



HEALTH INSURANCE FOR ALL ST. LUCIANS

EDITORIAL

A REASONABLE CASE

A system in which every St. Lucian resident has access to a set of services without fear or favour, without any barriers.

A new day is about to dawn for health care financing in St Lucia.

In another landmark initiative to improve the quality of life for St. Lucians, the Government of Prime Minister, Dr Kenny D. Anthony, is moving to set up a national health insurance scheme which will bring an end to the long-standing nightmare of costly medical care, and improve public access to health care.

A task force, established by Cabinet almost a year ago, has been assigned the job of coming up with an appropriate model of

health insurance for St Lucia, and taking it to the public for discussion with a view to making amendments before submitting the final recommendation to Government.

The task force, under the chairmanship of National Insurance Corporation (NIC) executive director Emma Hippolyte, has chosen consultant pathologist, Dr. Stephen King, to head up a sub-committee looking specifically at the health insurance initiative.

The task force is also advising Government on the establishment of a farmers pension and an unemployment insurance scheme

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During his recent visit to St Lucia, former United States President Bill Clinton shared some profound thoughts with a largely local audience on what future US-Caribbean relations should be like.

Mr Clinton argued a strong case for America "to do more to develop the Caribbean ... through trade, through aid, through investment, through debt relief.". He also noted that America's "future is in the hands of our neighbours and we have to be good neighbours."

There's hardly any doubt that the Caribbean has always sought to be a good neighbour of the United States. While pretty much the same can also be said about America, there have been times when America took the Caribbean for granted.

A case in point is the US-led campaign before the World Trade Organisation (WTO) against longstanding European preferences for Caribbean bananas. That action had the effect of undermining several Caribbean economies, including St Lucia's, which depended heavily on bananas.

As the United States pushes for the establishment of the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), the Caribbean hopes, this time around, that America, as a good neighbour, will appreciate and understand the region's case for special consideration.

Otherwise, Caribbean economies will be at a disadvantage against the more powerful economies in the proposed hemispheric trade bloc. The more powerful countries in the European Union certainly accept the need to extend concessions to less developed members to support their economic development.

Though no longer directing policy in Washington, President Clinton at least showed what is possible in US-Caribbean relations. And he still has some influence in Washington's power circles.

The Caribbean is making a reasonable case regarding its participation in the FTAA. It's a case deserving sympathetic consideration.



THE PEOPLE WELCOME THE PRESIDENT

Amidst the tight security provided by local whistle stop at the Castries market, Clinton police officers and United States Secret reached out to the crowd. See pages four and Service officers, former USA president Bill five for the full story of the visit, and the Clinton was lured by a crowd of warm St. highlights of his speech at a dinner reception Lucians eager to get a handshake. During a hosted by the Government of St. Lucia.

“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



SHAPING ETHICAL STANDARDS

Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony describes the launch of the ECPC as a giant step

The Eastern Caribbean Press Council was formally launched at the Bay Gardens Hotel in St. Lucia on Saturday January 25th 2002. The feature address was delivered by Prime Minister and Minister responsible for Information and Broadcasting in St. Lucia, Dr. Kenny D. Anthony. The following is the full text of the address.

"Let me first of all invite all of you to Simply Beautiful St. Lucia, where, I trust, you were not asked at the airport "Where you're from?" and "How long you're staying?" If these questions were asked of our Barbadian friends, then I would say to them that Barbados must make haste to join its OECS family, so as to enjoy our policy of Freedom of Movement.

Saint Lucia is honoured to have been selected as the site for the launching of the first-ever attempt by the print media of our sub-region to establish an Eastern Caribbean Press Council. This is really a giant step towards shaping ethical

standards in a business that, by its nature and responsibilities, defies regulation. sub-region. Several years ago, I called for the establishment of a similar council in Saint Lucia. An attempt by the local Media Association was torpedoed in its infancy. Clearly, it makes far more sense to establish a regional entity. The Council offers a wider protective umbrella, but more importantly, it is somewhat removed from the local domestic passions. This will engender greater trust and confidence among those who are compelled to turn to the Council for advice.

Of course, the idea of establishing a Press Council is not new. Other countries have established similar mechanisms to insist on observance of agreed standards and conduct. Indeed, we are all familiar with the respected Press Complaints Commission of the United Kingdom. It is a Commission that, I understand, respected regional media figures such as the distinguished Editor-in-Chief of the Nation newspapers of Barbados, Mr. Harold Hoyte, maintains a very close working relationship. The fact that Mr. Hoyte has played a vital role to

of all of us Caribbean citizens, for his professional contribution to journalism in the region. I speak, of course, of Rickey Singh, who is also a member of the Council's leadership.

