

SPEAKING NOTES FOR THE HON. DR. FENTON FERGUSON M. P.

2004 - 2005 SECTORAL DEBATE

TUESDAY JULY 6, 2004

ONE VISION,

ONE PEOPLE,

A STRONG JAMAICA

SECTION I

SALUTATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

MR. SPEAKER, MEMBERS OF THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE, IT IS WITH A GREAT SENSE OF GRATITUDE AND HUMILITY THAT I STAND HERE TO MAKE MY CONTRIBUTION TO THE SECTORAL DEBATE.

THE PEOPLE OF EASTERN ST. THOMAS HAVE GIVEN ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE IN THIS HOUSE FOR 11 CONSECUTIVE YEARS.

I AM GRATEFUL, MR. SPEAKER, AT THE VERY THOUGHT OF A GREAT GOD, WHO CONTINUES TO WATCH OVER ME AND WHO HAS GIVEN ME THE STRENGTH TO DO MY DUTIES FROM DAY TO DAY.

MR SPEAKER I KNOW THAT THERE HAD TO BE SOME DIVINE INTERVENTION IN SAVING ME AND THE TWO OTHER PERSONS INCLUDING MY SECURITY, FROM SUSTAINING GRAVE INJURIES, WHEN THE VEHICLE IN WHICH WE WERE TRAVELLING OVERTURNED ON FRIDAY JULY 2. I THANK ALL THOSE WHO CAME TO OUR ASSISTANCE AND WHO OFFERED PRAYERS AND WORDS OF CHEER.

MR. SPEAKER, I ESPECIALLY THANK THE MORANT BAY AND YALLAHS POLICE, FOR THEIR QUICK AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSE. I AM PROUD TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH SUCH OFFICERS.

I ALSO FEEL A SENSE OF GRATITUDE MR. SPEAKER, TO STAND AMONG MEN AND WOMEN OF STATURE IN THIS PARLIAMENT. THESE ARE LEADERS WHO HAVE COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO THE UPLIFTMENT OF OUR FELLOW JAMAICANS, AND WHO, THROUGH GREAT ADVERSITY FOR DAYS, WEEKS, MONTHS AND YEARS, HAVE COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO THE CONCEPT OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY, GOOD GOVERNANCE, AND

ULTIMATELY THE BEQUEATHING OF A LEGACY OF A STRONG JAMAICA TO THE SUCCEEDING GENERATIONS.

I AM GRATEFUL MR. SPEAKER THAT THOUSANDS OF MY CONSTITUENTS CONTINUE TO HOLD SECURE TRUST IN ME.

I DON'T TAKE IT FOR GRANTED.

I AM GRATEFUL, MR. SPEAKER, FOR THE ENORMOUS CONFIDENCE THAT THE MOST HONOURABLE PRIME MINISTER, P.J. PATTERSON HAS REPOSED IN ME, AND THEREFORE APPOINTED ME MINISTER OF STATE, WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE NATIONAL WORKS AGENCY.

MR. SPEAKER, I MUST EXPRESS THANKS, ALSO, TO MY CARING FAMILY, FOR ENDURING THE ODD HOURS OCCASIONED BY MY DUTIES AS A PARLIAMENTARIAN AND MINISTER OF STATE.

THANKS TO MY MINISTER FOR HIS SUPPORT. HE IS NOT JUST A NICE GUY, BUT A NICE GUY WITH INTEGRITY, AND FIXITY OF PURPOSE.

THE PERMANENT SECRETARY AND STAFF AT THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND WORKS HAVE PROVIDED SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE, TO THEM I SAY A HEART-FELT THANK YOU.

THANKS ALSO TO THE CEO AND STAFF OF THE NATIONAL WORKS AGENCY, FOR THEIR ADVICE AND SUPPORT, ESPECIALLY DURING DIFFICULT PERIODS.

TO THE MANY AGENCIES THAT FALL UNDER THIS MINISTRY, AND WITH WHICH I HAVE TO INTERACT FROM TIME TO TIME, I SAY A BIG THANK YOU. MR. SPEAKER, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE DEVELOPMENT BANK OF JAMAICA, MR. KINGSLEY THOMAS, DESERVES OUR HEART FELT THANKS AND GRATITUDE FOR PROVIDING THE DEFERRED FINANCING NECESSARY TO EXECUTE MANY OF OUR WORK PROGRAMMES.

THANKS TO YOU MR. SPEAKER FOR THE IMPARTIAL WAY YOU HAVE CARRIED OUT YOUR DUTIES, AND THE INTEGRITY AND CREDIBILITY YOU HAVE BROUGHT TO THE OFFICE.

FINALLY I SAY THANKS TO MY PERSONAL STAFF, FOR THEY TOO HAVE ENDURED THE ODD HOURS AND THE RIGOURS THAT COME WITH MY RESPONSIBILITIES.

SECTION II
CONSTITUENCY MATTERS

MR SPEAKER, I MUST EXPRESS THANKS TO MY CONSTITUENCY AND DIVISIONAL EXECUTIVES, TO MY AREA LEADERS AND TO MY P.D. WORKERS FOR THEIR CONTINUED HARD WORK AND SUPPORT; AND, I RE-AFFIRM THAT I WILL CONTINUE TO OFFER MYSELF TO SERVE THE PEOPLE OF EASTERN ST. THOMAS, IN FUTURE ELECTIONS.

MR SPEAKER, I AM PLEASED TO INFORM THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE THAT DUE TO THE POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES OF THIS GOVERNMENT, LED BY THE MOST HONOURABLE P.J. PATTERSON, MY CONSTITUENCY HAS MADE CONSIDERABLE STRIDES IN WATER SUPPLIES, ROAD REPAIRS AND REHABILITATION, RURAL ELECTRIFICATION, AGRICULTURE, EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND SPORTS.

MR SPEAKER THE POLICE STATION AT BATH HAS LONG PRESENTED A CHALLENGE TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVE US FROM THAT LOCATION AND THE COMMUNITY THAT USES IT.

I THEREFORE LOOK FORWARD TO, AND THANK THE GOVERNMENT AND MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY, FOR THE PROMISED NEW STATION, CONSTRUCTION OF WHICH IS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN IN THE THIRD QUARTER OF THIS YEAR.

MR. SPEAKER, THERE ARE HOWEVER, FOUR MAJOR CHALLENGES FACING THE CONSTITUENCY. THEREFORE IT IS MY INTENTION, THAT IN THIS TERM I WILL FOCUS ON THOSE FOUR MATTERS, NAMELY:

- ✚ LAND DISTRIBUTION
- ✚ SPORTS, CULTURE AND TOURISM.
- ✚ EDUCATION AND TRAINING
- ✚ A CENTRAL SEWERAGE SYSTEM FOR MORANT BAY.

MR. SPEAKER, REGARDING LAND DISTRIBUTION, WE INTEND TO FOCUS ON PROPERTIES SUCH AS:

- ✚ WHEELERSFIELD
- ✚ CHARLES TOWN
- ✚ EAST PROSPECT
- ✚ FORT
- ✚ LEITH HALL

- ✚ EAST POTOSI
- ✚ ENGLAND
- ✚ STANTON AND
- ✚ HECTOR'S RIVER.

MR. SPEAKER, IN TOURISM, THE THRUST WILL BE ON COMMUNITY TOURISM, THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE BATH FOUNTAIN, AND A MAJOR PROJECT SIMILAR TO THE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OF NEGRIL, INVOLVING THE HOLLAND BAY AREA, KNOWN AS THE EAST END PROJECT.

MR. SPEAKER , IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING, IT IS MY INTENTION TO FOCUS ON THE UPGRADING OF THE PAUL BOGLE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, TO A FULL-FLEDGED HIGH SCHOOL. IT IS ALSO MY INTENTION TO STRENGTHEN ADULT EDUCATION IN CONJUNCTION WITH JAMAL AND TO EXPAND COMPUTER, CONSTRUCTION, HOSPITALITY AND OTHER SKILLS, IN CONJUNCTION WITH HEART TRUST NTA.

MR. SPEAKER, I INTEND TO DEVELOP A PROGRAMME WHEREBY A STRONG SCHOOL WILL PARTNER AND HELP A WEAK SCHOOL TO IMPROVE ITS PERFORMANCE.

IN THIS REGARD, I WILL CONTINUE TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE PRINCIPALS AND BOARD CHAIRMEN TO EFFECT THIS PROGRAMME. IN THIS TERM, MR. SPEAKER, I WILL CONTINUE TO EXPAND AND STRENGTHEN THE REVOLVING TEACHER LOAN SCHEME, WHICH I HAVE ESTABLISHED IN SEVERAL SCHOOLS.

