



Throne Speech

By Her Excellency The Governor General

Dame Pearlette Louisy, GCSL, GCMG, D.ST.J, PH.D., LL.D. (HON)

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

OPENING OF THE SIXTH SESSION

OF THE EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

OF SAINT LUCIA

ON BEING SAINT LUCIAN

Tuesday, April 25, 2006

Mr. President and Members of the Senate,

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,

There was a time not so long ago, when one could look at the Saint Lucian landscape and read a hundred years of history in the unscarred hill, the ancient road, the old stone church, the quiet unchanged village. That present was not so different from its past. We could still inhabit the same world as our grand-parents and great-grandparents.

A PLACE CALLED HOME

We lived the same lives, very often in the same house. We spoke the same language. When our sons and daughters left these shores to study or work for a better life, they knew they could return to that same village or township, to the certainty of that eternal landscape where people passed, and the place remained reassuringly the same.

There was a certain sanctuary in that slow pace; a sanity, if you will. There was a calm, devoid of the frenzy of living elsewhere. There was a dependable quiet which stabilized, reinforced, and reminded us of where we came from and who we

were. There was a place called home to which we could return, in body and in memory, as to a green spring, or quiet cove for refreshment and renewal.

It is no doubt nostalgic. Something of a romantic notion: this ideal of old mountains and relatives that live forever. It is the sort of thing that a St. Omer might paint, or a Walcott might write about: this idea of an idyllic “passage” peopled with safe, dependable faces: fearless fishermen, familiar folk, country musicians, stoic school teachers and the matronly midwife.

It is the sort of story we would like to tell our grandchildren: about the old town clerk, the policeman, the overseer, the JP, and the parish priest. Through birth, first-communion, marriage and death, a manifest tradition presided over all the important milestones of our lives, and order characterised our existence.

In reality of course, that order was not chosen but imposed by material poverty, a lack of options, and few resources. We were a fledgling people, easing off the yoke of colonialism and dependency. Many had only their labour and some land.

But here were a people who endured and who overcame with the barest of amenities: no piped water, electricity, or telephones. Here were a people who

dared not hope for the benefits of public healthcare and universal education but managed to produce world-class scholars. Here were a people without national insurance benefits who could not dream of a job in the national bank, owning their own bus, or being their own boss.

And yet they became the foundation and the pillars of a new society; a society where people had role models, a sense of moral authority, an understanding of civic responsibility, and an appetite for social equity. We rose out of that ordered, even regimented society, and, despite its social stratification, that society knew itself intimately and held itself together with the kind of discipline and dignity that poverty and an absence of options often impose.

We lived through and triumphed over the circumstances of our history. In the paucity of our little island theatre we became lead characters in the dramas of our own lives. We worked hard and managed to love each other. We aspired and achieved. We proved that size had nothing to do with determination. We gave the world two Nobel Laureates. We did this with a sense of community, despite the desperate circumstances of geography and history.

Misyé Pwézidan, Misyé Speaker,

I pa ni tèlman lontan, I sanm, lè'w té palé di Sent Lisi, ou té palé di yon péyi ki té ni bon fanmi, bon vwézinaj, bon kopwann. An hòtè kon an vil, lavi té senp épi kam. Si ou té fèmé lapòt-ou ében finèt-ou léswè, sété sèlman pou anpéché maygwen ében lèspwi antwé. Moun pa té janmen twò pwésé pou asisté yonn-a-lòt, pou lonjé lanmen bay yonn-a-lòt. Kay-ou té ouvè, lanmen'w té ouvè, tjè'w té ouvè bay tout lé pasan. Gwanmanman épi gwanpapa té ka lévé ich yo épi ti ich yo. Manmay té ka wèspèkté gwan moun; gwan moun té ka potéjé timanmay. Nennenn épi pawen té ka lévé fiyèl-yo, si manman ében papa pa té pé. Sé konsa lavi té yé.

