

A Climate for Expansion



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ON NOVEMBER 18, 1980, THE HON. EDWARD SEAGA MADE HIS FIRST SPEECH IN PARLIAMENT AS PRIME MINISTER OF JAMAICA.

FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF HIS ADDRESS:

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to the Honourable Parliament for allowing me the opportunity to make a statement on developments of the past two-and-a-half weeks.

It is my honour, Mr. Speaker, to report on the result of the General Elections which were held on the 30th of October, 1980. In these general elections the House of Representatives was returned on a basis of fifty-one seats for the Jamaica Labour Party, eight seats for the People's National Party. At a later stage I will speak on the sixtieth seat.

The vote as shared by the two parties was fifty-nine per cent for the J.L.P. and forty-one per cent for the People's National Party, recording the highest percentage ever in the history of our electoral politics to be representative of any political party. In terms of actual votes cast, 492,260 votes were cast for the J.L.P., 340,326 votes were cast for the People's National Party, a plurality of some 150,000 votes in respect of the winning party.

The sixtieth seat, Western St. Andrew, has become once again a center of controversy. The person declared the winner on the preliminary count was the candidate for the People's National Party; and the person declared the winner on the final count was the candidate for the Jamaica Labour Party.

The candidate for the Jamaica Labour Party indicated his intention to bring an election petition because of alleged irregularities tainting the election in that constituency. On the recount and final count the candidate for the Jamaica Labour Party was declared the winner by the Returning Officer. This took place against the background of allegations of improper tampering of ballots and ballot boxes. This may have been done to destroy vital evidence either confirming or reversing the earlier counts and additionally to deliberately bring the electoral system into disrepute.

In a principled decision the candidate for the Jamaica Labour Party, Mr. Owen Stephenson, has elected not to take up his seat because in his view these irregularities still remain and the question

of who is the winner or the loser is still to be determined. Further, any act clouding the true outcome by interfering with ballots create an atmosphere of doubt and suspicion which can only demean the parliamentary process. The Government feels strongly that the democratic and parliamentary process can only properly operate through confidence and by being free from taint.

COMMITTED TO DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

This is not the first time that a similar situation has arisen with ballots cast in an election. The country will remember that in 1972 the J.L.P.'s Arthur Williams had brought an election petition against Dr. Douglas Manley of the P.N.P. because votes validly cast for Williams had been tampered with. But this is the first time that any Government of Jamaica has taken steps to correct the situation. We have taken the step of having the Attorney General institute an election petition on behalf of the people of Jamaica, as this Government is committed to strong democratic Government and free, fair and impartial elections and will not hesitate to take steps to protect the integrity of the electoral system.

Subsequent to the election of the Parliament a Cabinet has been appointed, the names of the Portfolio-holders already being announced. Junior Ministers have also been appointed and their names announced and all have been assigned to Ministries with the exception of one, the Member from Eastern Hanover, who I now advise has been assigned to the Ministry of Mining as Minister of State. On this week Friday it is proposed to announce and to have sworn in the names of Parliamentary Secretaries to complete the Junior Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries who will be acting in assistance to the various Ministers who hold portfolios. This, Mr. Speaker, leaves a number of persons who are back benchers in this Parliament

IMPORTANT ROLE FOR BACKBENCHERS

Notwithstanding the fact that they do not hold portfolio assignments we feel that there is an important role for the back benchers to play in this new Parliament, and that role should be one of monitoring the activities of Ministries so as to ensure that within this side of the House there is the necessary mechanism built in to keep ourselves on our toes despite the fact that there is an elected Opposition.

It is not yet decided, Mr. Speaker, as to the precise role that the back benchers will play. There is the thinking that certain Ministries may be grouped together and these can come under the scrutiny of a Committee of the House which is appointed for the purpose, led by Members of the back bench in terms of the position of chairman-

ship and membership on the Committee together with Opposition Membership or the alternative that one back bencher be assigned to each Ministry, there being sufficient for the purpose, to cover a particular Ministry and to speak for the particular point of view of back benchers on the affairs of that Ministry.

It is intended to take an early decision as to the role which the back bench may play inasmuch as it is intended to incorporate them into the parliamentary process not merely as person who are here to back up the executive will but to have a vital input in parliamentary decision making.

ADVISERS

I wish also to disclose, Mr. Speaker, that among the back benchers there are two persons who will be appointed as Advisers to the Government with no pay. These are persons of very senior standing, these are persons of considerable political experience, these are persons who have held ministerial responsibilities in the past but now in respect of the appointments of today which have gone to younger generations they have not been asked to take up ministerial appointments but instead to continue to play the vital role they have played in the parliamentary life of this country over many years and to give of the advice from the experiences that they have to the ministerial decision making process.