MR. SPEAKER, I INTEND TO ENSURE THAT ANYONE IN EASTERN ST. THOMAS, IRRESPECTIVE OF AGE OR FINANCIAL STATUS, IF HE OR SHE SO DESIRES, WILL BE ABLE TO ACQUIRE A SKILL.

MR. SPEAKER, IN SPORTS, I WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE ST. THOMAS F. A. AND THE CRICKET ASSOCIATION. MR. SPEAKER, OTHER SPORTS SUCH AS NETBALL, TABLE TENNIS, VOLLEYBALL, BASKET BALL, AS WELL AS THE TRADITIONAL TRACK & FIELD WILL BE FACILITATED THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SPORTS COUNCIL AND AT LEAST TWO MULTI-PURPOSE FIELDS AND CENTRES, THROUGH-OUT THE CONSTITUENCY.

FURTHER, MR. SPEAKER, IN RELATION TO CULTURE, I INTEND TO DEVELOP A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE JCDC, ESPECIALLY AS IT RELATES TO CULTURE IN SCHOOLS.

I WILL CONTINUE TO WORK WITH THE ST. THOMAS HOME COMING FOUNDATION TO STRENGTHEN THE KUMENTO FESTIVAL, ESPECIALLY AS IT RELATES TO SPONSORSHIP. DURING THIS TERM I WILL ALSO BE WORKING CLOSER WITH THE LEGACY GROUP FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURE IB ST, THOMAS, BUT BOWDEN PEN IN PARTICULAR.

MR. SPEAKER, I AM UPBEAT. MY COUNCILLORS ARE UPBEAT. MY DIVISIONAL CHAIRMEN ARE UPBEAT. MY CONSTITUENTS ARE UPBEAT. AND I AM CONFIDENT THAT WITH GOD'S GUIDANCE, WE WILL ACHIEVE OUR OBJECTIVES.

SECTION III**REBUTTAL**

MR. SPEAKER, I CRAVE THE LIBERTIES OF THIS HOUSE TO RESPOND TO SOME OF THE ARGUMENTS RAISED ON JUNE 16TH BY THE HONOURABLE MEMBER FROM EAST RURAL ST. ANDREW. MR. SPEAKER, IN JUDEO-CHRISTIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY, WE ARE ADVISED THAT THE WISEST PERSON THAT HAS EVER LIVED WROTE THE BOOK OF PROVERBS. IN PROVERBS CHAPTER 26 VERSES 4 AND 5, HE ADVISES TWO SEEMINGLY CONTRADICTIONARY COURSES OF ACTION. IN VERSE 4, HE ADMONISHES, AND ALLOW ME TO PARAPHRASE, **“NOT TO ANSWER TO CERTAIN FOLLIES OF THE CRITIC”**. HOWEVER, IN VERSE 5, HE SAYS, **ANSWER TO THE CRITIC, LEST THE CRITIC LEAVES THE DISCUSSION, “FEELING WISE IN HIS OWN CONCEIT”**.

I HAVE DECIDED MR. SPEAKER TO ACCEPT SOLOMON’S ADVICE. TO SOME OF THE CRITICISMS LEVELLED BY THE MEMBER, I WILL NOT RESPOND, BECAUSE THERE IS NO NEED TO DO SO. TO OTHERS, I MUST INDEED RESPOND, SO THAT THE MEMBER DOES NOT APPEAR AS SOLOMON PUTS IT, **“WISE IN HIS OWN**

CONCEIT", AND THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE, AND THE JAMAICAN PEOPLE BE MISLED.

MR SPEAKER, ONE COULD NOT HELP BUT NOTICE THE MANY AREAS VISITED, AND HIS ENERGETIC USAGE OF THE BROAD BRUSH APPROACH.

A PAINTER OF CONSUMMATE PATIENCE AND ACCOMPLISHMENT ONCE REMARKED THAT THE BROAD BRUSH WILL COVER A LARGER TRACT, BUT IT HAS THE TENDENCY TO COMPROMISE DETAIL AND ACCURACY.

MR. SPEAKER I OFTEN WONDER ABOUT THE LEVEL OF DUE DILIGENCE UNDERTAKEN BY THE MEMBER IN PREPARTION FOR HIS PRESENTATION. FURTHER MR. SPEAKER; I AM RELUCTANT AS ANY WISE MAN WOULD BE, TO OFFER UNSOLICITED ADVICE. BUT, AS A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE WITH KINDNESS OF HEART AND GENEROSITY OF SPIRIT, I SHALL OFFER SOME.

MR SPEAKER, THE MEMBER WISHED FOR THE UPGRADING OF FOOTPATHS AND BRIDLE TRACKS LINKING FOUR (4) COMMUNITIES IN EAST RURAL ST. ANDREW. I MUST COMMEND HIS ATTEMPTS AT REPRESENTATION.

MR. SPEAKER, THOSE AREAS CONSTITUTE SOME OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL VISTAS IN THE WORLD, HAVING MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN OF OVER 900M ABOVE SEA LEVEL, WITH UNSTABLE LIMESTONE AND SHALE SOIL CONDITIONS.

I AM ADVISED THAT MOTORABLE ROADS IN THESE AREAS WOULD BE AT CONSIDERABLE COST TO THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, AND INSTABILITY TO THE ECOLOGY.

THIS IS THE SAME MEMBER WHO LATER SAID THAT THE AREA IS PLAGUED BY ACUTE DEFORESTATION. IT WAS HE WHO FURTHER ADDUCED STATISTICS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT JAMAICA HAS THE SECOND HIGHEST ROAD DENSITY WORLDWIDE.

MR. SPEAKER, THE MEMBER ALSO SAID, AND I QUOTE, "FOR THESE REASONS, THOSE WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR AND WHO SUPERVISE, OR ARE OTHERWISE INVOLVED IN THE BUSINESS OF ROADS MUST ENSURE THAT THEY ARE SUITABLY LOCATED... IF WE DO THESE THINGS MR. SPEAKER, YOU SHOULD BE PLEASED AT THE OUTCOME; IF WE FAIL, WE WILL PAY A VERY DEAR PRICE."

IS HE CRITICISING THE GOVERNMENT ON ONE HAND, AND ASKING FOR NEW ROAD CONSTRUCTION ON THE OTHER HAND? IS THIS "SLEIGHT OF HAND" OR MISCHIEF?

WHY DOES HE NOT ACCEPT HIS OWN ADMONITION?

MR. SPEAKER, CONSTRUCTION OF NEW ROADS IS A MANAGED PROCESS FROM THE GROUND UP. IN THE TYPE OF SCENARIO PRESENTED BY THE MEMBER, A NUMBER OF PROCESSES HAVE TO BE SET IN MOTION.

ONE SUCH IS COMMUNITY MEETINGS TO ASCERTAIN WILLINGNESS TO COMMIT TO THE PROJECT.

IN THE END, IT SHOULD NOT BE AN IMPOSITION BY THE EXECUTING AGENCY. IF THIS WERE SO, IT COULD END UP BEING AN UNWELCOME INVASION OF PRISTINE LANDSCAPES BY ROARING BULLDOZERS.

HAS AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) BEEN UNDERTAKEN?

THIS IS AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREA.

THIRDLY, MR. SPEAKER, THIS GOVERNMENT HAS PROVIDED ALTERNATE FUNDING AVENUES FOR ROAD IMPROVEMENT.

FOR EXAMPLE, HAS THE MEMBER POINTED HIS COMMUNITIES IN THE DIRECTION OF JSIF?

IS THE SDC ACTIVE ON THE GROUND?

ARE THERE CDC'S WHICH CAN HELP TO ORGANIZE THE COMMUNITIES?

OR IS IT SIMPLY EASIER TO COME CRYING TO THE HONOURABLE MINISTER AND THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE?

MR. SPEAKER, THE HONOURABLE MEMBER RAISED TWENTY SEVEN (27) OTHER QUESTIONS, OF WHICH FOURTEEN (14) HAVE A DIRECT OR INDIRECT BEARING ON THE NATIONAL WORKS AGENCY.

I WILL SPARE THE HOUSE A REPETITION OF THE QUESTIONS.

THEY ARE ALL CONTAINED AT PAGES 15 AND 16 OF THE HONOURABLE MEMBER'S NOTES.

IT IS NEITHER THE TIME NOR THE PRACTICE OF THE SECTORAL DEBATES TO GIVE DETAILED RESPONSES.

BUT, MR SPEAKER, PLEASE ALLOW ME TO ALLAY THE FEARS OF THE MEMBER ON SOME OF THE CONCERNS RAISED, ESPECIALLY THOSE PERTAINING TO THE BULL PARK AND CHALKY RIVER AREAS.

