



NATIONWIDE

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PRIME MINISTER CALLS FOR

REGISTRATION OF LOCAL CONTRACTORS



P rime Minister Dr Kenny D. Anthony has called for the registration of local contractors to protect clients and to ensure their survival as professional contractors when the competition comes with the Caricom Single Market and Economy (CSME).

At Tuesday's sitting of Parliament, Minister for Physical Development, Environment and Housing, Hon. Ferguson John, presented for its second reading, a Bill to register architects.

Mr John said the move to register and regulate the architectural profession was necessary and overdue and local architects had

long been making representation in that regard.

However, in his contribution to the discussion of the Bill, the Prime Minister said local contractors needed to be registered just as much as architects.

He said he supported the Bill, but he felt it was "incomplete without companion legislation to also register contractors."

According to the Prime Minister, "We need to regulate contractors – especially those who give clients a bad deal.

"Just as the legislation before the House seeks to regulate the architects, the contractors need similar regulation, with clauses that would protect clients and ensure where li-

ability lies.

"For example, overseas St. Lucians complain bitterly about the quality of services from local contractors. Then too, there are contractors who change their contracted prices at will."

The Prime Minister said the impending CSME was another reason to ensure registration of architects, contractors and other local professionals.

"If we are to survive under the CSME," the PM said, "we need to introduce legislation to regulate professionals in St. Lucia and other Caricom territories."

But Dr Anthony also had words of caution and warning to local contractors who, he said, had to change

their habits and other modus operandi.

Said the PM: "Our professionals, if they are to survive in a competitive regional environment, must change their habits. Our contractors especially, must change the habits of charging hidden costs in order to charge clients extra outside of the written or verbal contract or agreement."

"Contractors will not survive doing business that way," the PM said, adding: "People have been taken for a ride for too long."

He said there was "an even greater need now to register contractors than there is to register architects."



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PM Welcomes Local Hotel's role in Sandals Chain winning four more Top Travel Industry Awards

Prime Minister Dr Kenny D. Anthony has welcomed the news that a local property belonging to the Sandals chain has helped the group to win four of the most coveted prizes at the just-concluded 2004 Caribbean World Travel Awards and World Travel Market Awards in London.

Sandals Resorts International (SRI), which operates both the Sandals and Beaches chains of Caribbean all-inclusive resorts, was voted Best Caribbean Hotel Chain, Best All-Inclusive Luxury Resorts and Best Hotel Group, in addition to winning the prestigious Environmental Gold Award.

The Best Caribbean Hotel Chain award went to Sandals after its local property, Sandals Regency, located at La Toc, was voted the Best All Inclusive Hotel by customers of Virgin Holidays, which sponsors that particular award.

Prime Minister Anthony says that by winning those awards, the Sandals Group, which operates three properties on the island and is about to build a fourth, "has demonstrated once again, the commitment and dedication of its



management and staff to providing an excellent service to customers."

He said it also "demonstrated the support of the industry for Sandals' efforts and confirmed the commitment of leadership of SRI to always seek to exceed the expectations of its guests."

The Best Hotel Group Award is

among the most prominent of all the travel trade honours, in which travel agents from across the United Kingdom and Ireland vote for the company they believe has provided the best service during the year.

The Best All Inclusive Luxury Resort Award honours excellence among

hotels throughout the Caribbean and is based on votes by readers of Caribbean World, a quarterly magazine focusing on all things Caribbean.

The Environmental Growth Award is sponsored by Thompson's Holidays, which says the Sandals Group has shown ongoing commitment to environmental responsibility.

The chain adopted the internationally respected Green Globe Environmental Management system in 1998 and, to date, seventeen Sandals and Beaches Resorts, including those in St. Lucia, are now Green-Globe certified. Industry analysts say this means the group is now on course to become the first all-inclusive chain in the world to be fully Green-Globe certified.

Thompson's says Sandals also administers one of the most comprehensive community outreach programmes in the Caribbean. The group sponsors over 100 such projects in its host communities, including St. Lucia, spanning health, education, skills development, sports, senior citizens welfare and conflict resolution.

US\$7.5M plan to better protect St. Lucia from natural disasters

A US\$7.5 million 2nd Phase Disaster Mitigation Plan for the island was launched at the Sandals Halcyon Beach Resort on Wednesday, December 1, 2004. The Phase II initiative, like the first will seek to address the problems facing the island in terms of disaster preparedness.

The initiative spearheaded by the Ministry of Physical Development is being funded through a loan of US\$3.7 million from the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development, and Credit in the amount of US\$3.8 million from the International Development Association.

The project aims at further reducing the country's vulnerability to adverse natural events, such as tropical storms,

hurricanes, floods and earthquakes through investment in risk management activities.

Speaking at the launching ceremony, Minister for Physical Development, Environment and Housing Hon. Ferguson John said, "The community of Dennery South is expected to benefit most from the initiative".

