of the Rotarians in this venture, some of whom the Honourable Minister in his presentation of the resolution spoke to. But Madam Deputy Speaker, I also have some concerns, because we should be facilitating the cause and promotion of service organisations such as Rotaries and Lions in assisting in the development of Barbados. But instead we had last week - last Monday - a pronouncement by the Honourable Minister of Finance seeking to curtail the tax allowances that presently exist, encouraging people to make monetary donations to organisations such as these and to other non-governmental organisations and charities. Because after all, the pronouncement of a Minister is what is the law, as I understand it, for four months until the enabling legislation is passed. And the Honourable Minister of Finance clearly said in his budget presentation that deductions will no longer exist except for contributions to trade unions and one-off donations to charities, including the church. That is what I heard him say. And the natural interpretation of that is that if you give a donation to the church - a monetary donation to the church - as many Christian-minded Barbadians do, Barbados being traditionally a Christian-minded, God-fearing society, that if you give that one-off donation to your church within the space of a financial year, any contribution monetarily given

to any other service organisation or charity will not bring you the tax allowance which you have had and which, to be truthful, this Democratic Labour Party under its late Prime Minister even advanced.

Therefore, monetary donations given to service organisations such as the Rotarians, such as Lions, will no longer be tax deductible as was previously the case, once you also give donations to another charity or to a church, or to the Salvation Army, or to the Council for the Disabled. And that, Madam Deputy Speaker, is a backward, retrogressive tax policy that has been now promoted by this Democratic Labour Party government that says that it cares about people, that says that it cares about society - and Barbados is a society and not only an economy. And that kind of rhetoric that it was promoting - and in all honesty I have not heard recently, because they themselves must realise that it is pure rhetoric and not translated into reality as far as their policies are concerned - I can only say, Madam Deputy Speaker, and can only urge this Democratic Labour Party government to relook at this policy. Maybe some of the cabinet did not understand the implications in full. Maybe they signed off on it without much discussion, not realising the full implications of this.

But in a situation where you are asking charities such as the Rotarians, the Lions, the Salvation Army, the Red Cross - all of these non-governmental organisations, voluntary organisations - to take greater strain in society, the churches to host a more burdened, heavier weight because the government is going through hard times and because the budget allocation, its expenditure, far exceeds its income, and you are asking these organisations to serve in terms of protecting the most vulnerable - many churches, some churches in my constituency for example, having a feeding programme feeding the old, persons with disabilities, the unemployed; the Salvation Army every year, twice a year, asking for money, especially at Christmas time and mid-year as well, to advance their feeding programme and housing programmes for people who are homeless.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: I believe the Honourable Member is in breach of Rule 28(4), which says it shall be out of order to reflect on any vote of the House or attempt to reconsider any specific matter upon which the House has come to a conclusion during the current session, except upon a substantive motion. The Member, Madam Deputy Speaker, is actually reflecting on last week's presentation. But moreover, Madam, he is actually further misleading the House, because the Minister of Finance in his contribution says - and I quote from page 44 - that with effect from income tax year 2015, only the following deductions will be allowed, along with existing personal allowances: contributions to trade unions and statutory

associations, donations to charities, including the church, et cetera - which is contrary to what the Honourable Member is saying. On those two points, Madam Deputy Speaker, I urge you to guide the Honourable Member.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. James North. I am inclined to agree with the Honourable Member and I was actually going through Standing Order 28(4). Yes, I was reflecting, and there you really ought not to be discussing a matter that has already come to its own conclusion. Can you please be more relevant?

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Madam Deputy Speaker, I of course abide by your ruling, although I am speaking on socio-economic conditions of Barbados in the wider sense, which has to be the subject of debate in this Parliament on all occasions. But also, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Minister of Finance - and I listened to him extremely carefully on that point last Monday - he did not say what is stated in this budget. He said one-off contributions.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you are again back to breaching Standing Order 28(4).

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Madam Deputy Speaker, can we please continue. Of the current social economic reality. But I am not talking on the budget. If it seems to me you are. If there is a tax policy that has implications for the socio-economic aspect of Barbados and certainly, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Government will have an opportunity when it passes in enabling legislation to clarify this issue. If there is doubt on this issue - and there is doubt according to the Honourable Attorney General - let it be clarified. That is all I am saying. Because it will severely affect the ability to gain positive results for charities in this country, including churches and organisations such as the Rotary Club of Barbados.

The resolution, Madam Deputy Speaker, also lends itself towards examining the position of children with disabilities in this country and within the wider context, persons with disabilities. 25 000 square feet of land is being granted to facilitate the construction and development of a recreational facility for children with disabilities. And of course the physical aspect of an individual is just as important as their intellectual aspect. And therefore we have to encourage and support the construction and creation of this facility.

Looking at the terms and conditions which attach to the grant of this land - the lease of this land, though, Madam Deputy Speaker - I see that term D, term and condition D, includes that the Rotary Club will be responsible for the payment of land tax arising out of the use of the site. And I query whether that is the best way to

approach this matter in terms of terms and conditions. Of course land vested in the Crown is exempt from payment of land tax. Lands, for example, that are vested in the National Housing Corporation are exempt from payment of land tax. You are now going to be asking a service organisation that out of the kindness of its heart is helping Government in terms of creating a recreational facility to pay land tax on over half an acre of land and on a building after it is constructed. And I think that is fundamentally wrong.

We have had an increase in land taxes again last week, Madam Deputy Speaker. [Interruption.] I mean the House Leader knows better than to be interrupting with his loud voice. So I think that again, this is something that the Minister may wish to relook at. The Rotarians are not an organisation that generates profit; they are not an income-generating organisation - it is a service organisation. And in my submission, to ask it to pay land tax now on land that it does not own, but that it only leases, is not fair, because under the normal law of property, a lessor pays land taxes. So that is a point that I have to speak to in terms of, Madam Deputy Speaker, the status of children with disabilities in present-day Barbados.

We have to put this within the context that the last census of Barbados showed that 5 per cent of the population have some form of disability - physical, mental, intellectual, some form of disability. And of course we have to agree with Mahatma Gandhi that a society has to be judged by how it treats its most vulnerable, and persons with disabilities - children with disabilities - must come in, in any society, and certainly in Barbados, among the most vulnerable in society.

We have had advances at policy level by the Barbados Labour Party on the situation with persons with disabilities. In 1997, the National Disabilities Unit was established under the administration of the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter. I know that there are accessibility problems with that unit still, in terms that it is upstairs still in its location and clearly therefore is not accessible to mobility-challenged individuals. And that is certainly something that the Government needs, as a matter of urgency, to look at.

In 2002, we had laid in this Parliament the Green Paper on Persons with Disabilities, calling for, as part of the national developmental policy of the Barbados Labour Party Government at the time. In 2002, that Government then laid the White Paper on Persons with Disabilities in this Parliament. Of course, in 2007, that same Government would have signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. And that Convention would have been ratified by this present Democratic Labour Party Government a week after the last election - I think it was February 28th, 2013.

But ratification of that Convention, really and truly, Madam Deputy Speaker, bound the Government of Barbados to form a monitoring committee and to submit to the United Nations within two years of the ratification - in other words, by February this year - a statement showing how it will bring into force legislation enacting the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. And that report should have included what advances have been made by the Barbados Government and by society as a whole in terms of improving the rights of persons with disabilities. The Barbados Government has not yet submitted such a report to the United Nations, even though over four months have passed since it was due to do so.

And lastly, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Government and the Honourable Minister of Social Care has to take responsibility for this, largely because that monitoring committee was in fact only formed in July or August last year - a whole 18 months after the ratification at the United Nations. A Government that truly speaks and says that it is a caring government and that it is a people-centred government ought to be doing better than this. That monitoring committee should have been set up long ago. It is headed by Her Honour the President in the other place - a very capable individual - and should have been given time so that it could have submitted its proposals to the Government, which then in turn could have submitted its report to the United Nations within the two-year period.

I have laid in this Parliament, in mid-March, Madam Deputy Speaker, a Private Member's Resolution calling on this Government to do what it ought to do, having ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at international level - to do what it ought to do and to lay in this Parliament disabilities legislation to advance the cause of persons with disabilities, including children in this country, so that they could be better included in this society, so that their fundamental human rights under the Constitution of Barbados could be recognised, so that in reality they would not be discriminated against. Because there are many intrinsic discriminatory policies in this country against persons with disabilities and children with disabilities.

It is argued by many legal experts that even though we have had free education as of right in this country since the early 1960s - as a continuation of the policy of the Barbados Labour Party in the 1950s - that in reality many children with disabilities do not have the right to free education in this country, because many children with disabilities are refused entry into public schools for one reason or another. They may be incontinent; they may have mobility issues in terms of accessing areas in the public schools because there are no ramps and the bathroom facilities are not constructed to accommodate children with disabilities. Many of these children therefore have to go to

private schools whereby their parents have to pay money each term. And the reality of the situation is that many children with disabilities come from poor and financially challenged homes in this country and their parents find it difficult to pay the cost of educating these children at these special schools.

I know, for example, that the Chandler School is challenged economically. I know that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and I would have paid a visit to that school within recent times. And we know that requests have been made of the Government for funding that have not come to fruition. We know that teachers of children with special needs are in need of training and they are not being trained. The funding is not there. These schools in many cases are private schools. And it is a situation where the Ministry of Education ought to allocate funds to train teachers of special needs children so that they could come into the fold and be educated like any of us. The fact that a child has special needs or has a disability should not be a deterrent to them realising their full potential and becoming an able member of their community, an able member of this country, and contributing to its advancement like anyone else.

We have had persons who have been given the opportunity - I mean, one visually impaired person, a blind person, won a Barbados Exhibition just last year. Tremendous ability, studying law at Cave Hill. But there are many others. There are many others in the wider community besides that individual, besides Her Honour the President in the other place, who is

given the opportunity by a government that has to have as its mandate the facilitation of the most vulnerable in society to achieve their full potential. Potential. And the government has to see this as part of its duty to its citizens. We need a comprehensive policy on special education needs which includes teachers, which includes the schools, which includes the parents. Coming on from that, Madam Deputy Speaker, we need a policy whereby children with disabilities, when they become adults, can access employment in this country like everyone else. At the present time, again, the statistics show that about 90 per cent of Barbadians who have a disability are unemployed, are underemployed, or are not being educated at post-secondary level. And again, that is not something that we as a country should be proud of.

In Jamaica, for example, the government has a policy that 3 per cent of all public sector jobs are reserved for persons with disability. In Barbados our government has no such policy. And in fact, on the other hand, once you become disabled physically in the public sector of Barbados, after a year you are going to be sent before a medical board constituted by the National Insurance scheme and medically boarded. You are told you cannot

work anymore, go and get a pension, which these days is taking long to access anyway.

We should have a policy, Madam Deputy Speaker, whereby you look to accommodate such a person who is now physically challenged because of a car accident or what have you. Any of us can become physically challenged any day, but they still have their mental faculties. And there is no reason whatsoever why a caring government cannot accommodate such an individual in another area of the public sector or another area of their employment so that they can continue to work, so that they can continue to be independent, so that they can continue to feel good about themselves, rather than to be sent home by a medical board after one year because they are physically challenged. We have to, in this age, be able to find solutions to these kinds of problems which 5 per cent of our population have as part of their daily living.

We have a situation - this is a housing and land situation - where under the green paper which I spoke about earlier, laid in this Parliament in 2000 by the last Barbados Labour Party government, 10 per cent of government housing was to be allocated to persons with disabilities. That has not been done. It has not been done. I can tell you as a fact. And again, that is something that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy in his capacity as Minister of Housing needs to look at going forward.

We have a situation, Madam Deputy Speaker, where you have Special Olympics every year put on by the various councils serving the community of the disabled. And I know as a fact that those Special Olympics put on at the stadium every year are supported by service organisations in this country. But they need to be encouraged. They need greater support from government and from the wider community. You go there - I do not know how many members have been, but I go and I see great, great joy in the children with disabilities, in the achievements of being able to finish a race, for example, in being able to jump into the sand pit. But it is not supported to a great extent by the wider community. These games - you go there, you do not see that many people. And this is something, all of this is within the context of advancing the cause of children with disabilities, which this resolution speaks towards. We have to be able to create wholesome citizens in all aspects of their development.

Right now, for example, we have a situation where the Paralympic Association of Barbados is asking private citizens for funding to help some Paralympians go to two competitions - one in London, one I think in Canada in the near future. Government needs, even though yes, we are speaking towards asking those in society to be able to help - Madam Deputy Speaker, I cannot hear myself. The Honourable Member for St. James is in breach of the House rules. Honourable members need to speak in silence.

And the Honourable Member for St. James South, as a second-term member of Parliament in this House, if he does not know the rules of this House, he ought not to be in here. But you will get your chance to speak.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I just need some clarity. I thought if I am speaking to a resolution, I have unlimited time and not 30 minutes. That is not so. That is okay, ma'am.

The issue of public transportation for children with disabilities, Madam Deputy Speaker, is also of concern. This Democratic Labour Party government brought a policy for free bus rides for school children. But the reality is that children with disabilities, a lot of them, to go to school, have to pay for special transportation to take them to school. And this, again, is something that ought to be looked at. So access to the built physical environment by children with disabilities, by persons with disabilities, also needs to be looked at. And all of this, Madam Deputy Speaker, needs to be addressed within the context of disability legislation, which I really hope that this government could find it fit to bring to this Parliament in the near future.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, while we support this resolution - just one more issue, Deputy Speaker, that we spoke about, because again I am corrected: I have unlimited time. I thought so. Thank you, ma'am.

Again, if we are looking at trying to advance the cause of children with disabilities and their access to culture, to recreation, as this resolution speaks to - their access to education and to all aspects of their development - the issue of the \$52 000 being asked to be paid on a bus that has been at the port since the 10th of January, that has been brought in for children with disabilities to enable them to get to school, has to be a matter of concern. \$52 000 - a bus brought in, paid for by the Marian Holder Trust, which has to be commended. And I have done that before in this House on at least two occasions, and with the Honourable Minister here today presenting this resolution, also a supporter, bringing in a bus costing a few hundred thousand dollars, none of it having to be paid by the Government of Barbados - the Government of Barbados, in fact, benefiting from that. Because if an organisation such as the Marian Holder Trust did not do it, it would be in problems in terms of the education of its children with disabilities. And all that is being asked for is to waive \$52 000. Some lawyers, some DLP lawyers, getting \$1.6 million for reading two pieces of document and putting a signature on a paper. And all that is being asked is to waive \$52 000 so that the children with disabilities can get a bus out of the port that has been in there now for almost six months, and to be able to travel about Barbados like anybody else.

Two previous political administrations - the last Barbados Labour Party administration in 2007 and the Democratic Labour Party in 2010 - under similar circumstances, waived the payment of excise tax on buses coming in for people with disabilities. And even though promises were made by the relevant officials that this excise tax would have been waived, it is still being insisted on. And that, Madam Deputy Speaker, is a disgrace for a government that says how it is caring and how it is people-centred and how it supports poor people and all those - and it is socially balanced - and all this rhetoric that ministers speak from now and again and that is included in their manifesto. It is wrong. And the Minister of Finance has the authority by negative resolution to waive this tax, as has been done previously. There is precedent for it under both previous administrations and it ought to be done.

