



NATIONWIDE

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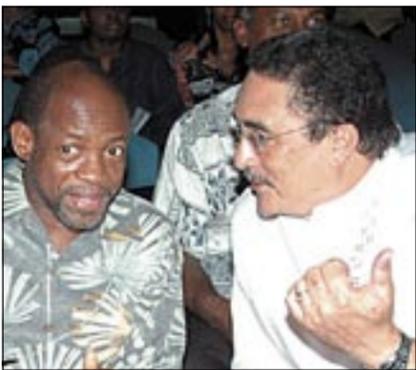
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CASTRIES CENTRAL BYE-ELECTION VOTERS LIST READY

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PRIORITIES FOR 2006

For this year and until such time that the General Election is announced, the Government will focus on six (6) priorities.

Priority number one is to secure further reductions in crime;

Priority number two is to intensify efforts to reduce unemployment;

Priority number three is to speed up implementation of the Universal Health Care System, the UHC;

Priority number four is to complete preparations for the Cricket World Cup, 2007;

Priority number five is to complete the drive to universal secondary education, to provide every child a place in a secondary school.

Priority number six is to ensure that Saint Lucia conducts its electoral business without reproach and Saint Lucian participate in elections that are free, fair, and free from fear and intimidation." Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony



Among the major achievements for 2005 were the repairing and rehabilitation of roads. According to Prime Minister Kenny Anthony "drivers and commuter travelling between Vieux-Fort and Soufriere were pleased that the new South West Coast Road was finally completed last year." Commuters in the north western communities have also been moving around in comfort. In the above photograph, a section of the Babonneau road was rehabilitated during the past year. Many other roads in the area the Grand Riviere/La Croix road were also completed.



"Take 2" - A fifteen minute news review of the week. Every Friday at 6.15 p.m. on NTN, Cablevision Channel 2.

Government Notebook

A fresh news package daily on all local radio stations



BETTER HEALTH CARE AND EMPLOYMENT FOR BABONNEAU



Hon. Felix Finnisterre tours projects with technical team

Minister for Communication Works Transport and Public Utilities and Member of Parliament for Babonneau says much work has been done in the communities of the north east of the island to improve social and economic conditions of the people. Reporting to the nation during his Christ-

Education

Under the World Bank funded Disaster Preparedness Project, the roof of the Fond Assau Primary School was replaced. Under the same project, the Babonneau Primary School will be similarly repaired, for which the tendering process is currently in train. Meanwhile, we look forward to the

mitigation projects aimed at ameliorating the living conditions of many communities island-wide were undertaken. Specific to Babonneau was the construction of two causeways at Des Ablon in Boguis, and the Floris in Ti Morne. Also under this project a number of other small drainage works were completed. To the hard working farmers in the Marquis River valley, relief is on the way. The long-awaited, long-promised replacement bridge has been designed and approval for tendering by way of a 'no objection' is being awaited from the World Bank.

In the area of rural Electrification

All communities have benefited under the rural electrification programme. However, particularly gratifying is the electrification for the farms in the Poix Doux area. For decades, the efforts of farmers at diversification have been frustrated for lack of power. Thanks to the generosity of LUCELEC new poultry and pig rearing ventures have began.

Water supply

The completion of the Hill 20 project to replace the 6 inch raw water line with an 8 inch PVC pipe should result in a more reliable supply for the wider North-east Castries and Babonneau areas. However, domestic connections and the distribution network need to be upgraded to ensure an adequate supply to our numerous under-serviced com-

munities. In this regard, WASCO connected, free-of-charge 25 households in the Talvern area, whilst the distribution system to Boguis and Des Barras were upgraded.

Through the People's Republic of China's Chinese Cooperation Fund, provides a grant of \$50,000 toward poverty alleviation in select communities. Through this initiative foot paths will be constructed in the Ti Conway area of Fond Assau at a cost of \$25,000. Also approved for implementation is a community-managed, locally-chlorinated water storage and treatment project for the small Ravine Go/Lanfor community in Chassin.

Residents of Chassin and indeed all of Fond Assau and its surrounding areas have reason to look toward 2006 with renewed optimism. The scheduled opening of the Aerial Tram project early in the new year will result in employment for over 75 persons; especially youth, with the majority naturally coming from the immediate



Aerial Tram under construction

neighborhoods of Babonneau. During construction the playing field was damaged and the youth were denied its use for some six (6) months. We thank the sportsmen for their cooperation and understanding and we look forward to the speedy and complete restitution of the grounds by the Aerial Tram Company."

The full text of the Minister's address is available on the Government of Saint Lucia website www.stlucia.gov.lc



Improved water treatment and distribution

mas message for 2005, Hon. Felix Finnisterre spoke of improvements in education, health care, roads and water supply. The following is an edited version of the Ministers address, which was broadcast on local radio and television.

Health Care

In the area of health care, we opened the La Guerre Health Post - thanks to the Poverty Reduction Fund. We also re-commissioned the newly refurbished Babonneau Health Centre, funded by the CDB and BNTE. Currently, there is the ongoing refurbishment of the Fond Assau Health Centre under the Economic Reconstruction Programme funded by the CDB/GOSL. Completion is expected early in 2006. The People and Government of Cuba responded generously to the improvement of the eyesight of approximately 100 persons within the Babonneau Constituency.

completion of the designs and tendering for the new (8) classroom block at the Fond Assau Primary School. If all goes according to plan, the ground breaking ceremony should take place in the first quarter of 2006.

With respect to Road improvement

The major reconstruction works on the La Croix/Grande Riviere road is now significantly complete. The Fond Assau/Chassin and La Croix/Des Barras roads, under the French funded Tertiary Roads Programme are at an advanced stage and nearing completion. Minor repairs have been undertaken on a number of other roads. However, it is hoped that in the new year, major repairs will be carried out on the Babonneau main road, the Ti Chemin/Fond Assau(short cut) and the Cacao/Girard Roads.

Small Mitigation

Under the 2nd World Bank Disaster Mitigation project a number of small



The La Guerre Health Post

Energy Task Force Discuss PetroCaribe Agreement With Venezuelans

The Government of St. Lucia remains deeply interested in the PetroCaribe Agreement. That's the word from Prime Minister Dr Kenny D. Anthony. The Prime Minister says the Government "remains interested" in the offer by Venezuela of cheaper fuel, notwithstanding the recent criticism of the Venezuelan initiative by former Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition United Workers Party (UWP), Sir John Compton.

Sir John recently claimed that the Venezuelan initiative, which has been embraced by other Caricom member-states, may upset the United States and result in punitive actions against them. He also argued that closer Caricom relations with Cuba could also upset Washington.