Clearly, with the other members, including Monsignor Patrick Anthony and the energetic Leslie Pierre, the leadership you have chosen is representative of a broad collection of minds, ideas and experiences that favours the ECPC.

Need to Broaden Jurisdiction

I have noted that the ECPC will be concerned, initially anyway, with newspapers, news magazines and other print publications. However, in view of the increasing importance of the electronic media (that is, of radio and television) in communicating with the public, it is to be hoped that sooner, rather than later, the ECPC's mandate and functions can be extended to encompass all segments of the media in this sub-region and, eventually, throughout the Caribbean Community.

Accountability of the Media

There are other reasons why the establishment of the Council is so necessary and timely. Governments of the region have searched for mechanisms to engage the media in dialogue to shape policy for our Caribbean Community. The diverse and fractious nature of the Press in the region has made this difficult. There has been no representative body that the governments could tap for advice and guidance on matters pertaining, for example, to the rights and privileges of media personnel in our regional community.

Speaking for myself, however, there is an even more compelling reason for supporting the establishment of the Council. It can never be in the interest of our democracy, or indeed the public, for the Press and the Government to sleep in the same bed. Indeed, there is good reason why the relationship should be conditioned by

mutual distrust. The Press has an overriding responsibility to jealously guard the public interest, that is the right of the public to receive accurate, honest and timely information.

While distrust is unavoidable and is at the heart of the relationship between Governments and the Press, the abuse and disrespect of public functionaries and citizens is an unacceptable trend. I fear that if the press is not careful, then its audience, in the words of Tocqueville, will become "deaf." As he put it:

"If one wishes to know the real power of the press, one should pay attention, not to what it says, but to the way in which it is listened to. There are times when its very heart is a symptom of weakness and prophecies its end. Its clamours and its fears often speak in the same voice. It only cries so loud because its audience is becoming deaf."

Media practitioners are public figures. As such, they must attract accountability – perhaps with less intensity than politicians, but accountability nevertheless. Of course, there will always be some debate about what accountability of the press means. The press cannot behave as if they are without sin when some among them are guilty of breaching, personally and otherwise, the same standards they vociferously condemn.

If the objectives of the Eastern Caribbean Press Council are met, then it might help to reduce the temptation to haul media practitioners before the courts for defamatory statements. Until now, politicians have depended on the courts of law for protection. A functioning Press Council, one that is fair, just, balanced and courageous, can act as a buffer between the aggrieved politicians and the offending journalists. But it is not just the politicians who need the council. Media practitioners need it just as well.

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Prime Minister and Minister responsible for Information of St. Lucia Dr. Kenny D. Anthony chats with Mirror editor Guy Ellis (St. Lucia), and Mr. Carl Ince (Barbados Advocate). Both newspapers were founding members of the ECPC

standards in a business that, by its nature and responsibilities, defies regulation.

This initiative comes thirteen years after the demise of the Caribbean Press Council (CPC), then under the chairmanship of the respected and distinguished Caribbean jurist and great friend of the regional press, the late Aubrey Fraser. It is a welcome initiative, particularly as it springs from the efforts of the publishers and editors of the Eastern Caribbean and Barbados.

The days of Aubrey Fraser were purposeful and exciting. This is not nostalgia speaking, but merely a wish to see the rekindling of the spirit that fired the press to seek a definition of itself in our evolving Caribbean society.

A Welcome Regional Initiative

It is without reservation that I welcome the establishment of this Press Council in our

make today's ceremony a reality adds to the credibility of the ECPC.

I am also particularly pleased to note that in its composition, the ECPC encompasses the entire Eastern Caribbean and with citizens of our region of doubtless experience and integrity. Without being invidious, let me salute your distinguished chairperson, retired Justice Lady Marie Simmons. The ECPC is fortunate to have attracted the leadership of Lady Marie Simmons. She is known for her fairness, firmness and sound intellect. She brings to the Council great prestige, experience and capacity for independent judgement.

Similarly, the Council's richness of experience, integrity and depth of knowledge will also be enhanced by the presence of that little man who stands so tall. He was not too long ago honoured by the University of the West Indies on behalf



Mrs. Gwendolyn Evelyn signs the charter on behalf of the New Chronicle newspaper of Dominica. Assisting is Executive Officer Ainsley Sahai while Roxanne Gibbs of the Nation Newspaper (Barbados) looks on.

NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE FOR ALL

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“One of the principles that we are adopting ... is equity,” says Dr. King. “We would like to have a system in which every St Lucian resident has access to a set of services without fear or favour, without any barriers and we need to find a system that can do that.”

Dr. King says the present system of user fees, which patients have been paying at public hospitals here since 1992, represents a “barrier for certain people”. Further, he adds, it has contributed to “constant tension” between patients, public hospitals, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Finance.

Who Pays the Bills?

Approximately \$100 million is spent annually on health care in St Lucia. Government accounts for 60 per cent, with the bulk coming out of the Consolidated Fund. User fees paid by patients account for around \$8 million. The remaining 40 per cent is through the private sector. Private insurance, patients paying for health care services on delivery, etc.

The task force has already held discussions with key health sector stakeholders – public sector administrators, local public and private hospitals, doctors, nurses, and pharmacists, among others — on the health insurance proposal.

Based on these discussions, the task force has come up with a number of financing options, which an actuary is currently studying to determine their feasibility. An actuary is an insurance industry professional who gathers and analyses data to calculate insurance risks and premiums.

After the actuary gives an opinion on the various options, the task force's next move is to embark on an island-wide series of consultations to hear what St. Lucians have to say.



Executive Director of the National Insurance Corporation Emma Hippolyte

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is also playing an advisory role.

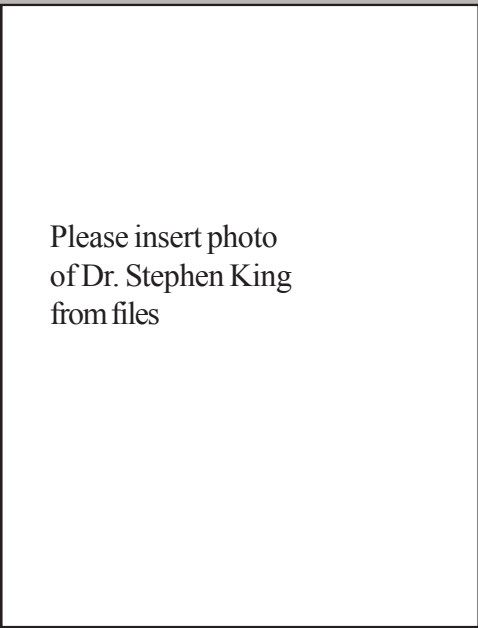
“If you are going to have a national health insurance that allows universal access and universal access means that every man, woman and child would have equal access to the system, then you need to look at a funding mechanism that is going to fund that,” says Miss Hippolyte.

Workers to Contribute

“It is going to be a lot more expensive because everybody should have access,” she points out.

A task force team visited Antigua to have a look at their medical benefits scheme, which is financed through a payroll tax and caters primarily to workers who contribute to the scheme. It was seen as having some benefits but also deficiencies.

The task force considered using a so-called “sin” tax on tobacco and alcohol to finance the scheme but it was ruled out because the island's present economic base renders such a measure unfeasible.



Please insert photo of Dr. Stephen King from files

Dr. Stephen King heads a special committee for National Health Insurance

“Based on the discussions we had, we saw the initial financing as a broad-based tax – not a payroll tax — which will be on certain commodities,” says Miss Hippolyte. “In general, the whole public will be affected. That also has its pros and cons and that is why we are going to get technical assistance from an actuary to advise us which is the most feasible one for us at this time.”

In St Lucia, the most common health issues which not only result in death but also cause significant losses to the economy, are cancer, heart disease, cardiovascular disease especially strokes, diabetes and accidents.

“Our package of benefits has to respond to these types of illnesses,” says Dr. King.

Financing medical care overseas is also under consideration but it's an aspect task force officials think will have to be monitored closely to ensure there's no abuse of the system.

Patients who are covered by the scheme will be able to receive care from the private sector, for example Tapion Hospital, but it is very likely that patients may have to pay any difference if the cost of service exceeds the limit set by the scheme.

“We are going to establish fixed fees say for, for example, bed nights and that is going to be the same throughout the private or public sector,” explains Miss Hippolyte. “If you choose to go for a private sector one which is higher, you pay the extra cost.”

“That is the initial thinking of the task force,” she adds.



TAPION HOSPITAL: a private sector provider

Once the crucial financing issue is settled, the next matter to be resolved is a list of health services that will be covered by the scheme.

