

Mr Speaker, as I rise to make another presentation in this Honourable House I want to first express my gratitude to our beloved Prime Minister, the Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller, who continues to be a safe pair of hands steering the ship as we navigate the stormy seas, I want to reassure her that I will continue to do all I can from where I sit to ensure that this administration goes down in history as one of the country's greatest administrations. **"And who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"** I want to thank you Mr Speaker for the unbiased way in which you have directed the proceedings in this august house, I want to thank my Regional Chair Minister Lisa Hanna who continues to provide astute leadership and mentorship in region one. I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle; I take this opportunity to assure the public we are not as divided as the pundits believe. Mr Speaker, I want to thank each and every one of my constituents, who in 2011, decided not to GAMBLE BUT RATHER TO VOTE FOR CAMPBELL, their love and hard work continues to be the wind beneath my wings.

I want to specially highlight Mr Lucius Thomas who like John the Baptist was responsible for paving the way. To my Councillors, I want to say "Thank You" for your hard work and dedication to North West St Ann. Mr Speaker, I want to thank my family for whom it has been a rough year but, like true Africans, we continue to survive although we have a history borne out of hardship and trials. I also want to thank my friends some of whom sit in this Honourable house who continue to be a source of inspiration. Finally Mr Speaker, I want to thank my Lord and Saviour, the resurrected one whose words comfort me daily. Words such as these found in Jeremiah 29 and verse 11, **"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."**

When I began this journey I made a commitment to changing the lives of those whom I represent in a positive way. I believe that politics is one of the most potent careers to effect real change. This kind of change pulls an individual out of the oblivion of doubt and points them to a path that leads them to realizing their dreams and aspiration. I received that chance, as all of us in this Honourable house did, to change our circumstance of others within my influence

and I am making good on it. It is for that reason I can announce here today that you can expect great things from St Ann North Western as we have been working hard to ensure that the positive change that has eluded the people of the constituency for so long is now a welcome reality. Of course Mr Speaker, there is much left to do and we are up to the task.

Mr Speaker, I am of the firm belief that St. Ann North Western is one of the best constituencies in Jamaica, it has a comfortable mix of rural and urban areas, with Agriculture, Tourism, Mining the Bauxite Industry and small businesses all concentrated in its borders. The campaign leading up to the December 29, 2011 elections saw me asking the people to vote for a solid future under the broad slogan of the PNP "People Power". Mr Speaker that is exactly what I intend to do, give the people power. Power to rise above the negatives and secure a real opportunity to pursue prosperity. Mr Speaker the voice of the people is the voice of God. In light of this, we have sought to execute our development plan based on community consultations. The main areas that emerged as priority areas are as follows:

- 1) Infrastructure-
- 2) Employment
- 3) Education
- 4) Health care delivery
- 5) Youth Development

Mr Speaker, we will take these issues in turn after which I will speak to a few additional areas that are of particular interest to me.

Madam Prime Minister stated during the Budget Debate that we are 'Going for Growth and development working for the people' I would like to say to her that in North West St Ann we are operating under the mandate of this agenda. The Most Honourable Micheal Manley said 'The egalitarian philosophy commands us to walk consciously towards a situation of equality of the human condition' As Member of Parliament I am taking that walk towards the situation of equality where I am charting a course from poverty to prosperity by positing and implementing practical solutions to complex problems that face my constituents. Thus far, we made great strides but the work is by no means over.

1. Infrastructure

Reliable efficient Infrastructure is crucial to economic and social development by raising labour productivity and lowering production and transaction costs. Transport, energy and water enhances economic activity and so contributes to growth which is essential to poverty reduction.

I) Roads

Mr Speaker we have repaired the following roads; Orange Hill to Lower Buxton, Knapdale to Sturge Town, Minard Hill, Philadelphia, Trysee, Cardiff Hall, Back Hampstead and Mt Edgecombe.

Mr Speaker, as the JEEP refuels we plan to drive into Benin, Goshen, Muirhouse, Shelly Road, Hampstead and Hazelwood. I have not forgotten Retirement to Lawrence Park to Keith, which is in a deplorable condition. Mt. Zion, Mt. Olivet, Chester to Spicy Grove, and Top and Lower Valleys, I have heard your cries. Hold on; help is on the way. Your Member of Parliament has made representation for you and we await the response of the relevant Ministers, who, have been very accommodating, thus far, to the people of North West St. Ann.

II) Water

Mr. Speaker, Water is Life and it is my desire to bring life to the communities within my constituency, especially Bamboo and Queenhythe. Mr. Speaker, “A Bamboo, mi born an’ grow an mi affi ensure seh, dem have wata a flow”. Mr. Speaker, I am desirous to see the day when the people of the community are no longer burdened with buckets on their heads to carry water but have the commodity flowing freely from pipes in their homes. I am working to ensure that this most positive change occurs in the lives of the people of Bamboo.