And if we are serious about advancing the cause of children with disabilities, of people with disabilities, of the most vulnerable in society, we have to show it not by words but by actions. And it is unfair to ask an organisation that is doing tremendous good, such as the Marian Holder Trust, having paid a few hundred thousand dollars to access a bus for children with disabilities, to now ask them to find another \$52 000 for excise tax. The Council for the Disabled does not have it. Their budget has been cut last year by 12 per cent like everybody else. So the Council for the Disabled - of which I declare an interest, as I always do, as being a director - does not have it. The other organisations do not have it. Let us, as a Parliament elected to do good by the people of this country, treat to these issues and treat to these issues that especially affect the most vulnerable in this country.

We also have a situation, Madam Deputy Speaker, where welfare benefits to children, or to parents who have children with disabilities, are being cut. The welfare budget is down from over \$23 million as it was in 2012 - significantly, the year before the last general election - to under \$16 million this year. And the effect of that is that welfare benefits to a lot of people who used to access them, including persons with disabilities and parents who have children with disabilities, are being cut. That is the reality of the situation right now. People call me and tell me things are struggling here - welfare benefit cut, they are telling me to go and find a job, in some cases persons with disabilities. And nothing is wrong with that. But you have to create, of course, the environment first where the person with disabilities can get a job - facilitate them, create policies, affirmative action, whereby persons with disabilities, many of whom are as bright or brighter than some of the members in here, can get jobs and not be deterred just because they have mobility problems or they have visual problems or because they have hearing problems.

And a caring government cannot, under these circumstances where people are under pressure, where the cost of living has increased - and going to increase again with the basket of goods being lessened and all kinds of taxes being imposed - be cutting welfare benefits for the most vulnerable in society, including the disabled. That cannot be right. And all of these are issues that we need to address. If we are serious about the mandate given to us by the people of this country to advance their cause, to advance this country socially and economically, if we are serious, we have to address these. If we are not serious, if some of us are just here playing out time for the pensions and things, well, that is a different matter. But if we are a serious government, a serious Parliament, let us address these points.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, again, like I said, we in the opposition support this resolution. We look forward to assistance from the wider community and from the government for the construction of this facility in the not too distant future. We look forward to the children with disabilities accessing this facility and to being developed in terms not only of their physical being, but their cultural being, their sporting ability, and their intellectual being. Because all individuals, including persons with disabilities, are one whole.

We look forward to the creation of, within the wider context of Barbados being a place where sports becomes a second name - we have cricket today later on in Barbados, but this is a sporting country, a country that was at one time the number one country in the world in terms of cricket. Some of the seven best or ten best cricketers in the world at one stage in the 1960s came from this country - 166 square miles. And a government with vision has to see Barbados as a place where we can develop our sports, our reputation internationally as a sports hub. It has to be able to help our sports tourism advance.

We also have blind cricket, something again that is commendable when you see visually impaired persons playing cricket. That has to be developed. Every now and then, cricket teams from Barbados of visually impaired persons go overseas and play in competitions. This has to be encouraged. And if a facility such as this encourages that and facilitates that, all well and good.

I know the Honourable Minister, when he spoke, went into the wider context of the gymnasium. Clearly this opposition party supports the development of the gymnasium within the context of the advancement of sports development and cultural development. And we as well give praise to the Chinese government for assisting in this regard from the beginning - in terms of the construction of the gymnasium right through now to the redevelopment of it. And we have to give thanks to the Chinese government in that regard as well.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we will support this resolution, but clearly there are many concerns in terms of the tax policies of the government as it imposes itself on voluntary service organisations and charities such as the Rotarians who are at the forefront of this project. We have concerns in terms of the status of persons with disabilities, including children. And we feel that this government could do more to advance their cause. I am obliged to you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Madam Deputy Speaker, I felt compelled to enter this debate because I think that it is important that we do not - well, first of all, to support my colleague, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central, who is the Minister responsible for this particular area, sports, together with youth and culture, for bringing this resolution to the House of Assembly to have it pass in furtherance of the work of one of our very outstanding social organisations, the Rotary Club. Of course, as you know, as an established, long-established, well-functioning and appropriately managed institution, it has contributed tremendously to the development of Barbados and along with other charities, established charities in Barbados, and other community development organisations and national development organisations who may be otherwise located in different parts of the functioning of the social endeavours of Barbados, have really been exemplary in their role in contributing to socioeconomic development in Barbados.

And long may that be the case, because it is not everything that government can do and frankly it is not everything that government should do in the circumstances. And that is why it is important that social groups that come up from time to time be allowed to develop themselves to the stage where they can contribute and take some of that burden, or share some of the burden, of helping to manage our society alongside government, as is the case for civic institutions.

Now, of course, I have a background previously in working with non-governmental organisations and therefore I have a soft spot, so to speak, for NGOs and CBOs, having myself participated in managing one for a fairly long period of time and of course working not just in Barbados, but globally as well, regionally and globally in that movement. And therefore I understand from the context of being a former manager of an institution that doesn't have a specific base of revenue that you draw in, but rather relies on donations and contributions and tax breaks, if you want to call it that, and endowments and so forth and so on, that sometimes it can be challenging because the flow of resources is not always as consistent as

one would like, because as I said, there is no established and fixed source of revenue coming in.

So non-governmental institutions, as we call them in their broader category, whether they be civic groups, social clubs, community-based organisations, national development institutions - these non-governmental organisations have the acute responsibility of managing slender resources against the huge demands which are placed on their services. And from time to time they engage in what we will call popular fundraising activities to help contribute to those circumstances of being able to manage. From time to time, they rely - for those who are able to do so and whose work is recognised as being fundamental to the development of the society - they rely on government and they get subventions from government to execute this work.

And all governments in Barbados, as is the case across the world, who are interested in societal development and the need for civics and civic contribution and development and volunteerism to be able to develop within the society and to bring that along - governments who have been interested in that have worked hand in hand successively in Barbados to develop. That is why we have a Charities Act. And in fact, one of the things that this government promised - and I think still ought to be done, and I know that the Ministry of Social Care has been working on that, and I believe somewhere between the changes of ministries, maybe also the Ministry of Community Development is looking at a National Charities Commission - to be able to properly distribute the resources and the assistance which government gives to groups.

In fact, Madam Deputy Speaker, one of the reasons why we had approached that matter - and I was involved in some of the early work, even though the group that I headed, the Caribbean Policy Development Centre, did not really do work in Barbados per se; we never could really get resources to do work in Barbados because Barbados is not considered to be a country in a particular state of abject poverty, so the work that we did was more outside of Barbados - but as one of the senior members of the NGO community, one of the things that came across from domestic NGOs and CBOs in Barbados was the fact that under the last administration, people were concerned about the way in which government resources were being apportioned to community groups in Barbados. In fact, there were suggestions that it was unbalanced and that some groups were able to get a lot of money, that some groups got millions of dollars, while other groups did not get.

And the view was - Madam Deputy Speaker, the view was then, and I am not saying anything that is not true - that we needed to have a Charities Commission to do two

things: to determine what level of resources government was going to be able to give in terms of direct subventions, what was the criteria and the basis on which such groups would get such resources; and also to have an NGO law passed in Barbados to continue to have a separation, an appropriate level of separation, between the state and civic groups. Because some people felt that there were certain groups who were getting large chunks of resources but were too closely associated - or certainly operatives responsible for the management of those groups were too closely related - to the government of the day.

Now, I did not cast any such aspersions on those persons, because I knew that the persons involved - and the Honourable Member for St. Michael East was one of them; he was not an MP in the government at the time, I believe, though he probably was at some point - but nonetheless, when he was responsible, with other persons, for starting the groups with which he is associated, he was not any member of any government or of that party at the time. And we know of the work, the excellent work, that his group did in Barbados, and probably continues to do - I do not follow it as closely as I did. And we know of other groups who have done excellent work.

But the appearance, the perception, that there was too close a relationship between the two gave rise to a discourse that there should be an NGO law and that there should be a commission so that the NGOs should have responsibility - since they were utilising public resources - for proper reporting on what they were doing, the activities they were engaged in and so forth, that should be accounted for; but also that there should be a respectable distance between the groups and the government of the day from which they were getting resources. So we have been through a lot of this in relation to this matter.

The other point that I wanted to make in regards to this is the whole issue of tax, because the Honourable Member for St. James North - and I think it is quite unfortunate - because he has used his position, whatever that position is, I believe as a council member of the Barbados Council for the Disabled, to win his way up the steps of Parliament and to come in here to launch very unfortunate, unwarranted, unsubstantiated, and misleading attacks on the Ministry of Finance and, of course, by extension on me as Minister of Finance, and involving groups like the Maria Holder Trust that are doing outstanding work in Barbados. It was totally uncalled for. And I believe as Minister of Finance,

I have to address this issue. Many governments, successive governments have before and continue and will continue to give tax concessions to social groups, civic organisations, non-governmental organisations, you name it, we will continue to do so. We know how they can be positioned. Some come as charities and under the charities

are entitled to get tax waivers on a number of things, churches and so forth and so on. That is not in question. In fact, it was this administration, when the leader - the former leader of this party, the honourable member for St. John - was with us, who came to this Parliament and moved amendments to the Charities Act to make it even more accessible to groups, but also make it even wider in terms of the people who could contribute and claim back from their tax filings contributions made to charities. And therefore, in fact, this government led an entire process on the question of philanthropy, of corporate philanthropy in Barbados. Contributions to the QEH that saw contributions to the QEH by a number of organisations and other places within the context of Barbados. And therefore for the honourable member to stand on his feet - when I know he knows better, when I know he knows better - to try to prosecute this government in relation to a matter pertaining to the Council, dragging the Council's business in here in a political way, in a way that frankly is not appropriate. It is not appropriate.

Now, we know that we don't play politics with the Council because the President of the Council happens to be the President of the other place, appointed by this administration. And therefore we don't play politics with these things. But when you want to score cheap political points in a speech that you began saying you support the government - or rather than just saying you support the thing and sit down and let us get on with the rest of the business of the House - you try to find all types of little things to criticise. The latest being because the member can't prosecute, as I have said, the position of this government and the track record of this government of supporting those entities. He tried to criticise the government in relation to the Council.

Now here are the facts, because he is tying it to Maria Holder. Let me make this point. The government of Barbados - and this is nothing new because the Prime Minister spoke about this at the opening of the Derek Smith School, which we facilitated as well with generous tax concessions as we ought to have done, given the important work which the Barbados Children's Trust and the other people and the Sandy Lane Trust and whoever else are doing up there - I believe that was the Sandy Lane Trust that were up at the Derrick Smith School Charitable Trust. And they did outstanding, outstanding work up there and we facilitated that, as we are currently in the process of facilitating an approval for duty waivers and tax waivers for the Children's Trust for the work that they are going to be doing at the Nightingale Home in Blackrock and the constituency. The honourable member for - we have done it before. They did some splendid work up there. They came back again. They are doing, in fact, from what I saw, an extensive amount of work they are proposing to do up there. Millions of dollars. And we are going to step right alongside them and accompany them on that. And the

Ministry of Finance is currently working on getting that approved and getting that work started before the summer comes to an end. Four buildings in all. So you cannot come and try to prosecute this government and give the impression that this government is not giving to charitable institutions.

Now let me get to Maria Holder, because I do not believe that should be the thing. The Prime Minister said at the Derek Smith School launching that we had - and it was correct - that we had just signed, the ink had probably not yet dried, on a memorandum of understanding that allows the Maria Holder Trust to get extensive tax concessions for the work they are doing in Barbados. And they are doing a lot. They are doing extensive work. They are doing nursery schools, they are doing the industrial thing at the Parkinson. They do the community centres. They are doing a whole body of work and we just signed off on that. But like anything, Madam Deputy Speaker, you have to have rules and conditions governing how things are done.

Now the honourable member knows, because he called me on the phone about the matter in relation to the Council, and we have made - yes, that is the thing about it. This is the thing about it. I ain't taking no more calls. Don't call me again. The point of the matter is, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that we said - because within the space of months, the Ministry received no fewer than seven requests for buses to transport the disabled. And we said, okay, fair enough, there has got to be some conditions under which these things are done. And we basically say to them, as we say to Maria Holder and others, we do not mind you sponsoring something like a bus to transport the disabled or otherwise, but there has got to be some rules. You cannot have a group going to a funder, both of them agreeing - yes, I am going to fund the bus - they provide the money, the people order the bus, the bus comes to the port, and then you turn up at the Ministry of Finance and say, I want to get duty free. So before you start all of that, start at the Ministry of Finance and say, it is our intention to bring in a bus and we would like to have duty free. We are putting in an application; we have identified a funder. We are putting in an application for duty waivers and let the process start. Because if you do that, then it seems as though it is a fait accompli. Are you finding a funder? Are you going to get a bus? And the Ministry of Finance must give me a tax waiver? But it does not work that way. I explained that to the honourable member.

I also explained to the honourable member that he called and in my usual generous mood I would contact the people in the Ministry to find out what was the issue with the Council's bus, as indeed the President called me about him. That is true. And I asked them what was the problem, apart from identifying that first issue that I just related. They said that it is the Ministry's policy, because we said in this honourable House of Assembly that we had to put a

discipline on the kind of waivers of duty that we were doing, because we were up to almost \$800 million in duty waivers, half of which were the discretionary ones, not the statutory ones - the discretionary. So I said that we were going to put some discipline on the VAT in particular, and it is not excise, it is the VAT. So you got the whole thing wrong anyhow. So the Ministry, operating under the rules - I rush to criticise people. You do not check your facts. The Ministry officers followed the instructions as coming out of the Budget of 2013 and said, we will give you duty waiver, excise tax waiver, but we are not going to do VAT - or we are going to do VAT at 50 per cent or whatever it is. They said, okay. Members called. Both the President and the honourable member called. I said, well, okay, I will look back at it. I asked for the file. And they said, but you know, we carried out the instructions as is the Ministry's policy.

I said, well, look, in the case of the Council, the Council receives every year from the government \$350 240. That is what it is now. More than what they got under the last government. But this is what it is now. So we are giving the Council \$350 000 a year. So I say to the staff, even in spite of the policy which we have in place, the Council does not have a direct source of funding other than government. So it would not make sense for the government to give the Council \$350 000 and then ask them to take money out of the \$350 000 to go and pay the VAT for the bus, because it is basically paying back to the government the money that they gave them. So we will waive the VAT for them on the bus. That is what we did. And I told the honourable member that is precisely what we would do. I subsequently, on the written recommendation of the staff, approved for the waiver to be done. And yet the honourable member drags himself up in here to give the public the impression that this heartless Minister of Finance and this heartless government is trying to stop the Council from getting a bus. Apologise now. Shame on you.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Yes, honourable member. Right on the point of order. The honourable member is misleading the House. Also, there is a letter that has said that excise duty - whatever you want to call it, if it is an excise - but \$52 000 has to be paid. So the honourable member, by giving the impression that all taxes have now been waived, is misleading the House. That is not so. Why, if that is so, is the bus still in the port after almost six months? Why is it not out? It is not out because \$52 000 is being asked to be paid. And that has been stated in writing.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Get out of that. Listen to me, Madam Deputy Speaker. I do not have anything to get out of. I am telling you what I have done as Minister of Finance. I have had the privilege of working as Minister of Finance. The honourable member has not had the privilege of doing anything other than misleading this House. I am saying clearly in relation to that, that we have said the

problem is if people will follow the procedures, that bus would not have been in there. And I am saying that people have to respect the procedures. Come to the Ministry of Finance first, get your letter of waiver and then go and get your equipment, not the other way around. So if you brought the equipment in and have it down there and they have to wait on the process to be completed for three or four months or however long it takes to do these things, then that is not my fault. We cannot accept responsibility for that and we will not charge the Council because it would be tantamount to giving them money and then trying to take it back out of them. And that is what we have said.