Péyi-a pa té ni tèlman gwan mouvan; bagay té ka maché tou lantman, tou dousman. Sété akwédi ti légliz-la nou té konnèt bò pon-an, ti chimen-an ki té ka mouté an tèt mòn-lan, lowvyè-a ki té ka désann a gwan galo anba sé go pyé pòwyé-a, té la dépi koumansan latè-a, épi konsi yo té kay la pou lavi diwant, pou lavi étènèl. Sété senn konsa, ou kay sijèt wè sé jou sala an potwé Dunstan St. Omer, ében an liv poézi Derek Walcott. Sété Sent Lisi sala jan péyi-a té ka chonjé lè yo té oblijé vwayajé lòt péyi pou twavay ében étidyé. Epi sété lèspwa-a ki yo té kay witounen yon jou an péyi sala pou wafwéchi lam-yo, pou winouvlé lèspwi-yo, ki té ka soutni yo an péyi sé étwanjé-a.

I ni adan pami nou ki kay di ki sa sé nostaltji, sa sé bagay ki ja pasé, lavi lontan, épi pitèt lè-a ja wivé pou nou obliyé tout sa. Mé okontwè. Mannyè bagay ka alé sé jou sala, i nésésè pou nou pwan an ti pòz, pou nou wéfléchi, pou nou mandé kò nou kwèstyon, pou wè ki kalité moun ayèl nou té yé, ki té fé yo kapab bati fondasyon sosyété nou-an, épi dévlopé idantité nasyonal nou-an.

Yo pa té ni pyès gwan wichès. Okontwè, sété pli souvan ti jan pòv: adan di yo pitèt té ni an mòso tè ében an pwopwiété chèk koté. Yo pa té ni dlo sitèn, ni ilèktrisité, ni téléfòn. Yo pa té sa dépann asou asiwans nasyonal, ében asou sèvis santé piblik. Sé lé pli chansé ki té alé lékòl, ében menm fini lékòl. Mé nou ja apwann ki pòvte pa ni péché, ni fèblès. Paski magwé tout pòvte yo-a, sé yo ki sèvi kon pilotwi épi fondasyon sosyété mòdèn nou-an. Yo moutwé nou valè disiplin épi dignité, kimannyè pou twavay wèd, épi pou ni lanmou pou yonn-a-lòt. Yo moutwé nou ki pititès pa ni fèblès, ni maladi, épi sé pa pou nou sèvi'y kon èskiz pou wété anyen afè. Sé sé lison sala ki mennen nou koté nou yé jòdi-a. Kon pwèv, nou fè laté-a kado dé Lowéa: Sir Arthur Lewis épi Onnowab Derek Walcott. Nou éwisi fè sa gwas a détèminasyon-nou pou simonté difikilté, pou twavay ansanm, pou hosé né yonn-a-lòt, pou kouvè défo yonn-a-lòt. Sé sa nou té konnèt kon lèspwi Sent Lisyenn. I ni sa ki kwè ki pen adan di nou ja tou béwé, mé sé fo yo sav sé paski nou pétwi épi lelven sala.

THE PASSING OF COMMUNAL LIFE

But today, Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, the concept of communal life is too quickly passing from us. The idea of people bound together by more than blood is becoming increasingly illusive. The youth, though they may live in the same house, no longer speak the same language as their elders. We are becoming a house divided into so many factions that it is difficult to define, much less discover, that emotional and spiritual place called home. We are in danger of losing sight of that society which anchored us and which reminded us of who we are, how far we have come, and where we might choose to go.

It would seem then Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, that one of the luxuries of better living is the ability to leave our past behind. It would seem that among the spinoffs of development is the option of abandoning our history. We have, it appears, earned the right of amnesia and the benefit of forgetting who we are and what it means to be a Saint Lucian.

A RADICAL TRANSFORMATION

In the last fifteen years, a radical transformation of the Saint Lucian landscape has taken place. This transformation is likely to accelerate in coming years to a pace

unforeseen. The old plantation economy is no more. New highways, schools, hotels, harbours, banks, and other businesses have risen from the soil. A ferry terminal stands where once there was a banana shed. Sleepy villages have awoken from slumber to find that there is a living to be earned. International travel and communication are common place for people from all walks of life. Consumer tastes and preferences have become cosmopolitan. In the home, televisions are often more common than radios. Computers have replaced books. The cell phone is everywhere. We have, as they say, “arrived!”

A PERVASIVE MODERNISING

There has been, you might say Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, a pervasive modernising of this society with all of the positives and negatives that the term implies. There has been irrevocable change upon the landscape and this has produced strains and stresses, physical and psychological. The diminution of the banana economy for example, has altered the pace and practice of rural living. The visible expansion in tourism has changed the physical environment. This affects where we work and where we recreate.