Parliamentary Representative for the community, Damian Greaves expressed satisfaction that flood and coastal problems experienced by his constituency, especially during the hurricane season, would be addressed once and for all: "I think our people in Dennery, more particularly those who live near the coastline will be extremely happy. Of

course, part of the project will also involve the relocation of some residents who are facing the brunt of the sea surges and therefore, we are finalizing

the plan for the rationalization of the land at Anse-Kanot so that some of our people to the southern side of the coastline can be relocated".

Under the project, three bridges will be constructed as well as retaining walls for the stabilization of slopes. The project will also see the retrofitting of a number of health centres and schools on the island normally used as disaster shelters.



SLTB refutes Talk Show Host's claim

In a "TALK" show aired on Sunday 3 November, 2004 the host made a statement alleging that the former deceased Chairman of the St Lucia Tourist Board had incurred a sizeable debt, to the tune of \$350,000, and in addition, implied that the former Chairman had left the Board with large credit card debts.

The St Lucia Tourist Board wishes to categorically clarify that there is absolutely no truth in this statement, which could be misinterpreted by the general public to tarnish the good name of the deceased former Chairman.

To begin with, the St Lucia Tourist Board follows strict procedures as it relates to large financial commitments, and no such commitments are made by any one individual. Further, any credit card issued to the Chairman of the St Lucia Tourist Board, both past and present has a definite credit limit of EC\$5,000, with all expenditure on the said card being fully authorized.

The St Lucia Tourist Board hopes that this now clarifies any unpleasant impressions which may have been left as a result of the unfortunate statement, and continues to applaud its former deceased chairman for the invaluable contribution to tourism.

Bring back inter-house competition – Michael Pierre

Physical Education Officer attached to the Department of Youth and Sports Michael Pierre has said that lack of inter-house competition in schools was of some concern to the department.

Speaking on the GIS' Sports in Action programme over the weekend, Mr Pierre suggested that the entire sporting competitions among schools would improve, if schools were able to host inter-house competition in several sporting disciplines.

"Almost every school has their inter-house track and field meet, which seems to be a big thing in their calendar. I can recall that when we went to school track and field this was the thing within the school system. Our concern

is that if you can find the time to organise track and field, I know there are some constraints, but an effort should be made in organising your inter-house football, netball, basketball, or do it on a form basis," Said Mr. Pierre.

Mr Pierre suggested that if schools did this, they would have an idea of who their talented students are: "There'll be no need to be calling trials or asking people to sign up. This is time consuming. Through the inter-house competitions you can pick a nucleus of persons, who you then fine tune to represent your school and I think that will get greater results."

Mr Pierre said sporting events put on by the department this year have been quite successful so far, despite a few drawbacks from time to time.

ECCB encourages prudent financial choices

ECCB area students are invited to recommend measures to encourage the citizens of the ECCB member states to exercise greater financial prudence in the 2005 OECS Essay Competition, sponsored by the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB).

Now in its 10th year, students 15 – 18 years from the eight ECCB member countries will compete for a total of EC fifteen thousand dollars (EC\$15,000.00) in prizes.

The entries are to be submitted to the ECCB Headquarters in St Kitts or the Bank’s Agency Office in the member countries by Friday, 13 May 2005. Fliers detailing the topic and the terms of the competition have been distributed to the regional secondary schools and colleges.

The annual essay competition, which encourages discourse on social and economic issues affecting the citizens of the ECCB member countries, is part of the Central Bank’s Community Outreach Programme.



Bank of St. Lucia

Government of St Lucia EC\$27M Bond Issue Oversubscribed on the ECSE

The Government of St Lucia’s twenty seven million Eastern Caribbean dollars (EC\$27 million), six year bond issue auctioned through the primary market platform of the Eastern Caribbean Securities Exchange (ECSE) has been oversubscribed by EC\$4,634,000.00.

At the close of the bidding period at 12:00 noon on Thursday, November 25, 2004 licensed intermediaries had placed a total of 14 bids, ranging from \$9,000 to \$7,600,000 with a total value of \$31,634,000.00. A fixed price auction methodology was adopted at a coupon rate of 6.00%.

Investors submitted bids for this of-

fering through the Antigua Commercial Bank, the Bank of Nevis Ltd., the Bank of St Lucia Ltd., the National Commercial Bank (SVG) Ltd., the St Kitts Nevis Anguilla National Bank Ltd, National Mortgage & Finance Company of Dominica (a subsidiary of the National Bank of Dominica), and Republic Finance & Merchant Bank of Grenada.

Since the launch of the Regional Government Securities Market (RGSM) in November 2002, participating governments have raised over EC\$645 Million using the ECSE primary market platform and investors from across the currency union and beyond have benefited from these issues.