Accordingly, Mr. Edwin Allen, Member of Parliament for North-west Clarendon will be asked to act in the capacity of an Adviser to the Ministry of Education and the Member of Parliament for East Central St. Andrew, Mr. Allan Isaacs, will be acting in a capacity of an Adviser to the Office of the Prime Minister. At a later stage I will expand on the possibility of the role of the back bencher being incorporated into the proposal for the establishment of an Expenditures Committee.

REVITALISING PARLIAMENT

The intention, Mr. Speaker, is to revitalise the Parliament of the country and to give it its due place as the supreme body of the land. And in this respect the Members of the Executive know that they will have to deal with a Parliament which, while being members of a team will be exercising the role of being persons in a monitoring position to ask pertinent questions and to help to keep the Executive alert and alive. In keeping, Mr. Speaker, with this revitalization process I myself propose to play a role and that is to answer questions in Parliament on a regular basis for fifteen minutes in such sessions of the House that is set aside for such purposes in keeping with the practice in the Westminster Parliament in the United Kingdom.

ROLE OF OPPOSITION

I turn to the role of the Opposition. It will be quite clear that in the comments which I have made concerning the monitoring role which is to be determined in respect of back benchers that we are desirous of Opposition. We are desirous of greater accountability by Ministers and Ministries, and this is deemed a very necessary function in the role of the Opposition. The House, Mr. Speaker, is comprised of a small Opposition, but this is not unusual. We have in fact just emerged from a Parliament in which there was also a small Opposition.

It cannot be said that that small Opposition of 13 members did not prove itself effective in dealing with its role in this Parliament from time to time. It would be good for the nation if it was quite clear that the Opposition proposes to play a similar role notwithstanding its lesser numbers, and it would be determined to play as effective a role in the parliamentary life of the country. This, however, stands in some doubt because if we are to judge by the pronouncement at the level of the leadership of the Opposition Party, there is a question to be raised as to whether the Opposition proposes to pursue the parliamentary process or the revolutionary process.

If I am to quote the Secretary General of the Opposition People's National Party in a statement made on election night, the exact words used are that 'we now move to revolutionary politics'.

We are not sure what is meant by 'revolutionary politics'. We hope that it does not mean what these words ordinarily mean. We regret that the Leader of the Opposition and the Opposition are absent on such a vital occasion in which the opportunity would have presented itself for clarification. We regret that they have chosen to be absent on so trivial a basis as to so predetermine and prejudge a matter which is slated for decision-making in the Courts of the land at which time the people of the country will know the decision and act accordingly.

It is only fair for us to say that our mandate is that of a constitutionally elected Government obliged to respect a constitutionally elected Opposition. Indeed, it may be said, particularly in view of the size of the Opposition, that our mandate extends to protection of the Opposition and its supporters by a series of measures which I will outline later. Our mandate does not require us to respect or protect an Opposition which resorts to unconstitutional and revolutionary means. And let it be clearly understood that we have both a constitutional duty and a clear and overwhelming mandate to protect the country from any attempt to follow up the revolutionary course.

RE-APPOINTMENT OF STATUTORY BOARDS

In the course of the transition process, Mr. Speaker, a matter for early action at ministerial level has been the re-appointment of the various statutory organisations and enterprises insofar as the membership of those organisations and enterprises are concerned. Many of these boards and the corporate members of such enterprises have already been changed and in due course announcement will be made in respect of the new membership. It is expected that within the month of November we shall complete this exercise and it will be found that when these new boards are announced that many chairmen appointed by the previous administration are being asked to carry on in a similar capacity by this Government. In other cases some members appointed by the previous administration are being asked to carry on and in the final analysis it will also be noted that a great infusion of new blood, a great infusion of new membership and a great infusion of new thought has been added by way of new members to these new boards. The re-appointments have been guided by the principle of the ability to do the job and we have set aside partisan considerations in the determination of the ability to do the job; we have no committee especially set up to weed out persons of a particular commitment as against those of ability.

Great urgency has been attached to the appointment of these boards at an early date because it has been found, and this has been true to a certain extent within certain Ministries, that in the interim period between the date on which the electorate made its decision and the date on which the boards or various committees cease to operate, authorisation was proceeding for expenditure, staff appointments were being made and old ones being confirmed, contracts for employment and for other purposes were being signed and indeed, when I take into consideration the number of contracts that were signed on the 28th and the 29th of October, bearing the signatures of persons who were at that time battling for their political lives in various remote areas, it raises the grave suspicion as to whether these contracts were not signed after the election and retroactively back-dated.