The advent of the CSME may alter our demographics as citizens of this region exchange addresses: Saint Lucians will be attracted abroad just as our regional brothers and sisters will seek opportunity here. In the meantime, universal secondary education is altering the landscape of the mind. Compared to their parents, young students have an altogether different appreciation of the world and their role within it. Indeed, the Saint Lucian family is redefining itself from extended to nuclear to single-parent.

IMPACT OF NEW IMAGES

All these trends suggest that the young Saint Lucian psyche is being bombarded. New images of popular living are imported daily via the media and the internet. Those images include the glorification of violence and the trivialisation of sex, the corruption of society and the indulgence of the individual self. If we lack a keen understanding of ourselves and our own vision and values, then we will hasten to fill the void with what we are told is “fly”, “fab” and “gangsta”.

So when the world arrives at our doorstep, we welcome it in. We embrace liberalisation, communication and globalisation - lock, stock and barrel. Unfortunately, what we find in the barrel is more than we bargained for. Our

openness has made us susceptible to a host of ills and potential vulnerabilities: crime, drugs, terrorism, HIV/aids, money laundering.

But, surely we think, regular Saint Lucians and ordinary citizens are not engaged in all these evils. Well, maybe we need to think again, for it appears that we are all engaged in a society that is increasingly tolerant, even accommodating of these ills.

TURNING A BLIND EYE

We are engaged in a society that too often celebrates wrong doing and which turns a blind eye. We tend to criticize but not contribute. We are quick to talk but slow to act. Many know the problems but few will pioneer the solution. We are quick to condemn the victim and undermine the ambitious. We want employment but do not want to work for someone else. We gossip and spread ill will. We will go along with the popular lie rather than stand alone for truth. Is this what it means to be a Saint Lucian?

These are the ills of our chosen existence, and we must take responsibility for the society that is built upon them. Perhaps, the old Saint Lucian psyche would have found this unacceptable and revolted. Perhaps our former selves would have known how to take arms against this sea of troubles. Some Saint Lucians do feel

strongly enough to protest from the comfort of their living rooms and the safety of Friday-nite bars. But we are not quite ready to come forth and be counted. We are ill-equipped and not prepared to define or to defend the Saint Lucian way of life; the ideals of family, community, and society.

LOOKING TO THE STATE

Meanwhile, we look to the state to provide traditional public goods like health, infrastructure, education, and security. But it seems that we also look increasingly to government to clean the neighbourhoods that we pollute, to rebuild the schools that we destroy, to capture the criminals that we harbour, and to raise the children we bring into the world. How often have we used the old adage: the solution must start in the schools, when we know full well that the solution must start in the home? A place called home which once was the heart of our country.

It is perhaps a perversion of our ingrained fight against the once colonial, once oppressive, once discriminatory system that we continue to undermine the house that we ourselves have built. When we pull down our brother or our sister, what message do we send? Do not aspire; do not dream; do not try; do not succeed. We

are saying to the world that we are not capable. We are denying ourselves while providing the means to be exploited.

AT ODDS WITH OURSELVES

As triumphant as we have been as a young nation, we seem to be still deeply at odds with the idea of governing ourselves? Is this what it means to be Saint Lucian? How is this possible when we have already earned our independence? We have already proven that we can build a society worthy of preservation, even emulation. We have already proven that a small impoverished nation can pull itself out of the quagmire of dependency. We have already proven that we have something to offer as our legacy to the world.

These issues are not unique to Saint Lucia. They are the same for many developing countries seeking to actively define and preserve their identity in an increasingly borderless world. Let us not be fooled however about the benefits of a world without borders. Osmosis, Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, is a process by which substances move through a semi-permeable membrane. This sounds like integration, but regrettably, it is one-way. The more concentrated substance

infiltrates the less concentrated substance. The flow only ends when the two substances are indistinguishable.

PART OF A WHOLE

But, we do not integrate so as to be consumed or overcome. We integrate to be part of a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. We need, therefore, to be strong of mind and purpose. In a world without borders, we do not wish to be indistinguishable; without our own national identity. Among our Caribbean brothers and sisters, among other world citizens and the community of nations, we must retain our Saint Lucian-ness; that which makes us who we are; something that no one else can be.