“What we've got to do is look at how much money we have, what are the people's health needs and then come up with the most cost-effective set of interventions to meet those needs,” Dr King explains.

“You have to look at every health intervention and decide how effective it is,” Dr King adds. “I must say from a principled point of view so far and to make people feel at ease (that) what is presently available to the public in St Lucia at Victoria Hospital, St Jude's Hospital, these benefits will remain. We will not reduce on the benefits...”

Dr King says there exists a strong case for primary health care facilities to be beefed up under current health sector reform initiatives.

“Primary care is the bedrock of your health service,” he notes. “That is where you develop wellness.”

“Whatever we do with national health insurance,” he adds, “we need to make sure (there are) more resources for primary care.... If we design it properly and do it well, the public should expect better hospital care as well as better community care.”



VICTORIA HOSPITAL: St Lucia's principal health care institution.

**NOUVEL NOU MENM
KWEYOL NEWS on NTN**

A WORLD OF GLOBALIZATION

CLINTON DISCUSSES THE NEW WORLD ORDER

Globalisation is a contemporary world reality to which Government frequently refers when discussing the performance of St Lucia's economy.

And, during a whirlwind visit to the island on Saturday, January 18, former US President Bill Clinton reinforced the point that globalization today is an inescapable fact of life not only for St. Lucia and the United States, but all countries.

The 42nd US president, who left office two years ago after serving two terms, was on a private one-day visit to get some rest and relaxation and a welcome break from the unusually freezing winter America is experiencing this year.

Government hosted a dinner in his honour and Clinton used the opportunity to speak about US-Caribbean relations, the serious challenge posed by HIV/AIDS, and also to graphically illustrate examples of globalization in action before an audience of 200 that included the prime ministers of the OECS countries.

Freedom and Opportunity

"We are living in a world in which all people who love freedom and want opportunity are interdependent but we are also interdependent with people who do not necessarily share our values, our hopes, or recognize our responsibilities," he said, a reference to international terrorists.

"Most people describe the world we live in as globalization but globalization to most people means economics. It means trade and investment and other economic things



William Jefferson Clinton, 42nd President of the USA, addressing dinner guests at the Sandals Grande in St. Lucia

so I prefer the term interdependence. Interdependence means that you're connected in lots of ways and that you can't get unconnected," he added.

Support for work on HIV/AIDS

The visit took place as the William Jefferson Clinton Foundation, set up by the former president to support humanitarian causes around the world, is laying the groundwork for the launch of a major anti-HIV/AIDS project to benefit the countries of the Caribbean. The team, in fact, arrived in St Lucia on the Tuesday following Clinton's visit after stops in St Kitts and Dominica.



Her Excellency, Dame Pearlette Louisy, Governor General of St. Lucia shares a light moment with President Clinton at the dinner reception.

Clinton attracted a large crowd of curious on-lookers who warmly greeted him during a surprise mid-morning visit to the Castries Craft Market. As he mingled with the crowd, he came face to face with an example of globalization through contact with cruise ship tourists who were spending the day on the island.

He related the experience to his dinner audience in the ballroom of the Sandals Grande.

"If anybody wanted a picture of the globalization of the world in a positive sense, you could've just walked down the street with me today. I had all these Irish

tourists come up to me and thank me for my work for peace in Ireland (during his tenure as president)."

He added: "And I thought this is the 21st century world. I am standing on the street in St Lucia in January, it's 15 degrees (Fahrenheit) in New York it's about that cold in Dublin so these poor Irish people come to St Lucia to escape their cold (and) I come down here to work on AIDS and play a little golf and we are talking on the street about the rest of the world."

The face-to-face encounter with globalization came home to the ex-prez in an even more personal way when he ran into some visitors from his old home state where he served as governor before becoming president. "I met three people from a little hometown in Arkansas where I lived when I was a teacher many years ago here in your community today."

Illegal Drug Trade

Clinton pointed to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on America to illustrate the extent of interdependence that exists between the Caribbean and the United States, especially at the economic level.

"After September 11, 2001, America was hurt economically and so were you. On September 11, 3,100 people from 70 countries were killed in New York City, Washington and Pennsylvania including many from the Caribbean."

"My wife is a senator from the State of New York. She represents people from every island in the Caribbean in New York," he said.