In Queenhythe, Mr. Speaker, the US Marines had dug a well over a decade ago and we are

anxious to see it operational as it will improve the water resources of the people in Lawrence Park, Retirement, Keith, Home Castle and Queenhythe proper. Mr. Speaker, we enthusiastically await the commencement of the pump and tank programme the Minister of Land Water and Environment change has announced to undertake this year. It would mean a great deal to the constituents of St. Ann North Western. In addition, to the pump and tank programme, we are proposing to undertake a roll out of a 'black tank' project this year to alleviate the sufferings of the constituents in the deep rural communities of the constituency. Your cries have not fallen on deaf ears.

Mr. Speaker, We have made great strides but the work is by no means over. The people must be taken from poverty to prosperity.

III)Electricity

Mr. Speaker, it is unacceptable that in 21st century Jamaica, there are communities without electricity. No effort should be spared, in ensuring that this shameful reality is sent packing to the past, where it belongs. I am committed to ensuring that this is done and so we are working with the Rural Electrification Project (REP) to have electricity delivered to one community per year. This year we will be focusing on Lower Buxton after which we will move to Green Castle, Alma, Freehill, Old Folly then Mt. Edgecombe. Mr. Speaker, one one coco full basket and little by little we are taking the constituency of St. Ann North Western from poverty to prosperity. We have made great strides, but the work is by no means over.

IV)Land Titling

Mr Speaker, there is nothing more fulfilling than owning a piece of this tropical paradise, with this in mind we want to see the residents of Black Ants corner in Discovery Bay, Mines, Trysee and Lewis being able to obtain titles for their lands and thus be able to access capital to lift themselves from poverty to prosperity.

V)Housing

Mr Speaker, the residents are grateful for the Belle-Aire project and are anxious to benefit from the lots that will be made available, we do hope that low income houses will be built and that our people will benefit as there is a long list of teachers, policemen and other public sector workers who are lining up to make use of this magnificent opportunity. Mr Speaker, we want to register our thanks for the work being done by Food for the Poor in providing housing solutions to persons living in abject poverty, the partnership with the Government of Jamaica has seen several persons now able to open their own doors.

Mr Speaker, I now turn to the issue of

2. Employment

A holistic approach to putting people on the road to economic prosperity must include looking beyond the piecemeal solutions. In North West St. Ann we have posited and implemented practical solutions to militate against the crippling effects of Unemployment.

1) Farming

Mr Speaker, Farming remains the main income generator for 50% of the constituents of St. Ann North Western, as Member of Parliament I have been working with the farmers to implement lucrative projects, we invested in ginger and this year we have planting material for 20 farmers to plant one(1) acre lots each. We have engaged the JAS and we will be doing a red peas project that will see 50 farmers planting half (1/2) acre plots each, of the 50 farmers 20% or a minimum of 10 will be young people below the age of 25as we seek to pique their interest in farming.

Mr Speaker, a lot has been said about my views on marijuana, so let me clarify, my opposition is to smoking irrespective of what is being smoked, I do support its use for medicinal purposes, for neutraceuticals, hemp and clothing and textiles. Mr Speaker, I do believe that no well thinking

Jamaican would disagree with these uses. To this end, and bearing in mind that 50% of the employment in St. Ann North Western is from Agriculture I am making a request to the Minister of Agriculture for us in St. Ann North Western to have the first legitimate Agro Park where marijuana is cultivated as we have land, human resource, the know-how and the right climate to produce the highest quality herb.

Mr Speaker, we continue to support our farmers with tools, fertilizers and seeds. Grow or perish, export or die

A significant amount of Jamaica's rural population depends on farming as their source of income. It is therefore imperative that farmers are given the training and support needed so that they can augment their businesses. As Member of Parliament for St Ann North Western the majority of those whom I represent are farmers and I have become quite intimate with their struggles through my consultation with them. The difficulties that tend to cripple our farmers are lack of irrigation, refusal to adapt to newer technologies and the assumption that our farmers are also able to market their own produce. The farmers need to be engaged in some sort of training that will expose them to trending methods in marketing and farming that will amplify their income.

The approach to augmenting the farming fraternity's business must be twofold; we must look at ensuring that there is quality in the output and that there is a market for the produce.

Let me turn my attention to the problem of finding the market. It is safe to assume, based on what obtains currently, that our farmers are not experts in marketing, we must therefore engage in specialization of labour. The hotels are there and the farmers are also there so we must bridge the gap between the two. Our aim must be to also help with increasing yield and preventing extortion at the farmer's gate. We must capture our own market first and then the export market. Our agricultural produce has no hormones, they are healthier produce, and thus...we need public education of consumers to eat local. The former Prime Minister Michael

Manley said it best "Grow or perish, export or die".

In Old Folley in Discovery Bay St. Ann farmers are using greenhouse technology to grow vegetables for the hoteliers in the area. This is an example of farmers using new technology to boost their business. In this particular instance the farmers have found themselves a market. We need to help all our farmers to connect to a market for their produce.