Similarly, we may need, welcome and encourage foreign investment, but *we* must be directing its course into those sectors that we think appropriate. For this to happen, we need to be focused, realistic and strategic about our own strengths and how we will derive our long-term benefits. We too have goods and services for sale, and CSME or not, we need to promote our strengths in the international marketplace. Let us not turn as usual upon our brother, as if he is the enemy. Let

us see our brother as our first challenge, knowing that if we can convince each other of our worthiness, then surely we can more easily convince the world.

REINFORCING NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS

We know that we are strong in services, while others are strong in manufacturing. We are powerful in Tourism while others are rich in energy. These realities will not change soon, and being confident in our own skin is as much of an economic advantage as any other resource. If we are to benefit from the CSME and not see ourselves as lesser cousins of the regional family, we must re-establish and reinforce a sense of identity in the national consciousness.

This is a collective responsibility, and one which must be spearheaded by the would-be custodians of the national patrimony: our national foundations, historical societies, our trusts and other institutions dedicated to research and education; ministries engaged in community empowerment and social transformation, and not least, our media. This is your challenge.

Even our Tourism authorities, dutifully defining our tourism product, must be aware that they are also defining our face to the world, and by extension, they are defining the national personality.

Misyé Pwézidan, Misyé Speaker

Nou ka pèd kalité lavi-a nou té konnèt Sent Lisi. Epi si nou pa gadé kò nou byen, talè nou kay obliyé ki moun nou yé, ki koté nou sòti, épi menm ki koté nou vlé alé. Paski I sanm ki dévlopmann ka fè nou abandonnen listwa-nou. Anchay chanjman ja pwan kou an péyi-a pandan sé kenz lanné-a ki ja pasé-a. Wi; anchay di byen ja fèt. Nou bati chimen nèf, lékòl nèf, hotèl nèf, plas biznis nèf. Tout moun ka voyajé sé jou sala: jenn kon vyé, go kon piti. Mézon-nou ni pli télévizyon pasé i ni radyo. Konmpwouta ja wanplasé liv. Sèlfon toupatou. Kon yo ka di owon péyi-a “ Nou fè’y!”

Mé nou ka péyi chè pou tout sé dévlopmann sala. Pis paski nou pa ka pwan tan pou apwann ki moun nou yé, nou ka kité tout sòt vyé labitid dèwò tounen tèt-nou épi détwi péyi-a. Kwim, dwòg, AIDS, tout sa antwé an péyi-a. E mi atjwèlann, nou ozabwa épi kò nou, paski shandilyé ka kouté pasé lètèman. Nou vlé konsolé kò nou an dizan ki sé pa Sent Lisyen òdinè ki ka fè sé bagay sala. Mé an wéalité, i ka pawèt ki nou tout adan’y ansanm, paski pli an pli nou ka aksèpté épi nou ka tolòwé

sé vyé mannyè sala, sé vyé labitid sala. Jou an jou i sanm sa nou ka fè sé mète bobo asou maleng.

Nou enmen kwititjé, mé nou pa vlé péyé dé sou pou wè latè-a tounnen. Nou enmen palé, mé lè i vini pou agi, nou ka twennen dé pyé-nou. Tout moun konnèt pwoblenm péyi-a; yonn, dé, sèlman pawé vini douvan pou fè sa ki ni pou fèt-la. Nou ka mandé pou twavay, mé nou pa vlé twavay bay moun. Nou ka ankouwajé dispit. Lang adan di nou lib, lib, lib; nou ka édé lézòt simen mansanj, menm si nou konnèt mèyè. Mé vwéman, annou pozé épi mandé kò nou kwèstyon. Es sé vijay sala nou vlé pwézanaté bay yonn-a-lòt, bay lézòt? Sé sa lidantité nasyonal Sent Lisyen? Sé pou sa ayèl-nou twavay tèlman wèd pou bati sosyété nou-an? Souplé, annou kité lam yo pozé an wipo, Paski sé pa kalité Sent Lisyen sala yo té ni an lidé yo lè yo té fè tout sakwifis-la yo fè-a pou bati péyi-a, pou fè lavi-nou pli ézé.