However, Prime Minister Anthony



Fuel is the major input in energy production in Saint Lucia

says Sir John's statements regarding Venezuela and Cuba's relations with Caricom "not only reek of the Cold War, but are also inconsistent with

present-day political realities." He said: "The Government of St. Lucia will never surrender its sovereignty to any country. We will pursue initiatives,

once they are in the interest of the people of St. Lucia."

The Prime Minister pointed out that, "contrary to what Sir John thinks and says, there are cities and states in the United States of America that have made use of the Venezuelan offer to make cheaper fuel available to citizens." He asked: "If US cities can make use of the Venezuelan oil initiative, why then shouldn't St. Lucia enjoy the benefits of cooperation with and assistance from Venezuela?"

The Prime Minister indicated that St. Lucia would soon be engaging the Venezuelans in further discussions on the agreement. He pointed out that "the Government's Task force on Energy Conservation has been meeting on the PetroCaribe initiative and I am hoping that the committee will be in a position later this month to hold discussions with the Government of Venezuela on the agreement."

Prime Minister Anthony noted that "St. Lucia is not alone" in embracing the initiative, pointing out that "several other Caricom member-states have also been making use of the facility."

Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony Challenges Trinidad to Offer Fuel Options to Caricom

Prim Minister Dr Kenny D. Anthony has challenged the Government of Trinidad & Tobago to summon the will to do more to offer better fuel alternatives to its Caricom neighbours, rather than dissuade them from taking up Venezuela's offer of cheaper oil through the PetroCaribe initiative. Trinidad & Tobago's Prime Minister Patrick Manning, who is the new Chairman of Caricom, last week said in Guyana that while the Venezuelan initiative had "distinct negatives" for his country, it could be even more dangerous for Caricom states seeking fuel supplies on soft terms.

Mr Manning also threatened that should the thirteen Caricom member-states that have indicated interest in the Venezuelan initiative cease buying oil from Trinidad & Tobago to enter into an agreement that eventually falters, Trinidad & Tobago may not be willing to do business with them. Said PM Manning: "If ever countries wish to come back, they may very well find themselves in a position where Trinidad & Tobago has no products to supply."

Asked by a local reporter for a response to the Trinidad & Tobago Prime Minister's comments, the St. Lucia Prime Minister noted: "Prime Minister Manning's comments are consistent with what he said at the Caricom Summit here last July – that he realises that there will be challenges for Trinidad & Tobago." Prime Minister Anthony added, "the fact is that he must understand that these countries are reeling under pressure brought to bear on their

economies by the volatility of oil prices, while we all have to purchase fuel from Trinidad & Tobago at world market prices." He said there was an alternative to the present position adopted by the Trinidad & Tobago Prime Minister.

Said the St. Lucia Prime Minister: "Rather than Trinidad & Tobago suggesting that they are incapable, or that they are unable to do anything about the high prices we are forced to pay, they should rethink that position. "Notwithstanding that the oil industry in Trinidad & Tobago is owned by private sector interests, the Government can work out special arrangements for the OECS and the rest of Caricom." Dr Anthony explained the rationale behind Trinidad & Tobago's Caricom neighbours seeking other alternatives. He said: "These countries have been driven to accept the PetroCaribe agreement, not just because it's attractive, but because Trinidad & Tobago is not providing any alternative to them."

According to the St. Lucia Prime Minister: "It is not easy to understand why the average driver in the Eastern Caribbean must pay between \$10 and \$11 per gallon of gas, when it only costs about \$5 or \$6 in Trinidad & Tobago – especially in the context of a Single Market and Economy, where there is a general expectation of equality of treatment across the region." Dr Anthony was of the view that "Trinidad & Tobago must do some very serious thinking." He said: "They cannot have their cake and eat it. They cannot have a captive market and not reach out to help them in their hour of need. It simply will not do."



Major decisions ahead for CARICOM leaders

He said he knew his Trinidad & Tobago counterpart "has been a great friend of the region, his government has advanced the cause of integration in the region, he is committed and he has given generously." Prime Minister Anthony continued, "on this petroleum issue, I don't think Saint Lucia can agree with him, because I do believe that if government really wants to do it, they can create an arrangement that will ease the plight of these islands. They must summon the will to do so."

Last week, Prime Minister Anthony also restated Saint Lucia's interest in the PetroCaribe agreement after it was attacked by a former St. Lucia Prime Minister.

Responding to claims by former Prime Minister Sir John Compton that by embracing the agreement with Venezuela, St. Lucia and other Caricom member-states may anger Washington, PM Anthony reiterated that "St. Lucia is a sovereign country" and that its Government "reserves the right to pursue initiatives, once they are in the interest of the people of Saint Lucia."

He noted that several US cities had

taken advantage of the PetroCaribe Agreement "to provide cheaper fuel available to their citizens." Consequently, the Saint Lucia Prime Minister asked: "If US cities can make use of the Venezuela oil initiative, why shouldn't St. Lucia enjoy the benefits of cooperation with and assistance from Venezuela?" He also noted that "Saint Lucia is not alone, as several other Caricom states are also making use of the facility",

St. Lucia is one of the 13 Caricom member-states that have indicated interest in the PetroCaribe Agreement. Barbados and Trinidad & Tobago did not sign the agreement in Puerto Cruz, Venezuela, last year, but Jamaica has proceeded to implement it. Under the agreement, provisions are made for financing mechanisms and compensation, which include long-term and short-term financing, deferred payment and energy efficiency. According to its terms, Venezuela is also offering technical cooperation to support the creation of state agencies in countries not possessing qualified state institutions for this purpose.

Support Enumeration says Chief Elections Officer

Chief Elections Officer Carson Raggie is again encouraging the general public to cooperate with enumerators of an ongoing house to house enumeration exercise.

Mr. Raggie says though some members of the general public may consider some of the questions as being strange, the information is important for the revision of the electoral register and registration for access to health care services under the Universal Health Care Programme, when it comes on stream.

"Registration is voluntary in particular registration to vote, and if you do you do not wish to be registered or to be verified there are procedures and processes

that will take place so as to enable the department to either get information other than what you have provided them with or put you where you ought to be but the only way your name will be deleted is when you have died or when you have left the country for the period stipulated by law," Mr. Raggie said.

He says persons who refuse the enumerators are doing so at their own risk as they will not be issued with the new National ID Cards, which will become vital in the new CSME environment and for access to services under the UHC.

"So if you do not wish to apply for that national ID Card it is totally up to you. When the opportunity comes and you do

not have a National ID Card, then you would be able to access the Universal Healthcare which will be introduced. So it is entirely up to the person. If the person do not want to cooperate, then at some stage will have to come back to the office or to a registration centre to obtain that national

ID," Mr. Raggie said.