Clinton also referred to the illegal international narcotics trade as another example of globalization in action to show up another



In addition to the hundreds of St. Lucians who turned out to greet former president Bill Clinton, were visitors from the USA and Europe who wanted their (photo) shot at the president

DISCUSSION

"We may be different. We may have different religions. We may be of different races but we have a certain core set of values and they are very simple. Everybody counts. Everybody deserves a chance." *Bill Clinton*



Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony chats with St. Lucia's Ambassador to UNESCO Mr. Gilbert Chagoury.

dimension of the interdependence between the Caribbean and the US.

If you're hurt economically and the narcotics traffickers get a bigger foothold in the Caribbean, they sell the drugs that go into the bodies of children in America," he said.

He went on: "If you do well, we do well. If you're happy, we tend to be happy. If you're getting more prosperous, we are too."

Interdependence

Clinton said while the US and Caribbean generally like each other and enjoy a friendly relationship, we have undervalued the extent to which we are completely dependent upon each other in going forward".

"We need to find organized ways of working together," he added. "We can't forget about the fact that a lot of our future is in the hands of our neighbours and we have to be good neighbours."

"We have to put together a community of people in the Americas who are committed to sharing the benefits of the future, shouldering the responsibilities of the future and affirming the importance of our common humanity," Clinton said.

Recognizing America's interdependence with the Caribbean, Clinton said America should do more to support Caribbean economic development through trade, aid, investment and debt relief.

In relation to the wider world, he said the US must "do more" to promote economic growth in poor countries, help send more children to school and enable them to attain at least a secondary education, and combat the spread of HIV/AIDS.



Two Leaders meet: President Bill Clinton and Dr. Kenny Anthony during informal discussions prior to the dinner.

"We may be different. We may have different religions. We may be of different races but we have a certain core set of values and they are very simple. Everybody counts. Everybody deserves a chance. Everybody has got a role to play, and we all do better when we work together," he said.

Clinton said there were two obstacles to building "an integrated (global) community of shared benefits, shared responsibilities and shared values". One was terrorism; the other is the tendency of some people to want everything for themselves and deny others the same opportunity for self-improvement.

Clinton is expected back in the Caribbean later this year to take part in the official launch of the programme his Foundation is supporting to combat HIV/AIDS in the region. "Impressive" was how he described the approach regional governments have adopted towards the scourge.

Lyn Margherio, head of the Clinton Foundation team which visited St Lucia, said the support programme seeks "to scale up the care and treatment being provided to people living with HIV and AIDS in the region".

"Our aim is to have a completed business plan by the end of March in preparation for

President Clinton's next visit," she said. St Vincent and the Grenadines' Health Minister Dr Douglas Slater, who is working with the Clinton team in designing the programme, said the support was critical to enhancing the anti-HIV/AIDS fight in the region.

"With the help of the Clinton Foundation, all the partners in the OECS and CARICOM etc, we are seeing some light," Dr. Slater said during the visit here with the team.

"We are very glad that they are coming on board because we have been trying in several ways to raise resources. We feel confident they will deliver."



The Clinton Foundation team meets Hon. Damian Greaves and other officials of the Ministry of Health during a visit to the island.

TO PROTECT, SECURE AND REHABILITATE

The Bold Mission for Bordelais

St. Lucia, the first CARICOM country to establish a National Crime Commission to research and identify the root causes of major crime, is taking another pioneering step in the field of criminal justice within the region.

With the recent opening of the \$48 million, start-of-the-art Bordelais Correctional Facility in Dennery, the Kenny Anthony administration is setting out to transform the traditional Caribbean approach to imprisonment, by shifting emphasis away from the mere punishment of offenders to their successful rehabilitation and reintegration into society as law-abiding citizens.

"This project is the first of its kind in the Caribbean and it signals a departure from traditional methods of incarceration," says Margaret Thompson, general manager of NIPDEC, a Trinidadian company which managed the construction of the new prison.

Government's policy shift is in response to the ineffectiveness and irrelevance of the old British colonial-style penal system introduced more than 100 years ago. Meant

Bordelais' mission is to change all of that. Rather than just locking away offenders to serve out their sentences, as happened at the island's old congested jail on Bridge Street, the Bordelais method will seek to find underlying issues which may have contributed to the deviant behaviour, and to provide each inmate with professional help to effectively manage or overcome those issues altogether.

From the Old to the New

For Minister of Home Affairs and Gender Relations, Sarah Flood-Beaubrun, Bordelais represents a new beginning in a number of fundamental ways. Not only will it end what she describes as the "barbarity" of the old Bridge Street prison but, more importantly, it offers hope that offenders will discover there's a better life outside the world of crime.