Sé vwé, i ni Sent Lisyen ki pa enmen sa ka fèt an péyi-a. mé sé diskisyon sala ka pwan kou an salon yo, ében an sé kabawé péyi-a lé vandwédi swè. Yo pòkò pawé pou sòti pou moun tann vwa-yo. Anatandan, anchay di nou ka gadé asou Gouvèdman pa sèlman pou potjiwé sé sèvis piblik twadisyonnèl-la kon lendikasyon, sèvis sante, chimen épi sékouwité, mé osi pou vini anmasé zòdi nou ka jété an pa lapòt-nou; pou viwé wanjé épi wanjé sé lékòl-la nou ka vandalizé-a;

pou tjenbé sé kwiminèl-la nou ka séwé-a; pou lévé sé ich-la nou ka fè-a. Nou ka èspéwé asou lékòl pou kowijé manmay, mé nou tout sav sé lakay-nou nou ka apwann bon kondwit.

I ka pawèt konsi nou pa sa gouvèné kò nou, menm vennsèt lanné apwé lendépandans. Pito nou endé yonn-a-lòt, nou ka hédi yonn-a-lòt désann. Sé pa pou yo fè byen; sé pa pou yo éséyé; sé pa pou yo éwisi. Ki kalité konmisyon nou ka voyé bay moun lòt péyi? Nou pa kapab? Nou pa moun ou sa dépan asou? Nou pa moun ki ka tjenn pawòl yo? Nou pa moun ki ni anbisyon? Ki ni wèspé pou yonn-a-lòt?

Misyé Pwézidan, Misyé Speaker, nou pa sa kité wépitasyon nou épi wépitasyon péyi-a désann dégwé sala. Sé wèspansabilité nou tout épi nou chak pou mété lanmen nou épi tèt nou ansanm pou witouvé lèspwi Sent Lisyen-a nou sanm pèd-la. Epi pou wanfosé'y. Si pa sa, bal fini pou nou.

Mr. President, Mr Speaker, these ponderous social, cultural and economic issues also affect the political landscape and it is against this backdrop that Saint Lucians will go to the polls later this year. As most of us are aware, a convention has developed that General Elections are normally held on, before or about the

anniversary of the previous General Elections. As such, my Government's legislative agenda will be short.

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, my Government will assign priority to the Bills that were introduced in the previous session of Parliament. These include:

- (1) The Consumer Credit Bill;
- (2) The Private Security Bill; and
- (3) The Disaster Management Bill.

In the course of this Parliamentary Session, my Government intends to introduce a Protective Services Compensation Bill. This Bill is aimed at providing compensation to fire officers, correctional officers and police officers who suffer injury in the line of duty.

In the area of Health Sector Reform, my Government will introduce for enactment a Health Practitioners Bill. This Bill is currently in its final stages of consultations. The Bill will provide for the registration and regulation of health practitioners to allow for more efficiency and greater accountability in the health care system.

With the increased popularity of alternative health care practices, issues have been raised with respect to the accountability of individuals who engage in the practice of alternative medicine. Consequently, the Bill will also introduce a mechanism for the registration and regulation of such persons, normally described as allied health practitioners.

REVISITING HOLIDAYS WITH PAY

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, my Government is determined that the Labour Code is enacted during this Parliamentary Session. There are, however, some old laws and practices which require overhaul. One such law is the Holidays With Pay Act, now Chapter 16.11 of the Revised Laws of Saint Lucia. This Act, formerly an Ordinance, entered into force on June 11, 1965.

Section 3 (1) (a) of that Act stipulated that at the end of each succeeding year of employment an [employee] shall be entitled to an annual holiday of at least fourteen days. This provision has remained in effect for forty one years. In 1985, the Wages Regulations (Clerks) Order was enacted. This Order provided that Clerks, and others so described, shall, in respect of the first completed year of service and each completed year thereafter, up to and including the fifth year, be entitled to fourteen (14) working days. In respect of the 6th year and each

subsequent completed year the employee shall be entitled to twenty one (21) working days. But this regulation applied only to clerks but not ordinary workers.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, it should be noted that there is a wide disparity between workers in the Private Sector and workers in the Public Sector. Public Officers are normally entitled to twenty one (21) working days, irrespective of their years of service.

After forty-one years, the time has come to effect adjustments to this regime and ensure greater equity among our workers. My Government intends to effect changes to this regime, but consistent with the objective of reaching consensus on the Labour Code, will discuss its proposals with the Social Partners. The new provisions will appear in the Labour Code.