MR SPEAKER, ON SUNDAY, JUNE 27TH, THE MOST HONOURABLE PRIME MINISTER IN HIS NATIONAL BROADCAST OUTLINED THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION REGARDING THE PRESENT HURRICANE SEASON, AND THE DRAINAGE AND FLOOD MITIGATION PROCEDURES TO BE UNDERTAKEN, AND I QUOTE:

“AS IS CUSTOMARY, THE GOVERNMENT IS PLANNING FOR THE POTENTIAL PROBLEMS THAT COME WITH THE HURRICANE SEASON. WE ARE ALL TOO AWARE OF THE PERENNIAL PROBLEM OF FLOODING, WHICH CAUSES CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE TO THE MAIN ROAD NETWORK ISLAND WIDE, AS WELL AS DAMAGE TO RETAINING WALLS, BRIDGES, SEA DEFENCE SYSTEMS, RIVER TRAINING WORKS, GULLIES AND MAJOR DRAINAGE SYSTEMS. WITH THIS IN MIND, CABINET HAS APPROVED A BUDGET OF APPROXIMATELY 134 MILLION DOLLARS TO UNDERTAKE IMMEDIATE COMPREHENSIVE DRAINAGE WORKS. THIS WILL BE DONE IN CAREFULLY SELECTED FLOOD PRONE AREAS, AS A PREVENTATIVE MEASURE, AND TO MITIGATE THE SERIOUS EFFECTS OF FLOODING, OR, GOD FORBID, A HURRICANE OR VIOLENT STORM THIS YEAR....

...WORK SHOULD BEGIN SHORTLY IN THE FLOOD PRONE AREA OF TEN MILES, BULL BAY...”

MR. SPEAKER, THERE IS THEREFORE EVERY ASSURANCE THAT ATTENTION IS BEING PAID TO THE MATTERS, WHICH THE MEMBER RAISED AND WHILE I AM UNABLE TO GIVE THE PRECISE START UP DATE TODAY, I CAN TELL THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE THAT WITHIN TWO WEEKS, THE WORK AT TEN MILES SHOULD BEGIN.

MR. SPEAKER, THE MEMBER READ INTO THE RECORDS OF THIS HOUSE, STATISTICS REPORTING THE CONDITION SURVEY FINDINGS OF THE MAIN ROAD NETWORK. HE SAID:

"A ROAD CONDITION SURVEY CONDUCTED ON THE MAIN ROAD NETWORK BY THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND WORKS HAS INDICATED THAT JUST ABOUT 15% OF THE ENTIRE NETWORK IS REGARDED AS BEING IN **GOOD** CONDITION. ROUGHLY **40%** IS CONSIDERED TO BE IN A FAIRLY GOOD CONDITION, WHILE MORE THAN **45%** OF THE NETWORK IS DETERMINED TO BE IN A **POOR** CONDITION."

MR. SPEAKER, HE IS WRONG ON THIS SCORE. I DON'T KNOW WHERE THE MEMBER OBTAINED HIS FIGURES. I KNOW HE ONCE SERVED AS CHIEF TECHNICAL DIRECTOR OF THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT AND SO, SHOULD BE *AU FAIT* WITH THE STATISTICS.

HOWEVER, THE FACTS ARE: OUR ROAD CONDITION SURVEY HAS INDICATED THAT THERE HAS BEEN MARKED IMPROVEMENT IN THE MAIN ROAD NETWORK OVER THE PAST FIVE (5) YEARS.

IN 1998, ONLY THIRTEEN PERCENT (13%) OF OUR MAIN ROADS WAS IN GOOD CONDITION. IN 2003, THERE WAS A NEAR THREE TIMES IMPROVEMENT TO 36%.

CONVERSELY, 48% OF OUR MAIN ROADS WERE IN BAD CONDITION IN 1998. BY 2003, THE CONDITION HAD IMPROVED TO 33%.

MR. SPEAKER, THE EXPERIENCE OF THE MOTORING PUBLIC ON OUR MAIN ROADS, WHETHER IT IS TRAVELLING THE SOUTH COAST, THE NORTH COAST, THE EAST COAST, THE WEST COAST OR NO COAST AT ALL, IS ONE OF MARKED IMPROVEMENT.

MR. SPEAKER, WE HAVE A PROGRAMME INVOLVING ALMOST A DOZEN PATCHER UNITS, DEPLOYED ALL OVER JAMAICA, PATCHING POT HOLES HERE, PATCHING POT HOLES THERE IN A SYSTEMATIC PROGRAMME OF POT HOLE REDUCTION.

YOU SEE MR. SPEAKER, OURS IS A PROCESS, A CONSTANT ARRESTING OF POT HOLES. AND WHETHER IT IS 2003, 2004, 2005, OR WHENEVER, AS SOON AS A POT HOLE APPEARS, WE ARE GOING TO PATCH IT.

LET ME THEREFORE PAY TRIBUTE TO THE HARD WORKING MEN AND WOMEN OF THE PATCHING PROGRAMME...THE POTHOLE CREW, TO THE DRIVERS, THE SPRAY PATCHER OPERATORS, THEIR SUPERVISORS, PARISH OFFICERS, AND STAFFERS AT THE NATIONAL WORKS AGENCY.

YOURS IS A JOB BEING WELL DONE, AND WE COMMEND YOU.

MR. SPEAKER, THE MEMBER ALSO RAISED SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT **THE NORTHERN COASTAL HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME, THE BRIDGES PROGRAMME, AND THE QUESTION OF A LACK OF TECHNICAL SKILLS WITHIN THE NATIONAL WORKS AGENCY**, THAT I SHALL DEAL WITH. HE ALSO RAISED MINISTRY PAPER 52 / 03.

MR. SPEAKER, I EXPECT THAT THE MINISTRY PAPER WILL BE DEALT WITH BY THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE. BUT, I WILL RESPOND LATER TO THE ISSUE OF THE STAFFING, AND OTHER NWA RELATED MATTERS.

MR. SPEAKER, ALLOW ME TO TURN TO THE SUBSTANTIVE MATTER OF MY PRESENTATION.

SECTION IV

SCOPE OF PRESENTATION

MR. SPEAKER, IT IS MY INTENTION TO FOCUS ON THE NATIONAL WORKS AGENCY AND THE PROGRAMME FOR HOUSING SCHEMES, PAROCHIAL AND FARM ROADS.

NATIONAL WORKS AGENCY

I NOW TURN TO THE SUBSTANTIVE MATTER OF THE N. W. A.

OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS, THE NATIONAL WORKS AGENCY HAS RIGOROUSLY PURSUED A MISSION TO CREATE **A CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE**. THE EXCELLENCE OF WHICH I SPEAK, SEEKS

TO:

- ✚ **UNDERTAKE THE BEST OF WHAT WE CAN DO;**
- ✚ **SET THE STANDARDS FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW;**
- ✚ **ALWAYS BE INNOVATIVE, FINDING A BETTER WAY TO DO THINGS; AND**
- ✚ **BE CONTINUOUSLY RESEARCHING AND PLANNING WORK ACTIVITIES BASED ON KNOWLEDGE GLEANED FROM RESEARCH AND NOT BE TRAPPED IN CRISIS WORK.**

MR. SPEAKER, WITHOUT VISION THE PEOPLE WILL PERISH, AND THIS IS WHY THE NATIONAL WORKS AGENCY WAS BORN.

ACCOMPANYING THIS BIRTH, MR. SPEAKER, IS A SET OF CORE VALUES WHICH SPEAKS TO:

1. PARTNERSHIP
2. INTEGRITY
3. PEOPLE
4. IMPARTIALITY
5. AND A CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE

A CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE MR SPEAKER THAT EMBODIES:

- 1. A CONSISTENTLY GOOD PERFORMANCE WHICH LEADS TO PROFITABILITY**
- 2. DELIVERY OF PROJECTS ON TIME AND ON BUDGET**
- 3. THE ESSENCE OF VALUE FOR MONEY**
- 4. CRITICAL FOCUS ON COMMUNICATION & CUSTOMER SERVICES.**
- 5. EXCELLENCE IN PEOPLE;**
- 6. EXCELLENCE IN PROJECTS;**
- 7. EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION; AND**
- 8. EXCELLENCE IN RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY OPERATIONS.**

MR. SPEAKER, ALL THIS IS IN KEEPING WITH ITS ORIGINAL MANDATE TO DEVELOP SAFE, RELIABLE AND QUALITY ROADS. IF THE TRUTH BE TOLD, EVERY MEMBER OF THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE CAN ATTEST TO THE PRESENCE AND WORK OF THE NWA IN HIS OR HER CONSTITUENCY. IN FACT, NEVER BEFORE IN THE HISTORY OF OUR COUNTRY, HAVE WE MADE SUCH AN ASSAULT TO ARREST THE BAD ROAD CONDITIONS THAT HAD THREATENED TO STIFLE THE FREE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE, GOODS AND SERVICES. OUR TREMENDOUS EFFORT IS UNDERPINNED BY OUR GUIDING PHILOSOPHY THAT: **'THE ROAD TO DEVELOPMENT IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF ROADS'**. THIS IS THE *RAISON D' ÊTRE* OF THE N. W. A.

