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The Swearing in Ceremony of the Cabinet of Ministers
August 5, 2021

Salutations

Let me welcome you all to the Swearing in Ceremony of the new Cabinet of Ministers of the ten (10) day old Saint Lucia Labour Party Government. Let me inform you that the ten (10) days almost seems like ten (10) months considering the issues that I have had to deal with and I recall the patois saying that I first heard from my father when he was still a policeman and totally devoted to his job and the saying is "*You have got to sleep with chickens to discover whether or not they snore".*

My father and mother, a teacher for over forty (40) years could not have been better placed to observe close-up the various shades of daily life in Saint Lucia.

The chickens of which my father spoke were not of the plumed variety. They were the law-abiding citizens, some poor and uneducated in need of a helping hand seldom extended, an opportunity for self-betterment. They were the marginalized people who grew up telling their children that they would never be good enough to reach the top. They were to look for a Messiah to save them. That self-hate and low self-esteem prevented them from aspiring to the greatest possible achievement.

I grew up thinking that I would someday give these chickens an opportunity to sleep silently by demonstrating to them that anyone would reach the top with discipline, commitment, patience and gratitude.

My many years in public life have caused me to know the difference between an opponent and an enemy. I also understand what can turn regular human beings into something unrecognizable the minute they are placed near the leaver of power.

I have been up and I have been down. I know too that nothing lasts forever, neither the good times nor the bad. Life is itself not permanent and someday I will not be the Prime Minister.

It has been no easy road getting to where we are today. As I've said elsewhere, on July 26, 2021 the good people of Saint Lucia demonstrated in no uncertain terms their dissatisfaction with the previous managers of their business and placed it in the hands of the Saint Lucia Labour Party that I am privileged to lead. We are determined not to disappoint you the people of this Nation. We are fully aware of what it will take in these unprecedentedly difficult times to stay true to our promises. Deliver we will, nevertheless. Or, to paraphrase the Superstar Rapper 50 Cent, die trying.

We have started delivering on our promises to the people of Saint Lucia.

This school term starting in September 2021 parents will not be called upon to pay facility fees for their children. I ask the schools to be patient as the Ministry of Finance is in the process of finalizing the arrangements.

The long history of conflict with the National Trust over the much-needed subvention will be no more and Government has decided to reinstate the subvention. We look forward to a mutually

beneficial relationship with the guardians of our environment and patrimony and respect their autonomy when decision making.

Ladies and gentlemen this afternoon, we have presented to the people of Saint Lucia the team of men and women who will form the next Cabinet of Saint Lucia. The allocation of Ministries was not easy as every member is blessed with unique talents and attributes to serve the people of Saint Lucia.

- The Cabinet comprises of the former diplomat, university lecturer and international public servant in the person of **Hon**. **Dr. Ernest Hilaire.**
- An educator, cultural activist and passionate parliamentary representative **Hon. Moses Musa Jn. Baptiste.**
- Another educator, sports administrator and former national cricketer **Hon. Shawn Edward.**
- An orator par excellence and former external affairs minister trained in management, economics and civil aviation, **Hon. Alva Baptiste**
- International Civil Servant, Chattered Accountant and fraud detection and social security policy expert **Hon. Emma Hippolyte**
- **Hon. Kenson Casimir** trained communications and management, a former national sportsman and sports administrator
- Quantity Surveyor and social policy expert **Hon. Joachim Henry.**
- Experienced educator, trade unionist and international workers' rights advocate, **Dr. Virginia Albert-Poyotte.**
- Affable, experienced, trained agriculturist, former head of the Forestry Division, **Hon. Alfred Prospere.**

- **Hon. Wayne Girard** trained in finance and banking and capable of using his international experience for the benefit of the people of Anse La Raye/Canaries.

And to add their experience and ability to the team are educators and former school principals **Hon. Dr. Pauline Anotine-Prospere** and **Hon. Guibon Ferdinard,**

In acknowledgement of the will of the people in the Castries North and Castries Central seats and the role that the two successful independent candidates played leading up to and during the campaign in helping the Labour Party secure an overwhelming victory at the recent general elections, I have offered ministerial positions to both candidates.