Family for Growth (FFG) is a Non-Profit Organisation that has been established to help secure farming produce for our households. FFG's mandate is to promote agriculture to improve the family's quality of life, reduce poverty and sustain its reduction, encourage self-reliance within the family and promote family health and wealth. Menu planning is about budgeting, saving time and optimizing nutrition. Where shopping at home first (checking the cupboards and refrigerator) coupled with the crops reaped from the micro farms will be encouraged. Further, this will translate into Jamaicans being cultured in a realistic way to live the 'Grow What We Eat, Eat What We Grow' campaign of the Jamaica Agricultural Society (JAS).

The organic waste generated by the kitchen and other places in and around the home can be composted. The compost can be used as a soil amendment to improve fertility, texture and water holding capacity of the farms and/or container gardens in more developed areas. Container Gardening is the use of recycled inexpensive containers filled with suitable soil mix to cultivate crops or flowers in a controlled environment, this is not new technology. The legendary Hanging Gardens of Babylon (one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World) is one of the finest such examples from recorded history.

In an effort to counteract the effect of rising food costs, the initiative is aimed at assisting householders to grow fruits, vegetables and herbs in small spaces. By simply growing two cycles of tomato, cucumber, sweet pepper and Pak Choi, the average household would save approximately \$12,000 annually.

Improving the life skill set of Jamaicans through agriculture will stimulate and sustain an

economic transition from over-consumption of foreign goods to local production and consumption.

We must also aim to stimulate and sustain a novel personal habit in micro-agricultural production with the benefit of greater self-reliance and amelioration from economic strain and we are yet to scratch the surface as I have not spoken of Argo-processing yet.

II) Tourism

Mr Speaker, Tourism is responsible for 25% of the employment in St. Ann North Western with this in mind we want to further develop our tourism product by focusing on community tourism. To this end, we want to develop an ARTISAN VILLAGE IN SALEM

Breakdown of Artisan Village:

a. Artisan Village

1. Craft Training centre

2. Craft Shops

b. Rest Stop

1. Updated bathroom facilities

2. Changing room facilities

3. Smoking lounge

c. Food and Beverage

1. Authentic Jamaican meals

2. Seating Areas

d. Sports

1. Community games such as wind ball, football etc

e. Entertainment

1. Caribbean Artisan Exposition

2. Sports

F. Fishing village and shops are located across the road.

Artisan Village and Tourism:

It is our intention to use the Artisan Village as an attraction for tourists travelling through St. Ann as well as collaborate with local attractions so that the Artisan Village is included in their tour packages.

1. This will therefore become a “Pull” for the parish of St. Ann as tourists will be able to view how items are made and assist in making small souvenirs for themselves.
2. While on their tour they will be able to indulge in a cultural melting pot of authentic Jamaican meals ranging from renowned Jerk to local traditional cuisine. The aim is to promote things Jamaican, capitalizing on fishing village located across from proposed site.
3. This will become the premier restroom stop for the parish. The village will host updated bathroom facilities for Males and Females as well as being comfortably accessible to the disabled. It will also include changing areas for babies and adults.
4. The Facilities will be constructed with ramps to accommodate wheelchair users throughout the entire center.
5. Official private smoking lounge area located away from the public.
6. The proposed artisan village will be located on a sports center site. In light of this, we will be tapping into and promoting “Sports and Community Tourism”. Community activities organized through the community club will be used to provide a day of entertainment. Therefore, becoming an attraction for both the local and international market.
7. Thirty craft shops will be constructed on site, one of which will be donated to the school to generate revenues. All else will be rented so as to provide monthly revenue that will be used to maintain the attraction.
 - a. All workers will be required to wear uniforms designed to reflect Jamaican history.
 - b. Craft shops will be co-branded with the name of an attraction in Jamaica. For example YS Falls. This will encourage conversations as well as promote other tours.
 - c. It will be mandatory for workers to attend customer service and marketing workshops every six months.

III) Call Center

Mr Speaker, we have a lot of young people who are in dire need of jobs and we also have a constituency that is lined by the north coast and is only thirty (30) minutes from Montego Bay, we therefore would love to have a Call Center in the constituency, I have been training the young people which I will detail later, but the vision is to have three 8hrs shifts with 500 young people working per shift. Mr Speaker, in lieu of having the finances to construct a concrete structure we are willing to use retro-fitted containers to achieve this goal.

IV) Mobile Business Units

Mr Speaker, last year I made an impassioned plea for us to use MSMEs to drive rural development, I once again make this cry. Mr Speaker, what joy it would be to have a mobile unit rolling into the main towns in rural Jamaica with personnel from JBDC, REVENUE DEPARTMENT, COMPANIES OFFICE etc and Masters student s at the University who will work with these small business and their dreams to take them from conceptualization to writing business plans to registration of companies to opening of business accounts to micro-financing and finally opening the doors to their business.

3. Education

As a true believer in socialism and the virtues of education this is my primary area of focus. Mr Speaker, we intend to develop programs to treat with issues from cradle to college, Mr Speaker the message that underlines this priority area is that no matter where you are from your dreams are still valid.

I) Early Childhood

Mr Speaker, we are working to increase the number of spaces in our early childhood facilities. To this end we have constructed an Infant Department at the Runaway Bay All Age - we have also trained 20 students in early childhood education, who are now on work experience at different locations.