INITIATIVE IN CRIME PREVENTION

This modest legislative agenda notwithstanding, my government will continue to invest in national security and crime prevention. For example, Mr President, Mr. Speaker, ever mindful of the exigencies of Cricket World Cup 2007 and the rising levels of violent crime, my Government has approached Her Majesty's

Government in the United Kingdom to assist with recruiting seven (7) highly experienced, former British Police Officers on a two year contractual basis to serve in the Royal Saint Lucia Police Force.

These officers will be essential elements of my Government's strategy to build capacity in the Royal Saint Lucia Police Force and to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Force. They will help us to enhance our intelligence capacity, develop a research and development capability, improve public relations and relations with the community, introduce better management systems and processes, make better use of management information, and provide more effective and comprehensive training. Equally importantly, they will assist my Government in its police reform agenda, which will include an anti-corruption programme. New and additional posts will be created to accommodate these officers.

Based on discussions with Her Majesty's Government, the officers will be assigned responsibilities in:

1. Crime and Intelligence;
2. Management and Professional Standards, including anti-corruption;
3. Crime Analysis and Crime Management;

4. Research and Development;
5. Investigations; and
6. Community Policing.

The Police Welfare Association will shortly be consulted and fully briefed on this initiative.

In availing ourselves of this assistance, Saint Lucia will become the third country in the region, after Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica, to make use of the expertise of British Police Officers within the national Police Force.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members will be pleased to know that my Government will finance the cost of these officers by accessing the Petroleum Stabilisation Fund established by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

AN EYE ON PRODUCTIVITY

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, in this new era of challenges we have no choice but to press ahead, mindful as we are of both our strengths and our shortcomings. One clear signal that we must heed comes in the form of a warning from international

development agencies, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which both have cautioned Saint Lucia to keep a watchful eye on productivity. Similar concerns have also been expressed by our Private Sector.

The issue with which we must contend is the fact that wage rates and labour costs in Saint Lucia are rising faster than national output. This means that we are eroding our competitive edge in the international market place, and we must now exercise restraint. The challenge then is to link wage and salary increases to improvements in real output. We have to find ways to improve both the quantity and the quality of production, whether of goods or services, to make sure that we offer value for money in all that we produce.

If there is no improvement in quantity and quality while production costs remain high, the relative costs of goods and services from Saint Lucia will become even less attractive compared to those from other economies, even within the region. This will result in declining demand for our goods and services because we will be seen as a high-cost, low-quality economy, susceptible to inflation and recession.

This is simply not sustainable, and during the coming months therefore, mechanisms will have to be jointly explored by both public and private sectors to

link wage and salary adjustments to productivity and output. Several models exist within the region where the social partners engage in joint action to curb this dangerous trend. In Barbados, for example, there exists a National Productivity Council, which engages in a wide variety of productivity enhancement activities, including management and worker training. Such is the level of concern, that my Government will allocate resources to support initiatives of this nature, particularly those which engage the social partners in collaborative initiatives on a national scale.

Misyé Pwézidan, Misyé Speaker. Sé labitid péyi-a tjenn élèksyon tou pwé dat lannivèsè dènyé élèksyon-an. Konsa Gouvèdman kay kwiyé élèksyon pli ta lanné sala. Nou kay sèvi tan sala pou kontiné twavay asou yonn, dé lwa nou té antanmé an sèsyon-an ki fini bout-la. Nou kay twavay sitou asou sékouwité nasyonal épi demach pou wabat kwim an péyi-a. Gwan jwé bol Krikèt-la ki kay pwan kou isi-a lanné pochenn-lan épi sé kalité kwim violan-an nou ka wè sé jou sala kay fè anchay démann asou sèvis sékouwité péyi-a. Konsa nou ja apwoché Gouvèdman Langlité pou édé nou idantifyé sèt Polis épi èkspéwiyans ki kay sa asisté sé san nou-an pandan dé lanné pou wanfosé kapasité nou pou investigé kwim, pou mennajé sitwasyon kwim an péyi-a, épi pou améliowé sistenm sékouwité nasyonal péyi-a. Dé lòt péyi, Trinidad épi Janmaik ja pwan menm disisyon-an nou pwan-an

E pou menm wézon-an. Sé pou nou pwan tout sòt demach nou pé, pou vini a bout sé kalité pwoblenm sala nou ni-an.

