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CONSTITUTION TO BE REFORMED

PM SAYS THERE'S NO BETTER TIME THAN NOW

P rime Minister Dr Kenny D. Anthony says the appointment of a Commission to Review the Constitution of St. Lucia with a view to reforming the important document arose out of a definite need for change.

Addressing the launching ceremony for the Commission last Friday, the Prime Minister said the need arose out of many factors, including the fact that “we simply do not feel that we own our constitutions, as people do not have a sense of ownership.”

The Prime Minister was speaking against the background that the current Constitution of St. Lucia was handed down to the island in 1978 after it was drafted and agreed upon in England on the eve of St. Lucia’s attainment of Independence in 1979.

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Prime Minister Hon Kenny Anthony



Justice Suzie d'Auvergne



Commissioners of the CRC at the launching ceremony

JUSTICE SUZIE D'Auvergne SAYS OF CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM: "IT'S A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY!"



Members of the Judiciary

Retired High Court Judge Suzie d'Auvergne, who is the Chairman of the Commission for the Review of the Constitution of St. Lucia, says she and her fellow commissioners are aware of the magnitude of the task bestowed on them and they have every intention of being true to their mandate.

In her address at the launching of the Commission last week Friday, Ms d'Auvergne said she and her fellow commissioners were "cognizant of the responsibilities on our shoulders and what is expected of us."

She said it was "a golden opportunity to shape the constitution that will guide us."

Ms d'Auvergne noted that "the present constitution is based on the Westminster Model and it was handed to us with little participation."

But, she continued, "now we have the opportunity for St. Lucians, at home and abroad, to participate in its reform."

She said the first task of the commissioners would be to ensure that St. Lucians familiarize themselves with the existing constitution, for which purpose she said the commission hopes to have at least 10,000 copies printed and circulated.

She also said the commission was proposing to approach the local calypso fraternity with a view to organising a national calypso competition aimed at popularising the constitution and encouraging persons to participate in its reform.

Also on the cards, she said, are essay competitions for primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions "for the children who will get a chance to shape their own future."

The Chairperson said that with the advance in global technological changes, it was necessary for the Caribbean region to be able to adapt to the new regional and international developments and the reforming of St. Lucia's con-

stitution ought to be seen in that light as well.

She warned that "constitutional reform is diverse and we must draw on the experiences of our neighbours."

"If we work well," she noted, "we will come up with a new constitution that will serve us well for the future."

The feature address was presented by Mr Parnell Campbell, QC, who is a former Government Minister in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and is also the President of the Constitutional Reform Commission of that country.

Mr Campbell noted that in such exercises, "bi-partisanship is absolutely necessary" and he commended the fact that there was bipartisan parliamentary support for the initiative in St. Lucia from both sides of the House of Assembly and from both houses of parliament.

He also noted that unlike St. Lucia, there were representatives of political parties on the commission in his country.

The Chairperson of the Commis-



Justice Suzie d'Auvergne addressing the gathering

sion named the members of the commission, which included such names as: Nicholas John (Deputy Chairman), Ferrel Charles, Eldon Mathurin, Crescentia Philips, Fr Michel Francis, Dr Mc Donald Chase, Ernest Hilaire, Lawrence Poyotte, Flavia Cherry, Dwight Lay, Dr Urban Seraphine, Andy George, Cynthia Barrow-Giles, Veronica Cenac, David Cox, Rufus Bousquet and Gregor Biscette, among others.



Justice Suzie d'Auvergne and Dame Pearlette Louisy

SPARROW GOLD LAUNCHED AT SANDALS PM WELCOMES 'NEW CULTURE' AT RSL

The following address was delivered by Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, International Financial Services, Economic Affairs and Information Honourable Dr. Kenny D. Anthony on the occasion of the Press Launch of Radio St. Lucia's Sparrow Gold at Sandals Golf Resort and Spa, La Toc, on Tuesday, November 15, 2005 at 7 p.m.

Ladies and Gentlemen: It is with a sense of pleasure and pride that I welcome this opportunity to speak to you briefly on this latest initiative by Radio St. Lucia – Sparrow Gold. Pleasure, because I love the Mighty Sparrow and his music. He is undoubtedly the quintessential calypsonian and performer. Pleasure, because Sparrow Gold will showcase alongside the greatest exponent of the calypso art form, some of our own seasoned and budding calypso talents. And the experience will be to the benefit of all.