The new, free of charge, identification card will be embedded with additional security features to combat identity theft. The card holder will also be able to travel freely to countries within CARICOM using that document.



**NEW YEAR'S ADDRESS TO THE NATION
BY DR. THE HONOURABLE KENNY
D. ANTHONY PRIME MINISTER AND
MINISTER FOR FINANCE, ECONOMIC
AFFAIRS, INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL
SERVICES AND INFORMATION
JANUARY 16, 2006**

Fellow St. Lucians, as has become customary, around the middle of January each year, I report to you, the citizens, on our achievements, progress and failures of the year past. It is also an opportunity for me to outline the broad development objectives for our nation in the current year.

Last year, in my New Year's Address to the nation, I identified a number of priority areas for our country. This year I would like to report on what progress have been with regard to these priority areas. I will commence by reporting on the performance of our economy.

Performance of our economy

Preliminary data on the performance of the Saint Lucian economy up to year-end 2005, suggest strongly, that the country remained firmly on its path of accelerated growth. Despite the sluggishness of the Agricultural Sector and in the cruise sub-sector, reduced arrivals of cruise ships, all other major sectors of the economy expanded, leading local officials, as well as regional and international institutions to forecast economic growth of approximately five per cent (5%) for 2005. This will be the highest growth rate Saint Lucia will achieve since 1992, some fourteen years ago.

Expansion In Tourism - Developments in the tourism industry have been catalytic. Visitor arrivals for the eleven month period from January to the end of November 2005 featured significant increases of 21.8% to a total of 23,698 with respect to yacht passengers, and a further 6.8% to a total of 290,047 stay over visitors. While data for December is not yet available, there is every reason to believe that St. Lucia surpassed that important milestone of 300,000 stay over visitors in 2005 as arrivals typically averages in excess of 20,000 in the month of December.

However, US home porting and constraints in domestic berthing capacity restrained the overall performance of the cruise sector by 17.5% up to the end of November 2005.

Increase In Manufacturing Output - The value of manufacturing output from January to September 2005 alone, exclusive of textile and paper products, is estimated to have increased by 7.7% to \$91.7 million. This is an important development, as this sector prepares to face the challenges of operating in a more competitive environment.

Buoyancy In Construction - Unquestionably, a construction boom is well underway. The expansion was largely private sector led, as public sector construction slackened in the course of the year.

Private sector construction activity was particularly buoyant in 2005, owing to increased confidence in the economy. This is evidenced by the following indicators drawn from the first half of the year. (a) Investment expenditure in tourism plant of \$60 million; (b) Investment in telecommunications equipment and plant of \$17.1 million; (c) A 7.1 per cent increase in the value of imported construction material to \$43



**Prime Minister of Saint Lucia
Hon. Dr. Kenny D. Anthony**

million; and (d) A tripling of funds disbursed by the local financial institutions for financing commercial and residential construction to \$93 million, of which commercial construction attracted \$54 million.

In 2006, construction activity will be accelerated as the Government Public Sector Investment Programme unfolds.

Merchandise Trade - The buoyancy in the economy was reflective in merchandise trade. The value of merchandise trade imports grew by 12 per cent to \$522.8 million. Unfortunately exports contracted by 8.5 per cent largely as a result of a reduction in the export of bananas. There were significant increases in all three categories of imports; namely consumer goods by 55 per cent to \$288.1 million; intermediate goods (\$131.2 million) mainly on the strength of the rising price of oil and capital goods (\$103.6 million) led by increases in machinery and transport equipment.

Improved Fiscal Performance - On the fiscal side, taxes from International Trade and taxes on income led to an improvement in current revenue by 17 per cent to \$304.2 million. This increase is consistent with domestic economic expansion and improved administrative efficiency. Effective control measures led to relatively flat current expenditure of \$249.4 million and resulted in a considerable improvement of the current balance of \$54.9 million by the close of June 2005. However, the level of Capital Expenditure exceeded the current surplus and led to an overall deficit.

Meeting our priorities

When I addressed you at this time last year, the emphasis was on the priorities for 2005. Indeed, I had set seven priorities for the Govern-



More resources for the police to combat crime

EXCITING TIMES AND MOMENTS OF DECISION

ment and nation. Today, I am pleased to report that we have been able to register successes in each.

Was Unemployment Reduced? Priority Number One was to reduce unemployment.

Unemployment, as you know, has been a stubborn problem. At long last, I am beginning to see a downward movement.

I indicated that Government would seek to reduce unemployment by intensifying investment in tourism, encouraging more investments in the Information Technology Sector, encouraging self-employment through establishment of small businesses and expanding opportunities in public sector construction. One year later, I am pleased to report that we did succeed in encouraging significantly more investments in both the tourism and construction sectors, leading to increased employment at all levels.

According to Mr. Edwin St. Catherine, the Director of Statistics and I quote him, "the main driver for the decline in the unemployment rate is growth in the number of employment opportunities available in the hotels and restaurants and the Construction Sector, with employment in hotels and restaurants skewed towards the employment of women by a factor of two women to every one man employed and a factor of six men to every one woman employed in the construction sector. The Hotels and Restaurants Sectors added approximately 3,500 persons, while the Construction Sector added approximately 2,500 persons. While this is a healthy development, it must be sustained since the situation can be reversed due to the cyclical nature of construction activity and the fickle nature of the Tourism Sector.

For the first time, quarterly employment statistics for the 2nd and 3rd quarter of 2005 are indicating that the numbers of persons employed in the Hotels and Restaurants Sector has surpassed the Agriculture Sector, recording in the third quarter a total of 8,980 persons employed when compared to 7,460. The Construction Sector employed approximately as many persons as did the Agriculture Sector in the 3rd Quarter of 2005."

Today, several new tourism investments have taken off. In the past year, we have seen the opening of the new Coco Palm resort at Rodney Bay and the renovated Coconut Bay resort in Vieux Fort. The Plantation at Cotton Bay and Discovery at Marigot Bay are both about to come on stream; and new construction works have started on the Landings at Rodney Bay, the new Bay Gardens Suites (also at Rodney Bay) and on the new Le Paradis at Praslin on the island's East Coast.

At the same time, several existing hotels began expanding last year. These include the original Bay Gardens Hotel at Rodney Bay, Le Sport Villas at Cap Estate, Cara Suites at La Pansee in Castries and Jalousie Plantation in Soufriere - which changed hands and went under new, local management last year.

Altogether, the total number of investments in our tourism plant announced in 2005 have amounted to way over one billion EC dollars. This is a remarkable show of confidence on the part of local and foreign investors in our country and our tourism industry. Similarly, the Government of St. Lucia has to date awarded incentives to 24 local and foreign investors to expand accommodation for the Cricket World Cup. To these will be added Bread and Breakfast Accommodation Projects approved for the thousands of visitors expected here for the Cricket World Cup next year.

