

**EDITED ADDRESS BY STEPHEN LASHLEY, CANDIDATE FOR CHRIST  
CHURCH WEST CENTRAL TO THE ST. MICHAEL WEST BRANCH OF THE  
DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY ON SUNDAY, MARCH 4, 2007 AT ST.  
LEONARD'S BOYS' SCHOOL**

The same factors that faced the electorate and the DLP in opposition in 1986 are right before us. Our health sector is in crisis, our education system is in crisis, housing and land are in crisis and finally we have the Government and the FTC admitting to what the country knew all along, that the cost of living over the past three years has sky-rocketed out of the reaches and affordability of Barbadians. What pains me though is that they can announce no solutions to this crisis.

AND why the DLP has to return to Government to solve our country's problems is clearly documented by none other than Clyde Mascoll, who remains among young voters in particular with whom I interact, the biggest political let-down in recent history – In fact, it is clear to me that “the Mascoll manouvre” has brought increased apathy among voters and growing suspicion of every politician:

I want to quote Mascoll as the then Opposition Leader on why he felt the country needed the return to the DLP:

He made this statement in the House of Assembly on December 10, 2004 on the qualities of his current political boss:

*“Prime Minister Arthur is a monumental failure as a manager, reckless with spending the public's purse, and a disappointment as a leader. With two of the biggest electoral mandates in our history, he has not moved us forward as a country; he has failed to inspire us as a people; he has been afraid to take the tough decisions, the hallmark of great leaders - the move to republican status is a good example. He is afraid to offend his benefactors. In his own words, Mr. Speaker, he has been a catastrophic failure.”*

I wish to challenge Clyde Mascoll today to stand up and repeat this statement as a man and stand by it.

Suffice it to say, Clyde Mascoll's statement hangs like an albatross around his neck and the neck of his new boss, Owen Arthur and the entire BLP Government.

### **UP-COMING ELECTION CRUCIAL**

The coming election is a crucial one because it will test the intelligence of each and every Barbadian.

The strategy of the BLP each and every election is very clear – It protects its benefactors and stifles the progress of Barbadians throughout most of its term. It also does not act on the many promises it made to the electorate in its glossy manifesto, but within a year or so before elections, it mobilizes huge amounts of public and private funds, splashes ill-prepared roads in neighbourhoods in constituencies that are considered marginal with barber-green, give a few vulnerable persons short-term employment and appeals to young voters only on the basis of glitz, glamour and party.

The challenge for voters in the next General Election is whether it will allow the BLP to get away with cheap politicking to intimidate them into either not voting or voting for a tired three-term administration that has clearly lost its way.

Their performance has been dismal, but they have been quick to promise the world:

I give you a few examples –

In 1996 Billie Miller promised a whole new look for Bridgetown. It was only 10 years later that we saw any movement in this direction and in many respects the project remains incomplete. The promise of a pedestrian-only Broad Street is still to be seen.

Mia Mottley promised the removal of Lord Nelson. We know where Lord Nelson still remains. The promised boardwalk along Bay Street is still to be realized.

In 1994, Liz Thompson as Minister of Health promised that her ministry would be the one to introduce separation of garbage. Three ministers and 12 years later, not a single item of garbage is being separated. She also promised that the Mangrove Pond landfill would be closed “on a date to be announced”. That date has not yet arrived – 13 years later.

She also said that the country had a decision to make about whether a new landfill, an incinerator or a combination of both would be the way to go. That decision remains illusive.

In 1994 one of the first promises made by the then brand new Minister of Tourism in 1994, Sir Richard Cheltenham was a vastly expanded Grantley Adams International Airport. 13 years later, the airport final improvements continue to drag.

## PEOPLE NEGLECT

And I am charging this evening that each time the BLP runs this country, the ordinary man and woman, boy and girl is

neglected. Today our policemen, teachers, Sanitation Workers, Public Officers, school leavers, and self employed persons can expect no help from this Government.

At every juncture, any opportunity by Barbadians to get a piece of the action has been denied by the Barbados Labour party Administration. And I want to refer to some examples – We had the shameless granting of a multi-million dollar contract to make road signs for Barbados being granted to a Trinidadian company by the Ministry of Transport and Works without the opportunity being afforded to any Barbadian signage company to tender for that contract. And what's worst, there was the indecency of that same Trinidadian company turning around and seeking to sub-contract the very Barbadian sign companies to do the work.

This Government does not feel the need to create opportunities for ordinary Barbadians, but likes the idea of giving handouts and leaving people vulnerable to their political manouvres at election time.

Our policemen and policewomen have been side-lined by this Government.

Owen Arthur has said that our police officers are not special and police men and women need to remember this at election time. There is no doubt that we have a professional Police Force in Barbados, but they are not being remunerated adequately for the job they are called upon to do. Did you know that Airport and Seaport security officers are paid at a higher rate of salary on entering their respective services than police officers?

While millions of dollars are being lavished on World Cup and shoring up the impossible task of saving Bostic's deposit against Patrick Todd, our police officers are made to work under deplorable conditions. Since the DLP left office in 1994, the BLP has refused to do anything for the police. A look at the bad conditions at Central Police Station, Districts A, B, C, D and F, Crab Hill, Belleplaine, Hastings, Oistins and Six Roads

begs the question as to how do we expect members of the Police Force to perform at the level which they do. In some cases roofs have fallen on police officers, some have to operate from containers and some are forced to change their clothes at neighbouring people's homes. Female officers lack the privacy they need to functions properly – and in all this we have an Attorney General that understand little about these problems and does nothing to solve them. Our police officers deserve better.

Our teachers too have been neglected by this Government. Poor working conditions, tools and teaching aids – lack of consultation on important matters and no power to enforce discipline in our schools. All of this has occurred while between Mia Mottley and the present Minister, millions have been wasted in Edu-Tech with little or no benefit flowing to our children or teachers.

**YOUTH BEWARE**

I want to implore the youth – particularly those who will be voting for the very first time in this up-coming election – beware of the glitz and glamour of this – when you strip what they come with of the gift-wrap paper, you will find nothing but deception. Do not for one moment confuse them with us. Their style of politics – failed promises and neglect of our communities – has caused many of you to determine that you will not vote – As I have and continue to do in my constituency – Christ Church West Central – I urge you to use your vote to punish the Barbados Labour Party for their indiscretions – We need you to get rid of them and return decency to public life.

WHAT HAVE THEY DONE FOR YOU – NOTHING

The BLP has done nothing for young people beyond trying to use them. They had many opportunities to empower our youth but failed to make decisions that could create wealth for our youth.

They had an opportunity to assist young people directly and through entities such as Credit Unions, to become owners of two of the most powerful and successful state entities in Barbados – Barbados National Bank and Insurance Corporation of Barbados. Instead, rather than organizing our youth to take advantage of these opportunities, the BLP opted to sell them off to foreign interests. The most that Barbadians could now ever be in these institutions are employees answering to foreign bosses. And rather than encourage and cooperate with the Credit Unions, this Government is imposing the most draconian legislation on Credit Unions, owned largely by black workers, than any country has ever seen. Our vision of the Credit Unions as partners in the provision of housing for Barbadians, has been scoffed at by the BLP and under the proposed new legislation Credit Unions will be restricted in their ability to own real estate and grant mortgages. Imagine a movement of more than 150,000 members, owning assets in excess of \$700 million not being able to become the movers and shakers of this economy. This Government, having thrust CSME down our throats, has no

vision for the involvement of Credit Unions in CSME – but we  
in the DLP do.