Mr Speaker, our flagship project for this year will be the ROVING CAREGIVERS PROGRAM

The critical importance in Early Childhood Development (ECD) programmes in attenuating cognitive and social delays in children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds is of increasing interest to government and non-governmental agencies, policy makers, and educators in the developing world. Poverty and a lack of access to ECD place children on an unfavourable developmental trajectory: a life condemned to manual labour in young adulthood, poor family planning, and poor parenting skills. Undoubtedly, these outcomes also apply to Jamaica where sizable numbers of families and children live under difficult social and economic circumstances.

In an effort to advance the life chances of poor children; governmental, non-governmental organizations and social scientists have identified the early childhood years as an ideal time to implement intervention programmes to stave off the negative consequences of poverty and inadequate parenting on children's overall well-being. Specifically, early brain stimulation programmes conducted during the preschool years in diverse cultures around the world have produced evidence of the positive effects of intervention on children's intellectual and social functioning.

Research has shown that seventy five per cent (75%) of brain development occurs in the first five years of life. Brain Stimulation from birth (i.e. being read to) helps develop pre-literacy skills needed to be able to read. Learning to read is the single most important factor in school success. Early stimulation of the brain also sets the stage for how children will learn and interact with others throughout life.

As the maturing brain becomes more specialised to assume more complex functions, it becomes less capable of re-organising and adapting to new or unexpected challenges. It is for this precise reason that development delays before age 5/6 are difficult to compensate for later in life. Once the brain's circuit is "wired," it stabilises with age, making it increasingly more difficult to alter over time

According to the Statistical Institute of Jamaica (October 2008), approximately 75 per cent of men and approximately 56 per cent of women in the labour force had no exams passed and received no certification upon entering the workforce. These outcomes have obvious consequences for the competitiveness of the Jamaican economy.

Despite high levels of access to primary (99.7 per cent) and secondary (83 per cent) schooling, educational achievements in Jamaica are relatively low as measured by national assessments in 2009. At Grade 1, none of the five sub-tests of the assessment was mastered by more than 24 per cent of the six year olds entering primary school and 18 per cent of them did not master a single sub-test (UNICEF, 2009).

At Grade 4, 70 per cent showed mastery of the literacy test (girls 81 per cent; boys 59 per cent) and 45 per cent gained mastery on the numeracy test (girls 55 per cent; boys 36 per cent). Of particular concern is the low achievement of boys and children from the poorest and/or most volatile communities (UNICEF, 2009).

For Jamaica, passes in CXC English plummeted from 63.9 per cent in 2011 to 46.2 per cent in 2012, while in mathematics they dropped from an already low of 33.2 per cent in 2011 to an even more disappointing 31.7 per cent (Caribbean Examination Council). While individuals have accomplished spectacular results, the majority have not done well. The difficulties at the secondary level can be traced to the weak educational foundation at the early development level (0-5).

Attention to quality in secondary education will not improve to the level commensurate with the substantial investment made by government if the issues surrounding poor performance are not addressed in a systematic manner that includes early childhood development in the

continuum of education provision from early childhood to primary to secondary to tertiary level.

ROVING CAREGIVERS PROGRAMME (RCP)

The Roving Caregivers Programme (RCP) originated in Jamaica as a home visitation programme aimed at addressing the early childhood development needs of children(ages birth-3) in vulnerable (largely rural) families. It proved to be a useful model for providing these services in communities which would not otherwise have had access and was recognized by UNICEF in 2000 with its highest honour, the Maurice Pate Award.

The RCP builds on a solid history of home-based intervention as a way of inoculating young children against intellectual and social failure during the formative years. Couched within eco-cultural theoretical perspectives on parenting and childrearing, the RCP uses culturally and developmentally appropriate stimulation activities with the chief purpose of improving parenting skills and altering childrearing beliefs that would then prevent developmental lags identified in poor Jamaican children around the first birthday.

Often in the Caribbean, there are few opportunities for parents to receive information on optimal parenting much less parent stimulation services. Equally distressing is the fact that a large number of poor parents are young with low educational attainment, and less than optimal parenting skills.

Cognizant of these socio- demographic characteristics and childrearing challenges facing poor families in Jamaica, the Roving Caregivers Programme, having its genesis in the Teenage Mothers Project (TMP) (see Jarrett and Alexander Consulting Group Inc., 1995), is at the forefront of efforts to address the developmental delays manifested among poor children (Powell, 2004). Developmental delays among Jamaican children who live under difficult social and economic conditions have been documented as early as the first birthday. These delays become exacerbated by 5 years of age when poor children show lags of as much as 20 IQ points behind their middle-class counterparts (Chambers & Grantham-McGregor, 1986). The pivotal role of the RCP is to improve the childrearing beliefs and parenting practices of rural poor Jamaican parents with the hope of reversing the lags in cognitive and social skills that their

young children show prior to entry into basic schools.

