



## **Ministerial Statement**

### **Minister of Education**

**The Honourable Dame Jennifer Smith DBE, JP, DHumL, MP**

**Friday 25 May 2012**

### **The Pembroke Hamilton Club Agreement**

**Mr. Speaker**, I rise this morning to once again explain - for the benefit of the listening public - the difference between the Parliamentary process which allows for constructive criticism and politicalisation and electioneering.

I do this to ensure that members of the public will know that Members of Parliament do not have to resort to either the print media or electronic media to get their questions answered.

Every week, in this place, opportunity is offered for just such discourse - through Parliamentary questions.

**Mr. Speaker**, the Opposition generally use Parliamentary Questions to ask about travel and the number of teachers and students.

So I was surprised that they chose to ignore this avenue to get their questions about the matter of a 2008 agreement signed between the Pembroke Hamilton Club (PHC) and the Ministry of Education answered.

Regardless of the fact that this is yet another example of the Opposition ignoring the Parliamentary oath that they swore - **Mr. Speaker** - I will answer the unasked question.

My research indicates that in September, 2008, the then Minister of Education entered into an agreement to provide for the implementation of a wellness curriculum for preschool, primary and middle school students within the TN Tatem cluster of schools.

This cluster includes the Warwick and Paget Preschools, Purvis Primary, Heron Bay Primary, Gilbert Primary, Paget Primary Schools and TN Tatem Middle School.

The agreement called for the Pembroke Hamilton Club to provide the facility and the programmes for **four hundred and forty-two dollars** per student / per year; with the proviso that this sum would not be less than **three hundred and ninety-one thousand dollars** per year.

The terms of the agreement mean that PHC must make the facility available to each school on request during the school day (unless there is a conflict due to a request by another member of the family of schools).

The facility may be used for students each week from Monday to Friday, between the hours of 9 and 4. And, the hours may be extended to 5 p.m. on each of these days at no additional fee.

In addition, the Ministry shall have exclusive use of the facility when required for students, and PHC must ensure that other patrons do not interfere with use by students and staff.

**Mr. Speaker**, the Facility can also be used for prize-giving exercises, ceremonial events and recreational events organised by the schools or their Parent Teacher Associations - at no additional fee.

And - the Facility will be made available to the Ministry of Education for the purpose of conducting meetings.

School staff will be able to use the facility at no additional fee; while parents and guardians will benefit from a discounted rate.

**Mr. Speaker**, the agreement comes into operation **when** agreed by the Ministry of Education and PHC; but **not** before the facility has been granted a certificate of completion.

The agreement remains in effect for twenty years from the date of its coming into operation.

**Mr. Speaker**, the result is that this agreement will have a value of approximately **eight million dollars** by the time it concludes.

**Mr. Speaker**, I want honourable members to know that this agreement came to my attention this year and, in light of the economic climate, I have asked the Attorney-General's Chambers to advise me of its validity four years after the date of its signing given that we currently do not have a completion date for the facility.

**Mr. Speaker**, Members and the community can be assured that I will ensure transparency as we move forward.

In conclusion, **Mr. Speaker**, let me repeat the Oath we have sworn: "I being a Member of this present Assembly, do swear by Almighty God to use and employ my best endeavour therein for the general good, without any respect to private interest, gain or advantage, striving to discharge a good conscience in all equity and integrity during my continuance therein."

Thank you.