My sense of pride comes from the

fact that Sparrow Gold is a Radio St. Lucia initiative, and importantly, emphasises the fact that Radio St. Lucia has turned a corner, albeit quietly. Undoubtedly, Radio St. Lucia has had a tumultuous history. Until a couple years ago, it was not uncommon for Radio St. Lucia to be in the news for all the wrong reasons. However, in the past two years, the station truly has begun the process of transformation that the Government of Saint Lucia hoped would come when it took the decision in 1999 to convert Radio St. Lucia from a statutory corporation to company wholly owned by the state. The idea then was to introduce a new corporate governance structure in the conduct of the affairs of RSL allowing it to function more effectively in the commercial environment in an attempt to put Radio St Lucia on a path to sustainable growth and financial viability.

While the process is still under the way, some tangible results are already evident. The greater level of accountability on the part of the Board of Directors and man-

agement, which has begun to emerge, has started to impact the financial performance positively, although marginally, at this time. Importantly, for the past two years RSL has been able to provide successive audited financial statements and annual reports to the Government of Saint Lucia which have been laid in the Parliament of Saint Lucia. And my understanding is that the annual report and audited financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2005 are about to be presented to the Shareholders and indications are that RSL has registered an operating profit for the financial year just ended...the first in a long time for the company.

These are significant milestones for RSL. The company has shouldered its responsibility and responded positively to the call from the Government of Saint Lucia for a greater degree of accountability, transparency and financial prudence in the conduct of its affairs.

Figuratively, the bush has been cleared and the process of cultivating a new cul-

ture at RSL has begun. There is still much to be done. Having been part of the process of establishing a new strategic direction for RSL, the Government of Saint Lucia is satisfied that there is a clear vision for RSL and a strategy is emerging to take RSL to the pre-eminence of broadcasting in Saint Lucia.

The challenge though will be the mobilization of the required resources to do so. Sparrow Gold represents a step in the right direction. It says that Radio St. Lucia is rising to the challenge and embracing new and alternative ways of generating revenues.

So yes, I am pleased and proud... pleased and proud that a bold move by the Government of Saint Lucia is paying dividends.

I wish to commend the Board of Directors, management and staff of Radio St. Lucia for their efforts and for an excellent idea that combines a pursuit of the company's vision and mission with a potential revenue earner.

And it is with pleasure and pride that I wish to formally launch Sparrow Gold!

I thank you...and look forward to seeing you at the show!

CONSTITUTION TO BE REFORMED

PM SAYS THERE'S NO BETTER TIME THAN NOW

Continued from page 1

He said the same situation existed for other former british colonies, all of which got constitutions that were handed down by the British.

The PM said there was “no better time” than now to engage in the constitutional review, after 26 years of having the existing constitution.

He said both of the major parliamentary parties have had experiences of governing an independent state and that was quite important to a better understanding of what it takes and what needs to be done.

The Prime Minister reminded listeners that “a major constitutional crisis” had affected the country back in 1982, when the then Prime Minister, Sir Allan Louisy, had resigned.

He said that period brought to the fore “the resilience of the constitution” but it also drove home the reality that the country could face a similar such circumstance in the future.

Dr Anthony promised the make the full resources of the state and the full support of the Government available for the commission to do its work.

He noted that the commission was “entrusted to the citizens of St. Lucia” from the standpoint that there were no Members of Parliament among its members.

He said all efforts were made to ensure that Civil Society dominated the composition of the commission, which he describes as “a remarkable statement of trust” on the part of the government.

The Prime Minister spoke on behalf of the Government of St. Lucia and his speech was followed by that of the Leader of the Opposition Marcus Nicholas.

Like the Prime Minister, the Opposition leader noted that the need for change arose out of the fact that the country has had a constitution for the past 26 years. He said one of the challenges that would face the com-



Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony addressing the gathering



Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony and Mr. Pernel Campbell guest speaker



Members of Cabinet

missioners would include the need for adequate public consultation.

The launching ceremony was also addressed by the Speaker of the House of Assembly Hon. Joseph Baden Allain, as well as by Justice Suzie d’Auvergne, who is the Chairman of the Commission.

