

SPEAKING NOTES

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Rotary Club of St Andrew North

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Hilton Kingston Hotel

GREETINGS

INTRODUCTION

- Commend companies who are donors to Area 4 Police Civic Committee Education Trust Fund
- Scotiabank happy to participate in this worthy effort.
- But you can rest assured, I will not be speaking about the Police Force this evening, although I can't help noticing that 75% of Jamaicans in a recent poll agree with a suggestion I made some months ago.
- Earlier this year I suggested that we could use the human resources of the JDF more effectively, by disbanding both the JCF and JDF, and creating a larger multi-disciplinary police force drawn from the best of both. But as I said, that is not my topic this evening.

- This evening I want to focus on another subject that is quite topical today because of events taking place in the two political camps; and that is leadership.
- Let me make it very clear that I am not endorsing any particular candidate for party president, nor am I planning to discuss the merits of the persons who have presented themselves for these posts.
- Instead, while the political parties engage themselves in battles for the top posts and ultimately leader of our country, I believe that all Jamaicans should be thinking about the qualities we must demand in a leader.

- In fact I would like to broaden my discourse to look at qualities we should demand of all leaders, whether they are in the area of business, religion, civil society, education, or politics.
- Because, make no mistake, if the country is to experience much needed improvements in national security and the economy, we must see a highly improved quality of leadership.
- I would like to suggest that the leaders that must emerge to pull this country out of the doldrums of high crime and violence, sluggish development and economic ignominy, should have three essential qualities.
- These are **purpose, perspective and performance.**

PURPOSE

- Over 400 years ago, Ben Jonson (no relation to the athlete) said:
 - "Whom hatred frights/let him not dream on sovereignty"
- In other words, the man or woman who aspires to lead must be prepared to make unpopular decisions for the good of the people he/she is leading.
- This is an unfamiliar notion for most Jamaican leaders. In fact, in many spheres of our national life, the question of who is to be leader seems to rest on a popularity contest.

- But now, more than ever, we need leaders who are prepared to make unpopular decisions that enure to the good of this country.
- If we are to solve the pressing national problems of crime and violence, unemployment, low workforce skill levels and under-productivity, the people in charge of this country must be prepared to make some very tough decisions.
- A leader can only do this if he/she is clear about the purpose of the mandate and keeps his/her attention firmly focused on achieving it.

- If there was ever a leader who embodied this principle, it is British Prime Minister, Sir Winston Churchill, one of the six men who are said to have shaped the political history of the twentieth century. (The others are Vladimir Lenin, Stalin, Adolph Hitler, Mao Zedong and Franklin Roosevelt.)
- From an early age, Churchill was determined to serve the democratic process in his country and make an impact on public life.
- He had to overcome considerable odds to eventually realise his dream.
- He was mediocre in academics; his father despised him and he was a dismal failure in his first try at leadership.

- This failure was to cause to him to spend 25 years in the political wilderness, but Churchill did not lose sight of his purpose.
- His consistency led Britain to turn to him for leadership when the country and the free world needed him most. His brilliant stratagems and his persistence in the face of rejection led to the coalition that eventually won the war against Nazism and Fascism.
- Churchill was a man of purpose and it is this characteristic that earned him the gratitude of the entire free world and a place among the leaders of the last century.

PERSPECTIVE

- But we not only need leaders with purpose but also with perspective. Too often it seems that our leaders in every sector are operating on the short-term view.
- The solutions of Jamaica's current problems require long range thinking and planning. James Freeman Clarke said:
 - "The difference between a politician and a statesman is: a politician speaks of the next election and a statesman thinks of the next generation".

- It is time for our leadership to begin to think in terms of lasting legacies, a heritage that the next generation can build upon to carry this nation forward.
- Our leaders need to ask themselves: where should Jamaica be in the next ten or twenty years? What kind of planning do we need to effect to make this happen?
- They (and dare I say we since I'm considering leadership in all sectors) need to put the structures in place to enable development to happen whether or not we are around.
- Very often developing this kind of perspective means sacrificing immediate gains.

- It may even mean subsuming our own personal dreams to the cause of the greater and long term good.
- But that, my friends is the stuff of real leadership.
- I know we all know the story of Nelson Mandela, one of the most celebrated leaders of our time.
- I just want to remind you that when he decided to take up the struggle against apartheid, an examination of the current state of affairs in South Africa would lead to the logical conclusion that this was not the right time.

- In the words of a Time Magazine writer: “the great mass of have-nots had been humbled into docile collusion, the geographic expanse of the country hampered communication and mobility, and the prospects of a race war were not only unrealistic but also horrendous”.
- But Mandela took the long-term perspective and we all know the results; however they did not come without sacrifice and he was willing to pay the ultimate price.
- As he said in court:

- "During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to the struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination.
- I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities.
- It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But, if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."
- Such is the power of perspective.

PERFORMANCE

- Thirdly we need leaders for whom **performance** is an important priority.
- It is often said that perception forms 65% of people's opinions. Many people take that to mean that it's more important to **seem** to be doing a good job than to actually do it.
- This reminds me of a zoning board that had been set up in a new community.
- A householder went to the office to request permission to build a small tool shed in his backyard.
- (I guess that will tell you that I'm not talking about a zoning board here in Jamaica.)

- The directors asked if the householder had a plan, looked it over, wrote a few words on it made a copy and sent the householder on his way, saying “here is your permission.”
- A month later, a neighbour in almost the exact situation also wanted permission for a shed in her yard.
- She went to see the director, but only got as far as the secretary.
- The secretary took her documents and said “call me in two weeks; I’ll let you know what the director’s decision is, or if any further steps are necessary.”
- The applicant groaned and said, “but a month ago my neighbour got permission right away.”

- “Oh yes,” said the secretary, “but that was before we got organised.” (*Pause*)
- We laugh, but I know the laughter is shaded with some sadness, because this is so often the case here in Jamaica.
- I know that government has been reforming the public sector along performance management lines since the mid-nineties, and that is commendable.
- But we need more. The mantra of performance must permeate every level of leadership in this society.
- It must supersede the impulse to reward our friends with contracts even when they can’t do the job.

- When it comes to the business of national life, every dollar of GDP has to count. Every piece of Overseas Development assistance must be invested for the good of the next generation.
- We simply cannot afford to carry on in the same old way.
- We need leaders who, like former US president Richard Nixon are prepared to say:

- “My strong point is not rhetoric, it isn't showmanship, it isn't big promises - those things that excite the glamour and the excitement that people call charisma and warmth. My strong point, if I have a strong point, is performance. I always do more than I say, I always produce more than I promise.”

- Can you imagine where this country would be today; if our leaders took the stance they would promise less and deliver more?
- What a powerful paradigm shift!

CONCLUSION

- As far back as 1774, Edmund Burke said to the British House of Commons:
 - "A disposition to preserve, and an ability to improve, taken together, would be my standard of a statesman."
- Despite the dire pronouncements of the naysayers, there is still a lot of good to preserve in Jamaica. That is why Scotiabank continues to invest in this country both through our community outreach (which was in the order of \$132 million this year) and in our operations as a financial services group.

- We need leaders who will preserve what is still good and commit themselves with purpose, perspective and excellent performance to improving what is not good.
- Thank you