It is believed that some of these developmental lags are due to familial home environments that lack basic educational and play materials and adequate doses of parental stimulation. By “coaching” parents in a personalized manner within the security of their home environment to improve the quantity and quality of cognitive and social stimulation with children between 0-3 years, it is argued that the RCP helps parents equip their children with the necessary intellectual and social acumen to prevent poor performance early in the schooling process.

STRENGTHS OF THE RCP

A critical impulse driving the need for the RCP to be taken seriously by policymakers is the fact that it responds to some serious gaps and deficiencies in the provision of childcare, development and protection services particularly for the most vulnerable. Whether state or private, provision of these services invariably tends to be uni-dimensional.

Private day-care services provide little more than “child minding” services which include significant child stimulation tend to be expensive and out of reach of the poorest. Public services are too often over-subscribed with insufficiently trained staff and poorly resourced. There are hardly any other examples of services which address these needs in a holistic manner, combining child stimulation with protective health, maternal support and parenting training.

Specific strengths of the RCP are as follows:

- Grounded in culturally relevant theoretical principles of ECD and early intervention
- Community-based family intervention/bringing services directly to the home.
- Strong community-based parent education component that zeros in on parent management techniques, health and childhood safety issues, and growth promoting child-rearing practices
- Parent/child stimulation activities that are culturally and developmentally appropriate
- Well planned curriculum and activities
- Engagement of other community and civic organizations in the process

The basic idea with the RCP curriculum is to promote a shift from a directive curriculum to an

interactive one that has been found to contribute to children's development in cultures around the world, employing curriculum element's like High/Scope's plan-do-review daily routine. With the RCP curriculum there is a stronger focus on facilitating the caregiver-child interaction process in the delivery of early stimulation activities.

REPLICATION OF RCP INTO NORTH WEST ST. ANN PRE-SCHOOLS

The experience of the RCP has concretely demonstrated the potential of the RCP model to cost effectively deliver a vital social service while incorporating multi-partner alliances. The adaptability and flexibility of the RCP model is one of its most important characteristics. It has been identified as an indigenous innovation, subjected to rigorous research; assessment and piloting that shape it into a replicable solution.

In a comprehensive study, Roopnarine (2005) convincingly explored the theoretical and research foundations and efficacy of the RCP and he concluded that:

"The RCP carefully integrates childhood constructs rooted in child development theoretical principles that have well defined norms of childhood behaviours and skills, eco-cultural frameworks on parental psychologies that lay the foundation for structuring everyday settings and experiences for young children, and prevention models that seek to identify risk factors within families and to develop appropriate services that would assist in moderating them" (p.17)

Impact studies of the RCP were conducted by the Bernard van Leer Foundation in 2004 and 2008. The first study conducted in Jamaica concluded that the programme had "a substantial impact on the cognitive development of young children after one year of enrolment"

These independent conclusions therefore attest to the theoretical and methodological soundness of the RCP replication and confirm that the core objective of stimulating the cognitive capacity of the child is attainable.

Preschools/care support services can provide the underpinning of extension services and expertise through the RCP delivery mechanism and the Private Sector and civic organisations can partner with Government to provide support for the programme.

WHY NORTH WEST ST. ANN?

Children from chronically poor households are likely to experience the most debilitating kind of deprivation which is too often reflected in their performance at school. St Ann is steeped in poverty and is ranked as the poorest parish based on the consumption trend of its population. According to the Planning Institute of Jamaica's (PIOJ) recently launched Jamaica poverty map, about 14 of the island's poorest communities are in the garden parish.

The findings provide very strong evidence in support of ensuring that poverty reduction should be accompanied by very deliberate and sustained emphasis on pre-school and primary school development and education.

Targeting the children of the poor and unemployed is of particular importance because it is this group that is less likely to enrol in preschool or engage in early brain stimulation activities. This group is also more likely to attain lower achievement levels or grades for their age and to have poor cognitive ability.

The establishment of an RCP curriculum based approach into existing pre-school in North West St Ann that meets best practices standards will no doubt provide the gateway for early stimulation and providing an early head start in literacy for the children of this constituency. North West St. Ann can therefore be an ideal location for the joint partnership between the Foundation for the Development of Caribbean Children and the Government of Jamaica.

II) Primary

Mr Speaker, arsonists earlier this year waged war on education when they set fire to the LIBERTY HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL- this was truly a sad day for the residents and all well thinking Jamaicans, we have met with the parents and teachers and we have placed the students at the Discovery Bay All Age, we also arranged for transportation to take them from the community to the new school and then back home. Mr Speaker, they settled in well and did well in their GSATS based on reports we have received. We are working feverishly to reconstruct the school and plans are far advanced in realizing this. I want to place on record my gratitude to the Minister of Education for his assistance.

Mr Speaker, we continue to keep our annual luncheon where we award the top boy and girl from all 24 schools in the constituency at Primary level and the three(3) high schools, this year we will also be awarding the top boy and girl who are on the PATH program as there is a possibility that these students may not be the top achieving students – as well as it may very well be so –but given their financial situation, this award will be very meaningful to them and will be added impetus in their move from poverty to prosperity .