So we have set some rules in place because there were no rules. We had a situation in Barbados where the Auditor General had to ask inquiries of the Ministry of Finance - what rules do you have in relation to these waivers that you are doing? And this is when we came into office. You know, this is what we came upon. What rules do you have in relation to these waivers that you are doing? I see you waiving this for this car and that car, this bike and that thing. What rules? Because what I am looking at here, some people are not following these rules. You are doing this on good faith. But there are other people in this community who are not taking this on good faith.

So we had to set rules in place, and that is all we have done. All we have asked groups to do is to live by the rules, respect the rules, and you get what you want. So it is not true to state that we think - but I want to finish on this point, Madam Deputy Speaker. I want to finish on this point about the Welfare Department. I want to know which is worse: that the Welfare Department, in times of plenty, could be apportioned and voted by this Parliament close to \$30 million, and at the end of the year only \$18 or \$19 million was given out to people - and people out there complaining that they did not get anything, which is what took place under their administration - or rather that under strident circumstances where money is tight and cash is short, that you can apportion \$20 million, \$18 million to the Welfare Department and that all \$18 million can be given, with some addition to come later this year. It has to be the height of uncaringness and irresponsibility to vote \$30 million - and the criticism goes to the honourable member for St. Michael East - and then people out there asking for money and cannot get it because the Welfare Department was sending back the money as though there were not people out there who wanted the money. When you had money, you voted it and could not give people. Now that we do not have as much money as you had and we put something in place and are giving people money, then you are criticising us and saying that the vote is only \$18 million. But which is worse? They deliberately did not give it and you had it to give. We do not have it to give. And we are trying to find as much as we can, and you come here and criticise this administration.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I just want to clear up those few things in relation to that. And I think again that it was very unfortunate the honourable member felt he had to do what he had to do. But that is politics in today's environment. Thank you, and I am obliged.

SUSPENSION

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the sitting be suspended for lunch until 2.00 this afternoon.

AN HON. MEMBER: I beg to second that, Madam.

The question that the House be suspended until 2.00 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken, we were on Order Number 17. And with that we shall continue. Yes, Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish, sir, to indicate my unswerving support for this resolution for the lease for the Rotary Club Barbados South to access the site of land - the piece of land at the Garfield Sobers complex - for the construction and development of a recreational facility for children with disabilities. I too do not have special training, Mr. Speaker, but I have a passion for activities, policies, programmes and so on that relate to persons with disabilities. And of course, when we talk about disabilities, we know the category of individuals we are referring to. Often we interchange the title and we say persons with special needs. And special needs will include those who are gifted as well - children who accelerate in programmes beyond their age range and all that.

Now, in 1995-96, the Ministry of Education at that time had produced a white paper on education reform in preparation for the 21st century. And we know, sir, that would have been about 20 years or so ago, hence the need for some form of reform going to the next level. Because we know that there have been some achievements and in some areas we have had some slip-ups. And of course it will have a deleterious impact on that plan to be able to look specifically to the needs of those who are in our communities - those who are disabled or those who have special needs - to be able to work towards helping them to achieve their goals. So we are talking about the physically challenged, the mentally challenged, those who are mild and moderate and severe, hearing and visually impaired, learning disabilities, persons who suffer dyslexia and so on.

So I am referring to the document that is already a document of this Honourable Chamber, sir, at pages 52 and 53. And then we look at the emotionally and psychologically disadvantaged children and individuals with abnormal behaviour patterns, autism, attention deficit disorders and so on. We hear so much about that now. And of course the academically gifted and talented children whose academic and artistic achievements exceed the norm for their age by two or more years.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think that it is incumbent upon all Barbadians - those who are normal, those who have the challenges - to be able to work together to make a difference in their lives. And we know of those years when persons who were disabled were generally kept at home. Lots of parents were embarrassed, they did not know how to treat the issues and they were kept in the house. But over the last 40 or so years we have seen a change in attitudes towards them. And of course the opening up of facilities has helped parents to be able to come to grips with what their role must be and to bring out those children and give them an opportunity to excel in whichever area. If it is no more than moving a finger - if the child were not moving a finger before - it makes a tremendous difference. And so there are some strides in this whole exercise.

So I want to commend those parents who have been bold enough to bring out their children and to encourage those who have not yet sought to do it to do so. And we can understand, Mr. Speaker, the overprotectiveness of parents. This child is so delicate, it can hardly do much. However, I am going to keep it at home because I do not want anybody to ostracise it. And we know the feelings already. But of course, there are facilities out there to cater to the needs of those individuals who have children and are afraid to bring them out or do not have the necessary monetary resources to be able to take them to the next level. But I think it is critical that all parents and guardians work towards getting their children enlisted in some kind of schooling setting, some kind of environment that will help them to be able to improve their quality of life and their ability to go to the next level.

Now, I believe, sir, that what was a component of this educational reform document was associated with teachers getting the training. Because there is absolutely no need for us to bring our children who have challenges into the schools, and then have teachers who do not know how to cope with them. And we recognise that it is a tremendous challenge. There are some parents who do not understand about autism. They do not understand about the various deficits. And I thought that the effort to get Dr. Ben Stabler and a team to test the children in the schools on a yearly basis to determine what disabilities they may experience - I thought that was an honourable project. And I believe that I would like to encourage the Honourable Minister of Education to look at it again if it has been

stopped, because a teacher cannot just look at a child and see if it cannot hear. There are some children who are sitting at the back of the class who cannot see. So we move them forward. But then when we check there are other disabilities - visual challenges or visual impairments - that impact on them and their ability to see the chalkboard or to read. And that project called for further examinations and of course follow-up by the parents and then the issuance of spectacles or whatever corrective measures were to be in place. It was seen for visual impairments, it was seen for hearing impairments and so on.

And I believe that if teachers get the appropriate training, as was the case with those 40 teachers from the Mounts in association with Erdiston Teachers' Training College and in Monks and Vincent University, that 40 or so persons would have helped to make a difference in the lives of those students whom we have in the area of disabilities. I do not know at this time, Mr. Speaker, where exactly those teachers may be in the system. The last time I made a query, many of them were teaching in a regular classroom. But there is no point in persons doing a master's degree in special needs and then being placed in a regular classroom where any other teacher perhaps can provide the necessary teaching and learning for classes. So it would be useful, if those teachers are still in the system, that they be assigned to those particular institutions to be able to help those students who have those serious challenges.

I also felt that the mainstreaming of students was critical because it is all going to feed into the recreational activities and how those activities will help those children to strengthen the muscles and to learn how to socialise and perhaps pick up a couple of skills in speaking and reading and even movement. Because the Honourable Minister made mention of certain aspects of what would be placed - rooms that will be placed in the institution to help with the further learning. And I know, sir, the Honourable Leader in the other place would have been one of those students at Combermere School where adjustments were made to facilitate her. And there are many others. And as the times go by we are seeing even further efforts put into the area of looking after and mainstreaming students. And that is the reason why we had opened the All Saints Centre in St. Peter when the new All Saints School was put in place, so that children could be moved from a classroom if they were slow in mathematics and so move into the regular classroom to do the English, but come back in the special needs programme to be able to do the mathematics. And many of us have different strengths. Some people are excellent in the English language, but poor in the mathematics and in the sciences and other areas. And I thought that was an excellent effort. I trust that is still going on in the system, even with improvements.

Mr. Speaker, in the area of common entrance, some children now use technology to be able to further their

understanding of concepts and so on and to be able to write the common entrance. And sometimes they are given a little more time, especially those who are dyslexic. And I think that is a very good advancement for our country. And I trust that we will not step back, we will not renege on our responsibilities to be able to look after the needs of those students. These various annexes, sir, add to what plans there were and I know that those schools - those annexes - are still functioning and functioning very well. We have the Charles F. Brown, Ellerton Primary, Eagle Hall, All Saints, Erdiston and a couple of other institutions that are associated.

And the Honourable Member herself is asking questions, but I am trying to tie it in to show how later these recreational activities that will take place at the gymnasium will help these young people to be able to be mainstreamed or to be able to go to the next level. So Mr. Speaker, we have the Ann Hill School. They do excellent work and Irving Wilson in craft and so on. They mount their own exhibitions as a part of this development. I know that there was a linens project where one of those two schools was doing a project to be able to work - cleaning up the bathtubs and so on for some hotels and other institutions - so that employment can be given to those individuals who would have had some kind of impairment or challenge earlier. And I think the self-help approach was really very critical. We know of the School for the Blind and they make excellent mops and keen furniture. And if you see them, Mr. Speaker, when they are operating, it is a wonderful sight to behold. I think that is as a result of bringing out our children and giving them the necessary activities and putting them in the programmes that help them to go forward.

I want to commend those parents, guardians, teachers, entities, including the service clubs, for the excellent work that they have done. And I am sure that the Rotary Club must be highly commended for what it continues to do in the vanguard of ensuring that not only will they work with the disabled, but they will work with all communities to be able to empower individuals in this whole exercise.

Mr. Speaker, we have already established in Barbados that disability is not inability. And that was a slogan for one of the years going forward. And I am pleased to see the numerous entities in Barbados who are hiring persons with disabilities. I think it is important. I have been to Scotiabank. I have seen someone there. I will not disclose whether it is male or female. I have been to Mannings and I saw a lady in her motor wheelchair going forward and working excellently. I have heard some of them on television speaking about the roles they play and how they are not treated any differently from others and so on. I think that is honourable in a country as small as ours, where individuals can come out and play their part. And I

want to encourage other institutions to come on board and to engage the services of persons with disabilities. We always hear on the radio and we read in the newspaper of a number of individuals who are heading up those various institutions that are associated with the disabled asking for more opportunities to work. And I must commend one of them for a show that was at the Hilton earlier in the year where many young women got an opportunity to showcase their skills and talents. And I thought that it was an exceptional task and the success was really tremendous.

The only other thing I wish to say, sir, is that generally the large number of persons who are disabled, according to what I am seeing, is really working class people's children. And we know, sir, that they are the most vulnerable from the point of view that there is little funding to assist some of them. As a matter of fact, I have once asked for some kind of unwaged labour stipend to be offered to those men and women - but mostly women - who cannot work because of the severity of the disability of their children and they have to stay at home and nurture them, run them off to the school and so on. And I have asked the Honourable Minister to please give some consideration at some point in time - perhaps when the economy is better - for those who are challenged to be able to go to school for free. It is extremely costly, Mr. Speaker, for disabled students; the payment is extremely high and parents cannot always meet the demands. I know the Ministry will give some stipends and some waivers to be able to help some parents. But in the same way that we are looking and saying education is free to all at primary and secondary level, it is about time we get the consciousness to know that those who are disabled should also get to the stage where they too are given education for free.

The Challenor School - and the Honourable Member for St. James North spoke about it earlier - is now reeling under the pressure. And the Honourable Minister was correct when he spoke to the whole issue of renovations and maintenance of facilities. Many of our schools and our structures, especially in the government entities, are run down as a result of no proper maintenance programme, even on an annual basis. The houses we live in, after two or three years, we have to provide some kind of maintenance programme to ensure that house remains livable. And that recent visit to Challenor School spoke volumes of the challenges that are there. But I must confess, Mr. Speaker, sir, that the staff and the volunteers and of course the board are doing a tremendous task in helping to look after those students, some of whom cannot even feed themselves. And I know that the Learning Centre is doing a good job. And I welcome the new Derek Smith - I think it is called - Centre now opened at Jackmans in the Lears area to be able to help to facilitate. But I would wish that some special attention be paid to Challenor School as well, so that the respite care and so on can continue to happen and that

those who have gone beyond the age of 16 and 17 will continue to be engaged for them to be able to work.

I know the Honourable Member for St. James North also spoke about transportation. But we are aware that the Transport Board - because if you are going to have the facility at Wilkey at the gymnasium site, then the disabled are coming from all over Barbados and have to get there at some point in time to be integrated into the programmes that are being offered there and for them to be able to recreate. And so I would wish to encourage the Minister responsible for the Transport Board to have a more critical look at the buses that were specially designed for the disabled to ensure that they are working to the maximum - working in a manner that the students will be able to get to and from the facility when it is properly established. Because not every vehicle can carry a wheelchair or accommodate some of those students who have to be lifted and so on.

I am pleased to learn of the emphasis of this dynamic project to come - this project that is in the making with the indoor facility, the sensory room, the basketball court, the playground, which will accommodate 15 events in that location. Of course, the Special Olympics group must be commended as well because they have been doing excellent work. And that is when the activities that will take place there will help to show up the other individual students and the other individuals as a whole who will be able then to participate in activities beyond the basic level. And I think that is really very critical. I think that this facility will reap some dividends, Mr. Speaker. And that when it becomes a reality, I trust that all Barbadians who have children with special needs will go to that facility and help to work with the maintenance. Corporate Barbados will come on board and assist the Rotary with whatever plan there is. And the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West spoke about how government gives the subventions that assist these various entities. I trust that will continue to make a difference and to empower those individuals who - from the winking of an eye only to the opening of the eyes and the clutching of the fingers to the relaxation of those fingers because of the therapeutic activities that they will be engaged in - will help to take them a long way into being integrated into this society as the good citizens that we know that they will make.

We are all aware, Mr. Speaker, of the sporting activities and how they can help to build persons' confidence, the emotional development, the kind of social activities, friendliness, working in teams, good discipline. All of that will come on board as well with other sporting activities. And I trust that these young people will get that opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I want before I close to express my congratulations to the Rotary Club and the other entities

and commend them for their long-standing role that they have been playing in the growth and development of our people, the people of Barbados. But more particularly in this particular project that the Government has so kindly consented to allow them - the lease of some 25 000 or so square feet of land - to be able to develop their programme or develop an institution that will help to further empower those who are disabled among us. And I trust that Barbadians will come on board, assist as well as use the facility wisely so that students who are disabled can show to the rest of the world that disability is not inability. Because each one matters. And if a society cares about its disabled families, it will care about those who are normal and working together. We can go to the next level and show the rest of the world that we know how to integrate and mainstream to make a difference in the lives of everybody. Because each individual is important to this whole national exercise. Mr. Speaker, with those few comments, sir, I wish to

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

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise also to speak to this resolution. As you know, it was said earlier this morning how unconscionable we are to rent to the Rotary South this 25 000 square feet of land at \$19.24 per week. I find it rather regrettable because when this - yes, you said that - when this morning it was said. And as I was saying, Mr. Speaker, when we negotiated this in the ministry, we never got the impression that the thousand dollars per year was unreasonable. And when we asked them, sir, that they, on the 10th, pay the insurance payments, do the repairs, do the maintenance of the buildings and pay the land taxes, they never objected, sir, along with the utilities and the other outgoings arising from this lease. But we heard in here this morning how unreasonable it is for us to be charging - sorry, asking them to pay the land taxes.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear when one considers where the person sits that this will have to be the opinion of the Rotary Club and also of the organisation that represents the differently abled. And one can only come to the conclusion that when we thought we were doing them a favour, that they asked the Honourable Member for St. James North to put a representation for them, and that they are objecting to the lease that they agreed with us, and that they are foreign owners and that they are not able to pay these fees, and that the ministry who would have negotiated with them are unreasonable. And Mr. Speaker, I want to put the light to that - at no time did they object to these charges. Neither did they say that they had a problem in paying the land taxes.