MISSING FILES

There have been reported cases of erasures of tapes, missing files. Within the Ministry of Housing or rather, the Ministry of Construction, when the Minister called for the files of the brigadista training programme, a number of things emerged —

- (i) that the files could not be found;

- (ii) that on a report given it was declared that a senior officer of the Ministry directed that in the aftermath of the election they should be sent to the Cuban Embassy;
- (iii) that a vehicle which was a part of the section that dealt with the brigadista training programme and which belonged to the Ministry had been assigned for the election campaign to the candidate for that Party in Eastern Kingston.

There have been reports, Mr. Speaker, of instances of Government assets being sold off in this interim period while the change-over is being made and of certain Government assets being stolen

I say these things, to indicate the urgency which we have attached to the change-over or transition process in order that it may be fully appreciated that while the change-over is taking place, there are unscrupulous persons at work and the quicker the change-over is made the quicker we will be able to bring to an end these types of actions and activities.

Such malpractices and others as may be discovered will be the subject of departmental investigations in the first instance. My Ministers have been instructed to get to the bottom by way of departmental investigations of any reports of malpractices of the type that I have set out and others which fall squarely in the category of infringement of the regulations under which the Ministries operate.

It is my pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to indicate in dealing with the composition of Parliament that the Leader of the House is the Member from Northern Clarendon who sits on my left and the Deputy Leader is the Member from Central Manchester who sits behind us. These two gentlemen, Members of the House, have had experience in the parliamentary affairs of the country. The Member from Northern Clarendon has played this role to a large extent during the life of the previous Opposition and has exhibited his capabilities and has acquired the experience to be able to perform this role satisfactorily and we have great faith that he will be a Leader of the House on this side of great merit in this administration. The Deputy Leader is a person who is not only well known in the educational field but one who has theoretical background in constitutional affairs and has taught on the subject. He will readily make an excellent deputy in terms of understanding the various regulations by which the House is governed and will be a meritorious substitute on the occasions that the Leader is not available for him to take his place to lead the House.

ECONOMY

Having dealt with the development in the parliamentary life of the country Mr. Speaker I wish to turn to the economy. It is no secret that the economy has been plagued over the last many years by twin problems - the deficit on the foreign exchange and the deficit on the fiscal budget and what has brought these deficits into sharp focus in this year 1980 is that in these instances neither the foreign exchange budget nor the fiscal budget which is presented annually was presented on a basis of full financing being able to cover the expenditure set out.

In other words, in the presentation of these two budgets there were from the very beginning gaps to be closed which have not been closed.

In respect of the foreign exchange budget, the gap to be closed between now and the end of this calendar year is \$157 million (US) and in respect of the fiscal budget the gap to be closed by the end of the financial year March 31st, 1981 is \$370 million (Ja.). Indeed, the foreign exchange situation became so critical, as I have had occasion to remark before, that on the 29th of October, the day before the general elections, there was a time in which the Bank of Jamaica ran out of foreign exchange and it was only the timely deposit of \$10 million (US) by the Government of Iraq that enabled us to enter the post-electoral period with a small amount of foreign exchange in the reserves.

PETROLEUM

The gap with which we have been presented of \$157 million cannot be closed by the end of this Financial Year. Notwithstanding that, there are many ways in which it can be alleviated, and one of these concerns arrangements that are being made by way of negotiations for facilities for the supply of petroleum products to Jamaica through Venezuela and Mexico.

The Venezuelan facility will provide for 16,000 barrels per day of crude, which is about one-half of the capacity of our refinery. It provides 30 per cent credit of the total cost of the fuel which represents very substantial savings to us, and this 30 per cent credit will be repayable on very long-term loans providing we are able to generate the necessary counterpart investments which can be as long as 20 years repayment at a rate of interest of 2 per cent.

At this present time these negotiations are being brought to completion. They have been pending for a long time and there is at pre-

sent a representative of the Government in Venezuela to conclude the negotiations between the Bank of Jamaica and the Central Bank of Venezuela, as a result of which there will be a retroactive benefit to January 1, 1980 of somewhat over US\$50 Million in foreign exchange to the Government of Jamaica.

In addition to these negotiations which are now being completed but which have been in process for a period of several months there is the counterpart facility from Mexico and on this basis negotiations have also been proceeding but on a more difficult area of problems.

The proposal as it now stands is for the provision of 13,000 barrels per day of crude, but there are two difficulties to be dealt with. One of these concerns the processing of the particular crude supplied by Mexico which presents certain problems to the local oil refinery, but problems which can be overcome.

