

October 2nd 2020

Deception NDP Style

Introduction

Last week the opposition New Democratic Party produced a “flip flop” beyond anything anyone could imagine, in the political circles in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Former political leader, Sir James Mitchell, received an order of about forty thousand tee-shirts, apparently for the upcoming political campaign. He bragged and boasted to his friends, that the shipment was coming, along with some stickers. The stickers were already displayed on some vehicles here.

Imagine the look on Sir James Mitchell’s face, when the packages were opened, and he discovered that they were white in colour. Lord have his mercy, what an embarrassing situation for the NDP. But not to be outdone, Sir James, being the master strategist that he claims he is, found a solution.

Why not change the political colours of the party, from yellow to white? Why not find a reason to do this, for example, the need to attract the middle of the road and swing voters, who might not vote? And so Sir James took to the podium to explain the new strategy, the changing of the party colours. How this will play out in the campaign is anyone’s imagination.

In early 2016

The NDP was at it again, trying to deceive Vincentians about the sale of land in Canouan, to finance the international airport project at Argyle. Based on a flippant comment during a conversation between a developer and a few people in Canouan, a statement was made that if the people of that Grenadine island want access to a certain beach, then they should ask Dr. Ralph Gonsalves to return the sum of money paid for the land, to the developer.

Immediately, that statement went “viral” as our young people would say. The following day, a Saturday, Nice radio was putting a spin on this matter. Within a week, Arnhim Eustace was leading his party, the NDP, on a veritable charge that was going nowhere. He wanted to know about the land that was sold, where is the US\$60 million dollars paid for the land, when it was deposited, and whether or not it was in the Consolidated Fund.

These questions had one aim in mind, and that is to create in the minds of Vincentians, particularly those in Canouan, that there was some “hanky panky” in

terms of the sale of the land, that somehow the money was deposited in the hands of Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, and that there was some corrupt acts or acts, as a result of this "sale" of land.

This whole tissue of conjecture and lies, is all part of the NDP platform to create uncertainty in the country, in the wake of their defeat at the polls held in December 2015. Unfortunately for the NDP, they forgot that there is an institution called the Parliament of this country.

The meeting of the House

At a meeting of the House of Assembly the 6th June 2013, Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves moved a motion under Section 70(3) of the Constitution, in relation to a Supplementary Appropriation Bill No.4 of 2013, to sanction payments from the consolidated fund, for services in excess of the 2013 budget. here were four items from four separate sources of funding, under the Supplementary Appropriation Bill, which required the approval of the Parliament. Among the payments to be sanctioned by the Parliament, was a sum of money designated for the IADC, following the sale of lands in Canouan.

It is important to note that members of the Opposition, including Arnhim Eustace, Daniel Cummings and St. Clair Leacock, were present in the Parliament when the motion was debated, and in fact they participated in the debate.

As Prime Minister Gonsalves explained at the time, the money for sale of 40 acres of land in Canouan, amounted to EC\$53.6 million dollars. The parliament had to approve the transfer of the money from the Consolidated Fund to the account of the IADC, and that was done. So it is clear to all and sundry, including the Opposition, what this sale was all about. Further details in relation to the debate on the Supplementary Appropriation Bill, No.4 of 2013, can be obtained in the Parliamentary Hansard, which is available.

So it's disingenuous and a clear deception for the NDP, and Arnhim Eustace, to pretend that there was something wrong with the sale of the lands in Canouan. It is important to mention that the NDP did not remain in the parliament for the entire debate on the Bill. They walked out of the House following a disagreement over matter between the member for West Kingstown, Daniel Cummings, and government senator Julian Francis.

Let us not forget that the NDP opposed the sale of the land in the Grenadines, as part of their overall opposition to the construction of the international airport project at Argyle. They wanted to place as many obstacles in the way of the ULP administration, to delay, and ultimately to stop the construction of the airport. They have failed miserably in this regard.

The NDP deception

Having failed in their bid to win the general election in December 2015, the NDP has embarked on a series of activities to discredit the leadership of the ULP, and in particular, the Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves. Look at the way they tried to link the ULP and its leadership to the fiasco in Panama, in relation to monies lodged there by certain world leaders. There is absolutely no proof that anyone in the leadership of the ULP invested any money in Panama.

Expect the NDP to continue to try to use events to smear the name of the ULP and its leadership. Expect the NDP to continue to try to fool the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in a number of ways. Expect the NDP to seek to obtain relevance as a key stake-holder, a strategic partner in the development process of our beloved state. And expect the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to continue to reject the NDP, as an unpatriotic bunch, bereft of a philosophy and a strategy to take our country forward.

In the face of impressive progress in terms of the development of the country, the NDP and Godwin Friday, can do no more than make dream statements, wild posturing and weak leadership. And now we have this tee-shirt issue.

Who really is leading the NDP?