Misyé Pwézidan, Misiyé Speaker. Diskou mwen-an lanné sala té an ti pé diféwan. Si nou palé timiyèt plis asou sé twakasman-an ki ka afèkté péyi-a, sé pa paski nou china, ében nou vlé démowalizé pèp péyi-a épi yon litany, yon libéwa. Mé sé paski, tanzantan, sé pou nou doubout pou ègzaminé konsyans nasyonal-nou. Sitou lè bagay pa ka maché djè byen an péyi-a. Sé sa nou éséyé fè an diskou-a lanné sala, lavèy élèksyon général péyi-a. Sé pa lapenn nou agi akonsidiwé latè-a dwé nou kéchouy, ében menm notwi pen-nou; sé pa lapenn nou kwè nou kay éwisi si nou pa édé kò nou. Konsa nou ka kwiyé asou tout péyi-a pou moutwé latè-a ki kalité moun nou yé vwéman: nou entélijan, nou ni talan; nou ni anbisyon; nou enmen péyi-nou. Nou ni anchay kontwibousyon pou ofè latè-a. La pa ni pyès pozisyon nou pa kapab tjenbé, si nou jwenn lokasyon-an. Ou sa jwenn Sent Lisyen an go pozisyon toupatou: an gouvèdman, an antwépwiz pwivé, an linivèsité, an enstitusyon wéjonal èk entènasyonal, swé an sé péyi OECS-la, an CARICOM, an OAS-la, an gwan asanblé Nasyon Youni-a.

Konsa, fwè èk sè, annou kontiné vizé pli ho, épi twavay ansanm pou avwè siksé-a nou tout ka pwédyé pou-a. Annou koopéwé épi yonn-a-lòt, pou lapéti Sent Lisi,

pou lapéti ti péyi-a nou tout ka kwiyé “lakay-la”. Nou tout ni patizan nou, swé an politik, an wiliyòn, an biznis. Si nou bwizé péyi-a akòz di sé diféwans sala, chonjé sé nou menm ki kay ni pou anmasé sé mòso-a, pou kolé yo ansanm, épi pou koumansé dépwi an koumansman ankò. Pa bwizé’y, pa dévalizé’y, pa déglizé’y. Kawèsé’y plito, épi nou tout kay wéjwi an bèlté’y, an siksé’y.

CONCLUSION

Mr President, Mr Speaker, in cataloguing concerns of national import, it is not my intention to bemoan or demoralize, but to alert and draw attention to those issues that threaten our nation from within. There is little point in pretending that all our woes are external; that the world owes us a living; or that we will somehow continue to prosper indefinitely without conscious and collective endeavour. It simply is not so, and to turn a blind eye or a deaf ear to our shortcomings is to walk senseless off the high cliff of foolish pride, pettiness, and false pretension.

How much better then to let the world know that we are a good and noble people; that Saint Lucia and Saint Lucians have much to offer the world. Let the world know that we are an intelligent, imaginative people, proud of our island with its glorious past and promising future. Let the world know that our talents, like our

aspirations, our ambitions and our imaginations, are limitless. Let them see that in this global environment, we are a nation without boundaries, and that we will neither impose on ourselves, nor accept from others, any limitations on our universe of possibilities.

Let them know by our word and our deeds that we are a nation that has triumphed over the adversities of history and geography and taken our place among the citizens of the world. There is no office, no position, no opportunity, no responsibility of which we are not worthy, or to which we, for reasons of birth, race or economic circumstance, should not aspire.

We have given the world two Nobel Laureates. We have celebrated a quarter century of peaceful democratic independence. You will also find us lending vision and leadership in private enterprise and government institutions, in foundations and universities, in regional and international agencies, whether in the OECS, CARICOM, the OAS, or the United Nations.

Fellow Saint Lucians, let us not now lower our sights. Let us set our ambitions high and work together to achieve them. Let us extend the hand of cooperation to

each other, fulfilling the great potential of every single individual citizen of this our precious, our only nation: this place we all call home – Saint Lucia.

And so, Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, it is now my pleasure to declare open the Sixth Session of the Eighth Parliament of Saint Lucia.