MR. SPEAKER, IN EVERY CONSTITUENCY, FROM MORANT POINT TO NEGRIL, FROM GALINA POINT TO ROCKY POINT, THE NWA IS CONSTANTLY ENGAGED IN SOME SMALL OR GREAT WAY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SAFE, RELIABLE AND QUALITY ROADS.

HOWEVER, MR SPEAKER, I AM NOT UNMINDFUL OF THE FACT, THAT IN ALMOST ALL THESE CONSTITUENCIES THERE ARE ROADS IN VARYING STAGES OF COMPLETION, AND THAT SERIOUS CHALLENGES ARE PRESENTED TO THE MOTORISTS,

PEDESTRIANS AND POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVES ALIKE. ON OCCASIONS, OUR OFFICERS HAVE HAD TO INSTITUTE MEASURES TO REDUCE DUST NUISANCE.

MR. SPEAKER, RIGHT NOW DISCUSSIONS ARE CONTINUING IN THE MINISTRY, AS WELL AS INTER-MINISTERIALLY, WITH A VIEW TOWARDS FINDING A WAY TO COMPLETE THE PROGRAMME OF WORKS, ESPECIALLY THOSE ROADS THAT ARE MORE THAN 80% COMPLETE; AND ALSO TO FIND A WAY TO PAY SUMS OWED TO CONTRACTORS. MR. SPEAKER, LAST THURSDAY, MY MINISTER AND I, ALONG WITH THE PERMANENT SECRETARY, PRINCIPAL FINANCIAL OFFICER, THE CEO OF THE NWA AND HIS OFFICERS, MET ON THE MATTER WITH THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY AND HER OFFICERS, AND THE RESULTS OF THAT MEETING ARE VERY ENCOURAGING.

ROAD CONDITION SURVEY

MR. SPEAKER, WHEN WE SURVEYED THE MAIN ROADS A FEW YEARS AGO THE RESULTS DID NOT INSPIRE CONFIDENCE IN OUR ABILITY TO MOVE PEOPLE GOODS AND SERVICES FREELY. **13% OR 625.69 KM WERE IN GOOD CONDITION, 39 %, 1,977.07KM**

WERE IN FAIR CONDITION AND 48%, OR 2,310.24KM WERE IN POOR CONDITION.

IN FACT, KOCKS CONSULT, UNDERTOOK A STUDY, WHICH REVEALED THAT IT WAS COSTING THE ECONOMY **US\$1.3 BILLION** PER YEAR TO DRIVE ON BAD ROADS.

IN 5 YEARS, MR. SPEAKER, WE WERE ABLE TO REVERSE THIS TREND, AND AS I HAVE ALREADY STATED, IN **2003**, WE NOW HAVE **36% OR 1,735KM** OF ROAD ON GOOD CONDITION, **31% OR 1,514KM** IN FAIR CONDITION, AND ONLY **33% OR 1,565KM** IN UNACCEPTABLE CONDITION.

WE DID THINGS METHODICALLY, COMPREHENSIVELY AND PURPOSEFULLY.

WE REHABILITATED JUST UNDER A THOUSAND KILOMETERS OF MAIN ROADS UNDER OUR FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME, **THE NATIONAL ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME (NARIP).**

WE DEVELOPED A ROUTINE MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME TO COMPLEMENT OUR EFFORTS, AS WELL AS A FLOOD DAMAGE REHABILITATION PROGRAMME ALONGSIDE PROJECTS SUCH AS THE NORTHERN COASTAL HIGHWAY, THE KUWAIT, THE SAUDI, AND THE URBAN RURAL TOWNSHIP REHABILITATION AND

MAINTENANCE PROGRAMMES, AMONG OTHERS. MR. SPEAKER, LET ME ADMIT THAT WE ARE NOT PERFECT AND THINGS HAVE NOT GONE LIKE CLOCKWORK. YES, THERE ARE WEAKNESSES AND WE HAVE IDENTIFIED THEM. BUT, WE HAVE STRENGTHS AND, BETTER YET, A COMMITMENT TO CONTINUOUSLY STRIVE FOR THE EXCELLENCE OF WHICH I SPOKE EARLIER. WE WILL TURN OUR WEAKNESSES INTO STRENGTHS.

MR. SPEAKER, THERE HAD TO BE A PARTICULAR CONCEPT UNDERPINNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL WORKS AGENCY.

FIRSTLY, THAT CONCEPT INVOLVED THE CADRE OF HIGHLY TRAINED AND EQUALLY MOTIVATED PERSONS, WHO WOULD BE ABLE TO INITIATE AND SWIFTLY EXECUTE PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS.

SECONDLY, THE AGENCY HAD TO BE IN A POSITION TO RECEIVE GRANTS FROM THE BUDGET, BUT ALSO TO GENERATE ITS OWN FUNDS. IN SHORT MR. SPEAKER, AN EXECUTIVE AGENCY HAD TO BE CREATED IN ORDER TO MOVE SPEEDILY, YET JUDICIOUSLY FROM WHERE WE WERE TO WHERE WE WANT TO BE.

MR. SPEAKER, ALONG WITH THIS CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK, THERE HAD TO BE A MATCHING ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK. THIS MATCHING FRAMEWORK MR. SPEAKER, ENSURES THAT THE GREATER PART OF PROJECT FUNDS GOES TO THE PROJECT ITSELF, RATHER THAN TO SALARIES AND PERQUISITES, WHEN NO PROJECT IS BEING EXECUTED. THE ORGANIZATION IS THEREFORE STAFFED TO REFLECT THAT CONCEPT. IT IS A BASIC MISUNDERSTANDING OF THIS CONCEPT, WHICH GAVE THE MEMBER FOR EAST RURAL ST. ANDREW SOME CONCERNS, WHEN HE RAISED THE MATTER OF SUPERVISORS PURPORTEDLY BEING PAID BY CONTRACTORS.

LET ME STATE CATEGORICALLY, MR. SPEAKER, THAT THERE IS NO TRUTH TO THIS ALLEGATION. THE TRUTH IS, THAT WE HAVE INSTEAD THE MOST EFFICIENT USAGE OF LABOUR AND SKILLS. DURING THE PROJECT YEAR AT ANY GIVEN TIME, THERE IS LIKELY TO BE A DORMANCY OF OPERATIONS, AND AT SUCH TIMES, THE PROJECT AND TECHNICAL STAFF IS REDUCED TO EFFECT SAVINGS TO THE PUBLIC PURSE. THESE ARE HIGHLY TRAINED PROFESSIONALS, WHO OUTSOURCE THEIR SKILLS AND PROFESSION, AND SO, WHEN PROJECTS ARE REVIVED, THEY

ARE AGAIN EMPLOYED BY THE AGENCY. MR. SPEAKER, THIS IS A WIN-WIN SITUATION, AS I THINK THE MEMBER WILL AGREE.

**COLLABORATION WITH MINISTRIES, DEPARTMENTS, AGENCIES
& PRIVATE SECTOR**

MR. SPEAKER, I NOW TURN TO THE MATTER OF COLLABORATION WITH MINISTRIES AND DEPARTMENTS. IN ORDER TO FULFIL ITS MANDATE, THE NWA MUST, OF NECESSITY, COLLABORATE WITH MINISTRIES, AGENCIES AND DEPARTMENTS. FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE URBAN/RURAL TOWNSHIP PROGRAMME, WE COLLABORATED WITH THE MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, THE KSAC AND PARISH COUNCILS. IN TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT, WE COLLABORATED WITH CITIZENS GROUPS, SERVICE CLUBS, THE POLICE, AND I COULD GO ON AND ON.

WE ARE EAGER, MR. SPEAKER, TO ENSURE THAT ALL IDEAS CONTEND, BECAUSE WHILE WE MAY HAVE A MONOPOLY ON MAINTENANCE OF MAIN ROADS, WE DO NOT HAVE A MONOPOLY ON IDEAS AND USEFUL SUGGESTIONS. WE WELCOME THEM WITH OPEN ARMS.