The most serious aspect of the problems presented by the Mexican facility is the higher cost of the crude which has implications for price increases which may not be overcome. Negotiations are now to be started again at our request in order to bring to completion the facilities provided by the Government of Mexico in supplying this portion of our requirements of oil.

The credit arrangements are the same, 30 per cent of cost repayable on the same basis over a period which, depending on the kind of investment into which these funds are put may be as long as 20 years at 2 per cent.

The total impact on our foreign exchange earnings for a complete year in terms of savings in respect of the expenditure on oil could be as much as US\$108 million to the Government of Jamaica.

I want to take the opportunity of indicating that this Government appreciates the gesture of the two oil-exporting countries which have reached the stage of negotiations with us and which we are about to conclude in making available to us these facilities, and in recognition of the extent to which these facilities will save the country vital foreign exchange in excess of \$108 million.

There is a third facility available through the Government of Trinidad on which negotiations are to be pursued and on this I shall report at a later stage. It is worth noting, however, that the Government's finances as they now stand have neither the finances nor the credit available to provide the country with oil supplies for the balance of 1980, and the extent to which we will be able to continue to

keep the supplies of petroleum moving, which is so vital to the life of the country, will be dependent on the early conclusion of the Venezuelan facility which we have hopes to be concluded during this week.

LINES OF CREDIT RE-OPENED

I was advised, Mr. Speaker, that another noteworthy development that took place immediately in the post-election period was that many lines of credit which had been frozen and on which we could draw no further credit were immediately re-opened without the Government expressing any desire on the day after election. This, to our mind, is an expression of the goodwill and greater confidence that has been the result of the general elections.

At present the Bank of Jamaica and the Finance Ministry are working on other lines of credit which were frozen prior to the election period because of non-payment of debts in order to seek to re-activate them so that new credit can be available for the Jamaican economy.

These lines of credit are vital to the restoration of our supplies and an assessment in fact, has been made of what is the requirement of the economy for the balance of this year until the end of December in terms of foreign exchange to enable vital supplies of food, raw materials, spare parts and capital goods to be imported into Jamaica to keep the economy going. That assessment has indicated that our needs are US\$40 million so as to provide the country with the food that it requires to the end of the year, the raw materials that it requires to the end of the year, not on a stop/start basis but on a smooth flow, the spare parts required, and capital goods.

I am pleased to advise the country and the House that negotiations have been proceeding with the commercial banking system and with their headquarters in respect of the provision of this \$40 million (U.S.) in new credit and these negotiations are in an advanced stage for the provision of this \$40 million (U.S.) by way of an 10-days Letter of Credit to enable us to provide these basic and essential raw materials to take us through to the end of the year.

I may add that I am very optimistic about the outcome of the negotiations which will be known shortly. These new credits will depend the supply of food and I may pause to indicate that without these new credits the converse is true, there was not enough to take us through the month of December in Jamaica, either on hand or in

the pipeline by way of imports. On these new credits will depend the finished goods. And on these new credits will depend the repair of equipment to restore production. It may be said that this amount of US\$40 Million represents the difference between a Christmas of calamity and a Christmas of contentment.

TOURISM UPTURNS

I am also very pleased to report that in the field of tourism there has been noteworthy upturns in activity. Since November, bookings have shown a marked increase. Air Jamaica reports an increase of 17 per cent in reservations made between the 1st to the 15th of November over the reservations in the corresponding period on the previous month. The Jamaica Reservation Services which is the Government's own central reservation system for hotels in the island, reported that since the 1st November, 1980, forward bookings have increased to the point where the future bookings in the next six months for individual business is substantially ahead of the same period last year. However, there has been a marked decrease in charter business because charters take a long time to arrange and the charters that should have come in over this Winter should have been arranged from earlier in the year when conditions were not conducive. In short the picture is that in regard to individual business there has been a considerable increase in business. There has been considerable increases in bookings since the elections, but with regard to the charters the time is too short for there to be any improvements in the situation, which situation at present is much worse than last Winter.

INTEREST IN NEW PROJECTS

There has also been a surge in interest among promoters and developers of new projects industrial, housing and agriculture. At various Government agencies, and in the private sector there has been a report of considerable new interest, domestic and external. Enquiries are being made concerning the possibilities of new projects being instituted and implemented. Indeed, on the visit of a recent mission here so many enquiries were left behind so as to occupy a small task force for a good period.

It is also good to know that many of the skills that left the island during a period of migration when they were invited to do so - have now, without waiting for any invitation are returning home.

