

NATIONWIDE

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UNIVERSAL
SECONDARY
EDUCATION

St. Lucia is on the verge of bringing off an extraordinary accomplishment in secondary education, 150 years after the construction of the first secondary school on the island.

In another three years, but possibly before, the six-year-old Labour government, which Prime Minister Dr Kenny D. Anthony has described as an “education government”, will deliver on another key 1997 election promise to St Lucians: the attainment of universal secondary education.

In other words, every child who sits the Common Entrance Examination will be guaranteed a place at a secondary school.

“You must not underestimate the significance of this feat,” says Education Minister, Mario Michel, who has presided over a remarkable transformation of the education sector in the last six years.

“In the last year of government of the United Workers Party in 1996, only 43 per cent of the children who sat Common Entrance in St Lucia were able to get a place in secondary school.What we are telling you is that by the year 2006, 100 per cent of the children of this country will gain entry into secondary school,” Michel adds.

Approximately 5,000 primary school children
cont’d on page 3



Hon. Mario Michel, Minister of Education
Human Resource Development,
Youth and Sport.

“What we are telling you is that by the year 2006, 100 per cent of the children of this country will gain entry into secondary school,” Hon. Mario Michel.



Construction of new schools to open up more learning opportunities for young St. Lucians, has been a central element in Government’s drive towards universal secondary education. The ultra-modern Babonneau Secondary School, was among a total of four built in the last five years.

EDITORIAL

THE DANGER OF WAR

The world is watching with bated breath as the countdown to a seemingly inevitable US war in Iraq gains momentum.

Anxieties were heightened this week following the announcement by U.S. President, George W. Bush, that time is up for Saddam Hussein. From the look of things, war is now no longer a question of “if” but “when”.

Though far away, a Middle Eastern war will present formidable challenges for St Lucia and the other small, open Caribbean economies. In fact, the region as a whole is likely to shoulder a disproportionate burden of the consequences of such a conflict.

That’s why CARICOM heads of government, at their recent Inter-session Meeting in Trinidad, came out strongly against war and urged Iraq, for the sake of peace, to cooperate fully with the United Nations arms inspectors and honour its obligations to the international community.


In the Caribbean, the impact of war will be directly felt in two key areas: the price of oil and the tourist industry.

The first shots haven’t been fired but the threat has already caused oil prices to rise. As the president of the local petroleum dealers explained, it’s only Government’s subsidization of oil prices that has shielded St Lucian consumers so far from having to dig deeper in their pockets. Consumers in neighbouring Barbados haven’t been so lucky. They started paying more for petroleum products two weeks ago.

Tourism, which last year made an impressive recovery following the September 2001 terrorist attacks, is particularly vulnerable.


War renews the threat of terrorist attacks particularly on US targets, and it most likely will cause Americans to cancel plans to vacation overseas in places like St Lucia.

Let’s hope, even at this eleventh hour, that war will be averted. Too much is at stake. Government, through the National Economic Council (NEC), working with the social partners, will do its best to minimize the impact on St. Lucians.



“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



ST. LUCIA TO CHAIR UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The way seems virtually clear for St Lucia to make history at the United Nations as the first small island state to preside over the General Assembly.

Based on the solid endorsements his candidature has received, Minister of External Affairs, International Trade and Civil Aviation, Senator Julian R. Hunte, is widely expected to win election as President of 58th United Nations General Assembly which convenes in September.

It's the turn of Latin America and the Caribbean to occupy the prestigious position. Senator Hunte so far is the only candidate.

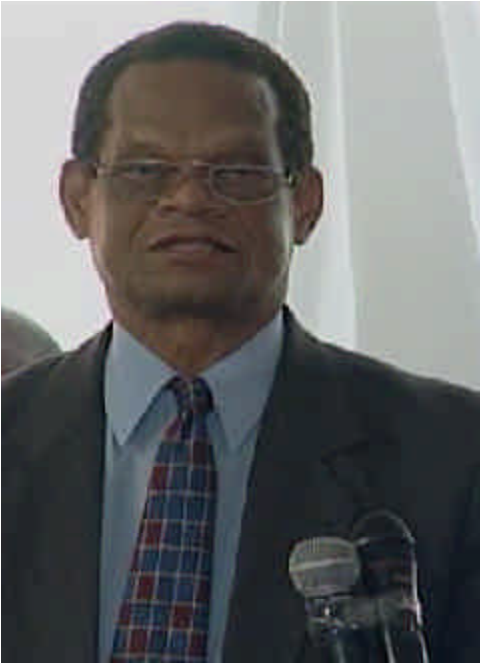
"The nomination of St Lucia ... has been supported by the entire Latin American group as well as the CARICOM group and this election has been made possible on an agreed procedure and formula established several years ago," says Prime Minister Dr Kenny D. Anthony.