In both instances the will of the people has been clear and emphatic and should not go unnoticed. **Hon. Stephenson King** and **Hon**. **Richard Frederick,** a lawyer by profession have both held Ministerial office and in the case of the former, the Office of the Prime Minister. I look forward to the benefit of their ministerial experiences in charting a new and inclusive path on the governance of the country and in securing the hopes and aspirations of the Saint Lucian people.

Their inclusion, though not members of the Saint Lucia Labour Party, in my Cabinet is to signal that my Government will be nothing else but a Government of the people and for all the people. I hope together we can serve the people of Saint Lucia well.

I now come to former Prime Minister and the Parliamentary Representative for Vieux Fort South, **Hon. Dr. Kenny D. Anthony.** Before I gave any consideration to Cabinet positions, I met Dr. Anthony and advised him that I would like to name and appoint him as a Senior Minister in the new Government. I also invited him to select any portfolio that would interest him. Dr. Anthony

advised me that he would not be able to take up any new cabinet position immediately as he had to undergo minor surgery in the next few weeks and would need time to do so.

Moreover, he had a number of legal matters to handle and would not wish to disappoint the clients whom he had agreed to represent. Consequently, we agreed that we will re-visit my invitation in six (6) months. It is my hope that given Dr. Anthony's undisputed experience, knowledge and skills, he will help to shape the policies of the Government and mentor the young, inexperienced ministers in our Cabinet.

I wish to make it clear that Dr. Anthony will not be receiving the salary of a minister during the period in question but will continue to receive the emoluments normally paid to members of Parliament.

Meanwhile, I wish to assure the people of Vieux Fort South and indeed all constituencies whose parliamentarians do not currently hold a cabinet position that their constituencies will not suffer any disadvantage as a result under this Government and my leadership.

I now come to the Micoud North, the history-making, the face of the future, the never -die, **Honourable Jeremiah Norbert.**

When we were searching for a candidate to contest the UWP fortress of Micoud North, the one seat since its formation that my party has never been successful in securing, several candidates came forward. Among them was a young impressionable junior police officer who stepped up to the plate and raised both his hands. Though I was immediately impressed, the more I came to know him, the more my admiration for him grew. Following the party's usual processes. Hon. Norbert emerged as the party's candidate of choice.

He immediately plunged into his work with a fervour that belied his political experience. But what he lacked in experience he more than made up for in discipline, a discipline no doubt he developed

as a result of his police experience. In fact, my information is that he graduated first in his class of 31.

As if seeking to capture the UWP stronghold was by itself not sufficiently daunting, Hon. Norbert was simultaneously undertaking higher education pursuing a bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of West Indies.

Then came that horrific accident, one which would have scuttled the dreams of lesser men. But not Hon. Norbert. Instead of self-pity, he saw the loss of a limb as an opportunity to champion the cause of the differently-abled. He also immediately assured the people of Micoud North in particular and Saint Lucia in general, that though he had lost a limb, he had not lost the determination to represent the Constituency. The rest, they say, is now history.

But the journey continues and as we ease him into political leadership of this country; as he continues to pursue his academic qualifications and as he continues his physical healing. I have decided to, in the first instance, to offer him the position of Deputy Speaker. I will revisit with Hon. Norbert in the short term and once his progress is satisfactory, graduate him to the next level. I have assured Hon. Norbert that the needs of the people of Micoud North will be of top priority to Government.

Conclusion

Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you for being present today. I must express my gratitude to the people of Castries East for their understanding as to the reasons why the ceremony could not take place in the constituency. Let me assure them that once the COVID-19 situation eases and we are given the all clear by the health officials we will celebrate in the constituency.

I thank everyone who has ensured that this event is memorable. To the people of Saint Lucia, I invite you to journey with us on this exciting journey to improve the quality of life of the people

of Saint Lucia- it's a task that together we can achieve. Our Government **will listen to the people and will always put them first,** it is our pledge. I call on all men and women of goodwill to put country first-our country does not belong to any individual or party; it's ours to cherish and grow for generations yet born. I end with a quote from Proverbs 22-8 ***"Whoever sows injustice reaps calamity and the rod they wield in fury will be broken"***

I thank you.