What is very heartening is that this not only applies to the private sector where one would naturally expect that resurgence, but to the public sector. Many of the well known names in the public sector

life of this country who found it necessary to migrate at that time are now looking to Jamaica, their homeland to return and to be able to contribute once again to the public affairs of this country through the skills that they have acquired in the interim.

SECURITY FORCES

It is also to be noted that in the period since the elections activities involving killings and shootings have decreased by fifty percent and in fact, during that period the Security Forces have recovered some eighty high-powered weapons.

I want to take the opportunity to pay tribute to the much maligned Security Forces of this country.

Nobody asked them when they are out there facing the real danger 'when last you had a day off? What are your hours?'

Nobody confronts them with the question whether like any other mortal they are tired; but they have borne not only the burden of the work-load which they have to carry but the burden of considerable criticism, considerable condemnation, all of which has been intended to lower their morale and their effectiveness.

It is one of the great accomplishments of the people of Jamaica that this section of its people which form the Security Forces have been able to patiently weather this condemnation and castigation and continue to perform their duty and to do so in admirable fashion and to do so in the manner that we know them constitutionally to be empowered to enforce law and order.

ELEMENT OF RECOVERY

Notwithstanding the element of recovery that has started to move into place, I must warn the nation that Jamaica still faces the gravest financial difficulties next year. We have this time inherited a foreign exchange projected budget for next year which shows a gap of \$250 million (US), and I want it to be clearly understood that this \$250 million gap is after all known sources of earnings and borrowings have been taken into account.

Indeed, Mr Speaker, it is after a projection has been made including a contribution from the IMF, and it is at this point that I would like to advise the country that we are now in the process of exploratory discussions with the IMF in Washington.

Jamaica is eligible to a quote arrangement for some \$600 million

(US) in IMF loans over a three year period at attractive and concessional rates of interest. We are exploring by way of discussions the present thinking of the International Monetary Fund and they are too, exploring the thinking of the new Government so that we may determine whether there is mutual ground on which we may come to an agreement which is not ground which the people of Jamaica would object but grounds which are in the interest of the country in terms of alleviating its foreign exchange position. The country will be kept informed on the progress of these talks from time to time.

BUDGET GAP

The fiscal budget starts with a gap of \$305 million at the beginning of the financial year. That gap is now between \$350 and \$370 million on the basis of additional net expenditure since the beginning of the financial year. There is no source of new revenues to finance this and indeed, loans for this purpose can very well at this stage be ruled out for this financial year.

The only source from which this financing can proceed is by printing money at the Bank of Jamaica, which is the bind in which we have been left and which is the condition which we have inherited. This carries with it certain inflationary pressures that have built up in the course of the succeeding year and next year when these inflationary pressures are being experienced in terms of price increases it is just as well that the country should know from now as indeed, I had warned in another capacity at an earlier time that the causative factors of many of such increases arise out of the inflationary financing which the Government of the past proceeded on in terms of financing the 1980/81 budget.

CRITICAL

For our part, it is absolutely critical that we maintain the present level of expenditure at no greater figure than the figure which I have mentioned, save and except for any act of God, and it will be our responsibility to hold expenditures absolutely tight for the balance of this financial year so as not to aggravate the situation any further.

The new budget which is being prepared to be presented next year is the first budget of this new Government. We will begin discussion in due course and in the interim exploratory talks are being initiated with such institutions as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank to determine the level of external financing on which they may be relied for, as this is going to be a critical factor in terms of bringing new projects on stream.

The point that I am making which requires reinforcement is that the expenditure level which we have inherited from the Government has virtually tied up the great bulk of finances of the country in an inescapable expenditure from one year to the other, leaving us pitifully little room to manoeuvre, leaving us pitifully little finances over which we have any discretion to reflect the policy and programme of the new Government.

External financing therefore, will play a very important role, and I propose at an early date to visit with the World Bank and with the Inter-American Development Bank in order to begin from now to line up the levels of support and the areas of support which we may expect from them so as to enable us to know where else to look for the other projects which are set out in the manifesto of the Jamaica Labour Party before it became the Government.

BACKLOG OF DAMAGE

We are still faced, Mr. Speaker, with the ravages of hurricane Allen, a backlog of damage which has not been attended to. Some funds are now being released to attend to some of the damage in the eastern parishes, particularly road damage, and sea-walls. I am glad to say that is now being done to alleviate conditions which are long standing from August.

We still have the problem of re-housing to face, which will be a priority that has next to be tackled and one area in which there is great concern as to the provision of funds for resuscitation programmes in the banana industry which was totally destroyed in the eastern parishes and greatly damaged in other areas of Jamaica.