New water facility established

The National Authorizing Office of the European Development Fund has pledged to do all within its power to ensure that St. Lucia makes use of a new water facility developed by the European Union for African, Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP). The project, which will assist ACP

countries in dealing with their water and sanitation problems, is being by funded to the tune of some one billion Euros. The demand driven facility allows government departments, non-state actors and even NGOs in St. Lucia and other ACP States to send in proposals

in order to access funding for various initiatives aimed at solving their water problems. St. Lucia will be in competition with 78 other ACP countries for funds under the facility. More than just providing funds for better sanitation, the facility can also

be utilized for the funding of water governance, policy and education, as well as for the effective management of water resources. The new water facility is in keeping with millennium goals established at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. The summit sought to improve on people’s access to fresh water and basic sanitation around the world.



Water Treatment Plant and Storage Facilities at Ciceron

A SALUTE to our PM in conversation



Dr. Kenny D. Anthony

Hello once again, St. Lucia, Today is the last Monday of November and we are drawing closer to the festive season.

In the last month, Saint Lucia's Tourism Industry received two prestigious awards. First, there was the Five Star Diamond Award for Excellence from the American Academy of Hospitality Sciences. This was followed by the Crystal Palm Award for Excellence to the Government and people of Saint Lucia. The thirty-six member countries of the Caribbean Hotel Association voted Saint Lucia as the Caribbean Government with the most favourable policies and attitudes to investment in tourism.

None of these awards would have been possible without our hotel owners, hotel administrators and most importantly, our hotel workers.

Of course, this is not the first time that St. Lucia has received an award. A year hardly goes by without St. Lucia being favourably mentioned or some St. Lucian hotel being voted "The Best" in one category or other. Sandals continue to lead the way among the large hotels, but our small hotels are also holding their own, whether it is Bay Gardens in the north or Anse Chastanet and Ladera on the west coast. Our hotels and their employees continue to win awards for Saint Lucia.

So, in recognition of these successes I have decided to dedicate today's Conversation to our hotel workers. Without them, our hotel industry would not be where it is today. They deserve our recognition for managing our industry with sensitivity, warmth and yes, pride and dignity.

Some in our midst are contemptuous of our hotel workers, declaring their

jobs as servile and demeaning. They even say that this Government wishes to create a nation of waiters.

Ironically, many waiters earn higher incomes than their critics. Some of whom incidentally, live off, directly or indirectly, on the income created by the tourism industry.

Other pillars of industry

As I speak of our hotel workers, I am also thinking of the other pillars of our tourism industry: the taxi drivers, the vendors, the workers at the duty free shops, the water sport and sport fishing staff, restaurant staff, airline staff, airport personnel, port security guards, and Customs and Immigration, officials. They too are important, but our hotel workers, more than any other determine whether the visitors return, or whether they move on to another destination.

Increasing arrivals

Unquestionably, we continue to be a favourite tourism destination. This is borne out by our increased arrivals by sea and air with each passing year. Our cruise tourism figures continue to grow, as do our arrivals by air. American Airlines is back with us. British Midlands undertakes its inaugural flight in December. Existing airlines are putting on more flights and adding routes.

Some local tour operators are reporting over 100% increase in business so far for this season.

New hotels are springing up and existing ones are expanding. The Sandals Group as already announced, the first of the Beaches chain in Saint Lucia. Discovery at Marigot Bay is under construction and will bring new life to Marigot. The Harbour at Rodney Bay is now finally cleared for construction

and will add a new dimension to Rodney Bay. Calabash at Marisule, is also nearing completion. Soon, Plantation Beach on the Cas-En-Bas beach will open its doors for business.

But that is not all. Existing hotels that are expanding include Bay Gardens, which also operates Bay Gardens Inn. Coco Creole, is working night and day to complete its almost 200 additional rooms. The former Rainbow Hotel, has re-entered the market as "The Village". Renovations are to start at the Rex St. Lucian sometime next year. The former Club Med in Vieux Fort re-opens in mid January under its new name "Coconut Bay". Some three hundred Saint Lucians will be employed there. Other good news about that property will soon follow.

In effect, some 700 additional rooms will be in the market in the next six months. All of that would not have been possible without investors. Every investment is a tangible expression of confidence in our industry and our economy.

But none of these successes I have spoken of, be they through awards or accolades, would have been possible without the contribution of the workers at our hotels. They are truly our front-line ambassadors in this industry.

More important than politicians

I have said before that as far as I am concerned, the hotel workers of this country are more important than politicians because they can make or break the industry. Their handling of visitors will determine if they convey favourable impressions of our island, people and the product we offer. Time and time again, visitors tell me that what impresses them the most about our St. Lucia is our people – their warmth, generosity and sensitivity.

I remember, as you do, the criticisms I have faced – and still do – for taking steps to provide jobs for hotel workers or to ensure that hotel workers keep their jobs in the face of difficulties facing their employers. In this regard, I remember the workers of the Rex chain, whose jobs we successfully secured by taking steps to assist the employers to keep their doors open. And of course, there are the continuing efforts to paint as a crime the Government's decision to ensure that six hundred St. Lucians are working at Sandals Grande, now the flagship of the chain in St. Lucia. I am proud of Sandals Grande. Whatever St. Lucia may have lost, the investment will be repaid handsomely, in a matter of years.