The developments just mentioned have also resulted in increased confidence on the part of the airlines, which have again began to focus on increasing flights to St. Lucia. Last year, we were able to secure new daily flights to and from Atlanta by Delta Airlines; the expected return of Air Jamaica with three weekly flights to and from New York as of next month; and direct flights from Manchester by Virgin Atlantic in June.

It is precisely because of the good performance of our tourism industry last year, that a very upbeat Minister of Tourism, Philip J. Pierre, was able to so confidently predict a few days ago, that this year, barring unforeseen circumstances, St. Lucia is set to reach and pass the 300,000-mark for stay-over visitors and hotel occupancy is also set to pass last year's 68% record. All of this continues to spell jobs and more jobs for St. Lucians.

Progress on preparations for CSME - Priority Number Two last year was to finalize St. Lucia's entry and participation in the Single

Market and Economy created by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Here too, we have some progress to report.

Legislation has been introduced in Parliament to remove discrimination between St. Lucians and other Caricom nationals to create the conditions for the Freedom of Movement of factors inherent in the CSME.

Last year, the Ministry of Commerce, which also has responsibility for matters pertaining to the trade aspects of the CSME, also began an ongoing public education drive aimed at informing the population and related sectors of the issues involved. These measures took place against the background of the establishment by the Government of St. Lucia of a Special CSME Task Force. The Special CSME Task Force is principally responsible for engaging the various sectors and fine-tuning of the required measures and mechanisms for our eventual entry into the new regional trading arrangements between member-states of Caricom.

I know that some of you are uneasy about the CSME. I understand the fears. I wish to reassure you that this Government will jealously guard the patrimony of Saint Lucia. The CSME will widen our horizons as our nationals will benefit from new rights and privileges in other member states. We must remember that unless we are part of the CSME we cannot sell our exports to the region on equal terms with our CARICOM neighbours.

St. Lucia will be present at the official ceremony launching the CSME in Jamaica on January 30th, 2006. Our presence there will be to reaffirm our commitment to the new regional



Improvement to the drainage at Beausejour for cricket in 2007

initiative. Once all issues are resolved, St. Lucia will be ready to join the CSME in the first quarter of this year.

Any Respite in Crime? Crime reduction was the third priority outlined in my New Year's Address in 2005. As you are aware, a number of initiatives were introduced to combat crime and criminality. These included the recruitment of more police officers. It is the intention of the Government to increase the membership of the Royal Saint Lucia Police Force by year end to over a 1,000 for the first time in its history.

The Programme for the Recovery of Illegal Weapons was another initiative introduced by the Government to combat crime. In 2005, the Programme recorded a measure of success with a total of 203 illegal guns being removed off the streets and from the hands of criminals. The number of guns removed off the streets this year as a result of the programme is four times greater than the numbers retrieved in the two years preceding the implementation of the programme, when an average of between 40 and 50 guns were being recovered each year. As a result of the success of the programme - which rewards informants and not the criminals - there was also noticeable reduction in the number of gun-related offences throughout the country.

Last year Saint Lucia recorded the same number of homicides as it did in the previous year. Thirty seven homicides is an unacceptable figure. In fact any homicide is unacceptable. This year, that figure must be reduced.

Additional measures introduced last year to intensify fight against crime in 2005 included the introduction of a new Criminal Code which came into effect; and later in the year the new



Expanding health care - Impressions of the new hospital

edition of the Revised Laws of St. Lucia was published and launched. Further, the curriculum at the Police Training Academy was improved and a new Crown Prosecution Service was introduced to improve the prosecution of criminals. The Interception of Communications Bill was also enacted last year, to strengthen the ability of the police to keep track of the more sophisticated criminals and their activities.

I regret that the establishment of the Forensic

and prepare Saint Lucians in the various communities as to what role they are perform to make our hosting of the World Cup the most successful ever. These roles ranged from providing entertainment to serving as volunteers. The feed back from the communities so far has been very positive. On October 22, 2005, the Local Organizing Committee held a very successful Road Show. And on December 5, 2005, the volunteer programme was launched. It is my hope that the benefits of the volunteer programme will instill into all Saint Lucians a greater sense of volunteerism which will redound to the greater good of our Society.

Repairing and Rehabilitating of Roads - Priority Number Five last year was to intensify our efforts to repair and rehabilitate our road infrastructure. In this regard, drivers and commuters travelling between Vieux Fort and Soufriere were pleased that the South West Coast Road was finally completed last year. In addition, several roads were repaired under the Tertiary Roads Programme. In the case of the Castries-Gros-Islet Highway construction will commence this quarter. The rehabilitation of the East Coast Highway is expected to pick up momentum. Several new bridges were also constructed last year as part of the road rehabilitation project. Because of the heavy rainfall in what was the busiest hurricane year on record, several major and tertiary roads that were earmarked to have started were unavoidably delayed. However, weather permitting, work will resume. In fact work has resumed on several of these roads. It is expected that 2006 will be another busy year for road repairs and rehabilitation island wide.

Preparing Bananas for Tariff - Only Regime - Priority Number Six for 2005 year was to prepare the Banana Industry for the inevitable transition to a tariff-only trading regime. In preparation for this eventuality, Government has on one hand, continued to provide assistance to banana farmers and their organisations. On the other hand, Government has also intensified its diplomatic efforts within the World Trade Organisation (WTO) along with other African Pacific and Caribbean member-states to secure a better deal for our farmers than what is being demanded by Latin America and what is being offered by the European Union (EU). Given the vicissitudes of international trade, our banana farmers can only continue to hope for a better deal on the world market.

Despite the many challenges that confronted the banana industry in 2005, Saint Lucia continued to be the major producer of bananas in the Windward Islands. In 2005 Saint Lucia produced more than half of the total production from the Windwards grouping. With the advent of the tariff only regime, the prospect for the banana industry remains worrying.

Improving Water Supply - A major priority last year was to improve our water supply and in particular, to ease the plight of the Dennerly communities.

In this regard, we have done quite a lot. Millions were expended to begin work on a new 18-inch transmission line from the new Errard water intake to the new storage and treatment plant at Bois Jolie. Meanwhile WASCO has been given the go-ahead to procure the materials required to improve the water supply in Dennerly North as promised in last year's address.

In addition, the 20-inch pipeline to Gros Islet was commissioned last year. Work has also begun on a new 14-inch pipeline to take water from the Gros Islet plant back to the communities between Gros Islet and Castries. New water works have also been completed last year at Grace/Woodlands in Vieux Fort North, as well as at Hill 20 and Talverne. New tanks have also been installed at Desruisseaux.