The amount of funds that is required is some \$40 million, and I wish at this stage it were possible to say to you that these funds have been totally lined up and are immediately available to be put to work in the field in order to overcome the problems which have been left by the devastation of hurricane Allen.

The most that I can say is that the sources of funds have been identified, some part of which have come on stream but the greater part of which will still require negotiations and a time-table for implementation. It will be our responsibility now to speed up and expedite the negotiations to complete the arrangements so that the banana farmers who are long awaiting the arrival of fertilisers and the arrival of cash contributions and other inputs in order to enable them to carry on the business of rehabilitation will be able to know what time-table they can operate by. We only hope that it will be possible

to satisfy their needs at an early date and they can depend on this Government towards earliest date possible.

EMPLOYMENT

Employment has, of course, been one of the most critical areas of the economy and it is to be expected that with the restoration of flows of raw materials which will be evident when the new financial arrangements are completed for the letters of credit to import raw materials that many persons who were out of work as a result of the down-turn in performance of the particular industry in which they were employed will be called back as the revival of those industrial sections come into play. But over and above that, the Government has formulated a Christmas Work Programme which is at the same level as the programme of last year. We wish in the financial circumstances that it would be more but unfortunately the maximum which can be provided is the level of last year, which in real terms will mean less in terms of what it can buy in goods and services.

DIFFERENCE

There is a notable difference and distinction this year, however, in the total amount of \$5.4 million which is being provided insofar as the allocations are concerned to the political representatives of Parliament. In the Ministry of Local Government, which is responsible for the major section of \$4 million, all Members of Parliament regardless of which side they are on, will be given a grant of \$39,200 for their constituencies and all constituencies will receive in addition \$16,250 to be divided among the councillors in the constituencies for expenditure by Councillors. The only exceptions are the fourteen Corporate Area constituencies in which there exists a crash programme activity which is being carried out by councillors in those areas. A corresponding amount has been shifted to the Members of Parliament in those fourteen constituencies and deducted from the \$16,250 which would be allocated.

EQUAL BASIS

The only other exceptions are the allocations that are normally made which are slightly different for the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition and Mayors of the Parish Councils and Corporate Area. All of these grants, therefore, Mr. Speaker, are being divided on an equal basis throughout the entire island in keeping with the principles which this Government adheres to in terms of non-victimization of party supporters. Indeed the Ministry of Construction is also to make provisions for the amount

of \$25,000 to each constituency irrespective of party affiliation, except the thirteen Corporate Area constituencies in which that Ministry has very little programmes of work that it can offer. And the Ministry of Agriculture is to present a programme of \$150,000 which will be formulated along similar lines.

In order to enable this programme to be implemented in time for Christmas, Members of Parliament are asked to send in their work programmes before the end of this week so that work may commence as of the beginning of next week in order to provide for four weeks of work before Christmas. On the basis of programmes which are designed to give two weeks of work to individuals, some 67,000 persons will be employed through the Ministry of Local Government's programme with additional numbers from the programme of the Ministry of Construction and the Ministry of Agriculture.

CLEAN-UP CAMPAIGN

The Kingston and St. Andrew Corporation in the meantime has been proceeding with a programme of work to clean the walls of graffiti and posters which were an inevitable by-product of the election campaign. I want to pay special tribute to the workers of the Street Cleansing Department who have come out and who have helped enormously to clear the various blockades which existed in certain roads so as to restore normal traffic flow and to help to clean up the city and put it once again in a more respectable condition.

EQUAL TO TASK

Despite the magnitude of the problems which we have inherited, Mr. Speaker, we consider that we are equal to the task, and we also consider that the people are equal to the task. It is only for us to devise strategies to release the mechanism which will trigger those within the people and to make them equal to the task. These mechanisms, Mr. Speaker, have been set out in the closing section of the manifesto prepared and published by the Jamaica Labour Party prior to the election entitled 'Change Without Chaos.' In this manifesto we indicate that the strategies to be employed will be based upon incentive, equity and integrity. Incentive to release the motivational forces that are tied up in the ambition of personal reward for personal initiative - and we have already acted to try to release some of the constraints that have so gripped the economy and the society that it has impeded the motivation of people to act and to produce.

CREATING THE CLIMATE

Over the years we are accustomed to the philosophy of restraint, the philosophy of belt tightening and the philosophy of sacrifice. All

of these things while still necessary at the stage at which we are in terms of the critical condition which we have inherited are no longer to be the real features of the strategy which we want to employ.