As I have said before, my overriding interest is to provide jobs and put food on the table for our hotel and tourism employees. The Government that I lead will always put jobs first.

Fierce competition

Our hotel workers apart, we must ensure that, as a nation we continue

Get



Taxi Drivers

to do what we have to do to build and improve on our tourism product. The competition is fierce. I was reminded by the Tourism Minister the other day, that some countries in the Middle East are using their "oil money" to build islands – yes, to build islands – in order to attract visitors who want the island experience that we offer.

It is for this reason that we must take every opportunity to promote our tourism industry by ensuring that each worker in every establishment in the hospitality industry sees himself or herself as a tourism ambassador. The nature of the product may change, but service remains the name of the game.

Take the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers – the ARC Race, as we know it. After more than a dozen years of being the final destination for this grueling but challenging and adventurous worldwide event that now attracts over 200 yachts and crew, we have to ensure that we keep the race and that it grows from strength to strength. Other countries want the ARC, and badly.

We must acknowledge the efforts of the Rodney Bay Marina, especially Cuthbert Didier, in ensuring that the "yachties" are welcomed, properly accommodated and given the best time they can have, each time around. But there's more that we can do.

Families fly to St. Lucia to meet crew members who have braved the seas. They live on their boats, but they spend to eat and to stay with us. We must treat them just as we do the cruise visitors or the hotel guests. They too, are important to the industry.

The biggest challenge

Yet, even while we acknowledge and salute the contribution of our hotel employees, their biggest challenge is still

Our hotel workers on with the nation getting ready for business

**Vendors**

yet to come. They will undoubtedly be challenged to ensure they continue to deliver the award-winning service they have made St. Lucia famous for. But their biggest challenge will come with the Cricket World Cup in 2007, when they have to host the thousands of cricket fans over 51 days.

This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for us to shine at our best, with the eyes of eight billion cricket spectators around the world fixed on us.

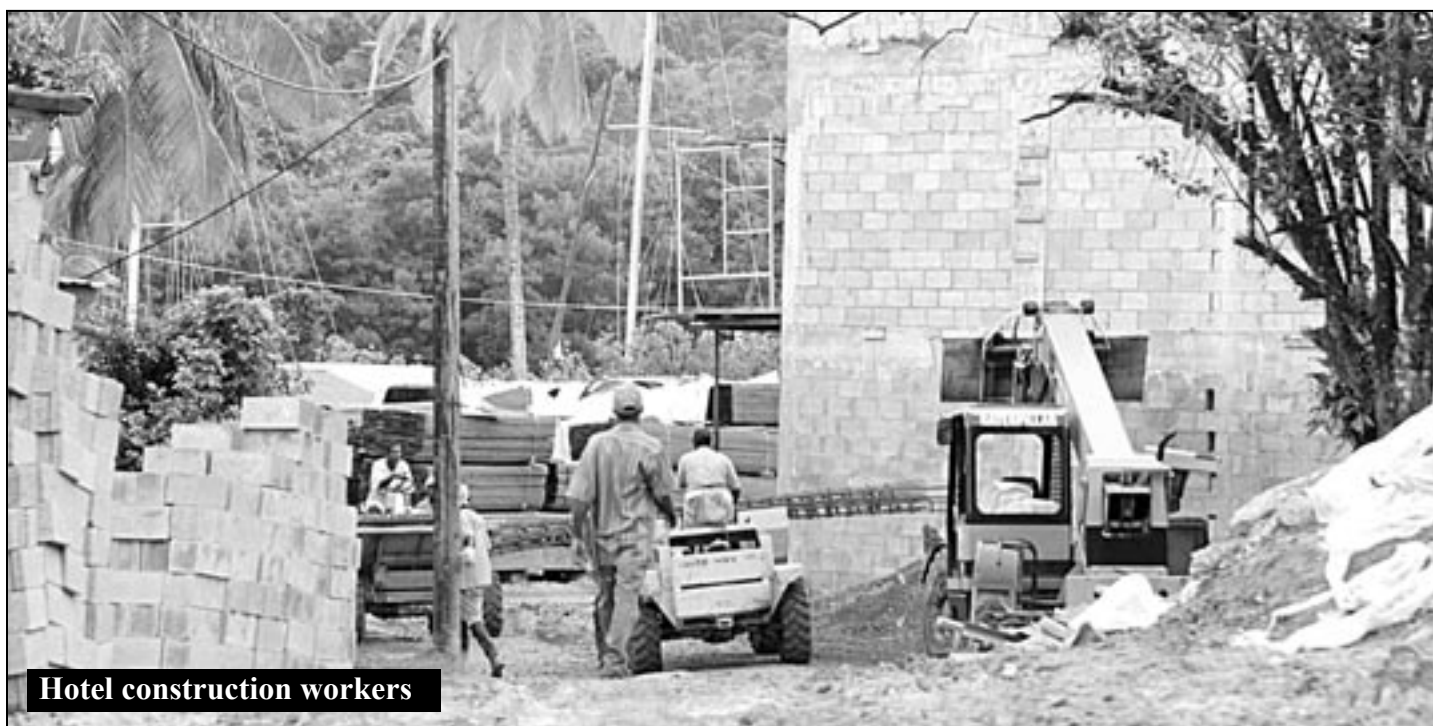
The Government has offered incentives aimed at ensuring we provide additional rooms in time for Cricket World Cup.