The ruling St. Lucia Labour Party (SLP) had made constitutional reform a platform promise in 1997 and the parliament of St. Lucia agreed two years ago to engage in a bipartisan approach to constitutional reform.

The Commission headed by Justice d’Auvergne will have two years to complete its work, which will also include a thorough process of public consultation of St. Lucians at home and abroad.

PM at Commonwealth Heads Meeting in Malta

Prim Minister Dr Kenny D. Anthony is leading St. Lucia’s delegation at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting which opened yesterday in Malta.

The Meeting, which runs from November 25th to 27th was declared open on Friday by Head of the Commonwealth, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second.

Discussions on matters affecting Small Island Developing States, Promotion of the Commonwealth’s Fundamental Political Values, the Report of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group on the Harare Declaration and the outcomes of the United Nations 2005 World Summit are on the agenda.

Commonwealth leaders will also discuss the special theme: “Networking the Commonwealth for Development.”

Commonwealth Heads of Government - for the most part, Presidents and Prime Ministers - meet every two years for a few days to discuss world and Commonwealth issues, and to agree collective policies and initiatives. These summits provide a unique forum for consultation at the highest level of government.

To encourage frank exchanges of views, every effort is made to promote an informal atmosphere. After a public opening session, discussions are held in camera, the number of advisers restricted and written speeches discouraged. No votes are taken; decisions are normally reached by consensus. Each meeting includes a ‘Retreat’ when Commonwealth leaders, unaccompanied by other ministers or officials, have complete privacy.

Many important initiatives have emerged from these Retreats. Commonwealth leaders have met regularly for more than a century - although as the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (or CHOGM) only since 1971 in Singapore.

The first meetings, known as Colonial Conferences, began in 1887. In 1911, these were replaced by Imperial Conferences, held regularly until 1937. Between 1944 and the early 1960s, Commonwealth Prime Ministers Meetings were held almost annually in London.

At Singapore, in 1971, the term Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting was adopted to encompass both Presidents and Prime Ministers. CHOGMs have been held every two years since.



Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony

CONVERSATION With The NATION

Inclement weather
Good Day, Ladies and Gentlemen, let me start off by extending my sympathies to those persons who suffered losses or discomfort as a result of the heavy, persistent rains that we experienced last week. The inclement weather also took its toll on our national infrastructure and we are still assessing the extent of the damage. I want to take this opportunity to commend the many public officers who worked long hours to restore conditions on our roads, in particular the employees of the Ministry of Communications, Works, Transport and Public Utilities. Also, I want to thank you, the members of the public, for the patience and understanding that you have exhibited during this period. I am aware that because of the ongoing flood mitigation works, particularly in Castries and Anse La Raye, vehicular and pedestrian traf-



Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony

INCLEMENT WEATHER AND RISING RETAIL PRICES

the Ministry of Works, the Solid Waste Management Authority and the Ministry of Physical Development can only do so much. There are only so many laws that we can pass to deter action that can lead to national disasters. The onus has to be on each and every resident of Saint Lucia to take responsibility for our environment and our country. If we don't, then we will continue to suffer the sort of discomfort and inconvenience that we lived through last week, and it will only get worse.

No new increases in consumption tax

This week, I want to touch on a matter that I am certain has been occupying the attention of most Saint Lucians, and that is the rising cost of certain items on our super market shelves. One product which comes to mind is Carnation Milk. For several years a tin of Carnation Milk was sold at \$1.99. Now, the price has gone up to \$2.36 a tin. As

usual, the Government is blamed for the increase. I have done a little research on this product and my findings suggest that the supplier of Carnation Milk has in fact increased the price at which the milk is sold to importers and retailers. I am told that suppliers have increased the cost of a carton of Carnation by 17.3%. Carnation Milk is a price controlled item and the new price of \$2.36 is the price calculated by the Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Affairs.

Before I say a little more on this subject, please allow me to put to rest another rumour that appears to be making the rounds, which is that it is a Government-imposed increase in the Consumption Tax that has caused prices to increase in the supermarkets and in retail stores. This is simply not true. I repeat, nothing can be further from the truth. The last adjustment in the Consumption Tax structure took place in July, 2003, and there has been no change since that date. Frankly, I have no idea why some brokers insist on telling importers and purchasers that increases are due to increases in Consumption Taxes.