"Lives will be changed and transformed for good in this correctional facility, something which happened very infrequently at the Her Majesty's Prison on upper Bridge Street," says Mrs. Flood-Beaubrun, who has ministerial responsibility for the prison.

"We will employ a scientific approach in



Prime Minister Hon. Dr. Kenny Anthony unveils the plaque at the Bordelais facility

Bordelais is a fully self-contained complex made up of 18 buildings surrounded by solid barbed wire fencing. Built to accommodate 500 inmates, the facility contains six separate prison wings: a female unit, adult male unit, maximum security and condemned unit with gallows and adjoining cemetery, young offenders unit, remand unit and segregation unit.

There's a court room to hear cases, as well as classrooms, a gymnasium, library, industrial kitchen, chapel, land for farming, and workshops where various skills will be taught.

A Humane Environment

What Bordelais offers inmates is a humane, compassionate environment conducive to their rehabilitation. It doesn't mean, however, that theirs will be a life of five-star hotel luxury, as some critics have claimed.

According to Director of Corrections, Hilary Herman, strict order and discipline will be maintained. "Our switch from penal to correctional doesn't mean we're going soft on crime," he says. "We'll be tough on crime but, on the same token, we'll concentrate on making every inmate a productive citizen."

Jail breaks, which were a fairly frequent occurrence at the overcrowded Bridge Street prison, should also be a thing of the past. Males in the 18-35 age group make up the majority of the prison population.

Here's what will happen when someone enters Bordelais. After being booked in, each inmate will be assessed by a professional team comprising a doctor, psychiatrist and counsellors. Based on the findings, an appropriate correction plan will be drawn up with a specific set of objectives to be achieved by the inmate during his or her stay.

The approach will be gender-sensitive, taking into account the particular needs of men and women.

"The correctional system is based on the recognition that offenders have the potential to be rehabilitated and to live as law-abiding citizens," explains Marcia Philbert-Jules, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs and Gender Relations.

"This approach is based on the principle that society is best protected when offenders are able to re-establish themselves into the community under conditions that minimize the risk of reoffending," she adds.

An integral part of the rehabilitation process is equipping offenders with skills that they can use on their re-entry into society for gainful employment. Inmates will be taught farming, carpentry, bread and pastry-making, arts and craft, and plumbing among other things.

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Former Minister of Home Affairs Velon John, flanked by Hon. Mario Michel and Hon. Ignatius Jean, at the opening ceremony of the Bordelais Correctional Facility.

to deter crime, the system ironically became part of the problem through a major shortcoming. It only punished offenders but never sought in a structured way to find out what caused the transgression and offer suitable help.

Mission of Change

As a result, prison became a revolving door for countless offenders who walked in and walked back out with the same wayward ways that landed them in trouble in the first place. In some cases, criminals came back out more hardened than when they went in.

our rehabilitation programmes using methods internationally recognised which have been proven to work," she adds. "We've employed that same scientific approach even in choosing correctional officers who had to succeed at many levels of testing to ensure that they are the best our country has to offer for that particular type of work."

Occupying a scenic 33.4 acre site on a wind-swept hilltop overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, Bordelais was officially opened on Wednesday, January 15. Governor-General Dame Pearlette Louisy cut the ribbon, and Prime Minister, Dr. Kenny D. Anthony, unveiled a commemorative plaque.



Mrs. Marcia Philbert-Jules
Permanent Secretary,
Ministry Home Affairs and Gender
Relations

BORDELAIS

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Community Participation

Community participation in the rehabilitation of offenders is seen as crucial. Hence, authorities are extending an invitation to the various churches to play an active role in providing spiritual guidance for inmates. The authorities are also looking to the private sector to give support by providing an outlet for goods and services inmates will be producing.

Former South African President Nelson Mandela, who was the world's best known prisoner during the anti-apartheid struggle, once said: "... No one knows a nation until one has been inside its prison. A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens but its lowest ones."

The truth is that prison conditions in St Lucia have been appalling for a very long time. As far back as 1901, the Report of the Gaol and Police Commission said Her Majesty's Gaol, built in 1827 to accommodate 60 persons, was "unsuitable and inadequate".



Hon. Sarah Flood-Beubrun

determining the character of the persons who serve time in St Lucia," he adds.

"We have done all this in a bid to ensure that those who leave the prisons repudiate and renounce a life of crime."

At a time when a country's respect for human rights matters in the eyes of the world, Bordelais will undoubtedly lift St Lucia's image. A favourable human rights rating does enhance a country's chances of reaping greater economic benefits from its international relationships.