New hotels are under way, which will mean more work for thousands of St. Lucians between now and the Cricket World Cup. All will have an opportunity to be the best hosts we can for the best Cricket World Cup ever. Additional hotels and Guest Houses will go up, but there will also be opportunities for ordinary household families to engage in provision of Bed & Breakfast accommodation, providing it is within the standard required and expected.

We have to go for it. I know we can. From what we have seen these past seven years, I know we can excel. We have proven it more than once before and we can continue to do it between now and Cricket World Cup, 2007. All we have to do is to continue to do what we are doing – and do it even better.

So, I close as I began, with praise for our hotel workers and their allies in the tourism and hospitality industry. Without them we could not have been here; and without them, we will not be able to get to where we are heading. Respect due to our hotel workers.

Till next Monday, be of good cheer and may our Lord protect you.

**Restaurant worker****Hotel construction workers**

Men's Resource Centre to be established: Gov't looking after the interest of men too



Martin Weekes, Coordinator

Lera Pascal, Director of Gender Relations

Strategic Objectives

This is the 2nd phase in the establishment of the Men's Resource Centre, which will address the issues facing men, with the objective of creating Responsible Men! Secured Home! and a Caring Society. This will foster a more harmonious relationship between men and women, and bring about greater efficiency in the workplace and economic growth.

St. Mary's College wins World AIDS Day slogan competition



St. Mary's College

Fourteen-year old, Tremayne Lubin of St. Mary's College emerged winner of the World AIDS Day slogan competition under the global theme, "Women, Girls, HIV & AIDS". Many entries were received from the public, but Tremayne topped with the slogan: "AIDS brings pain! Girls, please abstain! Ladies, be wise! Make them guys condomize!"

Genner Edward of La Guerre Combined School placed second with the slogan: "Be Aware! Be Prepared! HIV is passing, but don't be scared!" In 3rd place was Tammy Jn Baptiste

of La Guerre Combined School with: "Women, HIV/AIDS is NOT a lottery, take no chances".

The winners will each receive a cash prize of \$300, \$200, and \$100, respectively, as well as a certificate of participation and a T-shirt with their printed slogan.

The formal presentation will be made during the National Summit for Children on HIV/AIDS 2004, to take place at the National Cultural Center on Tuesday, November 30, 2004.

The persons received Honourable Mentions for their slogans: Gina Edward of Babonneau Primary with "Let HIV be your worst enemy! Fight HIV/AIDS"; and Pertrina Louisy of La Guerre Combined School with "Be beautiful! Be smart! Be stylish! But, protect yourself from HIV!"

CCSS to Represent St. Lucia at Drama Festival in Trinidad & Tobago

The Castries Comprehensive Secondary School, winner of the Cultural Development Foundation School's Drama Competition has benefited from a Digicel sponsorship, through the Cultural Development Foundation, to represent St. Lucia at the Secondary Schools Drama Festival in Trinidad & Tobago.

The main objective of the local drama competition is to encourage the implementation of the new CXC Theatre Arts Syllabus in secondary schools on the island.

Communications Officer with the CDF, Dainea Augier, said Digicel, being the main sponsor of the Cultural Development Foundation, has pledged the sum of EC\$100, 000 for the implementation of arts and cultural activities.

"Digicel sponsorship of the CDF extends to providing funding for carnival, for the carnival queen Show, the carnival exhibition, mass on the square, jour oeuvre, panorama, the inter commercial house competition, the soca monarch competition, and parade of the bands. Digicel has

committed more funding to the Cultural Development Foundation and has agreed to continue sponsorship of cul-

tural activities", Miss Augier said.

Digicel's sponsorship of the CCSS students includes the provision of cell

phones as a form of communication support during their week-long stay in Trinidad and Tobago.



Report of the investigation into the circumstances relating to the “Helenites building” located at 438 East 49th Street, Brooklyn, New

Continued from last week's issue

The indenture which transferred ownership from the Helenites Association of St Lucia Inc to the Government of St Lucia is dated December 3, 1999. Various reasons are given by the Ambassadors in New York at the relevant times why the transfer to the trust or the not-for-profit organization did not take place. One reason given is that the lawyers who were instructed to prepare the instruments were tardy in so doing. Another reason is that other complications arose, for in the period after the payment of the \$59, 000 and before the committee of management was set up to run the Centre, other taxes were owing.