We say to the people, we will create the climate and the conditions for you to expand, not to withdraw; the conditions and climate for you, given the motivational incentive, to have greater commitment and greater dedication to what you do. The levels of incentives that we are talking about are not to be mistaken with the traditional concepts of incentives that are granted to corporate enterprises.

We speak also of incentives to the workers of the country: we speak of incentive to the farmers of the country; so that each individual knows that there is a goal to work to; a bonus at the end of the line, something which can stir his ambition for a better life and gear him into higher levels of production. But none of this can have the meaning that it should have and the stability that it must have unless it is equally based on the concept of equity and integrity. For men must feel that they belong in order to be able to participate and it is our over-riding responsibility and our over-riding commitment that the people of the country must feel as if they are first class citizens in their own country and not segregated into categories to which some are considered second class citizens.

CITIZENS' RIGHTS

For a long time, Mr. Speaker, in the earlier days when we first brought to the forefront the principle and reasoned arguments for better citizens' rights, call them what you may, human rights, political rights, and demarcated those areas that were sensitive to the public life of the country, we have been fighting this battle for greater respect for citizens' rights. Over that course we tried, to a large extent in vain, to catch the ear of the previous Government and to get it to commit itself to this area of national responsibility of reducing or controlling the abuses in various sensitive areas of public life.

These areas are well known, we have outlined them so often that they hardly need any explanation: the electoral abuses, abuses over the control of the Security Forces, abuses in the expenditure of public funds, abuses in the use of the public media and abuses in the distribution of scarce benefits.

In the history of these abuses which have afflicted our nation for a long time had reached a pinnacle under the last administration. The talks which were held between the two parties had little success and much failure. The major area of success was in the electoral reforms

and the major areas of failure was in respect of correcting practices of victimization, practices of abuse of the Security Forces, public expenditure and in the public media.

Notwithstanding these failures this Government proposes to continue electoral reform as set out and as discussed in the past, and to take this process to its final conclusion of the processing and production of identification cards so as to eliminate the continuing little areas of loopholes that exist in the present reform which can still defeat in certain sections the will of the people.

We propose to take steps to seek the advice of the Attorney General in regard to the establishment of a special ombudsman to deal with cases of victimization, as we have long announced. We feel that if there is a watchful eye of an ombudsman who has the power that public officials will be wary of carrying out programmes which involve victimization. But, Mr. Speaker, the legal ramifications and technicians of such a position has to be dealt with at the level of the Attorney General before we are in a position to proceed.

CRASH PROGRAMME

It is, Mr. Speaker, a point to be noted that the crash programme work which has been carried out by the past Government ever since its inception in 1972, and which is comprised overwhelmingly with the recruitment of supporters of only one party. Indeed, the present programme as it now exists makes room only for a very tiny quota which comes to the constituency that I have the honour to represent. We have not interfered with it, we have not closed it down, we have not thrown thousands and thousands of people out of work in this pre-Christmas period.

However, it is also obvious that in the future of the programme we will have to find a way and formula for more equitable distribution comes the new year, and that we shall also have to find a more meaningful and productive role for that programme so that it no longer carries with it the sinecure that it now represents but in fact will be able to offer an honest man an honest day's work for an honest day's pay.

NO VICTIMIZATION

A matter that I wish to raise in this connection, Mr. Speaker, concerns an instance which took place in the constituency of South-west St. Catherine whereby workers on a particular site were the subject of letter written by the Member of Parliament for that constituency in which and by which letter he indicated that certain

numbers of workers would not be allowed to continue to work there for certain reasons. This had had the result of closing down the site; it has also had the result of an expression of policy which is not in keeping with this Government's policy; it has had the result of, in an open fashion, indicating that the intention was to victimize persons who were employed on a particular site.

It is only true to say, Mr. Speaker, that there is a background against which this took place. In the days before the election when recruitment to that site was taking place, it so happens that all the persons recruited were from among the supporters of the People's National Party. There was one exception, an unfortunate individual who found himself in a maze who was a supporter of the JLP and who when he was discovered was thoroughly beaten and thrown off the site.

I say this only by way of background to explain the deep feelings of the people but not to condone the action. It is not the policy of the Party to condone such action. It is contrary to what we stand for and what we have set out as our reasoned and principled areas of conduct in the area of work distribution. But I am also very glad to say that the Member for the constituency who happens to be the youngest Member elected to Parliament, and who has been spoken to by me and by other leaders of the Party, regrets the entire incident. He is contrite about its implication and understands fully the more far-reaching implications of his action. He has decided to write to the contractors a letter apologising for his conduct and asking that the site be re-opened and that the original workers be restored to their positions of employment on Wednesday morning. I would like to commend him for this decision.