The infrastructure at Bordelais is built according to international standards.

The most damning condemnation came in 1958 from a visiting British lawmaker, Lord Farrington. He said the Bridge Street prison, which was home to 400 inmates in its final days, was an "abomination" and the only solution was to blow it up with dynamite. Conditions deteriorated further over the next 40 years.

"...We have not followed Lord Farrington's directive to dynamite the old prison out of existence but we have taken a monumental step to ensure that we bring an end to the inhumanity which it sustained and facilitated for nearly half a century," says Prime Minister Anthony.

"By the construction of the Bordelais Correctional Facility, we have ensured that the conditions at the old Royal Gaol no longer have any place in shaping and

Bordelais' significance, however, extends beyond combatting crime through the punishment and rehabilitation of offenders. It reaches into the realm of St Lucia's social and economic development where it's a big plus.

"There can be no economic and social development in a society plagued by crime, social disorder, insecurity of person and property, anarchy and lawlessness," says Dr. Anthony. "Economic development and prosperity can only thrive in societies that enjoy peace, tranquillity, security and stability."

Bordelais will contribute to such an environment as it pursues its bold new mission.

CHEAPER ENERGY

As the possibility of a US war with Iraq increases and the strong likelihood that petroleum prices will go up as a result, the Government of St Lucia is stepping up efforts to promote greater use of alternative energy.

Coinciding with the annual observance of Energy Awareness Week ending today, came word that a fresh attempt is on to tap the rich geothermal resources around the Sulphur Springs, as a cheaper and cleaner alternative source of electricity.

It's just one aspect of an ambitious renewable energy programme aimed at reducing rising energy costs. Another aim is protecting the environment, considering the growing international concern about global warming and the vulnerability of small island states like St Lucia.

Emissions of carbon dioxide and other so-called greenhouse gases which result from the burning of petroleum-based fuels are linked to global warming. Scientists blame this phenomenon for rising sea levels and changing weather patterns which, among other things, have resulted in more powerful hurricanes in the last decade.

Geothermal Potential

Bishnu Tulsie, Chief Sustainable Development Officer in the Ministry of Physical Planning, Environment and Housing, says talks are taking place with French interests about another attempt to exploit Soufriere's abundant geothermal potential which is related to volcanic activity at the Sulphur Springs.

Within the economy itself, it's estimated that consumers spend roughly \$120 million a year on energy, with electricity and public transport accounting for the lion's share of that expenditure.

"The work that has gone on in geothermal confirms the existence of an exploitable resource," says Tulsie, referring to a previous project which had to be called off because holes to extract steam used to produce the electricity were drilled in a location that generated a lot of corrosion.

"Once we have the funding in place, we will look for places away from the Sulphur Springs to see if we could find suitable well locations," says Tulsie. "Geothermal must play an important role in our future energy supply. It is there. It is cheaper."

Enhancing Competitiveness

The promise of geothermal energy is particularly great from an economic standpoint. St Lucians currently pay around 20 cents for each kilowatt of electricity generated using imported diesel. By comparison, consumers in the country of Iceland pay a mere two US cents for electricity generated from geothermal sources.

Imagine what such an achievement could do for enhancing the competitiveness of the St Lucian economy!

As other alternative energy sources, Government is also promoting greater use of solar energy, especially for domestic and



Bishnu Tulsie, Chief Sustainable Development Officer - Ministry of Physical Planning, Environment and Housing.

commercial water heating, and wind-generated power, a source which LUCELEC, the national electricity supplier, is now considering after some initial reservations.

St Lucia spends in excess of \$65 million every year on imported fuel. Within the economy itself, it's estimated that consumers spend roughly \$120 million a year on energy, with electricity and public transport accounting for the lion's share of that expenditure.

"Energy consumption is on the rise," says Tulsie. "My own assessment – and this is not based on any research – is that St Lucians generally are not very energy conscious and energy is used without any serious thought given to the consequences of energy use."

Promoting Renewable Energy

Energy Awareness Week is an attempt to address such concerns through public sensitization. As part of the week's activities, the Ministry of Physical Planning, Environment and Housing staged an exhibition at the Castries City Hall to expose consumers to alternative energy technologies and to pass on energy-efficiency tips that can save them some money.

The promise of geothermal energy is particularly great from an economic standpoint. St Lucians currently pay around 20 cents for each kilowatt of electricity generated using imported diesel.

"Government has done a lot to promote renewable energy," says Tulsie. "The Government has removed all customs charges and consumption tax on all renewable energy technologies so that they come into the island at cost, plus shipping."