"It is an important honour for CARICOM because this is the first time that a very small state like ours will have the honour of sharing the presidency," he adds.

Guyana's current Foreign Minister, Rudy Insanally, was the first CARICOM representative to be elected president of the UN General Assembly. Guyana's ambassador to the United Nations at the time, Insanally presided over the 48th General Assembly in 1993.

In 1998, Barbados had put forward the late Dame Nita Barrow, who at the time was the island's UN ambassador, for the post. However, she was defeated in the election by Dante Caputo, then Argentina's foreign minister.

Dr Anthony says St Lucia plans to invite other CARICOM countries to share the responsibility of the one-year assignment by contributing officers to work on Senator Hunte's staff at the UN.



Minister of External Affairs, International Trade and Civil Aviation, Senator Julian R. Hunte

The proposal was discussed with and warmly received by CARICOM heads of government at their recent inter-sessional summit in Trinidad and Tobago.

The UN General Assembly brings together the delegations of all UN member states, many of them led by heads of Government or Foreign Ministers, for an examination of international issues.

Set up in 1945 under the Charter of the United Nations, the General Assembly is the United Nations' main deliberative organ and provides a forum for multilateral discussion of the full range of international issues covered by the Charter.

The Assembly meets in regular session each year from September to December, and thereafter as required.

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INDEPENDENCE 2003

"Participate fully and as meaningfully as you can. Within your community, know what is going on and be willing to assist as often as your are asked to. Be part of an organization that tries to bring out your true potential, one that utilizes your energies in a positive light and allows you to express yourself as uniquely as you are. Be part of an organization that is involved in the development of your country, and be proud that you are a member of such an organization.

Defend what you believe in, and remember that you and only you are responsible for your actions. You cannot run from who you are, you must confront that person deep inside with you, touch base with it, and develop it. Use it positively to develop your fellowmen and your country. The greatest investment you make is an investment in a friend, and your best friend is St. Lucia".

Mr. Silas Wilson addressing the Independence 2003 Youth Rally at Beausejour Cricket Ground.



NYC President Silas Wilson

FUNCTIONS OF THE GENERAL UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

As set out in the Charter of the United Nations, the functions and powers of the United Nations General Assembly are:

- To consider and make recommendations on the general principles of co-operation for maintaining international peace and security, including disarmament;
- To discuss any question relating to international peace and security and, except where a dispute or situation is currently being discussed by the Security Council, to make recommendations on it;
- To discuss, with the same exception, and make recommendations on any questions within the scope of the Charter or affecting the powers and functions of any organ of the United Nations;
- To initiate studies and make recommendations to promote international political co-operation, the development and codification of international law, the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms and international collaboration in the economic, social, humanitarian, cultural, educational and health fields;
- To make recommendations for the peaceful settlement of any situation which might impair friendly relations among nations;
- To receive and consider reports from the Security Council and other United Nations organs;
- To consider and approve the United Nations budget and establish the financial assessments of Member States;
- To elect the non-permanent members of the Security Council and the members of other United Nations Councils and organs and, on the recommendation of the Security Council, to appoint the Secretary-General.

NEW TEAM AT FINANCE

The Ministry of Finance, International Financial Services and Economic Affairs is under a new management team following the appointments of seven career public officers to senior positions within the past month.

Topping the list is Trevor Brathwaite, former Comptroller of Inland Revenue, who has been confirmed as permanent secretary as of January 16, after acting in the post for six months.

Brathwaite is a Certified General Accountant (CGA) who once worked in the private sector in Barbados as audit manager with the accounting firm, KPMG Peat Marwick. He also did a stint at KPMG in New Zealand.

Former Accountant-General, Isaac Anthony, is the new Director of Finance. His appointment took effect on January 16. He had acted in the post for almost seven months, after serving 10 years as Accountant-General.

Anthony holds a MBA and BSc in Economics and Accounting from the University of the West Indies (UWI), Cave Hill. He is also a Certified Government Financial Manager.

Taking over at the Treasury as Accountant-General, as of February 3, is Agosta Degazon. A Cave Hill MBA with a BSc in Accounting from UWI, Mona, she previously served in the Inland Revenue Department as Deputy Comptroller. From September 2002 until last month, she acted as Comptroller of Inland Revenue.

At Inland Revenue, James Charles, a CGA, has been appointed on promotion to the post of Comptroller. Prior to his appointment, which is effective February 3, Charles held the post of Assistant Comptroller from December 1999.

Another promotion at Inland Revenue saw Adria Sonson moving up to Deputy Comptroller, also effective February 3, after serving as acting Assistant Comptroller from June 2001. Sonson, a former tax inspector, is an ACCA-certified accountant with a Certificate in Business Administration from the UWI.