COTTON POLYESTER PLANT

Mistakes will be made but the important thing is when they are made that they should be corrected. By way of an aside, it should interest the country to know that this plant, the cotton polyester plant, was originally estimated to cost of \$26m. It is now estimated that the plant will cost \$32m. when finally completed, but what is more, the start-up cost by way of working capital over two shifts for raw material and other expenses to keep the plant running is estimated to be \$16.

On this basis I am informed that the last Government took a decision to abandon the plant after it was built so to speak, just to mothball it, allow it to sit there because it would not have been possible for them to find the funds to put it into operation. What I

believe was of importance in this decision which they came to is the fact that the plant is not expected to be viable. It is expected to start out losing \$2m. a year and by year five reach an annual loss of \$6m. a year.

It now becomes our challenge as well as our inheritance to be able to take this plant and to try and put it into some basis of operation which will not require its abandonment. Bearing in mind the levels of investment which have taken place, a good part of which has been a kind gesture of the People's Republic of China, and bearing in mind that if it goes into employment on two shifts it will employ 600 people, it is now our responsibility to try to do something better than the mothballing of this plant when it is completed.

IMPARTIAL COMMISSIONS

Government proposes to establish the Expenditures Committee of which we have already spoken but on a basis which will require one Ministry at a time to sit before a Committee of the House at a given period.

We propose to proceed with the establishment of an impartial Public Service and Police Service Commissions in consultation with the Opposition.

We propose to appoint a Media Commission which will overlook the conduct of the public media such as there is under the ownership of the Government. And to appoint a Contractor General who will have the responsibility of monitoring all contracts and agreements.

I have mentioned these because it is vital that the right candidates be found for these particular posts and in mentioning them, I am by that manner advertising the post and asking persons who believe that they can suit these high levels of qualifications to contact us so that we may determine whether we can find the right persons for the right jobs because that is essential in the entire performance of these critical areas of new thinking.

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

The Government proposes also Mr. Speaker, to proceed with the constitutional reform process which will again require consultation with the Opposition.

LARGEST MANDATE

I want to close on a querulous note, a note which I am sure, has come to the minds of many people. The Jamaica Labour Party has

received a massive mandate to form the Government of the country, the largest mandate of any history of Jamaica. Certain elements of this mandate are known but certain elements are not quite clear and we must ask ourselves the question honestly, what is this mandate?

It is obvious that a part of this mandate was in respect of the mismanagement of affairs and the corrective action which is expected of us. A part of this was condemnation of the trend toward Marxism and Communism and part of it, Mr. Speaker, was condemnation of racism.

Other elements of this mandate are not as obvious, yet it is unmistakable that a great change has taken place in the minds of the people. A new dynamic is in operation which needs to be understood and which we must understand lest we misunderstand.

GREAT CHANGE

I propose to put together a team to investigate the nature of the mandate that we have received and to formulate the principles on which it has been based in order that these principles may be guidelines for us in executing this mandate.

I propose that in this team there should be young minds which are reflecting the new attitudes of the youths of the land; that there should be creative people who have that gift of intuitively seeing what those of us, who reason by logic, eventually come to by way of conclusion at some other time in the future; that it should be composed of thinkers and practical and practicing people in the political arena — people who know what the reactions of an electorate mean and what it has aimed at in terms of its objectives. When this exercise is over, I believe we will all be wiser, as this Government desires to be wiser, in understanding this great change that has taken place among our people.

SOPHISTICATED ELECTORATE

It can be said, as it may have been said before, that the Jamaican electorate is one of the most sophisticated electorates in the entire world. It waited patiently through years of discontent without resorting to some of the mechanisms by which discontent is expressed and in so doing it waited patiently for the moment in which it could do what it desired to do at the right time and I want to take the opportunity to congratulate the electorate of Jamaica.

On the basis of any free and fair elections it has never proven itself to be wrong and in this instance it has reinforced the conviction

and it has reinforced the confidence of those of us who have positions of leadership that we are dealing with people of great sophistication, great insight and principles in depth which may not have been analysed before as part of the makeup of the electorate of Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate you on the post to which you have selected by our colleagues. I know that in your wisdom you will guide this House in its deliberations and that in equity you will see that fair play is done and that over the years of the life of this new Parliament you will help to establish the basis on which this Parliament can reassert itself as the principal constitutional instrument of the land.

I thank the House and I thank the Members for having allowed me the opportunity of presenting such developments as have taken place in our little country over these past two weeks and at a future date I will report once again on the further developments that we have done.



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