THEREFORE, MR SPEAKER, THE N. W. A. HAS NEVER ADOPTED AN ISOLATIONIST APPROACH *VIS-À-VIS* OTHER EXECUTING

AGENCIES. INDEED, MR. SPEAKER, WE HAVE FROM THE BEGINNING ENSURED THAT ALL OUR ASSOCIATES BENEFITED FROM THE BEST PRACTICES OF THE CONSUMER RELATIONS INDUSTRY.

MAJOR PROGRAMMES

MR. SPEAKER, THE N. W. A. MANAGES SIMULTANEOUSLY SEVERAL MAJOR PROGRAMMES VIZ:

1. THE NORTHERN COASTAL HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME (NCHIP) - SEGMENTS I, II & III;
 2. THE NATIONAL ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME (NARIP);
 3. THE IADB/ CDB/ GOJ FLOOD DAMAGE REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES;
 4. THE URBAN/RURAL TOWNSHIP REHABILITATION & MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME;
 5. THE ROUTINE MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME;
 6. THE MAJOR PATCHING PROGRAMME;
 7. THE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME;
 8. THE BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION AND REPAIR PROGRAMME;
- AND

9. THE KUWAIT AND OPEC FUND ASSISTED ROAD
REHABILITATION PROGRAMME.

MR. SPEAKER, I WILL NOW SPEAK TO THE NORTHERN COASTAL
HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME; SEGMENTS I, II, AND III,
AND THEREAFTER TABLE THE OTHERS.

SEGMENT 1

THE APPROXIMATELY 71KM STRETCH BETWEEN NEGRIL AND
MONTEGO BAY IS NOW COMPLETE AND THE GREAT
INCONVENIENCE THAT WAS CAUSED BY THE WORKS IS NOW A
THING OF THE PAST. THE ONLY COMPLAINT, AT THIS TIME, IS
THE SPEED WITH WHICH ONE NOW GETS FROM MONTEGO BAY
TO NEGRIL AND THE APPROACHES TO THE BRIDGES, WHICH HAD
STARTED TO SETTLE. HOWEVER, FROM THE TECHNICAL
REPORTS, NOTHING IS WRONG WITH THE STRUCTURE OF THE
NEW BRIDGES THEMSELVES.

I MUST REPORT TO THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE THAT THE
CONSULTANT, STANLEY CONSULTANTS INC. HAS AGREED TO
PAY FOR THE REMEDIAL WORK TO THE APPROACHES. I HAVE

HERE WITH ME A COPY OF A LETTER FROM STANLEY CONSULTANTS INC. THAT ACCEPTS LIABILITY AND INSTRUCTS THEIR PROJECT MANAGER TO PROCEED IMMEDIATELY WITH CORRECTIVE WORKS— AT NO ADDITIONAL COST TO THE PUBLIC PURSE. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, THIS COMMITMENT ON THEIR PART IS RARE AND NOTE WORTHY.

MR. SPEAKER, SOME TIME AGO THE BRIDGE AT GREEN ISLAND FAILED BECAUSE OF STRUCTURAL DEFICIENCIES. LET ME CATEGORICALLY INFORM THIS HOUSE, THAT THIS BRIDGE WAS NOT ONE OF THE BRIDGES BUILT OR REPAIRED UNDER SEGMENT 1 OF THE NORTHERN COASTAL HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT. HOWEVER, MR. SPEAKER, THIS BRIDGE WILL BE REPLACED UNDER THE R. A. MURRAY BRIDGE PROGRAMME. THE DESIGN HAS ALREADY BEEN COMPLETED, THE BRIDGE PARTS ARE ALREADY HERE AND SHORTLY, THE CONTRACT WILL BE TENDERED.

SEGMENT 11

THIS 97 KM STRETCH FROM MONTEGO BAY TO OCHO RIOS IS WELL UNDERWAY. WE HAVE ADVANCED THE LAND ACQUISITION AND UTILITY RELOCATION TO 90%, WHILE FULLY RESETTLING THE PROJECT AFFECTED PERSONS.

WE HAVE RE-SCOPED THE WORKS TO CREATE THE FALMOUTH, DUNCANS, COOPERS PEN AND RIO BUENO BYPASSES. THIS HAS REDUCED THE LAND ACQUISITION COSTS AND TRAFFIC CONGESTION IN THE RESORT AREAS, AS WELL AS AVOIDING COSTLY ROCK EXCAVATION WHILE REDUCING TRAVEL TIME BETWEEN DESTINATIONS.

ROAD SAFETY HAS BEEN ENHANCED. THE RESERVATION HAS BEEN EXPANDED TO FACILITATE FUTURE LANE EXPANSION. THE SHOULDERS ARE BEING PAVED TO REDUCE MAINTENANCE COSTS AND ENHANCE THE SAFETY OF PEDESTRIANS AND NON-MOTORIZED EQUIPMENT OPERATORS.

WE ARE CONSTRUCTING UNDERPASSES AT SELECTED LOCATIONS ALONG WITH A MAJOR INTERCHANGE AT

WAKEFIELD MAIN ROAD IN TRELAWNY, TO FACILITATE SAFE AND EASY ENTRANCE AND EXIT TO AND FROM THE HIGHWAY. THE UNDERPASSES WILL ALLOW GOLF CARTS, PEDESTRIANS AND SMALL TRUCKS TO MOVE SAFELY FROM THE ADJOINING PROPERTIES.

THE FULL CONSTRUCTION COSTS OF SEVERAL OF THESE FACILITIES ARE BEING BORNE BY OWNERS OF PROPERTIES WHERE APPLICABLE.

APPROXIMATELY 50KM OF NWC PIPE LINE IS BEING RELOCATED, TO ENSURE THAT FUTURE REPAIRS, EXTENSION OR EXCAVATION, DO NOT AFFECT THE ROADWAY.

WE HAVE INITIATED AN AUDIT OF THE COSTS FOR UTILITY RELOCATION I.E. JPSCO AND C&WJ. OUR FINDINGS INDICATE THAT THERE IS LIKELY TO BE A REDUCTION OF THE COST, WHICH COULD RESULT IN SAVINGS ON THE PROJECT.

COMPLETION SCHEDULE

MR. SPEAKER, DUE IN SMALL MEASURE TO ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS, AND LARGELY TO TARDINESS IN THE RELOCATION OF THE UTILITIES, THE COMPLETION SCHEDULE HAS HAD TO BE

REVISED FROM THE ORIGINAL 30-MONTH CONTRACT DURATION ENDING JUNE 2004, TO JUNE 2005. EVEN SO, MR SPEAKER, A FURTHER EXTENSION TO COMPLETE THE WORKS MAY BE REQUIRED.

MR. SPEAKER, THE ESTIMATED COST OF THE PROJECT NOW STANDS AT US\$128.9M.

SEGMENT 111

THIS APPROXIMATELY 120 KM STRETCH OF ROADWAY FROM OCHO RIOS IN ST. ANN TO FAIR PROSPECT IN PORTLAND, INVOLVES RECONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION WHERE NECESSARY. WE SEEK TO PRESERVE THE INTEGRITY OF THE PRISTINE BEAUTY OF THE AREA. WE WILL BE STAYING ON THE EXISTING ALIGNMENT FOR AS MUCH AS IT IS HUMANLY POSSIBLE.

THE PROJECT IS BEING JOINTLY FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE GOJ. THE EUROPEAN UNION HAS GIVEN STRICT GUIDELINES FOR THE GRANT FUNDS. THESE INCLUDE CLEAR AND UNRESTRICTED ACCESS TO THE CONTRACTOR, THE ACQUISITION OF ALL NECESSARY LANDS, RESETTLEMENT OF

THE PROJECT AFFECTED PERSONS AND THE RELOCATION OF THE UTILITIES PRIOR TO JANUARY 1, 2004.

AS AT MARCH 2004, 99% OF THE LAND HAS BEEN ACQUIRED, 96% OF THE UTILITIES HAVE BEEN RELOCATED, 96% OF THE RESETTLEMENT OF AFFECTED PERSONS HAS BEEN COMPLETED, 9 COMMUNITY MEETINGS WERE HELD AND THE NECESSARY ENVIRONMENTAL PERMIT GRANTED BY NEPA, PAVING THE WAY FOR THE PROJECT TO BEGIN.

MR. SPEAKER, WE HAVE ESTABLISHED THE FOLLOWING

TARGETS:

- ✚ AUGUST 2004 - LAUNCH OF TENDER
- ✚ MAY 2005 - SIGNING OF CONTRACT
- ✚ OCTOBER 2005 - COMMENCEMENT OF WORKS
- ✚ DURATION OF CONTRACT - 35 MONTHS.