The Ambassador at the time of the purchase of the building put in place a committee, initially for a period of six months, to manage the affairs of the Centre. That committee, which performed admirably according to the Ambassador, paid the current taxes on the property but it was unaware that before it took over the management of the Centre, taxes had been in arrears. The members of the committee carried on for two years but after that they resigned.

The Ambassador had instructed the lawyer from Grenada to look into the setting up of the trust, but he left office in 2001 before the trust or not-for-profit organization could be established.

The new Ambassador found the members of the management committee expressing their desire to relinquish office and so the committee was formally dissolved. On his meeting with the various St Lucian Associations there was a majority view to sell the building. The Helenites Association was adamant not to sell.

Overdue taxes came up again under the new Ambassador. These pertained to amounts owing after the purchase of the building by the Government of St Lucia but before the committee was set up to manage the Centre. It must be borne in mind that the acquisition of ownership by the Government does not automatically result in exemption from taxes. Application for exemption has to be made and granted.

The arrears of taxes in the amount of \$31, 000 approximately was paid by a debt collector and having acquired a lien on the property he threatened foreclosure. It is in these circumstances that the transfer of title, not an attempted transfer, was made to Bartlett and the facilitation of the mortgage over the property occurred.

I think it is best to copy part of the Ambassador's statement in this respect: “A member of one of the Associations on the Council who had had a long association with the building, then offered to raise a loan to pay the lien and repair the building for rental, with the proceeds from the rental of the building going to repay the loan. This would involve transferring the title of the property to him so that the loan could be raised on the property. I agreed to do this on the clear understanding that it would be a temporary transfer and that the Government of St Lucia would continue to remain the legitimate owner of the property. There is therefore a signed agreement attesting that the transfer of title to the property is a temporary arrangement, that this arrangement was entered into to facilitate a mortgage on the property undertaken by and that the loan was to be used for the Centre in the

manner I have already outlined, that the title would be transferred back to Government once the loan was repaid, and that the Centre was responsible for the loan repayments”.

The Ambassador stated further that, in the course of preparing the mortgage papers, it was discovered that the transfer of title from the Helenites Association to the St Lucia Government in 1999 had not been properly registered and the legal work for the sale of the property from the original Jewish owners to the Helenites Association had not been complete, so that according to New York City files the property was registered under the name of the original owner Young Israel of Ruby, a Jewish synagogue. To clear up the legal difficulties required more money than had been originally thought and so a loan of \$150, 000 was sought.

The Ambassador is in effect saying that the loan of \$150, 000 was for three matters: (a) payment of arrears of tax in the amount of \$31, 000 approximately; (b) repairs to the Centre; and (c) clearing up of titles to the Centre.

I need only to observe that the Department of Finance of the City of New York had certified as true, a copy of the indenture between the Helenites Association of St Lucia Inc and the Government of St Lucia dated December 3, 1999.

I wish to say a brief word about the “Note” and the “Mortgage”, both of which seem to have legal effect and both of which are signed by the mortgagor, especially as so few of the persons that I interviewed have seen the documents. The Note and the Mortgage were duly executed before a Notary Public and registered. The Note determines the lending period as two years from April 29, 2003 to April 29, 2005. It requires the interest of \$2000 a month to be paid during that period. The annual interest rate is 16%. The mortgage names the borrower as Michael Bartlett and the lender as Farhad Bokhour. In his obligations the Mortgagor promises that he lawfully owns the property. The lawyer from Grenada is a witness. The compound effect of both documents is that the Mortgagor pays only interest during the two year period and what is known as a “balloon mortgage rider” requires the principal of \$150, 000 to be paid on the termination date.

The mortgage date is April 29, 2003. There is another document dated April 30, 2003 signed by Michael Bartlett and the Ambassador headed “Agreement on the transfer of title”. It states that on completion of the payment of the mortgage by the Government of St Lucia, Michael Bartlett will transfer the title to the property back to the Government of St Lucia. A copy of the Agreement is at Schedule 3.

In a written report which he handed me, Michael Bartlett stated, “Mr. Huntley called on me. I agreed and that is where I came in. To the mortgage company I had to submit a copy of my proof of citizenship, my driver's licence, my passport, my title to my property, 994 Dumont Avenue and a credit report.”

One staff member of the Mission gave me another written report which stated, “In October 2002 a foreclosure notice was served on the St Lucia Consulate in reference to the property. In trying to obtain funds to deal with the mounting bills and foreclosure sale

of the property, numerous banks and mortgage firms were contacted. None were willing to loan any monies since the Government of St Lucia has diplomatic immunity. It was then suggested by the attorney, Trevor Gairy, that the then Ambassador, Earl Huntley, should approach someone who would be willing to use his credit to obtain the loan as long as there was the understanding that Government was responsible for paying off that loan and not the person; after all, it was Government's building. The members of the Association were approached. The answer from all was “No”, with the exception of Mr. Michael Bartlett.”