After acting for more than a year, Phillip Dalsou has been confirmed in the post of Budget Controller. The holder of a BSc in Economics from the University of London and an M.Phil in Economics and the Politics of Development from the University of Cambridge, Dalsou previously served in the Ministry as Deputy Director, Research and Policy.

Louis Lewis, former Director of Tourism, Research and Administration with the St. Lucia Tourist Board, is the new Director of Economic Affairs. He holds a B.Sc. in Economics from the UWI, Cave Hill, and is wrapping up studies for a Cave Hill MBA. This appointment is effective January 16.

Economist, Tracy Polius, has assumed duties as Deputy Director, Development Cooperation and Programme Planning, effective January 15. The holder of BSc and MSc degrees in economics, she previously worked as an economist with the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank.

UNIVERSAL SECONDARY EDUCATION

from page 1

write the Common Entrance Examination every year. However, a longstanding problem of the demand for secondary school space outstripping the supply, meant roughly half of the students never made it on to a secondary education.

Determined to bring an end to this injustice, the Labour government, upon taking office in 1997, embarked on an unprecedented school building programme to bridge the gaping gap between demand and supply.

18 Secondary Schools

By the end of the administration's first term, four new secondary schools – at Piaye, Anse Ger, Soufriere and Babonneau — had been built with the support of the World Bank, adding over 2,000 new places.

At present, there are 18 secondary schools on the island. By the time the latest education development support agreement with the World Bank comes to an end, the number should jump to around 22.



Model for the future: the new Union Primary School under construction.

In fact, September this year will see the opening of the fifth new secondary school, in time for the start of the 2003-2004 academic year. Located in Ciceron, it will provide an additional 535 spaces and will be the first St Lucian secondary school specializing in technical vocation (techvoc) subjects.

Under the latest World Bank agreement which took effect last January 31, two more secondary schools will be built over the next three years. The Grand Riviere Senior Primary School in Dennerly will be upgraded to secondary status, and 10 existing secondary schools will undergo major renovations.

Universal Secondary Education.

These projects, Michel says, put St Lucia on “the final lap in the journey towards universal secondary education.”

Government’s vision for education is far-reaching. It isn’t just about putting up new school buildings. Rather, it’s about transforming the entire system with the ultimate goal of giving St Lucia a world-class education system that not only produces well-rounded citizens, but equips them with the

necessary skills to compete in a fast-changing global economy.

Several Caribbean countries, which have similar goals for their education systems, are keeping a close eye on the reform process underway in St Lucia to see how they can learn from the experience.

“The approach we used in developing our education sector plan has been identified by the World Bank as a best practice,” says Permanent Secretary, Dr. Didacus Jules. “Trinidad, Grenada, Dominica, a number of countries have sent delegations from their Ministries of Education to St Lucia to see what we are doing,... some of the techniques we use. in order to incorporate that in their own planning.”

The fact that secondary education has received so much attention in the last six years doesn’t mean other sub-sectors have suffered as a result. In fact, quite the opposite has occurred as every sub-sector – from the Ministry of Education right down to pre-school

– has been or will be touched by the comprehensive reform process.

According to Dr. Jules, “balanced development” across the major sub-sectors is what Government is seeking to achieve. At the pre-school level, for example, the next five years will see some new government initiatives to encourage the largely private sector school operators to increase their intake.

“These initiatives will be targeted at reaching the poorest of the poor so that persons who would otherwise fall outside the loop of provision, will not lose the head-start opportunity,” says Dr. Jules.

Primary education is poised for some very exciting times. The opening, in September, of the new Union Primary School, the largest and most modern in the Eastern Caribbean, will set a whole new standard for primary education.

The start-up of this school, which will break new ground as far as primary school facilities are concerned, will also bring an end to the so-called “shift system” that restricted

children at the Ave Maria and RC Boys School to a half-day of schooling for the past 30 years.

“The Union Primary School, when it is completed by August, will accommodate some 1,050 students and it will have facilities and amenities that exist in no other primary school in St Lucia,” says Michel.

Modern Facilities

“We will have, for the first time, a primary school with a resource centre, computer labs, segregated sick bay for boys and girls. We will have a primary school with its own home economics room, its own counselling room, a primary school for the first time ever with a dedicated staff room for teachers, with offices for both principal and vice principal,” the minister adds.

“We will have a primary school with a multi-purpose court and provision for a playing field, ...covered outdoor area with a stage for assembly by students. We will also have a primary school which will be so landscaped

as to make provision for outdoor learning spaces so that teachers can take the students outside and conduct classes in a comfortable and aesthetically pleasing environment.”

