ADDRESS
BY
THE HONOURABLE
Esther Le Gendre, M.P.
MINISTER OF EDUCATION

at the

FORMAL HANDING-OVER CEREMONY

of the

TRANQUILITY GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Tuesday 13\textsuperscript{th} October, 2009

8:30 a.m.
• Master of Ceremonies
• Honourable Gary Hunt – Member of Parliament – Port-of-Spain North/St Ann’s West
• Permanent Secretary Angella Jack and other officials of the Ministry of Education
• Mr. Nestor Lambert and Ms Nichola Armstrong – Directors - EFCL
• Mr. Paul Taylor – Chief Executive Officer , and staff of EFCL
• Mr. Vishnu Jagdeo - Principal – Tranquillity Government Primary School
• Ms. Odith O’Connor Gomez – 1st Assistant Secretary - National Parent Teachers Association
• Mr. Aaron Napier – President - Parent Teachers Association and parents of Tranquillity Gov’t Primary School
• Members of the Community; Members of the media
• Students, parents, teachers
• Ladies and gentlemen all other protocols observed

Good morning to all.
In the continuing drive to improve the infrastructure of schools in our nation, and to achieve the objectives as set out in vision 2020, the Ministry of Education is extremely proud this morning to hand over formally the Tranquility Government Primary School to the students, staff and parents. This school, has the privilege of being located in our nation's capital, a city that has become one of the busiest centres of the region.

The mission of the Ministry of Education is to provide for all our students, from the nursery to the secondary levels, school facilities which are ultra modern and consistent with the standards adopted by developed nations. I would like to thank the principal, teachers, parents and students for their patience during the time of construction.

I would also like to thank the management of the NUGFW whose premises were pressed into service to house students while this school was being built.

At this time I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the Educational Facilities Company Limited, the Uniform Building Contractors Limited and the Beijing Liujuan Construction Corporation who have done a tremendous job to create a modern, functional facility.

I would like to extend my sincerest condolences to the family and friends of Mr. Chen, a dedicated and hard working employee, who passed away at the St. Clair Medical Centre last week.

My team and I had taken particular interest in this school given the special circumstances surrounding its construction, and I myself had made many visits to the site during construction and was impressed with the team spirit, work ethic and professionalism of everyone I met.

The Tranquility Government Primary School was established in 1966. Prior to this there was the Tranquility Boys' Intermediate and Tranquility Girls' Intermediate. After the school was converted in 1966, it was separated into two co-educational schools one of which was the Tranquility Government Primary School, which had an initial population of 1000 students!

The other school was, as most of you may already know, the Tranquility Government Secondary School.

Some of the many vibrant, committed principals who served since 1996 include, Ms. Wilma Driscoll, Mr. Kenneth Phillip, Mr. Rudolph Gordon and Ms. Ramona Chuckaree.

This school has always catered for varying competencies in the areas of academics, sport, and creative arts and continues to excel at seasonal music festivals, the most recent being SANFEST. On the sporting side, students of the school are frequently selected to represent the Port of Spain and Environs District at Ministry's National Sporting events.

Some of the past students who have become prominent citizens include former first lady, the late Mrs. Patricia Robinson, Justice Paula Mae-Weeks and Mr. Robert Riley of bpTT. So as you can see your school has a very rich history that makes you the envy of your fellow primary schools.

This school which currently has an enrollment of 488 students, now has a capacity for 630 students.

In addition to an expanded number of classrooms this school now boasts of a multi-purpose hall, administrative facilities, music room, pan-theatre, computer room, auditorium, elevator and an audio visual room. This is not all though, for I have left the most interesting for last, as this school is the first in Trinidad and Tobago to have an enclosed rooftop playfield and an underground carpark. The school is also fully equipped with facilities for differently-abled students.

The use of labs and computer rooms is driven by a more comprehensive syllabus which infuses an appreciation of technology in the teaching and learning process at the primary level. In short, it is the intention of the Ministry of
Education that this new school will be one more step in the journey towards the comprehensive reform of the education system that will serve to achieve our vision.

And so, I am happy to be here with you today to celebrate progress for our children and our society. We say goodbye to our old accommodations and embrace a brand new one.

At this point I would like to make a special appeal to the principal, staff and parents. The management and operation of large, modern facilities such as these require not only special leadership skills, but the commitment of staff to support the leadership. I know that you have a highly engaged PTA which can do more with the support of more parents.

A school in the heart of the city can pose challenges to ensuring the safety of young ones before and after school. I have visited this school after dismissal (one of the drawbacks you will have because my office is so close) and I cannot say that I was happy with the level of supervision available at that time to our very energetic young ones after school hours. There is an opportunity here for the PTA to collaborate with the school during those empty hours after formal classes and before parents can pick up their children. The safety of our students is a matter for us all.

During that visit I was also less than happy with the level of garbage outside of bins and children running on top of brand new school furniture. Pride in our school and respect for property are values we must instill, values on which we must insist.

To the principal, teachers, students you are now entrusted with a brand new school designed, built and equipped according to international standards. I invite you to use these facilities well, Tranquility Government Primary School has given the nation many distinguished personalities including former Prime Minister the late Dr. Eric Williams…we hope that you find inspiration and hope in your traditions.

I thank you.