I spoke with Mr. Gairy in his office in Brooklyn, New York. He told me he was a lawyer and real estate broker. He was a Grenadian living in the U.S.A. for 30 years. He admitted that he signed as a witness to the mortgage and was then attorney for Mr. Bartlett. He had also acted for the Consulate on other occasions.

Mr. Gairy said that he did not draft or dictate the agreement between Huntley and Bartlett but, after looking at the document, he thought he had made some input. He said that the agreement is a side agreement although it cannot supersede the mortgage. He did not think in the light of the registered mortgage that the agreement was untidy.

Mr. Gairy said that the situation was frantic and there was a great risk of the owner losing the property for when JER Revenue Services gets hold of a property, you can say goodbye to it. His view is that Mr. Bartlett stepped in to save the property.

I have obtained from the Accountant at the Mission a breakdown of the \$150, 000 received from the lender. The borrower got only about \$63, 000 in hand, which was given to the Accountant and placed in the building account. The lawyer's closing statement is similar. The figures are in Schedule 4. A large amount is set aside as escrow pending settlement of title issues. Mr. Gairy is in the process of dealing with this. The loan closing cost is also high.

At the moment, the Accountant is paying the monthly mortgage payments of \$2000 from the proceeds of the rental of the Centre for various social activities. The problem is that the rentals will not be able to pay the balloon payment of \$150, 000 which is due next April.

The Ambassador was instrumental in bringing together all the St Lucian Associations in New York and as a result the Council of St Lucian Associations was formed. The five known associations are: (i) the St Lucia United Association. The president is Clinton Octave; (ii) the St Lucia Calypsonians Association. The president is Keran Deterville; (iii) the St Lucia Cultural Organisation. The president is Joseph Matty; (iv) the St Lucia Netball Association. The president is Matthias Wilkie; (v) The Iyanola Marathoners. The president is Gillian King.

It must be stated that the St Lucia United Association again came to the rescue of the Centre when there was \$12, 000 owing on the mortgage repayments in June of this year.

There is a Board of the Council of St Lucian Associations comprising: (a) Mr. H. Emmanuel of the Saint Lucia Mission; (b) Mr. Clinton Octave (St Lucia United Association); (c) Mr. Gillian King (Iyanola Marathoners); (d)

Mr. Keran Deterville (St Lucia Calypsonians Association); (e) Mr. Matthias Wilkie (St Lucia Netball Association) (f) Mr. St Jules (prominent St Lucian citizen); (g) Mr. Ruthven Farrel (prominent St Lucian citizen).

I need to say something about the establishment of the not-for-profit corporation. An application was filed and the not-for-profit status was obtained in February 2004. Following this, an application for Federal Tax ID / EN was made and that was obtained in May 2004. Tax exemption status / 501 C3 is presently in progress.

I visited the Helenites Centre on Tuesday October 12, 2004 at Brooklyn, New York. The building is located on a flat piece of land with one side bounded by the street and the three other sides are separated by fences from the other adjacent owners. The building lies close to the boundary on one side and does not occupy as much as one half of the ground area.

Unfortunately I saw the property before it could be cleaned up after the weekend's activities. Broken glass was scattered all over the grounds. From the yard, I saw the gutterings were falling apart and the roof did not appear sound. I was told by the caretaker, Edward Poyotte, that the roof leaks when rain falls.

It is a one-storey building and one gets to the floor by a few steps. There is a hall with no chairs or other furniture. The condition inside is not one where you would ask a Minister or other dignitary to address members of the St Lucian community. In the basement where the toilets are installed, it is not quite hygienic. I mention these to show that I agree with those who said that the building cannot remain in its present condition.

Most people I interviewed in New York were of the view that the way to deal with the payment of the \$150, 000 was by a method of refinancing which included the redevelopment of the Centre.

There is no doubt in my mind that the Ambassador had at heart the best interests of St Lucians living in New York. Before the loan was entered into, together with the Council, it was decided to sell the Centre and purchase an alternative property somewhere else in Brooklyn. This is still the view of the President of one association I spoke with about the future of the Centre.

I was told that an offer of \$350, 000 payable in cash was refused by the Ambassador and a later one of \$400, 000 did not materialize. He then thought the best course of action was not to sell, but to lease the Centre as a Day Care Centre. Then he began to entertain the thought of redeveloping the property. He embraced the recommendations of three real estate agents to this effect and it seems the decision was taken to engage Management Consulting and Controls Group Inc. of which the managing director is Jason Martin, a Trinidadian.

The project idea was explained to the Council of St Lucian Associations and they endorsed it. So the decision to repair the Centre was shelved in light of the proposed project. A team of consultants was retained to prepare the project. I understand the consultants were paid from that part of the loan which was set aside for repairs to the Centre.