Several primary schools are earmarked for renovation over the coming years. The emphasis will be on removing what Dr Jules calls “the wooden shack syndrome”, creating larger classrooms to enhance teacher and student comfort and safety, supplying computers and other modern learning aids, and bringing about, overall, a better ambience that promotes learning.

Transformation

At the secondary level, major transformation of the curriculum is on the cards with the help of the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC). The plan, which seeks to increase the number of subject options, will see every student pursuing a core number of subjects – namely, English, a foreign language, mathematics, science and information technology, and physical education – and eventually adding specialized subjects to the list.

“A number of countries have sent delegations ...to see what we are doing, some of the techniques we use ...”



Permanent Secretary, Dr. Didacus Jules: aiming to create a world-class education system.

“Our objective as a ministry is to ensure that whether you go to school in Castries, Bouton or Micoud, you are exposed to teachers of the finest quality and facilities that are comparable,” says Dr. Jules. “All schools will have the same basic facilities.”

Teacher training forms an integral part of the reform process.

Sixth form education, currently available only at the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College, is also in line for major expansion. Centrepiece of the plan being considered by the Ministry of Education, is the reintroduction of sixth forms at select secondary schools, beginning with St Mary’s College and the St Joseph’s Convent.

“As we move towards universal secondary education, Sir Arthur will not be able to handle the demand for sixth form education,” says Dr Jules. “We have to ensure that in the north, east, south and west, there are opportunities for sixth form education.”

“It is opportune to do this,” he adds. “At the time the former government centralized sixth forms, it was the right move to make because then sixth form education was not in as much demand then 20 years ago as it is now. You had relatively small numbers.

“Now, with the numbers, it makes it extremely economical to go in the other direction; that is, to decentralize so that you can in fact meet the demand and, at the same time, help to expand the base for tertiary education opportunities,” Dr Jules says.

REFOCUSED, RE-ENERGIZED

National Development Corporation adopts a pro-act

Imagine St Lucia as a focal point for the development of information technology (IT) in the Eastern Caribbean!

St. Lucia could very well end up in this enviable position, if the refocused and re-energized National Development Corporation (NDC) succeeds in developing a multi-million-dollar IT park geared towards the entire OECS sub-region.

As part of a new pro-active approach to promoting St Lucia as a prime Caribbean location for doing business, NDC, under the chairmanship of business magnate Michael Chastenet, is actively pursuing the IT project which is likely to go up in Vieux Fort.

Two potential US partners have already expressed interest. A real estate company reportedly “willing and eager” to facilitate the construction, and an IT company called Avaya which has close ties to big name Fortune 500 companies.

Avaya is expected to play a key role in identifying clients, namely US companies looking to relocate certain aspects of their operations offshore.

“We are not going to build an IT park and then go out and try to sell the concept,” explains Wayne Vitalis, who was appointed general manager a year ago to oversee a restructuring process currently underway at NDC.



Dainea Augier, Investment Promotion Officer

“It is going to be more of a demand-driven type of initiative as opposed to what was traditionally done where we built and then went out and tried to get investors to move in,” he adds.

As envisioned, the IT park will be a large business complex on approximately 40 acres, housing several IT-related businesses, both foreign and local, as well as an IT small business incubator, among other things.

It’s being promoted as “a truly unique project with world-class design, engineering and technology, offering service firms and manufacturing firms every facility for rapid start up and expansion....”



General Manager, Wayne Vitalis

The IT park is one of two big initiatives NDC is placing considerable emphasis on, as it goes about changing the way it does business as the Government’s principal investment promotion and facilitation agency.

Under a new mandate, spelt out in a new NDC Act which the Parliament of St Lucia passed in 2001, this statutory corporation is to concentrate less on real estate development, which was the main focus of its operations until recently, and concentrate more on mobilizing much-needed investment at home and abroad to spur economic development on the island.

The new mandate

“That Act speaks clearly to the new NDC’s role in promoting investment in certain key sectors and those sectors are considered priority by the Cabinet and Government of St Lucia,” Vitalis explains.

“The sectors include tourism, IT, agriculture and agro-processing, entertainment and other related activities. Within that mandate, we are shaping our objectives over the next couple of years,” he adds.

The second big project is a US\$70 million, 300-room hotel earmarked for Bois Chadon, Vieux Fort, not far from the former Club Med which is reopening to business in the coming months.

This new property, at an advanced stage of planning, is to be operated, under a management contract or some other business arrangement, by the Sandals hotel group under the Beaches all-inclusive family brand.

“We are now getting the funding and financial package together,” says Vitalis. “There are certain investors who have indicated their interest and we are now working with them to secure a firmer commitment.”

NDC has set up a property company, Chadon Investments Ltd., to raise equity for the project. It represents an opportunity for ordinary St Lucians to acquire a stake in tourism, the industry of the future, through investing in the company.