But, why the recent increases on these items? Much of what we consume in Saint Lucia has to be imported into our country. When a product lands in Saint Lucia, whether the mode of transportation is by air or sea, the importer has to meet three unavoidable costs: the cost of the product, the cost of insuring the product during transportation from the source to Saint Lucia, and the cost of freight, that is the cost of transporting the product. Customs charges are then applied to the value of the product, and as I have said, these charges have not increased in the last twenty nine (29) months. What have increased, however, are in some instances, the cost of producing the item, and in most instances, the cost of transporting the item. Both of these increases are a direct result of the increase in the cost of fuel. The Government does not have to interfere with Consumption Taxes for prices to rise. The Consumption Taxes may remain the same for years, but prices will rise simply because importers have to pay more for buying

and transporting goods from overseas. Take this example. The Government has waived Duty and Consumption Taxes on agricultural inputs such as fertilizers. Yet, the prices of fertilizers to farmers continue to increase because we have to pay more to buy overseas whether we import from Trinidad and Tobago, The Dominican Republic or Holland.

The impact of the rising cost of fuel

I want to explain further. Many manufacturing processes depend on the use of fuel during the production system. It stands to reason, therefore, that if the cost of fuel, which is a unit of production, increases, then the cost of production is also likely to increase. Additionally, the manufacture of the packaging material used for the product in question often depends on the use of fuel, and this is particularly the case for plastics, which are very fuel-dependent. So, you can understand why the cost of the product

why, for example, Government continues to lose revenue from the sale of kerosene and Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG), or what we call cooking gas, because we want to provide a buffer, particularly for the more vulnerable and disadvantaged among us. This is also why the prices of basic commodities like rice, flour and sugar have remained the same since 1997. That is what we are, a Government of all Saint Lucians for all Saint Lucians, which is particularly sensitive to the plight of the poor and the vulnerable among us.

Be wary of price gouging

All of this is not to say, however, that we should not be on the look-out for price gouging and for those who would seek to capitalize on the increase in fuel prices to impose unreasonable increases in the retail prices of commodities. This is an imperfect world, and there will always be those who seek to profit at the expense of



Rise in prices not due to rise in consumption tax



Heavy rains lead to scences as seen above

fic have been made more challenging, but these works are necessary to ensure that in the future we will have greater capacity to deal with the weather that we experienced last week.

Another sober reminder

Last week's weather was another sober reminder, although I suspect that by now none is required, of the need for us to always be prepared during the hurricane season. Although we are into what officially is the last month of the season, this has not spared us from bad weather. This hurricane season has been a record-breaking one. Never before in the history of the Atlantic Hurricane season have we exhausted the English alphabet and had to resort to the Greek alphabet for storm names.

This year we have had thirteen (13) hurricanes, which breaks the previous record of twelve that was set in 1969. Also, there have been three (3) Category Five hurricanes this year - Katrina,

Rita, and Wilma, another record, and Wilma, with its pressure of 882 millibars broke the old record set by Gilbert in 1988, to make it the strongest hurricane ever recorded in the Atlantic Ocean.

Take responsibility for our environment

We must remember, however, that our own actions continue to contribute to the severity of the impact of these weather systems on our lives. The indiscriminate disposal of plastics and other non biodegradable material, poor land use practices, and non-adherence to acceptable land development and building standards, among other factors, cause our rivers and drains to clog, our slopes to become more vulnerable, and our dwelling houses to be compromised. We must stop taking a short-term, live-for-today approach to the way we live our lives. Every action that we take today has a consequence that extends into tomorrow. NEMO,



Flood mitigation works should help alleviate this situation



La Place Carenage after heavy rains some time ago



Hike in prices due in part to increase in world oil prices

would have increased even before it is shipped to Saint Lucia. But that is not the only cause for the increased cost. To get a product from its point of origin, be that point the United States, the United Kingdom, or Trinidad, to Saint Lucia, the product has to be transported either via airplane or ship. Both of these forms of transportation depend heavily on the use of fuel. When fuel prices go up, then the shipping costs also increase. Therefore, on top of the increase in what is called the FOB cost of the product, or the cost minus insurance and shipping, there has also been an increase in the cost of freight. The result is an increase in the cost of the product when it arrives in Saint Lucia, or what is called the landed cost.