The World Bank has also approved a US \$7 million project and the Central Tenders Board has made the necessary land acquisitions to enable expansion works which will double the capacity at the T.R. Theobalds plant at Ciceron. The age-old bottlenecks in the Roseau Dam are also being removed to increase capacity and flow.

Priorities for 2006

What then are our priorities for 2006? For this year and until such time that the General Election is announced, the Government will focus on six (6) priorities. Priority number one is to secure further reductions in crime; Priority number two is to intensify efforts to reduce unemployment; Priority number three is to speed up implementation of the Universal Health Care System, the UHC; Priority number four is to complete preparations for the Cricket World Cup, 2007; Priority number five is to complete the drive to universal secondary education, to provide every child a place in a secondary school; Priority number six is to ensure that Saint Lucia conducts its electoral business without reproach and Saint Lucian participate in elections that are free, fair, and free from fear and intimidation.



Tourism construction projects - reducing unemployment

Securing further reductions in crime

I will now focus on Priority Number One - I am aware that the issue of crime is the most burning issue among Saint Lucians. Indeed, it is fair to say that while Saint Lucians credit the Government for its efforts in stabilising our economy, promoting education and sports, strengthening governance and attacking poverty they are generally disappointed that the efforts to contain and reduce crime have not yielded greater results. It is clear that the Police and the Government must redouble efforts to convince our citizens that we can win the fight against crime.

I propose to invite parliament to revisit all offences involving firearms and stiffen the penalties in respect of the possession of unlawful firearms and the use of such firearms in the commission of crime.

I will grant approval to train a further sixty police officers this year to increase the strength of the Special Service Unit from 45 to 100 men.

Now that the process of constitutional reform is underway, the Saint Lucia Labour Party will, at the appropriate time, propose and pursue amendments to the Constitution of Saint Lucia, to remove all impediments, whether introduced by judges or otherwise, to ensure that the death penalty is enforced. Judges must implement the will of the people as expressed in the laws they have freely chosen to enact. We must cease the vacillation over capital offences, but comply fully with the Rule of Law. There must be no exception.

In the course of this year, further reform will be effected to the court system. I propose to in-



Tourism grew in 2005

roduce a night court, staffed by two additional magistrates to hear traffic offences. This initiative will ease the burden of police officers who are compelled to waste valuable policing time during the normal course of the day.

We have inherited a dilapidated and outdated Central Police Station in the Capital which has

become dysfunctional. Government will focus its attention on the rehabilitation and refurbishment of the Central Police Station as a matter of urgency in the next few months as a temporary measure. In the meantime, plans will be drawn up for the conversion of the existing Police Headquarters into a modern, functional Headquarters Complex that will include a new Central Police Station.

Initiatives to reduce unemployment

Earlier, I spoke of the inroads we have made into unemployment. I intend to continue the broad mix of policies the Government pursued in 2005.

There are, however, two major initiatives which the Government proposes to undertake this year.

Firstly, the Government is aware that unemployment is highest amongst young people, especially persons between fifteen and twenty four years of age. In addition to the initiatives currently being undertaken by the National Skills Development Centre, Government will finance a programme of training for young persons particularly in the eastern and southern parts of the island for future employment in the new hotels to be constructed in those areas.

Secondly, as a country we have to be concerned about competitiveness. If wages continue to rise faster than productivity, then we are going to be in trouble. Government will, therefore, introduce a range of measures aimed at enhancing productivity into the workplace.

Details of both measures will be announced in the 2006/07 Budget.

Continued on page 6

EXCITING TIMES AND MOMENTS OF DECISION

Continued from page 5

Implementing the UHC

The implementation of the Universal Health Care system is our third priority. You have heard much about this programme. We must take decisive steps towards its implementation, especially now that construction of one of the two new hospitals is underway.

The Government will start with the changes to the governance and administration of Victoria Hospital. As I have stated before, the governance of the hospital will be ceded to a Board.

Secondly, commencing May 1st, The Government will introduce a scheme to provide free medical drugs to pensioners who suffer with hypertension and diabetes. The Government will invite the nascent UHC to administer this programme on its behalf.

I must however, warn you that the introduction of the UHC will cause discomfort and anxiety in the initial stages, but, we must press ahead because we cannot continue to deny basic health care to Saint Lucians who do not possess the income or the means to access such care.

Finalising preparations for World Cup

This year, we intend to complete our preparations for the 2007 ICC Cricket World Cup. The foresight of our Government in constructing the Beausejour Cricket Ground has given us more time in these critical months leading up to the Opening Ceremony on Sunday 11 March, 2007 and the first match in Saint Lucia on Wednesday 14 March, 2007 to concentrate on the myriad other issues critical to the hosting of a successful tournament.

In fact, we are sufficiently advanced and on schedule with our preparations that the Local Organising Committee intends to use the West Indies home series this year as a trial run for many of the new components that will be featured during the Cricket World Cup.

As stated earlier, the Beausejour-Bella Rosa link road is nearing completion, and with its commissioning in the next few months and the use of new drop-off zones, the traffic congestion that has been perhaps the one negative feature of international cricket at Beausejour will be a thing of the past.

Much of the permanent improvement works at the Beausejour Cricket Ground will also be completed within the first half of this year. Persons attending matches at Beausejour this year will notice an even faster draining outfield, due to comprehensive drainage works, improved concession stands, a new President's Box, and a permanent Venue Operations Centre, among other features. However, the feature that will bring even more pride to Saint Lucians will be



Preparing citizens for a new Parliament - a priority for 2006

used to be much more loving and caring. We have to rediscover that community spirit, and rekindle those feelings of respect, tolerance and neighbourly love that characterised our culture. And, we must make our country more secure.

There are still other challenges left to be overcome. Among these are providing sufficient accommodation to cater to the large numbers of visitors expected for the Opening Round and semi-final match that we will host. While I am extremely pleased with the response to the Cricket World Cup Accommodation Incentives packages, and remain optimistic that the Bed and Breakfast sector will help in bridging the accommodation gap, we still have an uphill battle.

I also want to see more of our local businesses preparing for the opportunities that 2007 will provide. The BOOST initiative of the OPSR is a positive step, but local businesses should also look to partner with other companies in the region, in order that they may profit from the entire tournament, and not just the Saint Lucia legs.