NDC is working at the same time to bring a number of other smaller-scale investment possibilities to fruition. Among them, tourism projects at Anse des Sables, Vieux Fort and another at Ganter’s Bay, near Pointe Seraphine. There are other proposals from investors for setting up call centres, various types of manufacturing operations, and health services.

“Attracting an investor takes a lot of time, a lot of effort and we are knocking on every opportunity that comes our way,” Vitalis says.

St Lucia’s labour rates present a major challenge attracting manufacturing-type investment in particular. While the average St Lucian will tell you he considers his pay to be low, foreign investors regard it as high, when compared with the going wage rates in competing locations like China, Indonesia and Costa Rica.

but if they want to come to St Lucia risk-free, we can’t offer that,” says O’Donavan Yarde, Manager of the NDC’s Project Management Unit which assesses investment-related risks.

Despite such challenges, the business of attracting investment to develop St Lucia still has to go on.

NDC is adopting a more personalized approach — a winning formula Jamaica has used despite the bad publicity it receives from time to time – to achieve higher levels of success in an international market where competition among countries for investment is fierce.

“We are giving ourselves certain tangible targets,” Vitalis says. “Everybody’s role is going to be measured in terms of tangible targets that they are to achieve whether they



Site of the proposed Beaches hotel at Bois Chadon.

As a result, St Lucia is no longer as attractive as before to manufacturing-type investments which, incidentally, still generate the most enquiries for NDC. The island does have, however, a competitive edge in IT, especially within the Caribbean, says Investment Promotion Officer Dainea Augier.

Another challenge NDC faces, she adds, is a belief by some investors that they should get factory space for virtually nothing, despite the fact that NDC sometimes have to incur substantial costs to retrofit factories for occupancy.

Red tape too has turned off investors occasionally but it’s a matter Government is working hard to rectify.

“To attract an investor to St Lucia, we cannot remove all the risk. We try to limit certain risks

are directly involved in investment promotion, or they provide support services...”

For about five years now, NDC has been financing its own operations without any subvention from Government. It does so largely through income generated from the rental of factory shells, its investment in the Point Seraphine duty free complex, and land sales.

Many St Lucians, no doubt, would be surprised by this news. NDC’s self-financing status makes it unique among state-operated investment promotion agencies which generally are taxpayer-funded.

“It is a major challenge but one of the things it probably does for us, is help us to appreciate some of the challenges businesses face because we have to pay the bills,” says Yarde.

ED, READY

an approach to investment

A US\$70 million, 300-room hotel earmarked for Bois Chadon, Vieux- Fort,



A computer generated model of one of the proposed developments in the south of the island.



O'Donovan Yarde, Manager, Project Management Unit

Under a new mandate, spelt out in a new NDC Act which the Parliament of St Lucia passed in 2001, this statutory corporation is to concentrate less on real estate development, which was the main focus of its operations until recently, and concentrate more on mobilizing much-needed investment at home and abroad to spur economic development on the island.



Architectural drawing of proposed IT Park

HELPING HAND FOR THE JOBLESS

Creating a safety net which will not be a deterrent to productivity.

Losing a job can be quite a devastating experience, especially if you do not have an alternative source of income to carry you through the period of joblessness.

To be unemployed in such circumstances usually means an uphill struggle to make ends meet, worries over how mortgage and other monthly bills will be paid, how the children will be sent to school, and so on.

Above everything else, what’s worst for many persons is the severe blow one’s self-esteem can take from the loss of financial independence, and the humiliating discomfort of having to rely on others until another job comes around.

As part of a landmark, wide-ranging attempt to create an extensive safety net to provide relief to St. Lucians during times of distress, the six-year-old Labour Government is looking to alleviate much of the personal trauma associated with job losses in St Lucia.

Unemployment benefit schemes usually have about three main objectives: (1) to provide cash payments to displaced workers during periods of involuntary unemployment; (2) to maintain to a substantial degree of the unemployed worker’s standard of living; and (3) to provide beneficiaries with time to find new employment consistent with their skills and experience.

Additionally, when a country is experiencing a recession and workers are losing jobs, unemployment insurance has a wider beneficial effect by helping to stabilise the economy. It does so by helping to shore up demand for goods and services through enabling unemployed workers to maintain at least some of their personal income and consumption spending.

Whatever is eventually decided after the task force submits its recommendations to Cabinet, it must be made clear that unemployment benefits will come at a cost to the St

around five per cent of their monthly earnings to the unemployment benefit scheme.

It’s nothing more than a proposal at this stage, but the five per cent would be in addition to the 10 per cent currently deducted from salaries for National Insurance. As is generally the case with unemployment insurance, the contribution is expected to be divided among employers and employees but the precise split is yet to be determined.