MR. SPEAKER, I WILL NOW LAY ON THE TABLE OF THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE NWA OVER THE LAST 2 YEARS. THESE RELATE TO THE NATIONAL ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME (NARIP), THE CDB AND IADB FLOOD DAMAGE PROGRAMMES, URBAN/RURAL TOWNSHIP REHABILITATION & MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME, ETC.

SECTION V**PROJECTS**

MR. SPEAKER, AT PRESENT THE NWA IS EXECUTING NO FEWER THAN 200 PROJECTS ISLAND-WIDE. IN 2003/2004, THAT NUMBER WAS CLOSER TO 300. BUT, IN THE INTEREST OF A LEANER AND MORE RESPONSIVE AGENCY AMONG OTHER REASONS, WE HAVE AGGREGATED SOME, AND TERMINATED OTHERS.

MR. SPEAKER, I THINK THAT IT IS FAIR TO SAY THAT DURING THE LAST FINANCIAL YEAR, THERE WAS AT LEAST ONE NWA PROJECT IN EACH OF THE 60 CONSTITUENCIES OF THE MEMBERS OF THIS HOUSE.

MR. SPEAKER, TAKE FOR EXAMPLE THE ROUTINE MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME. THIS CONSTITUTES FIFTY FIVE (55) PACKAGES, COVERING ALL THE RURAL CONSTITUENCIES. EAST RURAL ST. ANDREW, WEST RURAL ST. ANDREW, WESTERN ST. THOMAS EASTERN ST. THOMAS, WESTERN PORTLAND, EASTERN PORTLAND, WESTERN ST. MARY, SOUTH EAST ST. MARY, CENTRAL ST. MARY, AND I COULD GO ON AND ON.

ALL CONSTITUENCIES, MR. SPEAKER, HAVE BENEFITTED FROM THESE PACKAGES IN THE PAST, AND WHILE WE ARE AWARE OF THE MANY PROBLEMS FROM:

✚ UNACCEPTABLE WORK; AND

✚ LATE PAYMENT OF CONTRACTORS TO

✚ NON-PAYMENT OF WORKERS BY CONTRACTORS,

EVEN WHEN THEY HAVE BEEN PAID BY THE NATIONAL WORKS AGENCY, IT IS STILL OUR VIEW, MR. SPEAKER, THAT THE CONCEPT OF DEVELOPING A MAINTENANCE CULTURE IS A GOOD ONE.

THE NWA HAS THEREFORE DONE A REVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME, INCLUSIVE OF A SURVEY OF CONTRACTORS PERFORMANCE AND OUR PAYMENT SCHEDULES. I CAN ASSURE THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE, MR. SPEAKER, THAT THE NEXT SET OF CONTRACTS WILL BE BETTER MANAGED AND EXECUTED BECAUSE OUR SURVEY IDENTIFIED CONTRACTORS WHO HAVE PERFORMED POORLY. THESE CONTRACTORS, MR. SPEAKER, HAVE NOT BEEN CONSIDERED THIS TIME AROUND IN THE CONTRACTS THAT HAVE BEEN AWARDED. MEMBERS OF THIS HOUSE WILL THEREFORE BE PLEASED TO KNOW THAT WORK

WILL BEGIN SHORTLY IN THEIR CONSTITUENCIES AND THEY WILL BE DULY ADVISED.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

MR. SPEAKER, ANOTHER WORTHWHILE PROJECT IS THAT OF TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT.

WE HAVE REMARKED PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS, IMPROVED SIGNAGE, ESTABLISHED SCHOOL ZONES AND DRIVER FEEDBACK SIGNS AT SEVERAL LOCATIONS ACROSS THE ISLAND.

MR. SPEAKER WE HAVE ALSO ESTABLISHED ONE-WAY SYSTEMS TO ENHANCE THE FLOW OF TRAFFIC AND, MORE RECENTLY, A TIDAL FLOW SYSTEM IN SPANISH TOWN. MR. SPEAKER, I COMMEND THE EFFORTS OF THE TRAFFIC POLICE IN SPANISH TOWN, HEADED BY INSPECTOR PATRICK MURDOCK, FOR THEIR CONTINUED VIGILANCE IN ENSURING THAT THE SYSTEM WORKS. DURING THE MORNING AND AFTERNOON PEAK HOURS, MR. SPEAKER MOTORISTS CAN NOW TRAVERS THE SPANISH TOWN BYPASS IN 10 MINUTES AS AGAINST THE 30-45 MINUTES TORTURE THAT OBTAINED PRIOR TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW SYSTEM.

I ACKNOWLEDGE AND COMMEND THE COOPERATION OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES HEADED BY MAYOR NOTICE AND THE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, SHARON HAY-WEBSTER AND OLIVIA 'BABSY' GRANGE, AS WELL AS THE SPANISH TOWN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, THE JUTC, THE TAXI DRIVERS ASSOCIATION, AND OF COURSE THE HARD WORKING OFFICERS AT THE NWA, SUCH AS MESSERS PATRICK ROSE, STEPHEN SHAW, MICHAEL SANDERSON AND VANDO PALMER.

MR. SPEAKER, THEY HAVE ALL PLAYED A VITAL ROLE IN ENSURING THE CONTINUED OPERATION OF THE TIDAL FLOW SYSTEM IN SPANISH TOWN, AND WE AT THE MINISTRY THANK THE MOTORING PUBLIC FOR THEIR CO-OPERATION AND PATIENCE.

ROAD MAINTENANCE FUND

MR. SPEAKER, ALL THE PROJECTS UNDER MAINTENANCE AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT HAVE BEEN UNDERTAKEN BY THE NWA AND CONTRACTORS ON BEHALF OF THE ROAD MAINTENANCE FUND. LET ME PAUSE, MR. SPEAKER, TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE TREMENDOUS WORK BEING DONE BY THE CEO AND A SPECIAL

AND DEDICATED TEAM, DUBBED "***THE WEEK-END WARRIORS***", FROM THE NWA, AND THE HARD WORKING, ENERGETIC AND HANDS-ON CHAIRMAN OF THE FUND, MR. PRAKASH VASWANI.

MR. SPEAKER, I ALSO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE FUND MR. CLEMENT WATSON, AND TO THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT THAT HAS MET REGULARLY TO GIVE THE CHAIRMAN THE REQUISITE SUPPORT. MR. SPEAKER, THE FUND AND THE NWA HAVE WIDENED AND IMPROVED SEVERAL INTERSECTIONS IN KINGSTON, THEREBY SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVING SIGNIFICANTLY THE FLOW OF TRAFFIC ALONG THOSE CORRIDORS.

MR. SPEAKER, WE HAVE IMPROVED THE DUNROBIN AND CONSTANT SPRING ROAD AND THE SHORTWOOD AND CONSTANT SPRING ROAD INTERSECTIONS. BUT WE ARE NOT STOPPING THERE, MR. SPEAKER, IMPROVEMENT WORKS ARE STILL ONGOING ALONG OLD HOPE ROAD, AND FROM RUTHVEN ROAD TO HOLBORN ROAD ALONG THE HALF WAY TREE ROAD, TO NAME A FEW.

SECTION VI**THE BRIDGE PROGRAMME****MABEY AND JOHNSON PRIORITY BRIDGE AND R .A. MURRAY
PROGRAMMES**

MR. SPEAKER, ON AUGUST 23, 2002, WE SIGNED A CONTRACT, UNDER THE MABEY AND JOHNSON PRIORITY BRIDGE PROGRAMME, VALUED AT **22,800 POUNDS STERLING**. THE CONTRACT CALLED FOR THE DESIGN, FABRICATION AND SUPPLY OF 40 COMPACT STEEL BRIDGES, ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES, OVER A PERIOD OF TWO YEARS, EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 10, 2002.

MR. SPEAKER, THE R.A. MURRAY BRIDGE PROGRAMME, WHICH BEGAN IN OCTOBER 1999, PROVIDES FOR THE DESIGN, FABRICATION AND DELIVERY OF 40 BRIDGES AT THE COST OF TWENTY-THREE MILLION CANADIAN DOLLARS.

ONCE AGAIN, MR. SPEAKER, THE DISTRIBUTION IS AS WIDE AS ONE COULD HAVE WISHED.

LET ME GIVE INSTANCES:

- ✚ ST. ANDREW - MANOR PARK MARKET, BENSON FORD;
- ✚ ST. MARY - FONTABELLE, FORT GEORGE;
- ✚ ST. CATHERINE - BANBURY, WORTHY PARK;
- ✚ WESTMORELAND - STYXX RIVER, AND SO ON.