Mr. Speaker, you know it is wrong. And what was also hurtful, Mr. Speaker, to see that the Honourable

Member came in here and represented the organisation who is also paying for the vehicle for the differently abled. And at no time did they say that they were not aware that they have certain concessions that would be signed in the memorandum of understanding between the Maria Holder Trust and Government. But the Honourable Member from St. James North comes in here and gives the impression that these organisations are angry with Government because Government charges them something that they should not be charged with. They do not have to pay because the Maria Holder Trust has a memorandum of understanding with Government, because previously they used to pay these charges and then reclaim them, and the memorandum of understanding now stops them from doing that.

So I do not think it is fair to come to this House and give the impression that we in the Ministry of Housing and around the officers are so ungracious, do not appreciate the feelings of the differently abled and that we are so harsh on them. Let me declare an interest in this debate, sir, because I have said over and I will repeat it - my second son is autistic. I have never used the floor of this House to put a case for him. But I am quite prepared to put a case for any other organisation. And I do not believe that I should come to this House and put a case where I can do it in action. The floor of the House and the world does not have to know what you are doing on behalf of other organisations. And I find it rather deplorable to politically grandstand about what you are doing for the differently abled by using the floor of the House. And I find it rather insulting, Mr. Speaker.

I am saying, sir, that we need to understand that there are certain things we cannot trivialise. And I find it rather damaging and politically cheap to come in here and use the floor of the House to get political. I have never done it. I have never done it because I do not think it is a proper thing to do. But you do what you have to do. I do not think that the discussion that went on between the Honourable Member and the other Honourable Member should have been party to this discussion when the Honourable Member was given a commitment that it would have been dealt with. And I do not think that the Honourable Member should have spoken about the Maria Holder Trust before first finding out what is the memorandum of understanding between Government and the Maria Holder Trust. And you know you can do it to the able-bodied persons. But it hurts me when you want to play politics with the differently abled.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please address the Chair, please.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Thank you, sir.

You will never know what cause I advance, you see, because I am not going to use the floor of the House to advance -

Mr. SPEAKER: Member, please address the Chair.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I am speaking to you, sir. I was speaking to you, sir. So Mr. Speaker, I am happy, sir, because you know, Mr. Speaker, I normally would not go into this, because the impression is given here, sir, that this Government does not do anything for these people. I want the Honourable Member to know that I went to Hawaii and I never used this on this floor of the House, you know, and saw that there is no need to buy special buses - five or six special buses - for the disabled. The Transport Board can get all of the buses to be able to accommodate the disabled. All that is needed is the right type of sidewalks and the adjustable lifts, and it does not cause any large difference in expenditure. And I said what I have to say - that one only has to do a good thing and they will see that the additional cost is not great. So this thing about special buses and the great cost and all that - there is no need for it. All that is needed is that you adjust the sidewalks and ensure where the bus stops are that the lift is compatible to the sidewalks, and solve the problem.

Let us take this out of the political realm. These kids are bright and, you know something, to be honest with you, Mr. Speaker, I sometimes wonder whether they have problems or whether we are the ones. For example, my son understands everything I say to him. But it is difficult for us to understand what he is saying. And it means - pardon me - no, Mr. Speaker, I know you cannot hear the asides, and the Honourable Member for St. James North is no doubt telling those around him that nobody understands him. But I never knew that he had that incapacity - that he does not understand himself. I know you are not allowed to hear the asides, sir, but now I understand why everybody says they cannot understand his French or Spanish.

So Mr. Speaker, I am saying that these children are specially talented and that we have to understand that maybe they might be a step ahead of us and they have their own way of communicating, which we see as a negative, and which we need to carry out special studies to understand - that there is something that we can learn from them, and not what you are hearing in here from the Honourable Member for St. James North, who gives you the impression that these children are negatives. I do not see them as negatives. I see them as somebody that we need to spend more time to understand - how they can understand us, but we cannot understand them. And I think that there is a special case study, sir.

So I want to congratulate the Government and the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Maintenance, and the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central, and

commend him for bringing this resolution to an end and to show that this Government is not standing idly by and not putting a case - as you would have heard from the Honourable Member for St. James North - that this Government is not doing anything for the differently abled. And this puts a light to it. It also shows that the Government is not only doing this, but a couple of months ago the Government, along with the Silent Trust, went to Jackman's in the parish of St. Michael, of which the Government would have shared with the Silent Trust in ensuring that a school is constructed for these children when they get past the age of 18, so that they can move

from the educational aspect of the normal training over to the educational aspect to learn them how to work and how to operate in the work environment. Because the Government would not only have provided the concessions, but there is a working relationship between the Trust and the Ministry of Education where the Ministry of Education will pick up some of the costs to ensure that this school - which is new to Barbados - will be able to be functional, operational and be able to deliver the goods to these goodly children of Barbados.

So Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I support this resolution and to say that it puts a light to all the talk that was given by the Honourable Member for St. James North that the Government is not doing anything. One of the things I also want to say - the Honourable Member knows quite well what created the confusion about the duty-free concessions as it relates to vehicles. I do not think it is fair for him also to drag this into the debate at this House. Because I do not think it is fair to these organisations who were hijacked by some persons for this type of debate to be entered into on the floor of this House. And I was very happy, sir, that so far nobody on this side touched it and they allowed it to continue. And we will not bring this into the debate. But I thought it was very distasteful that other persons were prepared to drive these organisations - that are doing such good work - into the political realm. I want to thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am obliged.

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

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Mr. Speaker, I rise to join this debate on this important resolution that seeks to lease to the Rotary Club South a parcel of land situated at the Garfield Sobers Sports Complex for the recreational facility for children with disabilities. And I speak, Mr. Speaker, in this lower chamber as a Rotarian for over seven years. And I must say at the outset that I support this resolution wholeheartedly. And this is not a debate to come in this Honourable House like the Honourable Member for St. Lucy and try to attack and raise what I call frivolous issues with respect to this important resolution.

What we should be doing, Mr. Speaker, is congratulating Rotarians across the length and breadth of Barbados who have done tremendous work, men and women, with respect to improving conditions, whether it be social or economic, in this country. And I want to applaud the men and women of the Rotary Club for the sterling work that they have done in this country thus far and continue to do.

And it is not just Rotarians because there are other service organisations. There are other service organisations like the Lions Club, the Kiwanis Club. There are Soroptimists. These are other social organisations, primarily - some may disagree - but private sector driven, where you have professional men and women giving up their time to ensure that certain issues in this country are addressed not just by politicians, the political class, but by people who see fit to give back to this community.

And I have been part of Rotary and I came to public life as a young man with a motto: service above self. And that is one of the things that I try to emulate coming from Rotary, where you put service above self for the good of the people. And I think that most of us in this lower chamber should adopt some of the policies and the statements that Rotary promulgates. One of the things that I like about Rotary is something called the Four-Way Test: Is it the truth? Will it build goodwill and better friendships? Will it be beneficial to all concerned? And is it fair to all concerned?

And politicians must understand that when we carry out our day-to-day duties, whether as opposition or as government - primarily as government - we ought to take these things into consideration and try to live a selfless life and lead a selfless government whereby we put service above self as opposed to focusing on self and family. Because there are a number of persons out there who benefit tremendously.

Not only the disabled, but we have a number of projects that the Rotary Club and these other service organisations get involved in that help to promote the social good within countries. And it is not just politicians. I would just list a few areas of focus for the Rotary Clubs. Promoting peace, training local leaders to prevent and mediate conflict - that is very critical. I mean, at a time like now when we look around Barbados and we see some of the challenges in labour relations, I know some of the leaders can benefit from training in these areas. Not just politicians, but some of the leaders in the statutory bodies and in the public service, not only in the private sector.

Fighting diseases. You have cases whereby more than 100 million people are pushed into poverty each year because of medical costs. And Rotary worldwide has come to the assistance in certain countries, fighting HIV, AIDS,

malaria, polio - fighting the spread of these major diseases. That is the work that Rotary does worldwide.

Providing clean water. We know that there are some areas in the world whereby there is a major deficiency with respect to clean water. At least 3 000 children die from diarrhoeal diseases caused by unsafe water. And these are some of the works that Rotary International gets involved in. Saving mothers and children, supporting education, growing local economies.

So this resolution - I speak to it from a standpoint of knowledge with respect to Rotary, and not just only from the standpoint of enabling disabled persons in this country, because they too need to - they can live a life just like any one of us. And I applaud Rotary for coming out, getting this land and building the recreational facilities. Because there are a number of disabled people living in St. George South and I would like them to benefit from this recreational facility. I will make sure as their representative that they are exposed to this facility. So I welcome this facility.

And I say that this is not a debate - yes, if I have to get a Transport Board bus through you, Mr. Speaker, I will do it. But I say this is not a debate to get into any conflict or confrontation on either side. We should work as a team. We should work as a team to ensure that this project reaps the true benefit for the citizens of Barbados as it relates to the disabled community.

But I don't want it to stop there. I think that we listened to the whole aspect of wellness in the debate in the just-concluded Budget, and we heard how the whole basket of goods has been adjusted to try to encourage the citizens of this country to live a healthier lifestyle. But I am saying this too is part of the work of Rotary. And I would like government to get involved in the wellness centres whereby we don't only create a basket of goods but a lot more benefit can come through getting involved with the training facilities, the wellness centres, whereby we give incentives for people to join gyms. I think this is more value added, even more so than the basket of goods that we saw coming out of the Budget. But I am not here to go back to the Budget - I am just mentioning that because wellness is critical.

So we can only speak about disabilities and those areas which are critical. But we have other areas that I know Rotarians have been working hard at to enhance development in this country, whether it be economic or social good. And I want government to focus more on these projects that can help our citizens at a very difficult time.

The private sector - I applaud you, because these are a group of professional men and women who give of their time to ensure that these projects are executed and that they

not only are executed, but that they benefit the citizens of this country, primarily from the lower socio-economic bracket, from the lower spectrum of society. When we look at Rotary worldwide, these projects are aimed to impact positively people from the lower spectrum of society.

And Mr. Speaker, that is the basis of my intervention and support for this resolution, with the expectation that this resolution will not just be one of talk but that we will go into implementation where there seems to be a deficit, and that this will benefit St. George's disabled persons and the other disabled persons nationally through the other eleven parishes. And I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: And that is the Honourable Member for St. James - sorry,

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Thank you, sir. I rise to participate in this debate and to say that I support the resolution. In St. Michael West Central there are quite a number of families who I believe can benefit from initiatives such as these. And I think that the unfortunate thing about the whole question of how we treat disabilities in this country is that because of the way in which we treat them, there is an untapped resource that is available to us that could be helping to develop this country and leading very useful lives, who sometimes, because of the lack of facilities and opportunities for those persons who are physically challenged, are not able to actually live up to their potential in the communities from which they are part. And therefore, one would have to accept that this initiative is something that we should embrace and we should support.

And the fact that institutions such as Rotary is embracing it, I think is something that we should applaud. Because sometimes you find that even today, it might surprise you that the old attitude sometimes still persists in families in terms of how they deal with disabled children. And we have instances where in the past people were actually shut away and they were not able to live up to their potential. And I think that change in mindset, even if you were to take a lesson from what is happening there, it clearly shows that there is at least a change in the way in which we approach the whole problems that persons within this category are being dealt with. And therefore we want to recommend that approach then spread throughout the society. And we also want to see it in families in which people no longer feel as if they have done something wrong. And that the state in itself is making the type of advances that allows the persons who are in this category to make an active contribution to the society, and not only them, but the families also.

Because I know, having been in the field before, we have many examples in which the families of these individuals have had to stay home to look after them because there are no facilities available for those persons to

go to. And we have seen a lot of these instances as you go through various homes in St. Michael West Central. And I think that the fact that the Government has moved in this direction, that it should be applauded.

Now, I noted during the discourse this morning that the Minister, I think, should be congratulated on the fact that he is really, in terms of sports overall, looking at the facilities that we have generally around the country. But one thing I do want to say, though, is that the issue of maintenance of sport facilities throughout the country is something that I think that we need to pay attention to generally, because sometimes we erect facilities, but at the same time, we do not pay attention to the maintenance costs of these facilities. And even within the disabled community, there are examples of facilities that are there but are not well maintained. And I think that, for instance, the Challenger School in St. Thomas is an area that needs assistance, needs help, and we need to see how we can at least look at resources that would help to even develop existing facilities that will make them play a more functional relationship in terms of trying to solve the problems that you see persons with those kind of physical challenges experiencing.

And I think that we need to pay attention to that. How do we ensure for the future that we generate resources that will allow us to maintain these facilities? Because it is well and good to sometimes build them, but there is also an operational cost that has to be passed on to future generations. And while I heard the Member for St. George South, I think, speak about the involvement of the private sector, the thing is that they can go even further. Because one of the things that we need to recognise is that many times you have these private sector initiatives that build these buildings, but at the same time, there is an operational cost which has somehow to be financed. And of course, the responsibility happens to fall on Government to finance these things. And in a period where we have severe economic challenges, it therefore means that the money has to come from somewhere.

And I think unless we have a general appreciation in our society that every one of us must play the role of being our brother's keeper, because in many cases you see a lot of these institutions have to be financed by the parents of those children, sometimes having to play a part in raising funds to help to run those facilities. That is a fact. It is a very challenging situation. And even in terms sometimes when we look at the personnel which are available to deal with children in these type of institutions, because one of the things that I don't think we recognise is that many of us in the society are not familiar with dealing with persons who have these physical disabilities. And sometimes it could be a challenge to find the type of personnel who can actually cope with it. And even in that respect, a lot of the institutions that deliver these services to physically

challenged people have difficulty in terms of finding the type of personnel who can actually assist and work in those type of facilities. And that is something for the future that we might also need to pay attention to.

But going back to the issue of sports generally, I think that our ability now to compete in sports generally is enhanced by this particular approach. And I think that we have to complement the Rotary as far as that is concerned. But I also want to draw attention to other sports facilities in this country, which, for instance, the Grazettes playing field. I know that at this time it is not being used by the Grazettes Football Team largely because of the fact that it is in a state of disrepair. And the field in itself needs some remedial work being done on it. And it has been that we have been promising things for some time. And I really wish that even what I heard - we talk about the private sector - maybe where Government does not have the resources to do these things, maybe we can have private sector interests identifying specific needs in communities. For instance, that playing field is a specific need. And maybe if we can have private sector interests identifying that need and maybe put some resources in collaboration with the Ministry of Sports to help to get it right. Because somehow in our society we seem sometimes not to recognise the times that we are in, and that maybe if we have a greater collaboration between the private sector interests and of course Government, you can maybe get things done.