Universal Secondary Education - A Near Reality

I now turn to our fifth priority - Since assuming office, this Government has proven that economic growth is not incompatible with social re-engineering. Given the importance of education to our developmental process, its role in dismantling socio-economic barriers, walls of injustice and prejudice and as a source of empowerment, this Government has relentlessly pursued the goal of attaining universal

secondary education. Since assuming office we have worked steadily towards the achievement of that goal. During the tenure of this Government, four new secondary schools have been built. The construction of these four new secondary schools have increased considerably the existing stock of secondary school places available in Saint Lucia. The construction of three more secondary schools this year will serve to further augment the available stock of secondary school places. To date construction has already begun on two of these secondary schools - the Gros-Islet and Marigot secondary schools. The Gros Islet Secondary School is being built on 8.32 acres of land at Massade and will contain twenty classrooms, three science labs, one computer lab, one learning resource centre, an art room, segregated sick bays for male and female students, a staff room, offices for the principal, the vice principal, the school bursar and school counsellors and an auditorium designed to accommodate 1,000 persons. The school, when completed will be a four stream five form secondary school designed to accommodate seven hundred students.

The Marigot Secondary School will be built on 10 acres of land alongside the Marigot Playing Field and will also contain twenty classrooms, three science labs, one computer lab, one learning resource centre, segregated sick bays, a staff room, offices for the principal, the vice principal, the school bursar and school counsellors. This school will also be a four stream five form secondary school designed to accommodate seven hundred students.

In order to meet the stock of secondary school places required to make universal secondary education a reality, the Grande Riviere Senior Primary School will be transformed into a full-fledged secondary school. A new three storey concrete structure will be constructed on the existing site, an existing building will be expanded and upgraded to make provisions for specialist rooms, an existing toilet facility will be upgraded, a wooden building on the compound will be repaired and the school site will be landscaped. The new secondary school will contain between fifteen and twenty classrooms, two science labs, one computer lab, an auto mechanics room, a learning resource centre, a home economics room and the appropriate administrative facilities. The school will be either three stream or four stream, accommodating between 525 and 700 students as resources permit.

Also, three existing secondary schools namely the Choiseul Secondary, the Clendon Mason Memorial Secondary School and St. Mary's College will be expanded, upgraded and rehabilitated. A new building will be constructed on the compound of the Choiseul Secondary School, an existing building will be expanded and all existing buildings will be given a face lift. The school will be expanded from its present capacity of 525 students to 700 students. When the expansion is completed the school will be transformed from a three stream to a four stream five form secondary school.

A third floor containing six classrooms will be added to the existing accommodation of the Clendon Mason Memorial Secondary School and existing rooms in the school will be refurbished and reorganised. Particular attention will be paid to science labs, a learning resource centre and accommodation for teachers. The school will be expanded from its present capacity of 550 students to a four stream five form secondary school accommodating 700 students.

St. Mary's College - which is currently a four stream secondary school, will be transformed into a five stream secondary school when expansion work is completed. When the expansions are completed, St. Mary College is

expected to accommodate as many as 875 students. Surely, will all these investments in our education infrastructure, by the next academic year universal secondary education will at long last become a reality. I salute Hon. Mario Michel, our Minister of Education, Human Resource Development, Youth and Sports on this remarkable achievement.

Ensuring free and fair elections

As you know, our Constitution requires that General Elections must be held by the end of March 2007. But recent developments since the start of the New Year have indicated that some are more anxious than others about the upcoming national electoral contest. Indeed, some who are interested in the electoral race have demonstrated that they well understand the Creole proverb which says "Sa ki pa ni bon pye, pwan douvan" ("Those with bad feet or legs should start early.")

But, that aside, the Government last year did much to ensure the necessary pre-requisites are put in place so that the elections take place in a manner that is consistent with our democratic traditions. The enumeration of voters is now well underway. Scrutineers recommended by the Leader of the Opposition on behalf of the Opposition and myself, on behalf of the Government, are monitoring the process to ensure its integrity.

Earlier this month, I announced that regional and international observers will be invited to monitor the next General Elections. This is important, because while seven elections have been held since Independence in 1979, on no occasion has observers ever been invited. I wish St. Lucia to be an outstanding example of international best practice in electoral behaviour and conduct. We must conduct our elections without reproach and satisfy ourselves that we have been faithful to democratic norms and practice.

I urge all registered and eligible voters to ensure they are verified, so that, when the time comes, all will be ready, willing and able to perform their constitutional duty by exercising their franchise at the polls wherever they are registered to vote.

Conclusion

Fellow Saint Lucians, the year 2006 will, without question, be another interesting year. We expect that most of the projects which have commenced will be brought to a successful completion. Universal Secondary education will at long last become a reality. As well, our preparation to host the ICC Cricket World in 2007 will be at the point of completion by year end.

The Constitution of Saint Lucia requires that the next general elections for Saint Lucia be held no later than March 2007. I fully expect that during the course of this year we will see an acceleration in political activities on the part of all legitimate political parties. I take this opportunity to appeal to the leadership of all political parties and their supporters to conduct their electioneering activities in a peaceful, respectful and non-confrontational manner. For my part I intend to take all measures within the authority of the Prime Minister to ensure that general elections are conducted in a free and fair manner.

Let us all work together during 2006 to build a harmonious, peaceful and orderly Saint Lucia. I know we can do it, if we try. I thank you, and wish you a 2006 rich in good health, blessings, joy and success.



Ground works for new secondary school in Gros-Islet

the installation of night lighting at the ground, which will allow Saint Lucia to feature in a proud and historic first for West Indies cricket - the staging of the very first day-night One Day International on Wednesday 10th May, when Zimbabwe and the West Indies square off.

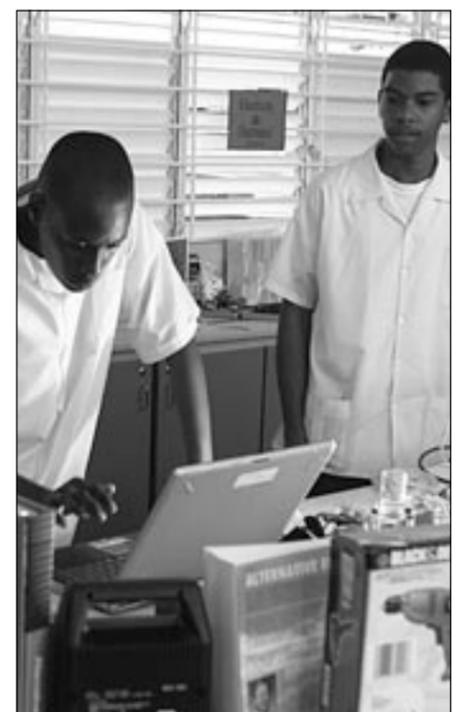
As I have repeatedly stated, the eyes of the world will be on our country in 2007, and the publicity that we stand to gain from our participation in the Cricket World Cup is both unprecedented and invaluable. Therefore, there is much that remains to be done in order that our country and our people can stand up to the most rigorous and intense international scrutiny.