III) Secondary

Mr Speaker, the residents of the constituency would benefit greatly from another High School most suitable in Discovery Bay, this will go a far way in removing the Brown's Town High School from the shift system and will save the parents valuable funds in relation to travelling.

IV) Tertiary

Mr Speaker, there is a motion in this Honourable House looking at the funding of tertiary education and we are also encouraged by the positive changes announced by the Hon. Minister of Finance in regards to the SLB, as we are convinced that education remains the only redemptive tool for the masses of the people. I have held a tertiary education funding workshop at Brown's Town Community College exposing the students to different ways to footing their educational bill.

V) Vocational

Mr Speaker, the Addison Park complex in Brown's Town is currently underutilized and we believe HEART TRUST/NTA would do well to take over this facility and offer training in areas that are in keeping with our development plan e.g. animation and other areas to fit into the impending Logistics hub.

VI) Adult Education

Mr Speaker, the Dr Dayton Campbell's CHANCE FOR CHANGE SCHOOL was designed to offer a second chance to residents in skills training and evening classes. Equality in access is the guiding

philosophy and to date we have 850 students doing Business Administration, Accounting, Customer Care, Computer Repair, Early Childhood Education, Cosmetology, Welding, Food Preparation, House Keeping, Cashiering, Merchandizing, Bar Tending, Food and Beverage

We also have 300 students doing a mixture of Mathematics, English, Principles of Business, Office Procedure, Social Studies. Mr Speaker, we pay all the bills and students are only asked to turn up to class and do their best. We have no limitation except that students must come from the constituency seeing that it is the CDF that funds this program. Mr Speaker, the effects of this program will be far reaching and will pay off in the long run. I am committed to this program and will not turn back on my commitment to educating the people as the greatest means of development. The program also has a remedial component which takes 400 participants who are not at the CXC level, from their level of competence to a point where they can matriculate to the skills training or the night school.

4. Health

I have used my medical background to complement the limited resources we have and grant all constituents with access to basic health care.

I) Health Center

Mr Speaker, the rapid growth in the constituency necessitates the need for a Health Center to be built in the Runaway Bay Area, lands have been identified and we are working with Ministers Buchanan and Ferguson to execute this project.

II) Medicals

Mr Speaker, we continue to travel the length and breadth of the constituency during the summer to do the back to school medicals free of charge for all students that present, so far we have done 2560 in the constituency and several hundred in other places like NW Clarendon,

NW Manchester, SW St. Elizabeth, SE. St. Elizabeth and Western St. Mary

III) Mobile Clinic

Mr Speaker, every Monday we go to a different community in the constituency to do a health fair where we do general checks of blood pressure, blood sugar etc , examinations, write prescriptions, sign up persons to NHF AND JADEP, all of this free of charge. Mr Speaker, this is one of the flagship projects and we are still working assiduously to get the mobile unit.

IV) Saturday Office Work

Mr Speaker, on Saturdays we do a health fair at my office in Brown's Town where we do general checks of blood pressure, blood sugar etc, examinations, write prescriptions, sign up persons to NHF AND JADEP, all of this free of charge

V) Health Talks

Mr Speaker, the Health Minister has been relentless in updating this Honourable house re the change in our morbidity profile from communicable diseases to non-communicable diseases which are lifestyle related and as such a critical part of management is at the primary level. With this in mind I try as best as possible to have health talks in the churches to increase awareness of common pathologies such as Diabetes and Hypertension and cancers.

5. Youth and Community Activities

Youth

The youth have a very important role to play in nation building. It is crucial to educate and help them obtain as many life experiences as we can. They will be the future workforce and leaders of our global community. They must learn. Mr. Speaker, we in North Western St. Ann understand the importance of engaging the youth and providing positive influence in their lives while guiding them to achieving their desired goals. In this breath we have done the following:

I) Sports

Mr Speaker, we have had cricket, football and netball competitions as we try to unearth the sporting talents within the constituency.

III) Mobile Skills Training

Mr Speaker, we would love to see HEART TRUST taking the suggestion to have mobile skills training units that will go into deep rural areas to offer a real chance to our young people in rural Jamaica and thus execute a part of the PM's mission of rural development.

III) Youth Month

Mr Speaker, for youth month we held a fantastic event where the three high schools competed in essay writing looking at issues affecting youth , drama competition and a project writing competition where they developed a project they would implement if they were MP for a year to develop the lives of young people.

Community Activities

I) Choirfest

Mr Speaker, we will later this year host our first “Choirfest” where all the churches will compete in a choir competition to win various prizes.

II) Talent Search

Mr Speaker, we will also be doing our first talent search to discover the next Jamaican star

III) Infrastructure

Mr Speaker, we are far advance in working to complete several Community Centers with Discovery Bay to be completed this year

IV)) Town Hall Meetings

Mr Speaker, we have been having our monthly Town Hall Meetings rotated in divisions where we invite agencies such as NWA, NWC, SDC, RADA, JCF ETC to meet with constituents thus keeping them informed.