“It is important in making that decision on the level of contribution that you study the impact it would have on the net pay of individuals and also on the various businesses, especially those that are already going through rough times,” Miss Hippolyte says.

She makes it clear, however, that the amount of benefits workers will receive, will be tied directly to the cost of providing the coverage. For example, if the scheme is going to pay out 60 per cent of the unemployed worker’s last

“While persons who are now unemployed would not benefit, it would make provision for persons who are now employed in the event they were to become unemployed in the future.”



NIC Director Emma Hippolyte: chairing the task force exploring the proposal.

as is the case in Barbados, because it is considered that they have complete control over whether they work or not.

Another key question relates to the eligibility requirements. Usually, to qualify, the worker must lose his or her job through no fault of their own. So that, if you were fired, there may be cases in which you may not qualify.

As part of the eligibility requirements, workers are also required to contribute to the scheme for a pre-determined period before the actual loss of employment. Common qualifying periods range from 26 to 52 weeks.

The main challenge designers of the scheme face, is coming up with a formula which strikes a balance between providing reasonable compensation for loss of income through unemployment, and not, at the same time, being so generous that workers are discouraged from going out to find new employment.

“You want a safety net to be there but you do not want it to be a deterrent for productivity,” explains Miss Hippolyte. “You are walking on a very thin line.”

ILO Convention No. 102, which acts as a sort of international standard, says payment of an unemployment benefit may be limited to 13 weeks within a period of 12 months. It also recommends that the benefit should be at a rate of at least 45 per cent of the claimant’s previous earnings.



St Lucian workers: poised to benefit from another pioneering Government initiative.

Looking to break more new ground in the critical area of human development, the administration of Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony is exploring the possibility of introducing an unemployment benefit scheme.

If St. Lucians agree with the proposal, St Lucia will become the second Caribbean country after Barbados offering this type of social benefit which makes a world of difference when people are out of work.

“Unemployment insurance provides a good safety net,” says Director of the National Insurance Corporation, Emma Hippolyte, who chairs a Government-appointed task force studying the proposal.

“While persons who are now unemployed would not benefit,” she explains, “it would make provision for persons who are now employed in the event they were to become unemployed in the future.”

The eight-month-old task force, which is receiving technical assistance from the International Labour Organisation (ILO), is also exploring the feasibility of introducing national health insurance – which was examined in a previous issue of *Nationwide* — and a pension scheme for farmers and fishermen.

Lucian worker, as is the case with any other type of insurance.

Workers’ contributions, however, will represent a worthwhile investment against an unpredictable risk, considering the vagaries of the present global economic environment in which anyone, anywhere, can lose their job at any time because of unanticipated market shifts.

Peace of Mind

Perhaps, the best recent example in St Lucia is the spate of layoffs, which occurred in the hotel sector following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on America. At the time of the layoffs resulting from a sharp downturn in tourist arrivals, many of the workers, who are now back on the job, had openly expressed concerns about how they would get by on the breadline.

What unemployment insurance gives workers in such circumstances, is a degree of peace of mind stemming from the knowledge that they will at least get a portion of their former salary during the time they are out of work.

According to Miss Hippolyte, the task force, in its deliberations so far, has looked at the possibility of asking workers to contribute

What unemployment insurance gives workers in such circumstances, is a degree of peace of mind stemming from the knowledge that they will at least get a portion of their former salary during the time they are out of work.

salary, the contribution will have to be higher than if it’s 40 per cent. Also, whether such payments will run for, let’s say, three or six months, is another factor that will determine the level of contribution.

Miss Hippolyte says it’s important that St. Lucians fully understand and appreciate the issues involved in operating an unemployment benefit scheme. The task force is therefore thinking about sounding out St. Lucians on the issue before making its final recommendation to Cabinet.

Who will be covered

“What we might end up doing is to draft a short document and try to do a sample survey to start getting a feel from the population as to whether they want it and whether they are willing to pay for it,” Miss Hippolyte says.

Answering a number of fundamental questions is the first step in designing an unemployment insurance scheme for St Lucia. The first question, obviously, is who will be covered.

Generally speaking, unemployment benefit schemes cover only persons who are in regular paid employment and are at the risk of involuntarily losing their jobs. Self-employed persons usually are not covered,

GOVERNMENT JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The Ministry of Home Affairs and Gender Relations is looking to recruit a Human Resource Officer III for the Bordelais Correctional Facility.

Applicants should possess a Bachelor's Degree in Management plus one year's experience in a post at Grade 12 or above, or, a Bachelor's Degree in Human Resource Management plus three years experience in a post at Grade 10 or above, or, a Diploma in Human Resource Management, plus four years experience in a post at Grade 12 or above. Salary is in the range of \$45,890.49 - \$47,782.13 per annum (Grade 14)

Applications must reach the Secretary, Public Service Commission, Block A, Waterfront, Castries, no later than March 21, 2003.

