



## **ENFORCE ANTI-CORRUPTION LAWS**

The ruling Democratic Labour Party has yet again failed to deliver on one of its major 2008 General Elections commitments to the people of Barbados.

St. James North Barbados Labour Party Member of Parliament Edmund Hinkson has chided the Government for its failure so far to establish the Prevention of Corruption Commission, which would receive all declarations and documents from persons in the public life who fall within the legislation's ambit.

Addressing the BLP St. Philip West branch meeting last Sunday at the Princess Margaret Memorial School, he accused Prime Minister Freundel Stuart of not revealing all of the facts in his recent comments to the media on the status of integrity and freedom of information legislation in the country.

"Having passed the Prevention of Corruption Act as one of its last parliamentary manoeuvres just before this year's General Elections, the Government has not established any Commission, as is required by the statute, so that the Act can be proclaimed. This eight-member Commission, to be headed by a former judge or a long-standing attorney-at-law, will also be empowered to carry out its own enquiries and investigations into any allegations of corruption by persons in public life and into complaints in respect of failure to comply with the Act's provisions," Hinkson stated.

"The real issue is not whether Parliament ought to now enact a separate Integrity in Public Life Act, as the Prime Minister declared, but whether there are indeed certain elements within the DLP which are seeking to delay the implementation of this legislation. The DLP was given a mandate in 2008 to enact this law, which should enhance transparency and accountability in our Country's political and administrative governance. The Act, having been passed, now needs to be enforced," he commented.

The attorney-at-law however opined that the legislation goes too far in including top trade unionists as well as ordinary members of statutory boards and government-controlled companies within its ambit while at the same time excluding officers in high levels of the public service below the rank of Permanent Secretary and Heads of Department. Revealing that he had written to the Joint Select Committee of Parliament on this issue before he became a Parliamentarian, he stated his belief that it will become more difficult to encourage citizens to perform national duty by serving on statutory boards and companies just because an Act, which otherwise needs to be in effect, has however gone too far in the categories of persons, their spouses and minor children who will fall within its compass.

### **EDMUND G. HINKSON**

Member of Parliament for Saint James North