

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION No 96/009

Govt Must Start Taking Decision On Future Of GBC

King Report Should Be Made Public

The Opposition is concerned at the length of time that it is taking the Government to come to concrete conclusions over the future of GBC following the commissioning of the King Report which the Government has kept secret until now. It is standard practice for this GSD Government to commission expensive reports at taxpayer's expense and then keep them to themselves and refuse to share the contents of those reports, thereby not allowing anyone to judge whether the supposed experts contracted have done a good job or not and whether all the recommendations contained in those reports are to be implemented, when and why or why not. This last report on GBC has been no exception, it has cost the taxpayer £50,000 and only the Government and we presume, the Board of GBC, knows what is in it.

GBC is at present in limbo, with the post of General Manager being rotated between three senior managers who, it appears can take little or no decisions without referring matters to a Board which has been hand-picked by the Government and has recently acted in a politically biased fashion, thereby putting in doubt the independence and impartiality of the Corporation as it is presently functioning. It is this Board that has to take the decisions over the future of GBC, although the Chief Minister already told Parliament that the Board generally agreed with the view of the Government over what was to be done, although nothing is being done.

The Opposition has no doubt that Peter Caruana is happy with the situation as it is today because it apparently allows him to better influence GBC decisions. The Opposition is eager to know what the Government or Board propose to do precisely to try and ensure that neither the Corporation as a whole nor any individual employee can be manipulated or controlled by anyone in the new set-up.

The employees want to know where they stand, the public want to know what sort of service they are to expect and what that service will cost in terms of investment and annually recurring costs. Moreover, it is certainly in the interest of the media, the trade unions and other political and social institutions that GBC radio and television should be independent and impartial and cannot be got at by the powers that be in the scheme of things that might be planned.

The Government and Board have had more than sufficient time to look at all the issues related to the future of GBC. It is about time they shared the information they have with all of us by making the £50,000 King Report public and by disclosing what their intentions are.

ENDS