The Ministry of Tourism has a vacancy for a Director of Product Development.

Qualifications for the post are a Master's Degree in Tourism Management, Business Management or related field with at least five years senior management experience, or, a Bachelor's Degree in Tourism Management, Business Management or related field with at least eight years senior management experience.

The applicant should possess organization and management skills, the ability to motivate and maintain staff morale, and a thorough knowledge of tourism matters and issues relevant to tourism in the Caribbean.

A motor vehicle is required for the proper performance of duties in this post. A traveling allowance will be paid. Salary is in the range of \$57,520.69 - \$58,921.95 (Grade 18)

Applications must be submitted to the Secretary, Public Service Commission by March 21, 2003.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries is inviting applications for the post of Produce Chemist III, II, I

Applicants must possess a Bachelor's Degree in Chemistry or a related field of study plus four years of experience, or, a Master's Degree in Chemistry or a related field plus two years experience.

Duties and responsibilities include providing analytical and quality control and monitoring services to agro-processors and manufacturers of products utilizing local raw materials; providing analytical support in water quality, soil fertilizer and pesticide residue analyses; assisting in the activities of the Pesticides Control Board/Toxic Hazardous Chemicals Board.

Salary scales are: Produce Chemist III - \$51,635.57 - \$53,527.21 per annum (Grade 16); Produce Chemist II — \$45,890.48 - \$47,782.13 per annum (Grade 14); Produce Chemist I - \$40,145.41 - \$42,387.40 per annum (Grade 12). The point of entry will be determined by the applicant's qualifications and experience.

Applications must be forwarded to the Secretary, Public Service Commission, by March 21, 2003.

A vacancy exists for a Registrar of Cooperatives in the Cooperative Department, Ministry of Labour Relations, Public Service and Cooperatives.

Interested persons should have a Master's Degree in Business Administration, Management Studies, Cooperative Management or other relevant qualifications, plus three years experience in a post at Grade 14 and above; or, a Bachelor's Degree in the same subjects plus five years experience in a post at Grade 12 and above.

Applicants should have, among other things, the ability to interpret and apply cooperative laws, regulations and by-laws; identify, develop and implement Human Resource Development Programmes for the Cooperative Sector; strong accounting/financial analytical skills. Salary is in the range \$54,507.99 - \$56,399.72 per annum (Grade 17)

Applicants must reach the Secretary, Public Service Commission, by March 31.

The Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development, Youth and Sports needs an Accountant III.

Qualifications are: Level III ACCA plus five years experience in auditing or accounting; or CGA Level IV, plus five years experience in auditing or accounting; or, a Master's Degree in Accounting plus two years experience in a post at Grade 12 or above; or, a Master's Degree in Accounting plus four years experience in a post at Grade 10; or, a Bachelor's Degree and Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting with three years experience in a post at Grade 12; or, a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting plus four years experience at Grade 12.

The successful applicant will be required, among other things, to supervise the operation of the Accounts Section; assist all departments in the Ministry on finances and accounting matters; monitor and control the budget of the Ministry; and prepare monthly revenue and expenditure statements for the Ministry. Salary is in the range of \$51,635.57 - \$53,527.21 per annum (Grade 16)

Applications on the prescribed form, along with certified copies of documents pertaining to qualifications should be sent to: The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labour Relations, Public Service and Cooperatives, Waterfront, Castries, no later than March 31.

Persons seeking employment with Government Ministries must submit applications on prescribed forms which are available at the Ministry of Labour Relations, Public Service and Cooperatives, located on the second floor of the Greaham Louisy Administrative Building, The Waterfront, Castries, or other selected government offices.

INDEPENDENCE 2003



Independence Awards recipients: Mrs.Alvina George, Mr. Winville King and Mrs. Majorie Brathwaite

Prime Minister Anthony says : Become champions of freedom and democracy by our efforts

“ Our independence and our sovereignty can only be advanced if we equip ourselves with the tools for prosperity and self-advancement and by overcoming the habits of dependency and mendicancy bequeathed to us by our colonial heritage. We must always remember that while we are victims of the colonial experience, that same experience has transformed us into champions of freedom and democracy by our own efforts. As descendants of uprooted and enslaved people, our capacity for freedom is manifested in our historical ability to create space for ourselves in any context of confinement. Similarly, we in this region have fashioned the oil drum (an instrument of labour) into the steel pan (an instrument of music and celebration), which has been widely acclaimed as the only musical instrument invented in the 20th Century.”