Because we need to go back to the point in this country where we recognise that sports actually start in communities. And if we can get greater community support for the activities, maybe then we will be even more successful. Because I think that one of the things that we need to understand is that the communities must play an important role. But they cannot play an important role if the very facilities that are in the communities are not adequate enough to support that particular aspect. Because, for instance, I even point to the National Stadium. I know that the Minister has actually indicated that the National Stadium, which is there now, is in need of repair. It is in a community in which people from St. Michael South are actually going up there. And even, for instance, within the disabled community in itself, we will have people who want to take the children there. But because of the state of that particular facility, you find that in some cases its use is limited. And that facility in itself is extremely important because it has access. And I think I would want to appeal to the private sector whether or not they cannot at the same time look at partnering with Government in terms of refurbishing critical facilities such as these.

I know sometimes - I know the Member for St. George spoke a lot about Rotary - but maybe they also need to look at helping Government and assisting Government in these areas. Because here is a case where

we have a facility generally accessible to the public, but cannot be used. And even, for instance, in this case, you have a situation where you have things such as cycling. Right now, the cyclists in Barbados cannot use the Velodrome, which is again an issue that we need to look at. So I think generally, especially those facilities that the public has access to, we need to put greater importance in terms of trying to ensure that they are maintained adequately. And in the same way, I think that the private sector have come up and recognised that, yes, we can assist in terms of other facilities. There are other areas where other private sector interests can actually commence and give that type of valuable assistance.

Because even when we talk about the whole question of the physically challenged persons, and even in terms of development of sports generally in communities, we don't understand that the real impetus for the development of sports starts within communities. A lot of the champions that you see develop in sports, it starts really in a community in which something has sparked to say, look, you need to achieve. But if we debilitate the circumstances under which that happens, all we can see really is that our performance on the world stage in terms of sports can decline because there is no incentive given to those individuals to succeed. And we must appreciate that unless that community in itself has those kind of facilities to help, it will not happen.

So I think generally, sir, I want to say I do support the resolution. I think it is valuable. I would also want to encourage the Minister of Sports and Youth to also, in his efforts to rehabilitate other facilities that we have within the public domain, to see whether or not we cannot get the level of support from the private sector, especially in the sports area, to help to do that. Because generally, I want to say this, that even in that regard, there are people, there are private businesses in this country that actually make money off of these facilities too, that benefit from the fact that we have a healthy sports programme that is producing champions. Because we also forget that when Obadele Thompson won the medal, it put Barbados in the spotlight. It put Barbados in the spotlight and it gave exposure. And I think even, for instance, when we look at the achievements of other gold medal winners, it shows you what can happen when a country produces ambassadors who can actually sell what the country has to offer to the world in a very positive way.

So I want to say, sir, that I do again support the resolution and I look forward, sir, to other initiatives in which we focus in terms of trying to rehabilitate our community support facilities so that the wider community in itself, sir, can be afforded a lot of the modern facilities that sometimes appear not to be available to those persons, especially in those disadvantaged communities too. Because we have this thing in Barbados where we view

some communities as being deserving of something and some not. But I believe, sir, that every community has to be treated in the same way. So I will want, sir, to encourage the Minister that way and indicate, sir, my support for the resolution. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Sir.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I rise to make a brief intervention giving folks the opportunity to speak to this resolution before the House today. And it really heartens me because behind all of this is the work of the Rotary Club of Barbados South. And like the Honourable Member for St. George South, I've served as a Rotarian for many years, having been active in the Rotary Club of Barbados West, a Presidency Club, and certainly an active member. And I'm very proud of the Rotary Clubs of Barbados, and in this case the Rotary Club of Barbados South in particular, for the work they're doing.

Of course, before I speak to the particular community whose concerns are being addressed here today, I think we have to reflect on the fact that even in the midst of trying times, we still have service organisations that are able to step up to the plate and make a meaningful contribution, and certainly are able to fill a void and provide things that otherwise individuals would have looked to the state to provide. And this certainly is in keeping with the fundamentals of Rotary - a service organisation, I believe one of the oldest service organisations in the world, having been founded in 1905 by Paul Harris, a Chicago attorney. But then, of course, one that quickly spread around the world. And it's not often that in this Chamber we get the chance to speak glowingly about a service organisation. But I think the Rotary Clubs in Barbados certainly stand well ahead of many of the other service organisations. And in this case, I think what we're witnessing here today with this resolution is testimony to that in particular.

But Rotary is not just involved in this project. Rotary continues to give great scholarships and give support in health and poverty alleviation, addressing some healthcare challenges in the country. And certainly our work among young people is unparalleled in this part of the world.

Mr. Speaker, before us today is a resolution to lease a parcel of Crown lands at the Wildey area gymnasium area to the Rotary Club above for the purpose of construction and provision of a facility to cater to the disabled. And I've heard quite a bit in here today about the disabled community, about charities as such. And let me start by reflecting upon the comments made by my good friend, the Honourable Member for St. James North, who every time he speaks in this Chamber will seek to give the impression that he is the only member of the House of Assembly who has ever recognised the disabled community. He's the only

person in Barbados who cares about the disabled community. Mind you, in all of his speeches I've never heard him define the disabled community in this country. He talks about the 5 per cent and his work with the Council of Disabled, et cetera. And he is the champion for the disabled.

You know, it is rather unfortunate. I think at the end of the day credit must be given to successive governments for their work in highlighting the challenges of the disabled community, defining or redefining them, and certainly putting structures in place to take care of this very vulnerable group. So I wisely understand the desperate need for the Honourable Member for St. James North to claim some relevance to something of importance in this society besides filing lawsuits or being involved in lawsuits with his colleagues in his party. The reality about it is that this particular issue of addressing the challenges of the disabled community is not a matter that resides solely in the bosom of my friend from St. James North. I don't think we need to make it a big political issue, because the truth of the matter is that if you go down that line, the party which he so viciously defends would have been found wanting in any cursory examination of work among the disabled community in Barbados.

I'm always concerned when I hear the Honourable Member and others speak of the need for special legislation for the disabled community in Barbados, because nobody ever goes beyond that general blank statement and gets into any specifics as to what really is required. Because on one hand you say that you want special legislation for the disabled community, but then on the other hand, almost in the same breath, you say you want the disabled community to be treated like anybody else. And that in itself creates somewhat of a concern, a little bit of confusion. I think what we ought to accept in Barbados is that we have good legislation that recognises the rights of all individuals, regardless of race, caste,

color, creed and their physical or mental state. Somewhat whilst there is indeed the need for certain systems and structures to be put in place to safeguard an extremely vulnerable group like those who may be physically or mentally challenged. The reality is that fundamentally our legislation by and large do take care of those individuals. We don't discriminate or we're not supposed to discriminate.

I think beyond. Look, we cannot legislate everything. We cannot legislate people's behaviour. We can bring legislation that may seek to guide and direct people's behaviour. But at the end of the day, who needs a law to say that we must teach our children not to giggle and tease at those who are differently abled. There is nothing to put on the statute books that is going to tell me as a father that I ought to teach my children not to laugh at those who

may look or conduct themselves differently than they do. You don't need legislation for that. That is how you are brought up. It's called decency and respect for others.

You don't need laws for that. You don't need legislation to tell you - or you shouldn't need legislation to tell you - that if you see a parking spot with a handicap sign on it or a sign for the disabled, you should not park there. You don't need to go to law school to learn that. That is common sense. And you don't need to be elected to Parliament to know that either. It's called respect for others.

So when I hear others palaver from the other side about the disabled community, there are some very simple things we can do in our day-to-day existence that really and truly brings home to this society the importance of recognising those who are differently abled. I have a challenge even to using the term disabled, really and truly. There are times I simply say differently abled. There are those who, as your Mary St. Thomas would say, those who may have special needs.

What the Rotary Club of Barbados South is doing here, Mr. Speaker, is indeed highly commendable. They recognise that this is a group of individuals in society who need these special facilities. And you can't put individuals who have these different skills or challenges in your regular environment or facility that may serve able-bodied persons, and these facilities don't come cheap. We haven't talked about the cost. I don't think the Rotary Club by itself has shared the cost with us. But let me say that it is indeed a very expensive undertaking.

I know when I served as Minister of Health and we had responsibility for the Albert Graham Centre - we actually renamed it the Albert Graham Centre in memory of outstanding paediatrician Bertie Graham - the cost, the equipment you put in there, the special lighting, the special pieces of equipment to ensure that there is no injury to the kids, the sensory systems that were put in place, those things don't come cheap. And I really must commend the Rotary Club and those who have partnered with them to conceptualise this project and to work with the Government to get it to fruition.

Now I know we are doing our part as the Government by providing land, because I keep hearing others say all the time the Government don't do anything, the Government isn't doing anything. Now the same people say in the same breath that the Government is broke and we don't have any money. You know, that's the kind of hypocrisy that this society is shown every day - Government is broke, but the Government is still expected to do everything for everybody, able-bodied and disabled. The reality about it is we have an excellent project here that is a manifestation of how civil society, philanthropy, those

who give to charitable causes, and those who are service organisations can work in a very focused and very collaborative manner to help us address some of the challenges in the society. And the spotlight and the focus is on the differently abled in Barbados today.

And this physical plant or facility to be constructed at Wildey on lands to be leased at peppercorn rent to the Rotary Club will make a fundamental difference in the lives of these people. How would it make a fundamental difference? It certainly means now that the parents of these differently abled individuals can find a place where they can take their charges to enjoy themselves, to recreate, and to also get some exercise or whatever it provides them. Sometimes we don't appreciate what parents or guardians of these differently abled individuals go through on a daily basis.

I have seen it firsthand. I've seen it in my own constituency of St. James South. I've seen mothers and fathers who have struggled - and not just in terms of financial situation, but certainly in terms of having to deal with an individual who, in spite of their chronological age, is not able to change their clothes, not able to bathe themselves, sometimes not able to feed themselves. And those are not easy things to witness and to put up with on a daily basis. So sometimes we have to recognise that in addressing the issues of the physically challenged or the differently abled in our society, we must also give a great measure of support and respect and accommodation to those parents and guardians who take care of them on a day-to-day basis.

Let us also thank those who work in our homes around the country where some of these differently abled individuals are placed. And I always lament the fact that in some of our institutions, sometimes we are still a society - and I want to speak specifically to the Member for St. James Central and the Member for St. James North through you, Mr. Speaker - because we still have not yet reached a stage in this society where we have the kind of systems and structures that allow a lot of these differently abled individuals to function in the home environment. What we do is that we are very contented to put them in an institution. That is why the Ministry of Social Care, the Ministry of Health and others have been over the years struggling to maintain homes around this country for the differently abled. And sometimes those who are responsible for bringing them into this world don't even pay them a visit. They have cousins and aunts and uncles who sometimes haven't seen them for years, who don't even sometimes remember that they exist.

We don't need legislation to tell supposedly responsible adults that they must show love, care and compassion for those who are less fortunate or differently abled in this society. You don't need laws for that. That is

something that all of us in this Christian society ought to be able to do. But I've witnessed more and more pressure being placed upon the state to provide those facilities, to have them adequately staffed, to have them resourced to all that is needed. And sometimes the bare minimum - sometimes those differently abled individuals are just able to lie in the bed and not move around. And then, you know, I watch the nurses and nursing aides and the staff just trying to be the mother and the father for them, while the biological relatives are nowhere to be found. And that is why I keep saying that civil society still has a lot more to do. We as a society still have a lot more to do when it comes to the disabled or the differently abled in our society.

And the same, Mr. Speaker, as we reflect upon this facility to be constructed by the Rotary Club of Barbados South with the support of the Ministry of Housing and Lands - and I wish to commend as well the Ministry of Sports, who continue to provide human leadership among many of these issues in this society - whilst we are focused on that physical structure and all the attendant apparatus to be placed therein, let us not ignore the broader issue of how do we identify and care for and provide supporting structures in this society for the differently abled across Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, my other point I wish to make in respect of this particular issue goes to the broader concept of charities and philanthropy and donations. Generally speaking, in Barbados, I keep hearing that you need to get tax allowances in place and you need to protect these tax allowances so people can give. Let me say, Mr. Speaker, if you genuinely believe in the cause, you should not need a tax allowance to allow you to give or to encourage you to give and give generously. My entire adult life I have been giving to charitable causes in Barbados. I have never once claimed it back on any personal tax form in Barbados. And I think sometimes that those who get up in this House of Assembly and make these calls for tax allowances and things need to ask themselves - not necessarily here, but in your quiet moments - if you genuinely care about others in this society, why should you get up in the House of Assembly and continue to make statements to give the impression that the only way you can give to a charity in Barbados is if you get a tax allowance or get the benefits.

Do you know, Mr. Speaker, that the majority of the millions of dollars given to charities in Barbados every year are not claimed on any income tax return? Many of the high net worth individuals who visit Barbados, who love this island, do it because they feel a sense of purpose. They are committed. Yes, they have money. But it's not always that you have to give millions.

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, in challenging my comments to the Member for St. James North via your

good chair, it doesn't matter the amount of money you give - it is the thought that counts. It doesn't matter how long you sit on the council of the disabled. It's a matter of how genuine you are in your concerns about the less fortunate in society. It is about service. Service above self. That's why you join the Rotary Club.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Point of order. The honourable Member is misleading the House by saying that people can give without the assistance of tax allowances. Maybe he can, as a multi-millionaire. But the majority of people in Barbados cannot give without the assistance of tax allowances.

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not going to get dragged into that conversation. The reality is, simply put, Mr. Speaker, I'm saying as a matter of principle we need to stop thinking about the dollars we contribute and look at the reason why we are contributing. And it's not always about the dollars. Sometimes we need to go to one of these homes with a gallon of paint and a paintbrush on a Saturday morning and repaint a wall - that doesn't cost you anything. Sometimes you need to get a picnic basket and go and help take care of those nurses who are there labouring in vain for those kids. Those are the things that are significant. It's not about getting on the front page of a newspaper handing over a cheque. Sometimes it's the things that don't end up in the public domain that are most important. And that is why I question these politicians sometimes, Mr. Speaker, when they grandstand about their work with these organisations. Because when you look at it, there's a lot of fluff. It's about self-serving mechanisms - getting votes, something to put on their CVs - not about any genuine love for the less fortunate in this society.

And that is why I challenge all Honourable Members in this House, especially the Honourable Member for St. James North, to turn up at the gymnasium and help the Rotary Club of Barbados South construct that facility. And do so without the glare of the cameras around. I will bring the water for you to drink.

The reality about it is that we have to get a lot more serious, Mr. Speaker, in this country about these issues. And it's not just the differently abled. There are those who have peculiar health care challenges that the state cannot provide for them in the manner in which they would like. I've been doing some work over the years for those who suffer lupus and sickle cell in this country. And it tears your heart sometimes when you see what they and their caregivers are going through. Nobody asks sometimes to write a big cheque. They just ask sometimes for someone to transport a sickler who is having one of their challenges, a little flare-up or whatever, or to be there to answer the phone when they're having their depressed moments.

Likewise, there are those who suffer cancer. And whilst the state may do its best at the clinical interventions, there is a support mechanism that is needed for them - simple things like getting around to the hospital to get your chemotherapy or your radiotherapy treatment. We don't sometimes appreciate the challenges that these people go through. So it's not always about the rich individual writing a cheque for a couple of million dollars or a couple of hundred thousand dollars. It's the simple things in life that make a fundamental difference in people's lives.