Cushioning the impact

This, therefore, is the effect that the volatile and ever-increasing price of fuel is having on our economy. Our Government understands this and has tried, as best we can, to cushion Saint Lucians from the full effect of this increase on some commodities. This is

others. I want to encourage the Department of Consumer Affairs and the National Consumer Association to be extra watchful during this period to ensure that our people are not exploited by unscrupulous and dishonest merchants, traders and retailers. Our Government will have no patience or sympathy for those persons.

Overseas meetings

In closing, I want to inform you that I will be away for nine days while I lead a CARICOM delegation to a meeting with Prime Minister Tony Blair of England, and then proceed to attend a meeting of Commonwealth Heads of Government in Malta. Both of these meetings are extremely important, especially as we seek to ensure that small island states like ours are not consumed and destroyed by the waves of trade liberalization and globalization. So, you will not hear from me until Monday, December 05, 2005, God willing.

Until we next meet, please take care of yourselves, stay safe, and protect our environment.



Hess Oil facility

Christmas Barrels Concession Begins 1st December

The Cabinet of Ministers has once again approved the annual concessions on barrels of gift items imported by St. Lucians over the holiday season.

This concession, which assists persons from all over St. Lucia receiving gift items from abroad during a specified period, is granted annually by the Government.

Under the programme, which began for Christmas 1997, each household is allowed a maximum of two barrels containing personal effects. The

goods must have a maximum value of EC \$1,500, but must not include electronic items or goods for commercial purposes.

Persons to whom the barrels are consigned pay only a Service Charge and an Environmental Tax on the imported gift items.

The concessions this year will begin on December 1st, and will continue until January 15, 2006.

This programme, which was initiated soon after the Labour Administration took office, has benefited thou-

sands of St. Lucians in the eight years of its existence.

With relatives and friends here released of the cost of the full range of Customs & Excise charges, those abroad have looked forward every year to being able to send more gift items than they normally would have.

Critics of the programme in the private sector have described it as an annual drain on the island's revenues and have called for it to be scrapped.

But while official sources confirm there have been instances of attempts

to import commercial goods under the programme, they say that greater scrutiny by Customs Officers and improved processing procedures have allowed the programme to each year benefit more of the persons it was intended for.

Cabinet sources indicate that the unanimous view among Ministers is that the programme should be allowed to continue, rather than allow the transgressions of a few to jeopardise or remove the benefits of the majority of those who need it most.

STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT & HOUSING, HONOURABLE FERGUSON JOHN TO MARK THE OPENING OF ENERGY WEEK 2005

Over the last year, the global economy has seen a steep and continuing increase in the price of oil. Just a few months ago, this upward trend resulted in an increase in prices at the pumps. Motorists now have to pay significantly more for fuel. Partly for this reason, commuters have recently seen an increase in bus fares.

The passage of Hurricane Katrina has not helped the global oil supply situation as it damaged a number of oil installations in Louisiana. This and other geo-political developments signal a lengthy period of instability on the world oil market. It is not unlikely that oil prices will continue to rise. Some experts are of the view that world oil production has reached its peak and that output will soon begin to decline. There are also some experts who believe we should be preparing for a one-hundred-dollar-a-barrel scenario in the not-too-distant future.

However the future unfolds, it appears that the days of cheap oil are over. The implications of this are many, as higher energy prices will affect all economic sectors. For countries such as Saint Lucia, largely reliant on imported fuel, the changes in world oil prices can have dire consequences as the producers pass the increased cost directly to the importing country. Further, these higher prices mean an increase in the amount of valuable foreign exchange leaving the country.

The current oil situation is one that should lead us, both individually, and as a nation, to seriously ponder our energy future. Can we afford to remain wholly dependent on an imported energy source that is growing increasingly expensive? Can we continue to burn fuel without giving real consideration to energy conservation? What avenues are open to us to help us ensure that our efforts at sustainable development are not undermined by unsustainable energy consumption practices? These are



Hon. Ferguson John

but some of the questions we need to consider at this time.

The present energy situation clearly poses a major challenge, but, as with most challenges, there is opportunity. As a people, it is up to us to seize the moment in an effort to help to ensure a more favourable energy future.