VIII) Mentorship

- So often we complain about the wayward nature of our young people. We wonder why our young men fall prey to the perils of the corner, rather than enrol in a college and hop on the most reliable vehicle heading to prosperity, education? The fact is those of us deemed as professionals have an awesome role to play. Prosperity can only be attained if we share formula. I say to you for the best results from our young people, Get Involved! Mr Speaker, there is no doubt to the value of mentorship, as of such I have taken on the task to mentor five boys at Prospect College.

Mr Speaker, the sharp focus on education from the early childhood to the adult continuing level is not by chance or mistake nor is it based on theory alone. Mr Speaker, it is from an experience I still have a testimony to share. You see my good Sir; I was born in a rural area in my beloved constituency called Bamboo. My father is a farmer and has also tried his hand at drug trafficking, Mr Speaker, he has gotten himself into trouble so often and just returned from prison in March of this year after almost 10 years on this occasion, he has been incarcerated for more than 75% of my life. My mother is a former domestic helper who toiled tirelessly over baskets of dirty laundry to feed her family. Sir, their union bore three children. Whilst growing up we were teased mercilessly, every mistake I made I was told that I'm just like my 'worthless

pupa'. I was called names like 'jail bud pickney', I was told that my mother 'just a hatch up the pickney dem' like fowl. Sir, I still have the stigmata of those emotional wounds. Mr Speaker, my sisters and I took a decision that we would use education as the vehicle for upward social mobility, as such we worked hard. We ignored the teasing about our uniforms like when I was asked if I took my measurement in water or when the pants got old and was outgrown and the hem was release but the crease could not be ironed out. We all passed for traditional secondary schools. We all went to The University of the West Indies (UWI) and in 2008 we all graduated from UWI, all three at the same graduation ceremony, my sister that passed away last year got first class honours in Nursing, my younger sister is now back from Fiji is completing her PhD at UWI in Chemistry and I am a medical doctor, the youngest MP in this parliament and one month away from having a law degree. Mr Speaker, look at the prison bud and domestic helper's children. If we can do it sir then that youngster in Bamboo can become a lecturer, that youngster in Brown's Town can become an engineer, that girl in Discovery Bay can become Prime Minister and that unborn pauper child in Runaway Bay can become a judge. It stands to reason sir that no matter where you are from your dreams are still valid. That even if everyone has given up on you, you should never give up on yourself and that if you dare to work hard and love God your dreams of today will be the realities of tomorrow. This Sir is a chance for change and for all others like me to be the change they want to see.

Mr Speaking, St Ann North Western St Ann has received a lot since December 29 2011, when they opted not to gamble but rather push ahead with Campbell, but we have not reached our destination we are pursuing prosperity unrelentingly. Poverty will no longer hold our people's potential hostage. Opportunities will set them free and the highest effort will transport them to prosperity.

Mr Speaker, allow me to speak to a National Issue which I would like to benefit from this Houses's attention.

Abortion

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that over 22,000 abortions are performed in Jamaica each year. Complications arising from unsafe abortion are among the top 10 causes of maternal death in the island, especially among teenagers. Review of legislation governing abortion has been 30 years in the making. Efforts by various Governments to address these concerns have been halted by conservative religious groups not sensitive to the reproductive rights and realities of women, girls, their families and partners.

In Jamaica, Sections 72 and 73 of the Offences Against the Persons Act (1861):

- Criminalise women who chose to terminate a pregnancy, who, if convicted “shall be liable to be imprisoned for life with or without hard labour.”
- Criminalise medical professionals who facilitate a woman’s exercise of choice to have her pregnancy terminated, and the parents and guardians who facilitate termination of pregnancies of girls under the age of 18. If convicted they “shall be liable to be imprisoned for a term not exceeding 3 years with or without hard labour.”

“Too often we enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought.

Think, does the illegality of abortion prevent its practice?

Is pregnancy only unwanted because the woman has been sexually reckless?

The answer to these questions is NO. The current law frustrates THOUSANDS of Jamaican women, the poor especially, who are in desperate need of abortion services. Nearly half of all pregnancies - 41 per cent - are unplanned (2002 Reproductive Health Survey); only 50 per cent of pregnancies were planned (2008 Reproductive Health Survey) In 2009, 7,612 live births occurred to mothers under the age of 20---a decrease from the 7,680 recorded at the end of the year 2008 (data obtained from NFPB) Eighty-one percent of recent births reported by women aged 15-19 were unplanned. Nearly all of these unintentional births were mistimed (occurred earlier than desired) as opposed to unwanted (no children or no more children

desired). (obtained from NFPB)

WHO IS AFFECTED

According to the WHO, "abortions and complications thereof are the eighth leading cause of maternal deaths in Jamaica affecting adolescents primarily". March 1 and August 31, 2005, there were 641 patients at Ward 5, which deals exclusively with abortions at the Victoria Jubilee Hospital.

All patients were from inner-city communities, single, and nearly half were Christians while a third were teenagers. About 40 per cent admitted to having had a previous termination of pregnancy and 30 per cent had two or more previous abortions.