We must therefore never adopt a posture of resignation to defeat by global forces. That is not in our tradition. Saint Lucia must strive always to move upward and forward and to identify for herself, not just the difficulties ushered in by globalization, but the opportunities for progress and prosperity. We must always remember that globalization began, not in the 1990s, but with the Columbian enterprise five centuries ago. We have therefore had an experience of five hundred years of survival in the global order. Let History be our guide and let us renew confidence in ourselves, firm in the knowledge that we can and will survive and prosper amidst the global tide.
Dr. Kenny D. Anthony , Independence address 2003

THANKS, MR. PRIME MINISTER!

Hotel Workers have their say on government's approach to the tourism industry

Two years ago, workers of the Rex St Lucian and Papillon hotels in Rodney Bay faced an uncertain future after they were placed on the breadline.

Business had nose-dived, forcing the closure of both properties. St Lucia's tourist industry then was taking a beating from the combination of a sharp downturn in the global economy and the fall-out from the September 11th terrorist attacks on America.

Two years on, not only have both hotels re-opened and re-hired most of the staff, they are also doing reasonably well despite some anxiety at the moment about the possible effects of a war in Iraq.

It's been truly a remarkable turn-around not only for the two Rex properties, but also most other hotels affected by the unfortunate events of two years ago.

The man the happy Rex workers are crediting for spearheading the rescue effort that saved the industry and their jobs, is none other than Prime Minister Dr. Kenny D. Anthony.

Dr. Anthony was the guest of honour when the two Rex hotels held their annual staff recognition awards on the night of Thursday, February 20. He was warmly received by the workers, presented with a plaque as a token of their appreciation, and even got some

praise from a long-standing Canadian guest who saluted these efforts.

"We thank you! History will embrace you!" General Manager, James Prosper, told Dr. Anthony, to loud applause.

"What you have done tonight means a lot to me," said Dr. Anthony, who was clearly moved by the gesture. "When these hotels closed months back, it was very difficult for me to sleep at night. A day did not go by when I did not think about your plight."

He added: "Any investment in the workers of this country is a sound investment and if this government has gone out of its way to protect the jobs of workers in the tourist industry, as it did in the case of Hyatt, then I have no apologies to make."

"It is money well spent," Dr Anthony said again to loud applause.

The Prime Minister also had a special word for hotel workers about how important they are to the success of the island's no. 1 industry.

"Where the tourism industry is concerned, I want you to know that you are far more important than me, the Prime Minister, or the Minister of Tourism. We can prescribe policy, we can shape policy, but the truth is whether



A representative of the Rex employees presents Dr. Anthony with his special award of recognition.

our visitors return to St Lucia time and time again, will depend on you."

Dr. Anthony continued: "Whatever I may do at the top, or the Government may do or the Tourist Board may do, ultimately you are the key. You are the success, you are secret to a vibrant, energetic, diversified, caring tourism industry."

PRAISE FOR POLICE



Rex General Manager, James Prosper, presents the award to Kim Louis, head of the Rapid Response Unit.

"The most successful thing that has ever happened in this area".

That's how Rodney Bay hotelier, James Prosper, is describing the effectiveness of the Rapid Response Unit of the Royal St Lucia Police Force, in reducing crime in the north of the island.

Prosper, the general manager of the Rex St Lucian and Papillon hotels, acknowledged he was initially skeptical about how effective the Rapid Response Unit would be. After one year, however, he had a change of heart because the results were quite obvious.

The Rapid Response Unit was set up two years ago as part of a government initiative to crack down on crime, especially in the north where it was beginning to pose a serious threat to the vital tourist industry.

As a gesture of their appreciation, the management and staff of the two Rex hotels presented a special recognition award to Mr. Kim Louis, head of the Rapid Response Unit, at their annual staff recognition awards on the night of Thursday, February 20.

"Our close proximity to the United States makes it rather difficult not to import American foreign lifestyles. I must say that we have made some positive strides at increasing public awareness of what is typically St. Lucian. In this regard, I'll like to congratulate government on the bold initiative in the creation of NTN. This network, more than any other, helps preserve our national and cultural heritage for posterity."

Fr. Francis Michel

INDEPENDENCE 2003



A longstanding Independence Day tradition in St Lucia is the colourful military parade put on the disciplined forces at the Mindoo Phillip Park. In this photo, Governor-General, Her Excellency Dame Pearlette Louisy, inspects the parade in honour of the island's 24th anniversary of Independence, escorted by the parade commander.



Catholic Priest Fr. Francis Michel addressing the ecumenical service at the Cultural Centre in Castries.

"A nation that guards its national pride cannot ignore the needs of those who are disadvantaged among us. Many of those persons in this category are persons who have worked hard and unrewarded to build up this nation of ours; we are reaping the fruits of their arduous labour"