Over the last several months, LUCELEC has been laying the groundwork for the establishment of a 1.6 Megawatt pilot wind farm in the south of the island and the company has been receiving the assistance of Government in acquiring the land for this initiative. It is hoped that when this project comes on stream, it will not only contribute to the national power grid but also set the stage to expand the contribution of wind energy to our energy mix, thus reducing our dependence on imported oil.

Government has long recognized the need to diversify Saint Lucia's energy mix and, while LUCELEC's plans to

introduce wind energy are welcome, there is a need to do more with respect to the introduction of sustainable energy. For example, the body of geothermal research over the years points to the existence of a commercially viable resource and, at this time, efforts are being made to realize the country's geothermal potential.

In similar vein, Government has already instituted measures to support the wider application of renewable energy technologies. These include the removal of duties on the importation of renewable energy. Further Government has lent its support to a range of initiatives such as the Caribbean Solar Financing Programme, an initiative aimed at providing low-income households with low-interest loans for the purchase of solar water heaters.

At present, Government, through a collaborative effort between public and private sector stakeholders, is in the process of formulating a National

Energy Policy. It is hoped that this policy will assist in creating an enabling environment for the sustainable use of energy resources. Government is also hoping to revise the existing Sustainable Energy Plan and to set targets that are more realistic, based on our current energy situation and available resources.

In her 2005 Throne Speech, Her Excellency the Governor-General announced her Government's intention to establish an Energy Conservation Task Force. As you may be aware, this task force was recently established by the Prime Minister and has already commenced its work.

While the State has a key role to play with respect to energy planning and management, all stakeholders must get involved and take responsibility for their energy use. Clearly, energy is a costly and precious commodity and we must use it wisely and efficiently in the household, on the roads and in our offices, stores, hotels and factories. For every unnecessary mile driven, or every light left burning, there is a cost to the consumer, and to the nation as a whole.

The call therefore, is for each and every one of us to use energy wisely and productively, not just burn it. Now is the time for all relevant agencies to step up their public education efforts in order that all Saint Lucians learn how to conserve energy, and the benefits of doing so. If we all play our part, we will be able to make a difference and to make the best of whatever energy future we may face.

I trust that for Energy Week, each and every one of us will make that extra effort to learn and to teach others, about the wise use of energy, and to put into practice what we have learnt. Let us all play our part in using our energy resources prudently, as we continue to pursue, together, the goal of sustainable Development.

CASTRIES EAST DAY CARE OPENS

“IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF RESIDENTS”

The following is an Address by Hon. Philip J. Pierre Minister for Commerce, Tourism, Investment and Consumer Affairs & Parliamentary representative for Castries East at opening of Castries East Day Care Centre, Monday 21st November, 2005.

Four years ago in November, 2001 we were gathered at this same venue to officially declare open the Human Resource Development Centre. At that time I said “it was a dream which had been harboured for a long time by members of this community, particularly the members of the Marchand Women’s League. The Marchand Women’s League had the foresight and the vision to recognize the importance of providing basic facilities to their community. They saw the necessity, many years ago of having a facility like this one in their community and initiated the process of raising funds to go towards the construction of such a facility. For this, they must be commended, and stand out as a fine example of what can be achieved through community effort.”

Now I am pleased to have the honour as Parliamentary Representative to witness the continuation of that dream of improving the quality of life for people of Castries East.

This facility is testimony to the fact that there may not be any need to move out of the Castries East area to improve the quality of your life. This Day Care Centre will provide quality service to the people of the area giving them the assurance that their children will be well looked after while they are earning their daily bread.

Many things have changed in Castries East. We have seen a significant improvement in the quality of life and the provision of services. Every aspect of life has improved – from the easier availability of electricity and water to the dramatic changes in infrastructure.

Our Mission is to make Castries East a vibrant community. Governments do not build communities, people make communities – Government provides the environment for people to develop – that is why we need to keep productive people living in Castries East, remaining close to the community anticipating the needs and being knowledgeable of the happenings in the community. Provision of this Day Care Centre is one step in that direction and an improvement in the living environment.

A usual practice at these ceremonies is to urge residents to care and preserve community buildings, I am pleased to say that the appearance of this building clearly demonstrates that it has been cherished by residents and professionally managed by the Committee giving lie to the late management guru Peter Drucker who hated government and thought that it was not capable of delegation – management of the centre has been delegated to a residents committee and I want you to help applaud them for a job well done.

