**September 4th 2020**

**All-important National Council Meeting by the ULP**

**Introduction**

Last week the ruling Unity Labour Party signaled its seriousness to meet the challenge of the opposition New Democratic Party in the upcoming general election, by holding its largest ever National Council meeting, at the Arnos Vale sporting complex on Thursday 27th August, 2020. All the constituencies were represented by large numbers, upwards and beyond what is normally expected at a national council meeting.

Last week the ULP confirmed and officially accepted the fifteen candidates who will represent the ULP at the next general election, expected to be called soon. Almost immediately one notices the difference between the candidate slate for the ULP, and that of the NDP, which has not been completed as yet.

The ULP boasts several young persons as candidates, including Carlos Williams from the Northern Grenadines, Luke Browne from East Kingstown, Carlos James from North Leeward, and Orando Brewster from Central Leeward. All in all, it’s an impressive slate of candidates, including the experienced Saboto Caesar in South Central Windward, and Montgomery Daniel in North Windward, all ably led by the Five Star General, Dr. Ralph Gonsalves.

The truth of the matter is that the Unity Labour Party is the only political entity in the country with the prepared plans, the organized skills, and the leadership, to take the country forward. The evidence is clear for all to see. In the midst of the Covid 19 Pandemic, with the world in chaos, it’s the safe guiding hand of the ULP, led by Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves, that is taking us through this crisis. We hear all sort of talk about closing down the country, and keeping people out, but now all the hasty and rash talk has died down. The country now knows that the ULP is providing the leadership, and is handling the Covid 19 crisis, with remarkable ease.

**The response of supporters**

They came in their numbers. They came from North Windward in support of Montgomery Daniel, from Central Leeward in support of Orando Brewster, from North Leeward in support of Carlos James, and from Bequia in support of Carlos Williams. The Mike Findlay stand which holds just over one thousand persons, was filled to capacity, with supporters moving to the Phillip Veira pavilion.

As the National Council approved the ULP, the response from the supporters was overwhelming, and there were no dissenting voices. Clearly this was a sign that the ULP was getting stronger and stronger, and this is of comfort to some of the doubters in the ULP camp. For sure, the response from the ULP supporters has sent a shock wave through the NDP camp. Friday and company could never imagine that the ULP continues to be strong and is getting stronger every day.

In the meantime, as the campaign gets more robust, we have the NDP candidates making errors after errors, with Friday being unable to provide some leadership, by ensuring that there is disciple in the camp. So we have the likes of Fitz Bramble talking about a toll road as if this is part of the NDP campaign, and maybe it is. And we have they messy situation in Marriaqua, where a former ULP prospective candidate, Kirk Da Silva, made a mess of the NDP’s campaign strategy, that rendered that party clueless, without any direction.

This left Friday with the dubious task of being forced to jettison Phillip Jackson, in favour of the resurrection of Bernard Wyllie. We expect more and more errors and mistakes from the NDP as the campaign continues.

**Lifting SVG Higher**

The ULP is committed to the theme of “Lifting SVG Higher”, as the party gets ready to further unfurl it development programme beyond the year 2025. This will be driven by the developments in the tourism sector, including the developments around the Sandals and Marriot hotel chains, the expansion of Port Kingstown and the development of the new city at Arnos Vale.

All of the existing programmes which have driven the development of the country over the 20 years, including the education revolution, the expansion in the health sector, the further developments in agriculture, to include the expansion in marijuana, and infrastructure development, will all be enhanced. New programmes will be included in the eagerly awaited new party election manifesto.

The ULP has already demonstrated that strategic thinking and actions are its hallmarks. With the mix of energetic and well-trained youth, coupled with the mix of experience candidates, and led by an astute and enterprising leader, the ULP is well placed to meet the challenges of the future.

Each of the fifteen ULP candidates is of high quality, well-trained and experienced, and possessed of endearing attributes and personal achievements. Even more, they are blessed with an enduring love for the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The ULP slate of candidates as approved by the National Council, is far better than what the NDP has to offer. The NDP cannot conclude its line-up of candidates, having a difficult time in deciding on a candidate for North Windward and North Central Windward.

This is a party that is not ready for governance in this country. They have no development plan, and no vision. They talk glibly about giving them a chance so that they can show Vincentians what they can do. This of course must be a fool’s errand. St. Vincent and the Grenadines cannot be likened to a lotto game, where the people take chances on the election of a government. We must have clear progressive policies to allow our people to decide. That is what the ULP is offering, a clear progressive development policy, and a qualified group of fifteen gifted candidates to carry out this plan, for the development of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.