MR. SPEAKER, I HAVE HERE WITH ME A COPY OF A REPORT OUTLINING THE SCHEDULE OF THE BRIDGE PROGRAMMES AND IN DUE COURSE, MEMBERS OF THIS HOUSE AND THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES, WILL BE INFORMED OF THE DETAILS OF THE PROGRAMME.

MR. SPEAKER, THIS GOVERNMENT IS DETERMINED TO ENSURE THAT OUR BRIDGES ARE AS MODERN AND STRUCTURALLY SAFE IN DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION.

YALLAHS BRIDGE

MR. SPEAKER, I AM PLEASED TO REPEAT THE ANNOUNCEMENT MADE TO THE HOUSE BY MY SENIOR MINISTER ON JUNE 15TH, THAT CABINET HAS GIVEN ITS APPROVAL FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A BRIDGE TO SPAN THE YALLAHS RIVER AT POOR MAN'S CORNER IN ST. THOMAS.

MR. SPEAKER, DESIGN WORKS FOR THIS BRIDGE WILL BEGIN IMMEDIATELY AND WILL LAST FOR SIX MONTHS. THIS WILL BE FOLLOWED BY THE TENDER AND CONSTRUCTION PERIOD WHICH WILL LAST FOR AN ADDITIONAL 24 MONTHS. IN OTHER WORDS, MR. SPEAKER, AFTER DECEMBER 2006, MOTORISTS GOING INTO ST. THOMAS AND EASTERN PORTLAND SHOULD NO LONGER HAVE TO TRAVERSE THE YALLAHS RIVER BED, BUT SHOULD HAVE A MODERN BRIDGE ON WHICH TO TRAVEL.

MR. SPEAKER, THE NWA HAS ALREADY UNDERTAKEN THE FIRST TECHNICAL REVIEW MEETING WITH MABEY AND JOHNSON, TO PRODUCE A DRAFT TECHNICAL GUIDELINE. THIS INCLUDES THE BRIDGE LENGTHS, THE BRIDGE LOADING, THE PREFERRED SPANSE AND THE LOGISTICS OF SHIPPING, TRANSPORTATION AND ERECTION.

MR. SPEAKER, THE NWA IS NOW FINALIZING THE TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEYS TO DETERMINE THE FINAL BRIDGE GEOMETRY AND HYDRAULIC OPENING REQUIREMENTS.

WE HAVE DONE MORE THAN THAT, MR. SPEAKER, THE NWA HAS DRAFTED PRELIMINARY PROCUREMENT AND CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMMES.

THE NWA HAS ALSO PROVIDED A TURNKEY DESIGN, IN CONSULTATION WITH MABEY AND JOHNSON, TO UNDERTAKE SITE INVESTIGATION WORKS; TO DESIGN THE STRUCTURE; AND TO PRODUCE CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS, INCLUDING BILLS OF QUANTITIES AND SPECIFICATIONS.

MR. SPEAKER, OUR COMMUNICATION AND CUSTOMER SERVICES DEPARTMENT AT THE N.W.A, WILL CONDUCT A SERIES OF TOWN MEETINGS IN THE IMMEDIATE COMMUNITIES TO ENSURE THAT THE RESIDENTS ARE FULLY ON-BOARD WITH THE PROJECT. ALREADY, WE ARE UP AND RUNNING WITH THIS PROJECT AND THE ESTIMATED COST IS J\$470M.

DISASTER MITIGATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

MR. SPEAKER, AS INDICATED EARLIER, THE MOST HONOURABLE PRIME MINISTER, P. J. PATTERSON, ANNOUNCED A \$134-MILLION DISASTER MITIGATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME.

MR. SPEAKER, I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE TO THE HOUSE, THE DETAILS OF THIS PROGRAMME:

DRAINS AND GULLIES	ALLOCATION
Portmore Outfall	\$8,212,500
Caymanas	\$5,455,354
Heartlands	\$6,679,500
Job Lane / Bushy Park	\$4,500,000
Big Pond	\$6,777,646
	(Total - \$31,625,000) for St. Catherine)
Bamboo River	\$14,000,000
Majestic Gardens	\$4,380,000
Ten Miles	\$6,785,000
Treasure Beach / Great Bay	\$3,285,000
Jacks Gully/ Flemming Gully/	\$14,000,000
McNeil Lands	\$1,642,500
Ocho Rios	\$1,095,000
Negro River	\$1,000,000
Broad Gate	\$5,000,000
Baileys Vale / Harmony Hall Aenon Town / Bog Hole Balcarres Johnstown Road- Portland Grange Hill North Gully Linstead Junction - St. Elizabeth Mico Gully Moreland Drains Falmouth	\$17,187,500

MR. SPEAKER, THE ADDITIONAL \$34-MILLION WILL BE SPENT BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES, THROUGH FUNDING FROM THE PAROCHIAL REVENUE FUND, AND ALREADY, MR. SPEAKER, DISCUSSIONS HAVE TAKEN PLACE BETWEEN THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT & WORKS AND THE MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SPORTS.

I AM ALSO PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE, MR. SPEAKER, THAT ALREADY WE ARE UP AND RUNNING WITH THE NWA PROGRAMME BECAUSE WE ARE VERY SERIOUS ABOUT EXECUTING THESE WORKS ON TIME AND WITHIN BUDGET.

MR. SPEAKER, ALLOW ME TO SAY SOMETHING ABOUT COOPERATION.

WHEN WE CLEAN THE GULLIES, WE WANT THEM TO REMAIN CLEAN. WE WILL BE WORKING WITH EVERY LOCAL AUTHORITY, CITIZENS ASSOCIATION, PARENT TEACHERS BODY, SERVICE CLUB, YOUTH CLUB, PARISH COUNCIL, AREA LEADER, CORNER LEADER, POLICE OFFICER AND THE NATIONAL SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY, TO ENSURE THAT LITTERING OF OUR GULLIES IS DRASTICALLY REDUCED AND EVEN ELIMINATED.

WE WILL ENSURE, MR. SPEAKER, THAT WHOEVER LITTERS RECEIVES THE FULL WEIGHT OF THE LAW.

PROGRAMME FOR PAROCHIAL, HOUSING SCHEME AND FARM ROADS

MR. SPEAKER, IN THE THIRD QUARTER OF 2003/2004, THE MOST HONOURABLE PRIME MINISTER INSTRUCTED ME TO DESIGN A PROGRAMME FOR THE REHABILITATION AND MANAGEMENT OF PAROCHIAL, HOUSING SCHEME AND FARM ROADS THROUGHOUT THE ISLAND.

MR. SPEAKER, THIS WAS DONE IN CONSULTATION WITH THE MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SPORTS, THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, JSIF AND THEIR TECHNICAL OFFICERS. MR. SPEAKER, I MADE A PRESENTATION MADE TO COUNCIL OF MINISTERS IN JANUARY OF THIS YEAR.

I AM THEREFORE CONFIDENT, MR. SPEAKER, THAT IN DUE COURSE AND WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT, CABINET WILL DECIDE WHICH AGENCY OR MINISTRY WILL EXECUTE THIS PROGRAMME, ONCE THE REQUISITE FUNDING IS IDENTIFIED.

MR. SPEAKER, HERE I MUST PUBLICLY COMMEND THE MOST HONOURABLE PRIME MINISTER FOR HIS PERSPICACITY, AND HIS FIXITY OF PURPOSE FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE ISLAND'S INFRASTRUCTURE. THIS PROGRAMME, MR. SPEAKER, HAS THE POTENTIAL TO ADDRESS MOST OF THE CONCERNS OF THE RESIDENTS AND MOTORISTS IN DEEP RURAL JAMAICA, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO LIVE ON SEEMINGLY ABANDONED ROADS IN HOUSING SCHEMES SCATTERED ALL OVER JAMAICA. THE HOUSE, I AM SURE, KNOWS THAT I AM NOT AT LIBERTY TO DIVULGE FURTHER DETAILS OF THE PROGRAMME, BUT JUST TO SAY, WATCH FOR IT, FOR IT IS COMING.

SECTION VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

ONE VISION... ONE PEOPLE... A STRONG JAMAICA

MR. SPEAKER, FOR THE PAST HOUR OR SO, YOU HAVE LISTENED PATIENTLY AS I OUTLINED MY STEWARDSHIP IN 2003 / 2004 AND ADVANCED THE PROSPECTS FOR 2004 / 2005.

PLEASE ALLOW ME NOW TO SUMMARISE QUICKLY, TO PRESENT IN A PANORAMIC SNAPSHOT, IF I MAY COIN THAT TERM, THE PROCESS THAT ENCAPSULATES THE PRESENT AND REVEALS THE FUTURE.