This center will provide for children between the ages of three months to three years from 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. All will agree that the people who work here have a huge responsibility. Government, through the Ministry of Social Transformation, have ensured that the staff, headed by Ms Phyllis Duplessis, are professionally trained and skilled in child care. I want them

of the infants are in their hands. You will notice, as you tour the facility, that the premises are equal, or even surpass required standards. The fees of \$60 per child per month and an annual insurance fee of \$10 are a contribution to the expenses for the services provided and is in a way the Government’s contribution to the early development of the people of St. Lucia.

I said in November, 2001 that the Human Resource Centre was not my idea. I said at the time “I took time off very early to recognise the contribution of the Marchand Women’s League, because I believe in giving credit where it is due. I readily concede that this Human Resource Centre was not conceived by me. However, I recognize the value of continuity and it is for this reason that I spared no effort in making this centre a reality.”

Truth be told, in 1997 I was elected by the people of Castries East to repre-



Hon. Philip J. Pierre

themselves from the community. Fact is, the majority of people who live in Castries East are hard working and as-



Children of the Castries East Constituency getting familiar with their enviroment

to continue to take the task seriously and at all times be aware of the present and to an extent, the future well being

sent their interest in Parliament. The Centre was still an idea and I promised in my election campaign to fulfill the dream of the people and the members of the Marchand Women’s League in particular, to provide the Human Resource Development Centre. You will allow me to say that I have, with the support of the Marchand Women’s League, the European Community, the Hon. Prime Minister and Cabinet of Ministers, Minister Greaves and Minister Rambally in particular, to stand here and proudly declare Mission Accomplished.

This afternoon there is a feeling of joy within me, not only personal, but for the people who have toiled to make this a reality. People of Castries East have been called and continue to be called all kinds of names – some say the area is riddled with crime, some say it is a ghetto, others believe that they can only achieve if they remove

pire for the best for their families and those of us who live here will continue to request our fair share of support from Government to continuously improve our quality of life.

Today is a time for reflection and gratitude. From 1979 a group of community minded women saw a need – that need removed through the years and is now reality – twenty six years later. I want to thank all members, past and present, of the Marchand Women’s League, its founding President Ms Philipa Joseph, to its present President Mrs Monica Alcide: Hon. Prime Minister and Ministers of Cabinet Hon. Damian Greaves and Hon. Menissa Rambally, European Development Fund, Permanent Secretary, Ms Jacinta Helene, Permanent Secretary, Ms Thecla Augustin and Staff of the Ministry of Social Transformation, Ms Phylliss Duplessis and staff of the Day Care Unit, Residents and Management Committee.



Inside the newly opened Castries East Day Care Centre

GOVERNMENT HONOURS WALCOTTS

The Government of St. Lucia has acquired the house where Derek and Roddy Walcott lived and intends to hand it over to the St. Lucia National Trust to become part of the country's national patrimony.

That was disclosed by Prime Minister Dr Kenny D. Anthony, during a meeting with representatives of the

Council of the St. Lucia National Trust on Thursday (November 17, 2005).

The house, on Chausee Road in Castries, was home to the island's second Nobel Prize Winner and his late brother. It was eventually sold and its last use was as a commercial printery, the Lithographic Press. The printery has since ceased operation.

The Prime Minister told the National

Trust Councillors that the Government would like the building to be restored as close as possible to its original design, so that it truly reflects the original home of Derek and Roddy Walcott.

The PM explained that the Trust would have to interview several persons who are familiar with the home, including Derek Walcott and his sister, to facilitate its restoration.

Chairman of the St. Lucia National Trust, Andy Lake, welcomed the news that another property acquired by the Government will be handed to the Trust.

He also expressed the appreciation of members of the Council for the decision by Cabinet to assign this important national task to the National Trust.

Catastrophic 2005 Hurricane Season Comes to an End

Leaving behind thousands of deaths, demolished infrastructure and displaced people, the unusually active 2005 Atlantic hurricane season will come to a close on November 30th. Before leaving the island on government business last week, Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony who is also the Chairman of the National Emergency Management Advisory Committee NEMAC reflected on the record breaking season.