Continued in the next issue

Beware of educational fast tracking – Hon. Mario Michel

Minister of Education, Human Resource Development, Youth and Sports, Hon. Mario Michel has warned against the educational fast tracking that is being offered by some institutions, noting that persons applying to overseas colleges and universities must ensure that these are credited institutions. Mr. Michel at the time was addressing the 18th Graduation Ceremony of Sir Arthur Lewis Community College last Sunday, November 28.

The graduation came, as efforts continue towards the provision of universal secondary education in St. Lucia, amid growing demand for universal tertiary education.

“Simple logic, rather than unreasonable haste should guide anyone wishing ultimately to have a Masters degree, to appreciate that no worth while Masters degree can be obtained like instant coffee, without first ensuring that the mastery of the basics has been attained”, Minister Michel said, adding, “the way forward for us



as a country and as a people therefore, must involve a more discriminating sense of what we want for ourselves”. He pointed out that we needed to be-

ware of the proverbial Greeks bearing gifts, and ensure that the degree offering, which we associate ourselves with are world class, bonafide, and academ-

ically sound products.

The Education Minister said the island's sole tertiary institution, the Sir Arthur Lewis Community college needed to be more proactive in forging alliances with highly regarded institutions around the world.

“It is partnership like this that would enable the college to offer degree programs in areas that we might not currently or in the foreseeable future have the capacity to independently offer. An examination of the degree offering of the college shows that we are very much locked into the UWI network, and while our partnering with the regional university is good, there are significant opportunities for going beyond the limited degree options now available, through the development of strategic alliances with other reputable institutions”, said Mr. Michel.

He stressed that the forging of partnerships with sound tertiary institutions and the programs that should be offered, must be determined by an analysis of the national human resource needs.

Staff of St. Jude's Hospital Receives Training in Biomedical Waste Management

The St. Lucia Solid Waste Management Authority on November 23 and 25, 2004, conducted a two-day biomedical waste management training workshop for the staff of the St. Jude's Hospital.

The purpose of the training exercise was to educate staff in proper biomedical waste management and prepare them for the biomedical waste management collection service to be offered from January 1, 2005.

From January 1, 2005, biomedical waste will be collected from all government health care establishments and transported to the biomedical waste management treatment facility, where it will be treated before disposal at the Deglos Sanitary Landfill.

It is envisaged that private medical facilities will be brought on board at a later date.

The training sessions focused on waste segregation, safe handling, transportation, storage and treatment of biomedical waste.

The sessions are expected to develop the capacity of the staff of the hospital to adequately manage this hazardous waste stream.

Meanwhile, The St. Lucia Solid Waste Management Authority (SLSWMA) in collaboration with the National Emergency management Organization (NEMO) on November 30, 2004, hosted a half day seminar for relevant stakeholders at the Cara Suites hotel from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon.

The purpose of the seminar was to discuss the draft guidelines for debris management in a Disaster developed by the SLSWMA in collaboration with NEMO.

These guidelines will facilitate and coordinate the removal, collection and disposal of debris following a disaster,

and mitigate against any potential threat to the health, safety and welfare of the impacted citizens, and expedite recovery efforts in the impacted areas.

Issues dealt with in the document include: Stakeholders and their responsibilities; procedures for contract and cooperative agreements; site selection for temporary debris holding areas and

debris removal priorities.

Remember Solid Waste is My Business, Your Business, Our Business!!!

Let's all do our part to protect our health, our economy and our environment.

The Solid Waste Office: 453-2208.

Solid Waste Hot Line: 450-7070 for all issues relating to Solid Waste Management.

PM embraces staff of the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute



Canaries community enjoys Canaries Day



THIS WEEK ON NTN

Sat. Dec. 4th - Fri. Dec. 10th , 2004

Government of St. Lucia - Year in Review 2003 Dec. 3rd , 9:00 p.m.

- SPORTS IN ACTION: Members of the Xavier Shotokan Karate Association speak about the Association's plans to bring World Renowned Karate Expert Chuck Norris to St. Lucia in an effort to build the sport and engage youth in positive activity - Sat. Dec. 4th, 8: 30 p.m.
- Queen's Jubilee Celebrations 2002 (Minor Basilica) Relive the moments - Sun. Dec. 5th, 8:30 p.m.
- The CSME in Perspective - Mon. Dec. 6th, 8:00 p.m.
- Feedback - A live call in programme. In this edition, the issue of HIV/AIDs is placed on the front burner Tues. Dec. 7th - 8:00 p.m.
- Flavouring St. Lucia Cooking - An exciting adventure using local foods and seasonings to create high class dishes - Wed. Dec. 8th, 6:30 p.m.
- A priest for the People - An in-depth interview with Dr. Monsignor - Thurs. Dec. 9th, 7:30 p.m.
- Caribbean Vision Presents "Educulture" - Fri. Dec. 10th 7: 10 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.

www.stlucia.gov.lc

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