MR. SPEAKER, OUR PEOPLE ARE STRONG, DETERMINED AND INDUSTRIOUS AS THEY FIGHT AGAINST ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ODDS THAT WOULD HAVE DAUNTED LESSER NATIONS.

WHETHER IT WAS THE INDUSTRIALISTS TRANSPORTING GOODS OVERLAND BY THE CONTAINER LOAD;

WHETHER IT WAS THE TRUCKER TRANSPORTING MATERIALS FROM A BUSINESS PLACE TO THE CONSUMER;

WHETHER IT WAS THE FARMER MOVING HIS FARM PRODUCE FROM THE FIELD TO THE MARKET;

WHETHER IT WAS THE HIGGLER TRANSPORTING GOODS FROM COUNTRY TO TOWN;

WHETHER IT WAS THE BUS DRIVER CARRYING STUDENTS FROM HOME TO SCHOOL AND BACK;

WHETHER IT WAS THE TAXI OPERATOR CARRYING PASSENGERS AROUND TOWN;

WHETHER IT WAS THE PRIVATE MOTORIST GETTING TO AND FROM WORK —

WE ARE BEQUEATHING A MAIN ROAD NETWORK BEFITTING PROUD JAMAICANS AND SERVICES TO SATISFY THEIR EVERY NEED.

THE VISION

BUT, MR. SPEAKER, THE WORLD'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ORDER HAS CHANGED FROM BEING BI-POLAR TO BEING UNI-POLAR.

INCREASINGLY, WE ARE EXPERIENCING THE TENSIONS THAT ARE BEING CREATED BY THIS DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEW WORLD ORDER.

MR. SPEAKER, ON THE ONE HAND, WE SEE A WORLD THAT IS INCREASINGLY BECOMING UNI-POLAR, WITH THE SUPER-POWER

APPROPRIATING MORE AND MORE OF THE WORLD'S RESOURCES TO ITSELF, AND DRAWING NATION STATES INTO SATRAPY.

MR. SPEAKER, ON THE OTHER HAND, WE WITNESS THE BALKANIZATION OF COUNTRIES INTO SMALL NATIONS, DEFINED BY NARROW ETHNIC, POLITICAL AND GEOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS. WE ARE GOING TO HAVE FEWER AND FEWER FRIENDS OF INDEPENDENT MIND AND ACTION WHO CAN ACT IN THEIR NATION'S BEST INTEREST.

MR. SPEAKER, THE COMING TRADE ARRANGEMENTS OF JANUARY 2005 AND BEYOND WILL MEAN INCREASED AND SOMETIMES UNFAIR COMPETITION FOR OUR PRODUCERS AND MANUFACTURERS, WHICH COULD UPSET EVERYTHING FOR THAT WE HAVE FOUGHT FOR. AND THAT IS WHY, MR. SPEAKER, WE NEED INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS THE CARIBBEAN SINGLE MARKET AND ECONOMY (CSME) AND THE CARIBBEAN COURT OF JUSTICE (CCJ).

MR. SPEAKER, OURS IS A VISION OF A PEOPLE UNITED.

OURS IS A VISION OF JAMAICA POSITIONED TO TAKE ON THE GLOBAL IMPERATIVES;

OURS IS A VISION OF OUR PEOPLE, MAKING BEST USE OF OUR
COMPETITIVENESS IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY;

OURS IS A VISION OF OUR PEOPLE, MAKING BEST USE OF OUR
SUPREMACY IN SPORTS;

OURS IS A VISION OF OUR PEOPLE, MAKING BEST USE OF OUR
SUPERIOR FLAVOR IN FRUITS AND OTHER NATURALLY
OCCURRING FOODS;

OURS IS A VISION OF OUR PEOPLE MAKING SUSTAINABLE USE
OF OUR STREAMS AND RIVERS, BEACHES, FISHING GROUNDS,
MOUNTAINS AND HUMAN CAPITAL;

OURS IS A VISION OF A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT;

OURS IS A VISION OF A PEOPLE OPERATING IN HARMONY...

OURS, MR. SPEAKER IS VISION OF A CALM AND PROSPEROUS
PEOPLE;

OURS IS A VISION OF ONE PEOPLE—

FREE TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS;

FREE TO LIVE WHERE THEY DESIRE;

FREE TO WORSHIP;

BUT A PEOPLE RESPECTFUL OF THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS.

THIS VISION, MR SPEAKER, IS COMPLEMENTED BY A SET OF ACTIVITIES PERFORMED IN GOVERNMENT AND SUPPORTED BY PRIVATE ACTION, IN ORDER TO MAKE THE VISION OF BUILDING A STRONG JAMAICA A REALITY.

SECTION VIII**HIGHLIGHTS OF GOOD NEWS**

✚ MR. SPEAKER, WE ARE BUILDING A STRONG JAMAICA, AND THAT IS WHY WE HAVE COMMISSIONED A DISASTER MITIGATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME FOR \$134-MILLION.

✚ WE ARE BUILDING A STRONG JAMAICA AND THAT IS WHY WE HAVE DEVELOPED THE NORTHERN COASTAL HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME.

✚ WE ARE BUILDING A STRONG JAMAICA, AND THAT IS WHY WE WILL LAUNCH TENDER OF SEGMENT 3 OF THE NORTHERN COASTAL HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME, IN AUGUST OF THIS YEAR.

✚ WE ARE BUILDING A STRONG JAMAICA AND THAT IS WHY WE WILL BE SPENDING A TOTAL OF ALMOST \$9-BILLION TO FINANCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF SEGMENT 3 OF THE NORTHERN COASTAL HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME.

- ✚ WE ARE BUILDING A STRONG JAMAICA, AND THAT IS WHY WE SPENT \$1.2 BILLION ON THE URBAN RURAL TOWNSHIP REHABILITATION AND MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME.

- ✚ WE ARE BUILDING A STRONG JAMAICA, AND THAT IS WHY WE DEDICATED SOME \$5 BILLION TO THE NATIONAL ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME (NARIP).

- ✚ WE ARE BUILDING A STRONG JAMAICA, AND THAT IS WHY WE SPENT SOME \$6-BILLION ON THE FLOOD DAMAGE REHABILITATION PROGRAMME.

- ✚ WE ARE BUILDING A STRONG JAMAICA, AND THAT IS WHY WE ARE REHABILITATING OR REPAIRING SOME 80 BRIDGES UNDER THE MAYBEY JOHNSON PRIORITY BRIDGE AND R. A. MURRAY PROGRAMMES.

- ✚ WE ARE BUILDING A STRONG JAMAICA, AND THAT IS WHY WE ARE GOING TO CONSTRUCT A BRIDGE TO SPAN THE YALLAHS RIVER AT POOR MAN'S CORNER IN ST. THOMAS, AT A COST OF \$470 MILLION.

✚ WE ARE BUILDING A STRONG JAMAICA AND THAT IS WHY WE ARE DEVELOPING A 10-YEAR, \$60 BILLION PROGRAMME FOR THE REHABILITATION OF PAROCHIAL, HOUSING SCHEME AND FARM ROADS.

✚ WE ARE BUILDING A STRONG JAMAICA AND THAT IS WHY HIGHWAY 2000 WAS CONCEIVED AND IS BEING DEVELOPED AS A TWENTY FIRST CENTURY MASTERPIECE IN ROAD AND TRANSIT TECHNOLOGY, TO REDUCE TRAVEL TIME BETWEEN THE CAPITAL AND THE WESTERN CITY OF MONTEGO BAY.

THAT IS WHY, MR. SPEAKER, WE BUILD, AND THAT IS WHY WE CALL THE PRIME MINISTER OF JAMAICA, PERCIVAL NOEL JAMES PATTERSON, "**MR. INFRASTRUCTURE**".

MR. SPEAKER, I WHOLE HEARTEDLY EMBRACE THE COMMITMENT TO THE VISION OF ALL MY COLLEAGUES ON THIS SIDE OF THE HOUSE, AND DEEP DOWN I TRUST, MR SPEAKER THAT MY COLLEAGUES ON THE OTHER SIDE EMBRACE THIS VISION.

AFTER ALL, MR. SPEAKER, WHO ARE WE BUT ONE PEOPLE....

RISING TO THE SAME ANTHEM,

FACING THE SAME FLAG, AND RECITING THE SAME PLEDGE.

THIS IS THE VISION.

WE ARE THE PEOPLE.

WE ALL STRIVE...FOR THIS STRONG JAMAICA

JAMAICA LAND WE LOVE...

MAY GOD BLESS US ALL.

**HONOURABLE DR. FENTON FERGUSON, MP
MINISTER OF STATE**