

PM Rowley's remarks: 2016 Launch of the Prime Minister's Charity Golf Classic

Venue: The Prime Minister's Residence and Diplomatic Centre

Date: Monday 18th April, 2016

Thank you very much Chairlady of this evening's proceedings.

The president and executive members of the Prime Minister's Charity Golf Tournament – and all the shy golfers at the back of the room – welcome to the Prime Minister's Charity Golf Tournament 2016.

I am very pleased this evening to welcome you here at this venue to signal the start of this very exciting annual event. I seem to recall, at some time in my younger days, taking part in at least one Prime Minister charity event which might have been held in Tobago.

I am very pleased and surprised to see that this is your twentieth year because I thought that it was only recently that this tournament had been started. But, when I calculated, it really is twenty years and, considering the state of my handicap after so many years, it means that you are better at charity than I am at golf.

However, I want to congratulate the executive members who keep the event alive and who use golf in such a very positive way because there are many people who do not believe that golf is positive. They don't believe that walking behind a little white ball gives any exercise and secondly, it's an indication of stupidity on the part of some.

Only yesterday I was looking at television at one of these game show programmes and the question was, "What's the most boring game on television?" And the winning answer was golf.

So there are a whole lot of bad things about golf. In fact in the Parliament, I get – you know – ribbed for playing golf. And I don't know why it is a bad thing to be playing golf but it's a good thing to be in golf if golf has been doing such wonderful things for the people in Trinidad and Tobago who acknowledge and who benefit from those who do.

The average person who plays golf, possibly, is doing better than the average person in Trinidad and Tobago. And that is why being involved in charity is such a good thing – for golfers to be involved. Because notwithstanding whatever our individual circumstances, we can help somebody else whose circumstances are far less attractive are far less attractive than ours.

And we do so not for the benefit of being able to say what we have done or who we have helped but out of a genuine sense of volunteerism – that you volunteer to keep the tournament going, volunteer to host the tournament, to play in the tournament knowing that at the end of the proceedings there would be a financial benefit which can be used to help others to improve their individual circumstances. Especially those families who, from day to day, rely on the efforts of others to ease their pain and their stresses and to renew and sustain their faith in the communities in which they survive.

I also want to thank the sponsors, especially those who have been sponsors and who are now returning, especially in time of straightened circumstance in the country, knowing that the dollar on this occasion would go a lot further than at an earlier time. We, as a nation, are going through some very difficult times now and it is good to see that members of the business community and individuals in their own right not turning away from being involved in matters of this nature, even though the economics are not as attractive as they were in the not too distant past. So the sponsors deserve our acknowledgement and our sincerest thanks.

Particularly those sponsors who came on in the beginning and who have stayed on until now and those new sponsors who have come on, who have seen proper organisation, proper accountability and who understand that whatever they do in this little event that their effort goes to those who have been targeted. And, at the end of the day, regardless of the score or the weather on the day of the event, that a good time ought to have been had by all.

This year I happen to be, by virtue of the office I hold, the patron of the event and I am particularly pleased to be able to do that and to have been able to have you here this evening to kick off the tournament. I understand you have, so far, sixty teams and I hope that by the time the day comes that you will have all the teams that the golf course can hold.

I have to apologise for not being able to play this year – had I been around I certainly would have participated in the event if you had agreed to keep my score a secret – but as you might have heard, I am out of the country during the first week of May on national duty and would not be able to participate. However, another group of organisers have said to me that since I am unable to take part in this event and since I am the patron of this event, they have undertaken to find the day to have another tournament and to ask you to help to organise that tournament so they can have a bigger tournament, so that they can have two tournament. So if that comes off I hope on that occasion I will be able to spend the day with you.

But on behalf of all the children in particular, and for those that I know personally – the ones at Cyril Ross – and all the other charities and the parents of those children and the communities where those children live, on their behalf I would like to thank you all very

sincerely for continuing to share with them that which you have contributed to this tournament.

So, welcome to the Diplomatic Centre, Have an extremely successful tournament. I wish you good weather and I wish you very very low scores, those of you who are golfing, and I look forward to hosting you again sometime in the very near future.

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