DO JAMAICANS SUPPORT ABORTION?

YES!!!!!! Many of us support efforts to make services for the termination of pregnancy legal, safe and affordable. A 2006 public opinion survey conducted by Hope Enterprise found about "60 per cent of respondents support the legalisation of termination of pregnancy under "special conditions" such as "incest, endangerment of the woman's physical or mental health and/or life."

From the public health perspective- We need to address these women who burden the public health system after botched abortion attempts. Evidence in Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, South Korea, Guyana and Barbados shows that where abortion is legal maternal morbidity and mortality rates fall. Rates may initially seem to rise because of the previous underreporting.

For women in the middle and upper income groups the law can be circumvented by access to financial resources to pay for private medical services to procure a safe abortion. The law is restrictive and unjust to women in the lower income groups who cannot afford private medical services and therefore resort to the illegal informal market. In both instances, the quality of the service that the woman receives is entirely determined by the ethics and integrity of the

individual practitioner. There are no minimum standards and no norms. Legal provision of abortion by qualified practitioners in both the public and private health care systems as recommended will ensure that safe abortions can be accessed by all women thus protecting their lives and health.

While debates on when life begins and ends may persist along the continuous range of religious perspectives, the realities surrounding this public health matter which affects so many women will not disappear unless addressed based on existing, objective realities. It is a woman's right to have all the options available to her, to be provided with information that allows her to make an informed decision, and not be persecuted for this decision. The State has a responsibility to ensure that the rights of all its citizens are protected.

The current illegal status of abortion in all circumstances exposes women to stigma and discrimination when they are faced with this choice. Women should not be punished for what is a difficult decision about their body, life and future. It is a misuse of Government power to take that right from them. Denying women access to medical services that enable them to regulate their fertility or terminate an unwanted or dangerous pregnancy amounts to a refusal to provide health care that only women need. Women are consequently exposed to health risks not experienced by men. Repealing the prohibitive provisions under the Offences Against the Persons Act concerning abortion, as recommended by the Policy Review Group would restore this right to women and prevent further stigmatization and gender discrimination.

Mr Speaker, let us consider cases where

- Contraception was used but it failed and the woman is not in a position to go through with the pregnancy and adequately support a child.
- The pregnancy resulted from rape or an abusive relationship.
- The pregnancy places them at severe mental, emotional and/or physical risk.
- The compromised development and health of the foetus.

To abort or not to abort is an extremely difficult decision for any woman.

There is, not only the financial cost to consider, but risk to her mental and physical health as well. Adequate access to appropriate counselling services to help her consider all the options, strengthening of sexual and reproductive education at all levels, and the strengthening of family planning services, help women make the best choices. Regrettably pregnancy is often not a question of choice for women, not only in cases of rape and incest, but also in the everyday dynamic of gender relations where many women are subject to domination and/or the threat of violence from men.

We as a nation need debate this issue and lay the facts bare without shrouding them in misconceptions, prejudice and religious absolutism. It is about time such an important issue be dealt with once and for all, the women of Jamaica deserve no less.

Mr Speaker, what of the bright young 16 yr old girl in the inner city who is getting ready to do CSEC and who is the only option to lift that family out of the abyss of poverty who is sent for by the "Don" in the community, then abused and subsequently takes the morning after pill but still ends up missing her period and later diagnosed as pregnant. Should she be forced to carry that child? Or to seek abortion on the black market? As a man of faith I humbly suggest that we allow common sense to prevail.

Let me make it abundantly clear that I am not proposing abortion as a means of contraception nor am I suggesting that mere poverty should be a reason for it, as I stand as a true example that it is possible to break the changes of poverty and rise from poverty to prosperity.

Mr Speaker, of paramount importance is also the need to revise our adoption laws so that we can provide this service to those persons who are in need.

I anxiously await a vigorous debate on this matter, as we seek to establish a new paradigm: to dispel myth and to embrace a true sense of liberty and prosperity.

Conclusion

Mr Speaker, Poverty is an endemic condition. In North Western St Ann we are using Multidimensional Strategies to address the needs of the constituents particularly the dispossessed. To this end, we have done a lot but there is still work left to do. The best way to assist low income families is to launch an attack on poverty on multiple fronts by making the most of our limited resources and targeting them in the priority areas.

Enabling pro-poor development that is development at a pace and in a pattern that enhances the ability of poor men and women to participate in and contribute to and benefit from development this will be critical in achieving a sustainable trajectory out of poverty to prosperity. The Jamaica we dream of achieving in 2030 cannot be causality of Poverty. Jamaica, the place of choice to live work raise families and do business. That dream is still valid.

Mr Speaker, St Ann North Western is equipped and ready to lead the journey to that prosperous nation. We believe that the nobler Jamaica, the loftier race can start with us. I have an abiding faith in the will, strength and capacities of my constituents. They placed their hope in my hands and I am prepared to work diligently and creatively, to think generously and honestly in NW St Ann so that Jamaica may, under God, increase in beauty fellowship and prosperity and play her part in advancing the welfare of the whole human race.