We have to beautify our island. There are still too many eyesores that we take for granted or appear content to live with. Indiscriminate littering must be curbed and curtailed. Customer service must improve. We cannot make a successful transition to a service economy if we provide discourteous or unhelpful service. We must do a better job resolving conflicts. We

secondary education. As a Government, we have always held dear the ideal that education should never be the exclusive preserve of a select few. I have long contended, that education must never be seen as a privilege but rather as an inalienable right of every citizen. It is only through equal access to educational opportunities can our citizens improve their life chances and change their circumstances.

As a Government, we have long embraced the belief first espoused by our esteemed Nobel Laureate, Sir Arthur Lewis, that "the cure for poverty is not money but education." We have long regarded universal secondary education as a worthwhile ideal to which we should aspire. Today, I am indeed pleased to report that this long pursuit is near over. The dream of universal secondary education is about to become a reality.

There can be no doubt that the attainment of universal secondary education by the next academic year will be a monumental milestone



Secondary education for the future

NIC Gets Tough on Delinquent Employers

The National Insurance Corporation (NIC) is hoping that it will not have to enforce judgements handed down by the local courts against employers who persistently refuse to pay NIC contributions on behalf of their employees.

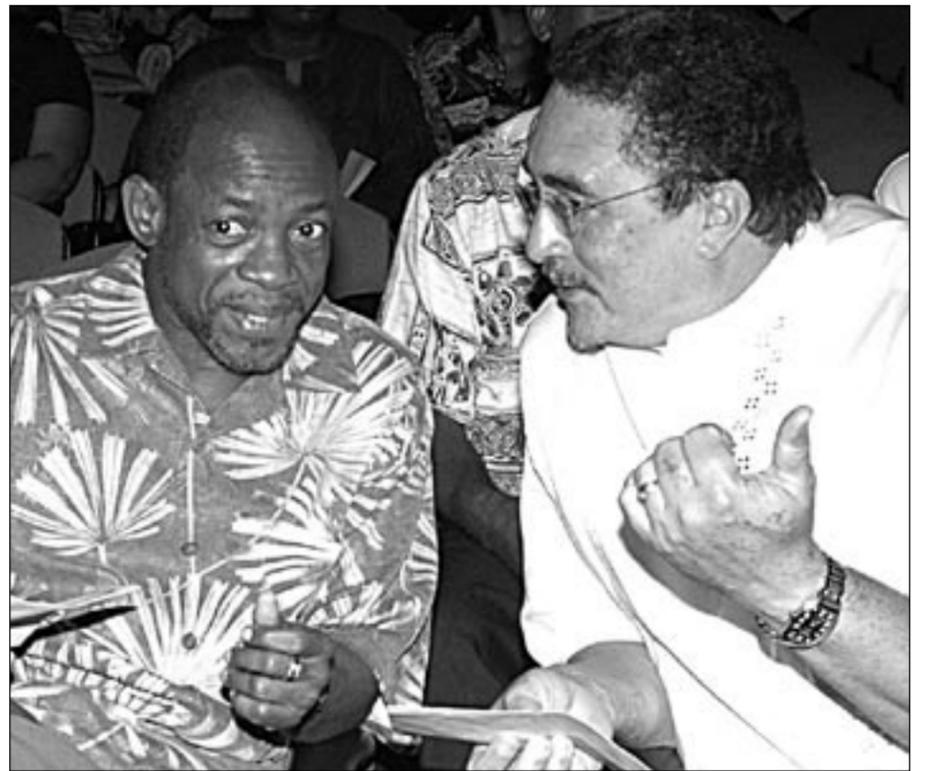
Public Relations Manager of the NIC Augustin Louis says the Corporation has tried everything possible to get the delinquent employers to comply but to no avail. He says the courts, through recent judgements, have given the NIC the permission to seize the assets of these employers if they fail to comply.

“We have our rights to enforce judgement but we have hesitated because we

know enforcing some of these judgements will particularly be very painful to some of them-because we may have to sell their houses or whatever little property that they’ve got-so we have hesitated in doing so. What we are telling them now is that we are giving them sufficient time that they can make good on their contributions to the National Insurance,” Mr. Louis said.

He says delinquent employers have been given until the end of January 2006 to comply. He says unless they can do so or make some arrangement with the NIC, the Corporation will have no choice but to enforce the courts judgement by February 2006.

OECS Celebrates 25 years of Unity



Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony of Saint Lucia and Prime Minister Dr. Denzel Douglas of St. Kitts and Nevis at the last Caricom meeting in Saint Lucia

Heads of Government of the Organisation of the Eastern Caribbean states will this year return to the federation of Saint Christopher and Nevis, the home of the Treaty of Basseterre, as part of the 25th Anniversary celebrations of the formation of the union.

The heads who have commissioned a review of the original Treaty are also expected to approve the implementation of the provisions of the revised treaty.

Senior Communications Officer of the OECS Secretariat Mr. Kendol Morgan says member states will host several important activities to mark the milestone.

“At the last meeting of the OECS heads which took place in November in Anguilla, the Acting Chairman Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony, who was sitting in for the Prime Minister of St. Vincent and Grenadines Ralph Gonsalves who is the current chairman of the OECS, unveiled a programme of activities which will attributed to observance the 25th anniversary. It should be a wide ranging programme of activities that should be in the public domain pretty shortly. A lot of the activities will be started towards the end of January”

Mr. Morgan said June will be the highlight month for OECS states. For their part the Heads have scheduled the first of their two annual meetings in Basseterre, the capital of St. Kitts Nevis.

The task force charged with reviewing the Treaty of Basseterre are currently refining the draft copy of the Treaty which had been presented to the Heads when they met in Anguilla in 2005.

According to Morgan: “There is a task force that is currently working on that Treaty. They presented a draft at the last meeting in Anguilla and the Heads asked for some further refinement. They will be meeting within a couple of weeks to look at the refining of the Treaty and then ensure that is is ready for signing as part of the 25th Anniversary celebrations in June of this year.”

The heads have in the past espoused the view that the existing Treaty signed in 1981 has to now be relevant to current and emerging economic and political developments. These include the fact that the OECS is moving towards an economic union under the Caribbean Single Market and Economy – CSME while making its own peculiar strides towards the closer integration of the sub region.

DENNERY HOSPITAL MAJOR REVIEW UNDERWAY

Minister for Health Honourable Damian Greaves has firmly dispelled what he has described as serious misconceptions suggesting the imminent closure of the Dennery Hospital.

Minister Greaves who is also Parliamentary Representative for the area says a new plan to redevelop the Dennery Hospital is under way and much investment has been injected into ensuring that a high level of health care is delivered to patients.

In 2003 patient admissions at the hospital was discontinued due to infrastructural shortcomings. However officials of the hospital say there is a full compliment of staff and all clinics are still operational. Where required, patients are referred to the Victoria Hospital for admission. The Dennery Hospital was originally a 22 bed facility, housing at some 200 stay over patients.