Prime Minister Anthony said the season which proved to be one of the most catastrophic ones ever recorded showed plainly how weather systems can impact on people's lives. Using the island's own experiences of bad weather in recent weeks the island's leader appealed to all to display more regard and more respect for the environment.

"We must remember, however, that

our own actions continue to contribute to the severity of the impact of these weather systems on our lives. The indiscriminate disposal of plastics and other non biodegradable material, poor land use practices, and non-adherence to acceptable land development and building standards, among other factors, cause our rivers and drains to clog, our slopes to become more vulnerable and our dwelling houses to be compromised."

Dr. Anthony also discouraged reliance on institutions such as the National Emergency Management Office, the Ministry of Communications and Works, the Solid Waste Management Authority and the Ministry of Physical Development which he says can only do so much.

Instead Dr. Anthony said every citizen should take responsibility for maintaining a healthy environment.

"The onus has to be on each and ev-



A reminder of the destruction this past hurricane season



ery resident of Saint Lucia to take responsibility for our environment and our country. If we don't, then we will continue to suffer the sort of discomfort and inconvenience that we lived through last week, and it will only get worse."

There were three Category Five hurricanes this year - Katrina, Rita, and Wilma. Wilma, with pressures of 882 millibars broke the old record set by Gilbert in 1988, to make it the strongest hurricane ever recorded in the Atlantic Ocean.

Statement of the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs on Compliance Letters Requested by the Banks and other Financial Institutions

The attention of the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs has been drawn to the practice of banks and other financial institutions to require prospective borrowers to obtain clearance letters from the Inland Revenue Department and the National Insurance Corporation. It appears that this policy has been in place for a while but is now being fully enforced.

It must be clearly stated that the Government of Saint Lucia did not introduce these requirements. The policy was introduced by financial institutions in their efforts to ensure that (1) the assets which are being used by borrowers as collateral are free and clear of all encumbrances, in particular, free of any liens or cautions imposed by these two agencies (i.e. IRD and NIC); and (2) prospective borrowers have fully met any income Tax/NIC obligations or have made satisfactory arrangements to settle any outstanding amounts.



Dr. Kenny D. Anthony
Minister for Finance, International
Financial Services, Economic
Affairs and Information

It appears that the financial institutions deem this necessary, consider-

ing that outstanding taxes and NIC contributions are considered to be privilege debts. This means that in the event of bankruptcy or liquidation proceedings, any debt owned to these agencies must be paid in priority over all other debts (save for wages and low costs).

The financial institutions want to ensure that they do not commit funds to any project, for which, from the inception, it appears that the possibility of recovery is slim or hampered by outstanding taxes and National Insurance Corporation contributions.

The Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs notes that both the National Insurance Corporation and Inland Revenue Department have mechanisms in place to accommodate taxpayers who require compliance letters. However, both institutions have been directed to indicate to clients that they are satisfying requirements of financial institutions and not the Government of Saint Lucia.



THIS WEEK ON NTN

Sat. Nov. 19th – Fri. Nov. 25th, 2004

The GIS discusses the Country Poverty Assessment Currently taking place in St. Lucia, Sat. Nov. 19th, 9:15 a.m.

Diabetes – It's Impact and Treatment - Sun. Nov. 20th, 10:30 a.m.

The GIS discusses access to medicine when the Universal Health Care Programme comes on stream. - Mon. Nov. 21st, 6:15 p.m.

Screening for Colorectal Cancer – Tues. Nov. 22nd, 6:15 p.m.

Youth Awards 2005 Part 1 – Tues. Nov. 22nd – 8:00 p.m.

Youth Awards 2005 Part 11 – Wed. Nov. 23rd – 8:00 p.m.

The GIS places the spotlight on the Centre for Adolescent Rehabilitation & Education - CARE – Thurs. Nov. 24th, 9:00 p.m.

Testicular & Breast Self-Exam – Fri. Nov. 25th, 8:00 p.m.

Remember to tune in for:

GIS News Breaks and Kweyol News daily from 6:30 p.m.

Issues & Answers/Mondays at 8:00pm:

Interview/Tuesdays at 6:15pm :

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

Your Right to Know/Thursdays at 6:15 p.m. (Min. of Ed. Prog).

Take 2/Fridays at 6:15pm

(Week in Review)

Weflechi/Fridays at 6:40pm - (Week in Review—Kweyol)

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

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