And I therefore send out a call to my friends on the Opposition bench to put aside the partisan political divide and start looking at these issues through a more nationalistic lens. The state cannot do everything. And we are witnessing here today an opportunity where a service organisation - a very reputable one, ably supported by the other members of the private sector and civil society - have identified a peculiar cause and need in this society. They stepped up to the plate and delivered it. And the state, to my mind, has done the right thing by offering the lands.

And you know, we don't oftentimes as Government - all governments - get commendation for our work. The Minister of Sport could have decided when a file landed on his desk, man, look, I want this land for some other sport and activity. But you have an enlightened Minister of Sport in his office, his Ministry, who recognised that, you know what, this facility is not going to produce Olympic medallists. This facility is not going to produce individuals who are going to go to the Pan Am Games. It's not going to produce our top swimmers per se. But it's going to make some people who are differently abled, and who may never have gotten the opportunity, at least strive to achieve their full potential in a clean and safe environment. And it is those things that matter most to us as a Democratic Labour Party Government. It's not about the brick and mortar. It's not about the grandstanding. It's about how we can make a positive difference in the lives of the average person.

And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I firmly stand behind this resolution. I recognise all that is not written on the paper. I wish to commend the Rotary Club of Barbados South and their leadership. As a matter of fact, this weekend coming, the three Rotary Clubs will be installing a new president and new executives. And I welcome - I didn't get your permission, but it's a positive mention - Mr. Milton Innes, who is coming in as District Governor for District 7030 of the Rotary Club. They will be installed this weekend, I think, at a lovely event at Sandy Lane Hotel, where all three clubs come together. And the reality about it is that service organisations must be commended for the continuing positive work they do in this country. With those words, Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to lend my support to this important resolution - the resolution where the Rotary Club South of Barbados is putting up a facility for disabled persons in this community. I want to say from the outset that I believe this act is very important and has taken a long time in coming, because I remember this being discussed over eight years ago. The land at the gymnasium area was set aside not only for this particular purpose, but for other sporting activity. In fact, the entire gymnasium site was earmarked for the development of sports.

I noticed this morning that the Minister of Housing, in whose name this resolution stands, was led off by the Minister of Sports. He, of course, went really wide - he talked about the sporting activities in the gymnasium area and about other sporting activities in Barbados as well. I want to be able to congratulate not only what the Ministry is doing here, but what has been done for a long time. There is nothing new in this particular development. As the Minister who just spoke said, post-independence governments of Barbados have recognised that they needed to support the disabled community, and over time we have done a lot of work to empower them. There is a lot of legislation in place to help the disabled. We have continued to put physical structures in place to help them.

I remember while I was at Public Works, we were able to reorganise most of the roads in Bridgetown for the disabled community - in terms of providing traffic lights and providing slants in the sidewalk. We were able to do a number of things. And I want to say that sometimes we get up in Parliament and we feel that we are doing the world of good and doing so much for the disabled. But sometimes we need to ask them what it is that we are doing. Some of them are saying they do not even know what we are doing. We need to explain to them and we need to listen to what these people are saying.

I want to say, Sir, that we must recognise that according to statistics, one out of every four adult persons may become disabled in his or her lifetime. And therefore we have to look around and see what needs to be put in place to help not only the present disabled person, but what will happen eventually, because there are many serious accidents. I know of a family who had a serious accident recently and three or four persons of that family have become disabled overnight. So we have to be conscious of the fact that we have to help the disabled community.

Now, as I said, I want to touch on what the Ministry of Housing and Lands is doing. This lease - we have talked about it. I noticed that there is a departure, however, from the stance that we took in the Ministry of Housing and Lands over 25 years ago to give all charity organisations the rent for \$100. That was something that we agreed to - the Cabinet of Barbados agreed that all the disabled groups would be given the rent at \$100 per annum. And of course,

I do not think the matter of tax is a big problem because I think the service groups - most of them are exempted from tax in any case. And therefore -

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Yes, I remember the Honourable Member for St. George North is misleading the House, because the Member for St. George North very well knows that the Business and Professional Women's Club was offered some land at Walker, St. George, in his constituency. And in fact, Sir, the reason why it did not take place was because his colleague was negotiating the rent with them, which was certainly not \$800 at market rates. He knows that very well. And there are other cases.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Thanks to the point of elucidation, Mr. Speaker - the lease that the Honourable Member for St. Philip South is talking about is not totally accurate at all, because the lease has not been completed yet. But I know representation was made, Mr. Speaker, that the lease was signed by me first. It was signed off by the former Minister of Housing. The present Minister of Housing has it on his desk. For the last two years I have pressed on it. Yes, our Member - the Honourable Member - is misleading the House. I do not have that file on my desk. It has passed my desk ever since. But what I can tell the House is that the Honourable Member was party to the exorbitant fees that they wanted to charge the Seroptimists, and I changed that very well.

Thanks for the elucidation. But what his government has done - as far as I know, the land was bought from the late Jack Odle, M.P., and it was agreed that a site, this very site where the house was, should have been used by the Seroptimist Club to put up a day-care facility for the elderly as well as children in the area. But I know that is a good thing and I hope that particular lease will also come to the Parliament of Barbados very soon, as well as other leases that the Ministry of Housing and Lands is dealing with now. I hope - I know that the Minister usually likes to take his time on these matters, but I want to implore him to look carefully at that lease and bring it as soon as possible, as well as the lease to the St. George Agricultural Co-operative that we really need.

But I want to spend a moment - since the Minister of Sports really led off this debate - to ask a few questions, especially as it relates to the gymnasium area. The Minister speaks about the gymnasium and I want to find out what is really happening. Because it was this government - it was this government - that has put more sporting organisations into peril today. I noticed that the present Minister is very energetic and I want to thank him for his enthusiasm. I want to thank him for his participation in the various sporting activities. He is all around; he goes to see these things and he is trying his best. But while he is trying his best, there are still a number of areas that have been left to themselves.

We look at hockey. Talk about hockey this morning. Now I grew up in hockey. My children play hockey. And I want to say that it was this government that has left the Astroturf in peril. When the government came into power, the Astroturf there was doing well. Today the Hockey Federation cannot put on a sporting event because the government has not done anything to the Astroturf at the gymnasium. The Minister said that they had to wait until 2016 in order to do anything. Now I want to say to him that every year for the last 20 or 30 years, the Hockey Association hosted not only the Banks tournament, but they had a lot of tournaments going on at the Astroturf. That Astroturf up there is in need of help.

Now it is true that the government found themselves in a bit of trouble because they did not go to the extent of bringing the private sector involved in this important activity. I believe that the private sector should be brought into contact with most of these sporting activities to help. But we need to see what - because at the end of the day, most of these sporting activities need some sort of benefit. Many persons who contribute sometimes use the tax incentive to help these sporting activities. I know there was a time when business people could get a refund on income tax or corporation tax in order to claim these things. But it is a help to government - because when you do not have the cash to put into sporting activities, the various business community will do so.

And when you look across Barbados you see a situation where a number of fields have not been cut over time. In my constituency, for example, I notice that they run and cut the Glebe often because the Glebe is next to my constituency office and they make a lot of noise because it is barely used. And I am glad that the Minister - the Attorney General - is always there. He is always there. He is called to the St. George Bar. He is always there and he likes it a lot. Called to the bar.

And I want to say that we definitely need to see the field at Sweet Bottom. The field at Sweet Bottom is in trouble. Now I want to alert the Minister to this. I noticed that the Chairman - the present Chairman of the Sports Council, who is my friend too, and I believe he may be doing a good job - but you need to see the field at the Sports Council at Glebe and at Sweet Bottom cut. We need to see this. We need to see, Mr. Speaker, that these are important things.

The pavilion that was left at the Glebe - many persons are saying to me that we definitely need to get that pavilion restarted because it has to be used by the St. George Park Cricket Club, the school, and the children in the area. I am saying that I believe that the Glebe playing field is used widely by most persons, not only in terms of sporting events but also in terms of other activities. There is a lot of sharp lines - and I want to compliment those

persons who now have the bowling lane at the Glebe. But I feel that we have to do more for sports.

The Minister spoke today about the new activity - the activity around the Kensington Oval - and about warehousing of the sporting activity there for those persons who will have to use the new sporting facility, the Armstrong sporting facility, at the Kensington Oval. Mr. Speaker, that particular facility was bought by the Government of Barbados some ten years ago when we negotiated the Kensington Oval and houses and businesses had to be relocated. That particular warehouse was bought by the Government of Barbados. And the Minister of Housing -

the Minister of Sports need to understand that is really a government facility and is not a private sector facility. I hear talking about and I hope they're not paying the private sector for this particular facility because it was left by this government to help develop Kensington Oval. And when we look at what has happened at Kensington Oval today, I noticed that the Minister of Housing does not go there because the Minister of Housing and Lands is on record to say that he does not support the development of Kensington Oval. It was he who said he carried the cricket down to St. Lucy. I remember he said that. So he does not go to Kensington. He has never been to Kensington. And we do not see him at any of the cricket games down there because he knows that he wanted his sporting facility down in St. Lucy.

But the Minister must tell us what has happened to those persons who were relocated around Kensington Oval if it had been completed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I am here listening and trying to get the whole feel of the relevance to this matter. And I hope that you can convince us soon that it is relevant.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Because, Mr. Speaker, the Member who introduced his resolution spoke about Kensington Oval. The Member spoke about the Armstrong building. He said that the Armstrong warehouse will be used - persons will use it, Mr. Speaker, for play activity when the gymnasium is closed. And that makes the matter in St. Lucy relevant. I am not talking about the airport. I will not talk about the airport today.

But I want to say that it is important for us not only to develop the sporting activity at Kensington Oval, but across Barbados. And I noticed, Mr. Speaker - you reminded me - no, no, no. I remember. You know, I do not have a voice as such.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please leave me out of it. Please leave me out of your argument. Thank you very much.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I would not bring you in this. But I noticed that something has happened at the gymnasium over the last two years that I would want to hear from the Member for St. Philip North, the Member for St. Philip South, and indeed the Member for St. Philip West. Something has happened and I believe - I understand that the Member for St. Philip North really stood up to defend what has happened at the gymnasium. But something has happened: this Government has sent home an individual, the manager of the gymnasium. The manager of a gymnasium who today has not received - not only his severance - has not received any payment at all. The man is struggling. I understand that the Member for St. Philip North stood up and said, well, you cannot send home this man. He was sent home. And the man is struggling today.

And I believe that we need to understand that many sporting people go home after two or three years, but they need to get their pension. They need to get not only their pension, but they need to get some form of compensation because they need to live. And when it comes to sports - I have made this point, Mr. Speaker - there are a number of persons who will go home at the age of 30, 35, 36, because a sportsman's life is relatively short, but they have to live. And why then would you not encourage - why would the Government not encourage the payment of severance for this youngster who is struggling and may very well lose his house because of the problem? And I believe that we have, as a matter of course, to look at this particular situation.

Now, the Minister also spoke about road tennis - road tennis, which is indeed a sport which we have developed in Barbados. And of course, I want to compliment Ms. Kim Holder and her family who have done very well in the development of road tennis, not only at a national level, but have taken it even wider. And the Minister has spoken about the development of road tennis and of course volleyball. But sports in itself - I guess the Minister of Tourism will agree - we have to carry forward this sporting agenda even to higher heights if tourism is to succeed in its totality. Sports and culture is the one area that can help build our tourism plan and tourism product more so than any other. And we have to put systems in place to sustain this type of thing.

I do not want to have a situation where one government comes in and does their thing, another government comes in and does their thing, and we have it going like this. I believe that the time has come for us not only to set up a commission for the sporting arena, but to take it out of the political realm - that we need to have this particular commission where we move forward in a way that will help the development of sports. Not only cricket and football, but also the smaller sports like volleyball, road tennis, and of course basketball. So there are a number of areas, Mr. Speaker, that have to be addressed.

I also finally want to say, Mr. Speaker, that we must complete what was started years ago. You talk about Sir Garfield Sobers. A lot of work has been done over the years to develop appreciation for Sir Garfield and we must continue to do so. But there are also other cricketers who are still on the sideline. And I want to spend a minute on this, Mr. Speaker, because I believe that we have to look at what is happening in cricket. It is not fair - and I have spoken of this openly - that in today's Barbados and in the Caribbean, our cricketing teams, the West Indies cricket, is struggling. And why is it struggling? I believe it is struggling because there is a need to do three things in particular. And I believe the three things are important: remuneration - I believe for our team there is a need to put in place technical development for our players and of course psychological development for our players as well.

Now, I understand quite recently that the West Indian cricketers are among the best paid cricketers in the world, but this is only recently. What about those other cricketers who have passed their time but who are struggling? There are many cricketers - resident cricketers - who have not played cricket in the last ten years, who do not have a job because they are still under 50, who do not receive any pension, who have got no severance, but yet still they are struggling. I believe - I do not want to call names in Parliament - but I am telling you that we have an opener, [Inaudible.] Campbell, and I want to say to you, the Members challenged me - challenged me to find a cricketer that is struggling. I am saying to you that we need to help persons who have played cricket, who have played football, but who dedicated their youth to the sport but have not developed in terms of education and find it difficult, Mr. Speaker, to get a job. And it is serious. A person may get a little job where they earn three or four hundred dollars a week, but it is not sustainable. We need to do something.

And in our time, I know in our time, the Government over there felt that we had to put in place a package for those cricketers and footballers and sportsmen who have done well over time, and we will continue to do so. And I want to ask the Government what is happening to those persons who do not get a pension, who have not got severance, whom the rest in the cricket board have abandoned. What is happening to those cricketers? I want to see a package for them. Of course, Sir Garfield - he will get help. And I believe it should remain like that forever. But there are other players, other persons whom the society sees from time to time that are struggling. I believe that we have to put something in place for them.

I want to say that we must become cognisant of the fact that we need to help our sportsmen and women, and the private sector must help, but Government must put in place the enabling legislation for them to help. I am not sure that the Government has put in place - I know it has started some time ago, but it has been left to itself and more

has to be done in order to help develop the sports of the individual.

So we will want to see that the Astroturf for the volleyballers and for the Hockey Association come on stream. We want to see the fields cut across Barbados. We want to see the stadium for athletics at the National Stadium repaired. Over the past five years a lot of these facilities have been left to themselves. And Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that they can be developed and that they will ever go back to their normal state. It is going to be expensive. It is going to take at least three or four, five years in order to return the Astroturf, return the gymnasium, return the National Stadium to its former glory. They are going to take money. So you have to put in place a programme to get the public sector involved in helping to sustain these sporting facilities and help develop the sporting career in this country. Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, the Honourable Member for Christ Church [Inaudible.]

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am raised to wrap up the debate on this resolution which has seen contributions from both sides of the House. And I would like to thank all members who participated in the debate and who would have given their various views and various inputs. This, of course, Mr. Speaker, is a very credible project and it is clear that it has received the support of both sides of the House.

I would like to certainly thank the Rotary Club of Barbados for working with the government in a partnership that will ultimately see the construction of a facility which will be very critical to the development of our differently abled children. It is, Mr. Speaker, a step in the right direction.