He adds: "In the last budget, the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance introduced a measure that will allow purchasers of solar water heaters to remove that from their chargeable income for income tax purposes.

A solar water heater costs around \$3,000 as opposed to a more expensive electric heater. However, the solar water heater pays for itself

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THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN PRESS COUNCIL

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In my own experience, I have discovered that media practitioners hate to admit when they are wrong. Some are as arrogant and self-righteous as the politicians they seek to condemn. Apologies that are insincere and misguided only drive politicians to the courts to seek vindication.

This council offers to media practitioners and media houses an opportunity to get another opinion, this time from an independent source. If this Council is to earn respect and engender confidence, then all of us must agree from the outset to accept its judgements and implement its recommendations. A commitment to that effect is vital to its credibility.

Code of Practice

When defined ethical practices are adhered to, everyone benefits – owners or publishers of the particular media enterprise, practitioners of the journalism profession, consumers of information (or the reading, viewing and listening public, if you like).

The Code of Practice induces a sense of comfort, if not security, for benchmarks exist to measure infractions and standards.



Members of the Eastern Caribbean Press Council: Msgr. Dr. Patrick Anthony (Windward Islands representative); Mr. Kendol Morgan (OECS Secretariat representative); Dr. Rickey Singh (Journalists representative); Mr. Harold Hoyte (Publishers representative) Mrs. Bernice Lake (Leeward Islands representative) Lady Marie Simmons (Chairperson); Mrs. Ann Hewitt (Barbados representative).

Broadening the Scope

I hope that once the Council is consolidated, it will broaden its mandate in two directions. First, I would urge that the Council conducts, on an annual basis, a review of the state of

the press in each country falling within its jurisdiction. This review should be published for public comment. The Reports of the US State Department on the state of the press in the region are helpful, but we need to

develop an independent capacity to judge ourselves.

Secondly, there is unfinished business. The late Aubrey Fraser constantly championed the need to modernize the laws governing broadcasting, access to information and defamation. Unquestionably, the extant legislation in the OECS is obsolete, archaic and irrelevant to the freedoms, which our Constitutions have entrenched. I urge our Editors and Publishers to conduct an early review and join governments in enacting harmonized legislation across our boundaries.

Savour the Beauty

Having said all of the foregoing, it is only left for me, once again, to welcome our visiting friends and invite them to savour the best of what we have to offer in the short time they have here. We also wish you well at this conference and hope that its objectives are met in full, so that our sub-regional media landscape could be one that is more of our own making than one which tends to blow according to winds generated by others.

I wish you well.

CHEAPER ENERGY

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in about a year and half because of the savings on electricity bills that the consumer will achieve.

Government is also promoting the use of bio-digesters by pig farmers to meet some of their domestic energy needs. Waste from the pig pens goes into the bio-digester where it breaks down, releasing the gas, methane, in the process. Methane can be used for cooking among other things.

Promoting Bio-Technology

Bio-digesters also have an environmental benefit because they eliminate the pungent stench which usually exists wherever pig farming occurs. Because the construction cost is a bit high – around \$10,000 – Government is looking at a possible trial project in which bio-digesters costing around US\$600 each will be brought in from overseas and assembled

Government's promotion of alternative energy is reaping some success. More and more houses are switching to solar heating. In addition, two establishments – the Bouton Combined School and the St Lucia National Trust-owned Anse La Liberté camp site – are fully solar-powered.

Existing legislation granting LUCELEC a monopoly in the production and distribution of electricity, is seen as a major obstacle to St Lucia making a faster shift to renewable energy. It's an issue that is likely engage Government's attention as part of reforms underway in the energy sector following a review of LUCELEC by a Government-appointed commission a few years ago.



Solar heaters have, in recent times, become the preferred energy source for many households

At the regional level, the OECS countries are having discussions with the World Bank regarding possible financing for an energy sector reform project. There's also the Caribbean Renewable Energy Development Project which, according to Tulsie, has around US\$30 million for investment in the development of renewable energy.

Environmental and other considerations aside, Government's efforts to promote alternative energy is a strategic move that has to be seen in a long-term context. Petroleum fuels are expected to run out in the future. Government is seeking to ensure that St Lucia is prepared to deal with that reality when it occurs without adverse economic impact.

"Government of necessity must look at the long term," says Tulsie. "Government needs to think in terms of how a country will provide itself with energy in those times when fossil fuels are no more."

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