The Health Minister also said the future of the Dennery Hospital will be the subject of a community consultation to be held on the 8th of February 2006. The consultation will be led by a team from the Ministry of Health.

Speaking of the upcoming consultation the Minister says Government

has already mapped out a new vision for the Dennery Hospital. He says the plans were shaped in keeping with the national goal of providing superior health delivery at all health institutions island wide.



Hon. Damian Greaves Minister for Health, Human Services, Family Affairs and Gender Relations

CASTRIES CENTRAL BYE-ELECTION VOTERS LIST READY

The Electoral Commission has confirmed that the old Voters List will be used for the upcoming bye-election in Castries Central. This was confirmed by the Chairman of the Commission, Mr Kenneth Monplaisir, Q.C. Prime Minister Dr Kenny D. Anthony wrote to the Commission on January 6, 2006, seeking clarification as to which list will be used for the upcoming bye-election in the constituency of Castries Central.

In his letter of reply to the Prime Minister, Mr Monplaisir indicated he had summoned a meeting of the Commission on January 10, to discuss the Prime Minister’s query. He said the Commission agreed that the Prime Minister was “absolutely correct” when he surmised

that “the current enumeration exercise will not be completed in time to publish a new Voters List for the forthcoming Castries Central Bye-election.”

According to Mr Monplaisir: “The Commission confirms that the Voters List, as published on 31st March 2005, shall be the register for the Castries Central Electoral District and, accordingly, shall be the list applicable for the forthcoming Castries Central Bye-election.” Mr Monplaisir indicated in his letter to the Prime Minister that “the authority for this is in accordance with Section 22 of the House of Assembly (Elections) Act 1979.” The Commission comprises one member each nominated by the Government and the Parliamentary Opposition and is chaired by an appointee of the Governor General.

A Life of Caring and Working



Anthony Darius

Administrative Attaché to the Prime Minister, who died at home on Wednesday January 18, 2006.

Anthony was a very responsible person who was totally committed to his multiple duties, which he approached with a high level of devotion.

He was quiet, humble, unassuming, honest and absolutely committed to his job.

Always one to exude confidence in his search for solutions to issues and problems, he will also always be remembered for his gentle smiles, his sense of humour, his passion for perfection, his quiet resolve and his superb intellect.

We will miss his sense of humour and the animated discussions he provoked among his colleagues and friends.

We extend our deepest condolences to the Darius family, who are in our thoughts and prayers as we mourn the passing of our dear and beloved colleague. **We will miss him.**

The Prime Minister and the entire staff of the Office of the Prime Minister are deeply saddened by the sudden passing of our colleague and friend, Anthony Darius,

SAINT LUCIAN UNDER-15 CRICKETERS SECOND IN WINDWARDS TOURNAMENT

Saint Lucia's national under-15 cricketers returned home last Saturday after finishing second in the annual Windward Islands cricket championship held for the second year in Trinidad and Tobago.

Five members of the team, captain Dalton Polius, batsmen Randall Rithal and Dwight Thomas, left arm spinner Audy Alexander and all-rounder Mc Vern Remy were also able to gain selection in an 18 member Windward Islands squad to prepare for this year's West Indies under-15 cricket tournament.

The Saint Lucian team unfortunately played only two of their four scheduled matches with the final two games washed out due to heavy rainfall in the twin island republic. The young Saint

Lucian cricketers lost their first match to eventual champions Dominica but secured an impressive 94 run win over Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in their second match.

Saint Lucia won the toss against Dominica and decided to take first knock in a 40 overs encounter at the Cricket Centre in Couva. The Saint Lucians reached 134 for nine with Dalton Polius topscoring with 55. Khalil Lulu was the next best contributor with 24.

The Dominican captain Oscar George bagged five for 26 in eight overs of medium pace, then finished on 39 not out to lead Dominica to 135 for six in 30.2 overs. Cawan Hector was also undefeated on 30. Left arm spinner Audy Alexander had a haul of four for 27 bowling for Saint Lucia.



Jubilant Saint Lucians cricketers at the Grantley Adams Airport in Barbados on route to Saint Lucia

The Saint Lucians also batted first at the same venue against Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. They registered an impressive 183 for seven with Randall Rithal topscoring with 38. Dwight Thomas contributed a valuable 35. Other useful knocks came from Dalton Polius and Khalil Lulu who both hit 23. Wayad Hippolyte chipped in with 19 and Hubert Joseph 16.

In reply the Vincentians were bowled out for 89 in 27.1 overs. Mc Vern Remy had excellent figures of three wickets for two runs, left arm orthodox spinner Marlon O' Brian two for 13 off five overs and Khalil Lulu ended a fine all-round game with two for 15 in three overs.

FREE ZONE IN VIEUX FORT HOME FOR MANY MANUFACTURING PLANTS



One of the areas of growth in 2005 was the manufacturing sector "The value of manufacturing output from January to September 2005 alone, exclusive of textile and paper products, is estimated to have increased by 7.7% to \$91.7 million. This is an important development, as this sector prepares to face the challenges of operating in a more competitive environment." said Prime Minister Dr. Kenny D. Anthony in his New Year address to the nation



THIS WEEK ON NTN

Sat. Jan. 21st - Fri. Jan. 27th, 2005
NTN - PROVIDING INFORMATION YOU NEED

Prime Minister's New Year's Address Sat. Jan. 21st, 11:30 a.m.
Find out much more about the CSME, its implementation and how the regional agreement will impact y. Sun. Jan. 22nd, 11:30 a.m.

Derek Walcott speaks with Stuart Hall - Mon. Jan. 23rd, 8:30 p.m.
Hon. Derek Walcott speaks about his life and his works - Tues. Jan. 24th, 8:00 p.m.

The role of Technical Vocational Education in our education system - Wed. Jan. 25th - 9:00 p.m.

The reorganization of agricultural sites and how this move affects the farming community - Thurs. Jan. 26th, 8:00 p.m.

Are you suffering with arthritis? Some ways and means for you and your family to cope with the ailment - Fri. Jan. 27th, 8:00 p.m.

Remember to tune in for:
GIS News Breaks and Kweyol News daily from 6:30 p.m.
Issues & Answers/Mondays at 8:00pm:

Interview/Tuesdays at 6:15pm :
Konsit Kweyol/Tuesdays at 8:00pm (Kweyol Discussion):

Your Right to Know/Thursdays at 6:15 p.m. (Min. of Ed. Prog).
Take 2/Fridays at 6:15pm (Week in Review)
Weflechi/Fridays at 6:40pm - (Week in Review—Kweyol)

For the complete programme guide, log on to our website at www.stlucia.gov.lc and then click on the NTN icon.

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