The last speaker who spoke called out to the government to do more for sports and he very correctly indicated that sports and culture do have a central role to play in relation to the advancement of sports tourism and of course the wider economy of Barbados. And I assure him that we are doing that. We are placing sports at a very pivotal point within the development culture of Barbados. The government itself has identified sports as a key plank of the growth strategy. And we have done that because it is recognised that over the years we have not - and when I say we, respective governments included - the government that he was a part of would not have placed enough emphasis on the importance of sports within the wider context of economic development. And all of the points that he has raised certainly confirm the fact that there has been a huge amount of neglect, I believe led by the Barbados Labour Party administration, which has seen us to this point.

And I am very glad that he has placed the debate within the context of recognising that since this neglect occurred over so long, he is now calling out for the government - this government - to do something to relieve him of the anguish of being a part of a government that led this huge neglect of the sporting sector. And I want to assure him that work has started. In fact, the very resolution before the House today signals the commitment of the government to partnering with private sector agencies. This is an example, Mr. Speaker, of that kind of private sector partnership that the Honourable Member for St. George North is talking about. And therefore it is within that context that we are working on a Sports Development Act which will help to create the kind of incentives to drive private sector participation in terms of further development of sports.

I believe the Honourable Member for St. George North is correct because we have had, for example, at the gymnasium - the gymnasium, of course, I made the revelation in my speech that the gymnasium was opened in November of 1993. And if you count the years, I did say that it has not benefited from any significant refurbishment or renovation since that time. In fact, this is the first time in all those years that you will see that kind of work being done. So I have specific information that can confirm that I am not happy with what has happened to the approach to sports under the last administration. But I will not dwell on that because it does not help the cause of today's athletes in terms of where they stand.

And the reason why I have had to respond is because the Member for St. George North made the point that he wanted more attention being paid to securing the future of sports persons. I share that particular concern as well. I believe, for example, that sports persons, particularly those who have served at a national level, should not have to worry about work in Barbados. But that is a philosophy that I hold. The question is how do we deal with it? But I agree with the thinking that our sports persons who have served at national level should not have to be in dire straits, should not have to be looking around for a job here and there. The State has a responsibility to those persons and we are looking at that. We are looking at that particular issue and I assure the Member that we are looking at that. But it is not something that can just be dealt with overnight. It is an issue that I am concerned about too, as Minister, and therefore I assure him that it is something that we will have to look at in a very serious way.

He did mention the question of cutting of fields, but cutting of fields continues to be something that the Sports Council does every day. Of course, one of the challenges the Sports Council has encountered over the years is that it has not been capitalised as it ought to have been. And this is not something that has occurred only since this government came to office. I think what the Member is

recognising, and I recognise too, is that we have to be able to move beyond the question of which government is in office and give the Sports Council the equipment. In the last Estimates, we have made provision for the necessary equipment to the Sports Council - the tractors and so on, and the mowers that are required to cut the fields. And therefore I believe you will see some further acceleration of the kind of routine work that is required.

I did mention that one of the things we are focusing on is the total reconfiguration and the restructuring of the National Sports Council. And part of that plan will see a different approach to how we pool resources towards taking care of our fields. We are also working with private sector partners to build partnerships where we will have community involvement in that exercise as well, where community groups can also be a part of helping to take care of the fields in their particular area. But it is an area that I will assure the Honourable Member will receive more focused attention. But the Sports Council is still cutting fields across Barbados.

The other point the Honourable Member mentioned had to do with the hockey turf, the Astroturf. Now the Honourable Member would know, once he remembers, how the hockey turf was first installed. You are talking about a facility that has been installed over 12 to 15 years ago - in fact, more than that, I believe. And to a large extent the life of the hockey turf expired under the former administration and ought to have been changed. The hockey turf was not supposed to be changed 12 years ago - it had not completed its life in 2008. They played hockey there after 2010. But because after 2010 they had problems, the Hockey Association wrote to the government and asked for help, but the government kept deferring because they did not have any money. And I am saying that is not a money thing - the government has to involve the private sector in this activity.

I can categorically say, and I do recognise in saying this, that the turf does need changing. I am just for the record indicating that the life of the hockey turf expired under the former administration. And therefore I would have expected that the Honourable Member would have started out from that recognition. But be that as it may, I did say in my opening remarks - I am not sure if the Honourable Member was in his chamber - but I did indicate that through a syndicated funding arrangement, including a contribution from the National Sports Council, we are now at the stage of having that turf replaced and it will be done very shortly.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the Member is misleading the House. The Member said two things that I remember - I always listen very carefully because I have told the Member on many occasions that we like to listen to him and we record what he speaks. He said two years ago

that we were going to restructure the sporting arena, the gymnasium, the Ministry of Sports, and that in that arena a man called Mason was sent home because of the arrangement in place. He also said that in short order we will see the turf replaced. I want to have a time frame for that.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. Please take your seat.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will repeat the fact that I said - yes - that through a syndicated arrangement, including financial support from the National Sports Council, including financial support from the Barbados Olympic Association as well as the Pan American Sports Organisation, otherwise known as PASO, the funding is now in place to replace the Astroturf. I also said that we are going to be moving out the current water-based surface and replacing it with a sand pitch. And in the second phase of the work we will then see the work in relation to the secretariat and office facilities. Now that is the current state of play.

In relation to the other matters that the Member raised - he said a young man was sent home from the gymnasium and that the government has treated him unfairly by not paying severance. Now that is not correct because no young man has been sent home from the gymnasium and the issue about severance does not apply. I did say publicly the question of the former General Manager - the General Manager's services were terminated by the board of the gymnasium. And the matter, if it is litigious, remains there. But it is not to be said in this House that this government has presided over sending home a young man and has not complied with the laws of Barbados in relation to severance. So that has to be put in its proper perspective. The board of the gymnasium is still in its lawful position to be able to exercise its rights over employees. So if the Member has been given information that is not correct, then I will invite the Member to revisit that. But from the perspective of myself as the Minister, the restructuring arrangements at the gymnasium were started and that also included the parting of company with the General Manager of the gymnasium. It is as simple as that.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that I have answered all of the queries raised by the Member for St. George North, including of course reminding him that quite a lot of the neglect in relation to sports would have happened under the Barbados Labour Party administration. In relation to the warehouse, I did say that was being explored. I did not indicate that there would be payment for it. Now the warehouse is under the control of Kensington Oval and therefore we are in discussion with Kensington Oval in terms of the utility of it. I did say that even after the gymnasium is repaired we will be looking at having a more long-lasting arrangement to accommodate those federations

who have to rely on indoor facilities. So I believe that is a very forward-thinking approach by the government that should be congratulated, particularly because I know the Member for St. George North would recognise that if all of these facilities were in place then we would not have to deal with them now. So it does suggest that the government is involved in forward-thinking planning and is doing things that obviously were not in place before.

So Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to delay the chamber any further. The Barbados Labour Party, of course, would have taken sports where they could take it. And it is now left to this government to take sports where it ought to be. And we recognise that. And it has to do, Mr. Speaker, with how we deploy our resources. And I am saying that nationally I agree that we need to treat sports more seriously. And therefore when we talk about allocation of resources to sports - for example, if the Honourable Member for St. George North can be taken at face value - I would have assumed, for example, that when you have a situation where you use \$100 million in Greenland, for example, that really and truly that money could have been better allocated to the development of sports. But it was not. And if we are going to meet at that point, I would agree.

So I believe that we are on a path of ensuring that we put the necessary funds into sports and we will ensure that the facilities are appropriately upgraded. When the restructuring of the Sports Council and the National Sports Council and the gymnasium are concluded, you will see a structure in place that will answer much of the questions that have been raised. Because by and large we have not done that restructuring over the years. It is now the role and function of the government to do that comprehensive restructuring that will ensure that quite a number of things - for example, ensuring that all our cricketers are not only recognised, but our sports persons generally recognised. I mentioned the Hall of Fame, which will be located at the gymnasium. That will be something that will be done. But there are other things that are of a tangible nature that I believe we have to have a national discourse on.

I believe, as I said, that our sports persons ought to be guaranteed proper employment when they have finished their course of duty at the national level. And therefore we are attentive to that and I intend to do something about it to ensure that we do not have those issues occurring. We have to be seen as a sporting nation in all elements. So once we bring to this House the sports development legislation which we are working on now - we have been doing the focus group sessions with the various groups and organisations - the intention is to come up with a white paper which will set the tone of a new sports policy in Barbados and recalibrate the whole focus on sports in its holistic dimension. That is really where we want to position sports in Barbados. And you have my assurance that we

will get there in terms of how we move forward with sports. I share the tone of the contribution in that there is an urgent need to press ahead with how we develop sports. And I certainly am on that page and the government is on that page.

Mr. Speaker, I want to again thank Honourable Members for their contribution to this debate. And I now move that this resolution do now pass.

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ORDER NO. 16 – RESOLUTION – LEASE OF CROWN
LANDS TO THE NATIONAL INSURANCE BOARD –
KEAN GARDEN, ST. THOMAS

Mr. CLERK: Yes, Order Number 16, sir. In the name of the Honourable Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development to move the passing of a resolution to approve, in accordance with Section 5 of the Crown Lands Vesting and Disposal Act, Chapter 225, the lease to the National Insurance Board of the parcel of land, the property of the Crown, situate at Kean Garden in the parish of St. Thomas in this island, for the construction of a public centre complex inclusive of police facilities.

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

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, the resolution before this House seeks permission to lease a parcel of land measuring 12 140.6 square metres situated in the parish of St. Thomas to the National Insurance Board for the construction of a citizen security facility. We are speaking, sir, as I said previously, of 12 140 square metres. And this is in continuation of this Government ensuring that the workers of Barbados, and especially the policemen of Barbados, are being housed in proper facilities.

As you are aware, sir, this is only one of many solutions that this Government will be bringing to solve the problems as they relate to the police station. As you are aware, when the money was flowing, these things did not occur. But now that there is a financial strain, this Government, recognising that we have to ensure that the people we are responsible for are properly housed, is finding the necessary solutions.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things I want to speak to also - as you know, there has been a lot of talk in Barbados about the contribution to the development of the economy and also to the housing conditions of workers. And I want to thank the National Insurance Board for ensuring that they have provided the necessary financing for these facilities. But at the same time, I want to make the point that in crisis times, we expect organisations in Barbados to recognise that they also have a role - not only in housing

the workers of Barbados and helping to contribute, but they have to ensure that they do not increase the deficit of the country. Because in times of need, everybody has to hold the hand of Government. Because when these organisations have their problems, we too find ways of ensuring that we provide the necessary finances to protect them. There was a time when the Government of the day was able to provide finances to the National Insurance Corporation and to the National Insurance Board, and now they in turn are doing likewise.

You would have heard a lot of discussion, sir, about junk bonds and things like that. Sir, I want to make the point that you cannot issue junk bonds in your own country. You cannot. And I am not talking about what occurred in this House - I am talking about the thoughts I am hearing on calling programmes. The junk bonds being issued by Government would have to be where you are issuing them to people outside of Barbados. And I want to challenge all those persons who spoke about junk bonds to recognise that that is not what they want to say. What they want us to do is to get involved in a larger debate - and that larger debate is to call on organisations who are financing the debt of Barbados to reduce the rate. And if that is what they want to do, they need to say that. But to come and start the debate by making reference to junk bonds is not being true to their profession.

We have to deal with the issue, sir. What we have before us, sir, is part of a loan for \$76 million, and this also has to do with the financing of the Government's projects and also the Government debt. So if the bonds that the people get from the Central Bank are junk, then the debt would be junk too. But I am saying it can only be an outsider who speaks of junk. The citizens of a country cannot get down from their own country - and that is what I am talking about. So I challenge all of those who want to speak on a discussion of financing and how we can reschedule the debt to join the debate at that level, and not use the term junk bonds when they know that a country cannot issue junk bonds to its own citizens, because the citizens make up the country. But if they are outside buying the bonds, that might be a different issue, because then you have to use foreign exchange to pay for it - and that is where the matter comes. But as long as you are using your own money, it cannot be junk. You are not looking for foreign exchange to do it.

So the matter before us, Mr. Speaker, as I said, is a lease to the National Insurance Board for the facility at Kean Garden. And we are quite prepared with the terms and conditions, sir, as explained in the document. And with these few remarks, sir, I beg that this resolution do now pass.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is there a seconder? Yes, the Member for St. Thomas.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: I am happy, sir, and I'm still very sad because this would have been the third time within this administration it would have heard about the commencement of the police station or the police complex, multipurpose complex, whatever it is called at Cane Garden. Mr. Speaker, let me say it's a bittersweet feeling because I have had grandchildren who've graduated from school since this project was to be on the table. So the Honourable Member for St. John is not the only person suffering from certain challenges. I trust that hers will soon be finished at the St. John Polyclinic, but that whatever will happen at Cane Garden will have similar features because, as one knows, there are some serious demographic shifts coming into the parish and numbers have grown.

I'm not going to go into the need for another primary school or other facilities that I know are necessary because we have no community centre after the community centre we had at Rock Hall - that was the Mecca of the parish. That community centre is now turned into the magistrates court and therefore it limits the activities that one would wish to do. Thank God for the Lester Vaughan School that this government in the early 1980s and 1990s did not complete, but it has been completed and was established in 1996. That is about the biggest location in the parish for us to be able to congregate and have discussions. So I know that it is overused - calypso tents, community independence activities and so on. And we are happy for it because that is what it was built for and that is what schools should really support, serve in the community and be community owned.

So I am happy to have learned from the Honourable Minister of Housing of the plan for the police complex or the community complex for Cane Garden, St. Thomas. I know that my predecessor will feel very happy about it since it was his instigation and his dynamic works that led to the acquisition and to have the complex constructed.

I would just want to indicate at the outset that I think that police are special. And in these trying times - and other workers, there are many other workers, nurses and so on - I am not casting any expressions on anybody or what they said. I am saying that me personally, Mr. Speaker, I think that police are special. Were I not in the teaching profession, Mr. Speaker, I would have joined the police force. And I feel that I have some ideas and some tactics. So right now I am not the Attorney General, sir. I am me. I feel, Mr. Speaker, if I had not gone into the teaching profession as a young woman, I would have joined the police force because I think that I can offer something extra in the force. I admire those young men and women who have decided to join the police force and to make their contributions from a professional level.

We need them. And the reason why we need them is because they are there to protect and serve. And every little squabble, every little confusion - call the police, call the

police, call the police. I think they are special because I admire most of them. I'm not going to go into the small percentage of the ones that should be cleaned out - sent to another island, because there are some of them too. But the largest percentage of them, about 98.5 per cent, have been serving this country well. They are honest, they are upright and they are role models. I can testify to that.

In relation to the District D police station, sir, that was closed off because of lack of - let me call it - maintenance, as well as it being within an old structure that must have been over 100 years old. In the light that the post office, the rates and taxes department, the police station and the community centre were all in the Rock Hall location, and of course because of the ageing plant, the post office was then relocated to Richmond Hall. The police station was bulldozed and the community centre turned into the magistrates court. So that made a minus for the community life.

Because I can speak, Mr. Speaker, sir - I never met you there. I don't think you had a preference for anyone in St. Thomas in that way at that time and because of your youthfulness you would not have known - but that community centre served us for festivals, dances, all kinds of recreational activity. But now we are without a community centre. I'm not blaming anybody. I'm just saying that it brings me to the next level where I believe that the police who have served Barbados well should not have had to leave Rock Hall and not gone into another home where there was safety for them and protection. Because it's okay for us to talk about the police protecting the public. I believe that our police need protection now for the number of challenges. We hear about people shooting at them, trying to knock them off their bikes and so on. They too need protection. And I'm not going to say what kind of protection, because that is not my role.

But when they left District D in St. Thomas, where the Rock Hall location was, they were then taken down to the old St. John the Baptist school on Holders Hill. And they were nestled in that little corner. And things improved because the old school was refurbished. But over time, that too fell into dilapidation, and they are now stationed at Holetown. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that you will appreciate the challenges when there are problems in St. Thomas, especially when it stretches all the way to Chapman's Village. And Spring Farm would not be too far out, but going all the way over to the section that joins St. Joseph and Walk Spring. And so it takes a longer period for the officers to get there. And sometimes there are no vehicles because of the depleting fleet that should be available. And so it's creating quite a lot of problems for the residents.

We are seeing in regular traditional communities where people looked out for each other but now are working, are now ageing and can no longer do that kind of

looking out to make sure that properties are secure. We are now seeing a large number of criminal activities taking place in what used to be the traditional quiet village where you could leave your windows open and your doors and you could step to the neighbour's - by the time you come back, Mr. Speaker, your house is broken into. Within recent times I am now back into the community where I was raised in the Vault Road, and we're having so many challenges there. And one doesn't want to have to be calling the police all the time for things that the police may think are frivolous but are really very important. So I think somebody is breaking into houses, whether it be in St. Thomas, St. Lucy, St. Peter, St. Michael - at minutes past nine in the morning and taking out people's properties. And so that is a serious thing, Mr. Speaker.

And therefore I want to say that it is critical that we get that police station. We know that the levels of crime are rising because of the statistics and people not reporting as often, or not reporting matters because some of them have the attitude: what's the point in complaining when they will not come till three days later? And then when they come, they are not equipped with the necessary equipment - cameras and tape and spotlights and different things - that they can carry out their duties in the best way. So the statistics may not show that crime is on the increase, but we in our villages and our communities and our towns recognise that there are problems.

And so I would want, Mr. Speaker, to say how happy I am that there is going to be an effort to have the construction of that location to be able to ease the plight of the residents, but more particularly of the police officers, because it's okay to be working in an institution where there are so many environmental problems as well. And when you look at the Holetown police station, you can see that it needs a lot of refurbishment. And those officers are working under very trying circumstances, especially when they have to shift to accommodate - the ones in Holetown have to shift to accommodate St. Thomas, to accommodate Belle Plain police at one point in time. And therefore I say that they are squatting, Mr. Speaker, and I am happy for any opportunity where they can come into their own environs and be able to service the public of Barbados, more particularly the people of St. Thomas, with a little more efficiency. And I would like this project to be done effectively and efficiently and with alacrity because it is long overdue. It is long overdue.

I do not even know, Mr. Speaker, where Crab Hill is. I have never worked in the Attorney General's or the Home Affairs office. I cannot speak to those matters. Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that I support this resolution for the construction of the complex. What I would like the Honourable Minister, though, to indicate, sir, to us and to me in particular, is the extent to which the complex will not only accommodate the police, but what are the other

aspects of housing and the facilities that will be included in the package. As far as I'm aware, it does not indicate in this 12 140 square metres of property here what they will be. Will it have a library? Will there be a community centre? Will there be a community technology location? Will there be a welfare department or a part of it? Will there be a small pharmacy? I really don't know.

I know the Honourable Member for St. John was able to highlight and outline the advantages of the Polyclinic and what it is bringing to ease the plight of the folk in St. John. And I respect that highly. And I hope that measure will soon come to a close to her satisfaction and that of the people of St. John and the surrounding environs. And I would like, sir, in the same way that the St. John Polyclinic is going to be offering those services, that this complex will indicate exactly and precisely what the residents in St. Thomas and the adjoining communities can look towards, because it is long overdue and really very necessary if it is to make a difference in the light of what is happening here.

And so, Mr. Speaker, once the environs are prepared and the facility is done, I believe that it will offer the police officers a safer and better location from which to function, because we acknowledge how complex their employment is becoming when it comes to the danger and the critical decisions they have to make and the enforcement of law and order that is necessary so that our community can become another environment where people will want to live and work and survive.

And my final comment, sir, if you will allow me, is to do with the whole resurgence of community officers. I had not seen one in the parish where I live in a little while, but within recent times I want to commend the Home Affairs and the Attorney General's office for having a relook at the exercise. We used to hear about an outpost in the New Orleans area and so on. We understand the reasons why. And an outpost over in St. Lawrence because of the heavy traffic and so on. And we had lost our community police officer. I am happy, sir, to indicate to this Honourable Chamber that the District D Police community officer is doing a fantastic job. And what blesses my heart more, that lady is Christian and understands the rudiments of carrying out her duties professionally. And she has been going from house to house in the villages to make people aware that the Police Force is carrying out its duties fairly effectively and that young people can aspire to be members of the Royal Barbados Police Force because of what they see is happening. She is doing a kind of education in an informal way to the public that we all are happy to have.

So, Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Minister of Housing and Lands will indicate to me, sir, or to the people of Barbados for that matter, exactly what are the special

features of this project, it will help to bless my heart, because I know that we will all be happy to be able to have more direct access to police, to policing, more direct access to community life, to be able to bring a measure of ease to the people of the parish of St. Thomas and of course the surrounding communities that will be in close proximity to the police station.

Mr. Speaker, with those comments I will wish to thank the police at District D and in general the Royal Barbados Police Force for its commitment and dedication over the years to ensuring that the whole of Barbados is being protected and that the service that is being offered will make a difference and build up a better confidence in what is being done in this country through the constabulary. It is with those comments, sir, that I wish to thank you for the opportunity.

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

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to close this debate. I've heard what was said by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and I'm very happy. I'm very happy that the Honourable Member has endorsed the good work of the new Acting Commissioner of Police and that the Honourable Member is happy to see how the policemen are now doing the community work. And when next I see him, I will let him know that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas is very happy about the community work that is now being done by the police force and that the Honourable Member would like to see it not only in St. Thomas, but right across Barbados.

When I go to Cabinet on Thursday, I would also let the Cabinet know that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas has endorsed the facility at St. John. And the Honourable Member has now asked that a similar facility be done in St. Thomas. And I would beseech them to adhere to the request from the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and that all the attention that was placed on the St. John Polyclinic and the facilities there, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas would like to see them in her constituency. And I want to congratulate her for moving away from the -

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, I remember. Perhaps if -

Miss C. Y. FORDE: - he would allow me to say that the project was conceived by the Labour Party, went back to Cabinet in our time because it was just for a police station, and therefore the extension to incorporate those areas I asked about. I respect the Commissioner of Police. I know him not. He's not a friend of mine. And I'm glad -

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, it has not changed anything I've said. And I will put in the word for

the honourable member who called on me, you know, Mr. Speaker, to do these things. And I'm doing them exactly. Wherever I have to place the request, I will place it on her behalf because I support the point made by the honourable member for St. Thomas. So I don't have a problem with that request, Mr. Speaker. And I will oblige the honourable member by taking the message because, as you are aware, sir, I can only do that, sir. I cannot come and promise the honourable member for St. Thomas the facilities. I have to take it before Cabinet and I will do that on her behalf. So with those few words, Mr. Speaker, I beg that this resolution do now pass.

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, sir, with that we have come to the end of Government Business for the day and I beg to move that the sitting be adjourned until Tuesday the 21st of July at 10.00 in the morning.

AN HON. MEMBER: I beg to second that.

The question that the House be adjourned until Tuesday, July 21, 2015 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

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HINKSON, Mr. E. G. (St. James North)
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PAUL, Mr. J. D. (St. Michael West Central)
SINCKLER, Hon. C. P. (St. Michael North West)
SUTHERLAND, Mr. D. G. (St. George South)

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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 correcting and preparing this report. Members are named as in the 2013–2018 Parliament.

Q1. Front matter. The source does not record the PRESENT list or the officiant at Prayers. The Members listed are those identified from the record; the time of meeting, 10.00 a.m., is as stated in the source. Please supply from the Votes and Proceedings.

Q2. Throughout. The bracketed time-checks in the source are out of sequence (for example '[01.00 a.m.]' during the morning and '[12.30 p.m.]' after the luncheon suspension) and have been omitted. At several of them the text resumes in mid-sentence, so words may be missing at those points.

Q3. Throughout. The source gives the words 'I beg to second that' at the end of the Leader of the House's own motions to suspend and to adjourn, and the Chair calls only 'Seconder' on the Minutes and the Standing Orders. The seconding words are printed under AN HON. MEMBER; the seconds are not identified. Please confirm.

Q4. Suspension of Standing Orders. The motion lists 'Standing Orders 6, 16, 18, 20, 42, 43 and 44', printed as in the source. Other sittings of the session suspend Standing Order No. 42(5); please confirm the number.

Q5. Order No. 17, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER is in the Chair from the call of Mr. E. G. Hinkson, but the change in the Chair is not recorded. Her call also reads 'Today is Friday', although the sitting was on a Tuesday. Please check against the recording.

Q6. Order No. 17, Hon. D. St.E. Kellman. 'Thank you, sir' and the words that follow, after Mr. SPEAKER asked the Member to address the Chair, run on in the source as part of Mr. SPEAKER's speech; they are restored to Hon. D. St.E. Kellman. The source has 'Morea Holder Trust'; printed as the Maria Holder Trust, as named by Hon. C. P. Sinckler.

Q7. Order No. 17, Mr. D. G. Sutherland. The source gives 'the Sagarfi Sober Sports complex'; printed as the Garfield Sobers Sports Complex.

Q8. Order No. 17, Mr. J. D. Paul. Headed 'HON. G. P. IAN GOODING-EDGHILL, J.P., M.P. (St. Michael West Central)' in the source; he was not a Member of the 2013-2018 House. Mr. SPEAKER's call is incomplete ('the Honourable Member for St. James - sorry,') but the

speaker twice refers to families in St. Michael West Central, whose Member in 2015 was Mr. J. D. Paul; printed under Mr. J. D. PAUL. Please confirm.

Q9. Order No. 17, point of order during Hon. D. O'N. Inniss. The point of order 'The honourable Member is misleading the House by saying that people can give without the assistance of tax allowances' is headed 'SPEAKER UNCERTAIN - REVIEW' in the source. Hon. D. O'N. Inniss had just addressed his comments to the Member for St. James North, and Mr. E. G. Hinkson had earlier argued the case for tax allowances on donations to charities; printed under Mr. E. G. HINKSON. Please confirm.

Q10. Order No. 17, Mr. G. A. Clarke. Mr. Clarke's speech is interrupted by a Member who says that 'the Honourable Member for St. George North is misleading the House'; the source runs this into Mr. Clarke's speech. Mr. Clarke then refers to 'the lease that the Honourable Member for St. Philip South is talking about', so the interruption is printed under Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE and the remainder restored to Mr. Clarke. The next passage ('Yes, our Member - the Honourable Member - is misleading the House. I do not have that file on my desk.') may also be an interjection. Please check against the recording.

Q11. Order No. 17, Hon. S. A. Lashley (reply). The reply and the further remarks after Mr. G. A. Clarke's point of order are headed 'HON. G. P. IAN GOODING-EDGHILL, J.P., M.P.' in the source; he was not a Member of the 2013-2018 House. Mr. SPEAKER called the Member for 'Christ Church [Inaudible.]' and the speaker rises 'to wrap up the debate' as mover of the resolution, the Minister responsible for sports, Member for Christ Church West Central; printed under Hon. S. A. LASHLEY.

Q12. Order No. 16. The Clerk reads the site as Kean Garden, St. Thomas; Miss C. Y. Forde refers to it as 'Cane Garden'. Her words are printed as in the source. Please confirm the place name.

Q13. Suspension. The source records '[THE SITTING WAS SUSPENDED AT [Inaudible.] P.M.]'; the time of the luncheon suspension is not recorded.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, June 23, 2015, with Mr. SPEAKER presiding. The Minutes of June 15 were not yet available and were

deferred on the motion of the Leader of the House, Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, and Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42, 43 and 44 were suspended for the remainder of the sitting.

Under Order No. 17 the Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, Hon. S. A. Lashley, moved a Resolution to lease 25 000 square feet at the Garfield Sobers Sports Complex, Upton, Christ Church, to the Rotary Club of Barbados South for a recreational facility for children with disabilities, for 25 years at \$1 000 a year, the lessee to pay insurance, maintenance, land tax and utilities. He described the allocations of land at the complex, of which 10.89 of 26.48 hectares had been allocated, and a renovation of the gymnasium costing \$18.4 million, a gift of the People's Republic of China, with a 150kW photovoltaic plant, due to start in April of the following year and close the gymnasium for some 14 months. With Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER in the Chair, Mr. E. G. Hinkson supported the Resolution in principle but questioned the land tax condition and the effect of the budget's changes to tax allowances on donations to charities; Hon. A. D. Brathwaite submitted that he was in breach of Standing Order 28(4), and Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER agreed. Mr. Hinkson cited the census finding that 5 per cent of the population had a disability, the Jamaican policy reserving 3 per cent of public sector jobs, and his Private Member's Resolution calling for disabilities legislation. Hon. C. P. Sinckler said the Government gave the Council, which had sought a bus to transport the disabled, \$350 240 a year and had waived the VAT on the bus; Mr. Hinkson rose to say that \$52 000 was still being asked of it. The sitting was suspended for lunch.

After the suspension Miss C. Y. Forde supported the Resolution, recalling the education white paper of 1995-96

and the mainstreaming of students. Hon. D. St.E. Kellman said the rent of \$1 000 a year had been negotiated without objection and that the Maria Holder Trust had a memorandum of understanding with Government; he declared an interest as the father of an autistic son, and Mr. SPEAKER twice asked him to address the Chair. Mr. D. G. Sutherland spoke as a Rotarian of over seven years. Mr. J. D. Paul spoke of families in St. Michael West Central and the maintenance of sports facilities such as the Velodrome. Hon. D. O'N. Inniss, a former Rotarian, challenged Mr. Hinkson and said that the majority of donations to charities were not claimed on income tax returns; Mr. Hinkson rose on a point of order. Mr. G. A. Clarke recalled the policy of a \$100 annual rent for disabled groups and raised the fields at Sweet Bottom, the pavilion at the Glebe and the Astroturf. Replying, Hon. S. A. Lashley said funding from the National Sports Council, the Barbados Olympic Association and PASO was in place to replace the Astroturf, with the water-based surface to give way to a sand pitch. The Resolution was passed.

Under Order No. 16 Hon. D. St.E. Kellman moved a Resolution to lease 12 140.6 square metres of Crown land at Kean Garden, St. Thomas, to the National Insurance Board for a complex including police facilities. Miss C. Y. Forde, Member for St. Thomas, welcomed the project, recalled the closure of the District D police station at Rock Hall and spoke of community policing. In reply Hon. D. St.E. Kellman undertook to take her request for facilities in St. Thomas to Cabinet. The Resolution was passed.

On the motion of Hon. J. D. E. Boyce the House adjourned until Tuesday, July 21, 2015 at 10.00 a.m.