



**Address to
The 25th Anniversary Luncheon
of the
Broadcasting Commission of Jamaica
by
Professor Hopeton S. Dunn,
Chairman, BCJ,
Wyndham Hotel, Kingston, October 25, 2001**

Master of Ceremonies;
Distinguished Guests, Friends All,

It is such a pleasure to see each of you here this afternoon!

I extend to you the warmest possible welcome to this, the 25th Anniversary Luncheon of the Broadcasting Commission.

As you know, we have received the apologies of a number of our former ministers, some of whom are now at a place not too far from here being sworn into office again following the recent appointment of the Hon. Andrew Holness as the new Prime Minister and his appointment of a new Cabinet. I welcome Mr Colin Campbell and Ms Sandra Falconer representing the Opposition, and Mr Oliver McIntosh representing former Minister Olivia Grange.

You have our very best wishes and we continue to thank you for your contributions to public life, to the Broadcasting and to the broadcasting eco-system in Jamaica.

Posthumous

In that same vein, we must also express our appreciation, though posthumously to others of your predecessors who have made their exit in recent times. I think in particular of the late former Ministers Donald Buchanan and Anthony Abrahams and we honour their memory.

Let me also welcome our friends from the industry: in particular Mr. Gary Allen – Chairman of the Media Association of Jamaica; Mrs. Winsome Witter – President of the Jamaica Association of Cable Operators (JACCO); Miss Jenny Campbell – President of the Press Association of Jamaica (PAJ).

We are also delighted to see our former Commission Chairman, Commissioners, licensees, members of the Secretariat Staff, representatives of our sister regulatory agencies and colleagues from other public sector departments.

ANDREW!

Ladies and gentlemen, long before the notion of youth in national leadership broke so dramatically on the political landscape, the Broadcasting Commission had invited a young man called Andrew to address us on this special occasion of our 25th Anniversary!

In so doing, we recognized that entrepreneur Andrew Pairman would bring to our deliberations not only the energy and insight of youth, but also the experience and acumen of someone who has built his own company in the field of digital information services. We are delighted to welcome him, knowing that this Andrew may not really need the full span of an hour to acquaint us with his thoughtful ideas, but we do look forward to his fresh insights and reflections on our Anniversary theme: PEOPLE TRANSITIONING DIGITAL.

This theme reflects the future, while centering our people at the heart of the process of transformation. It is the mantra that guides the work of the Commission, as we:

- Look to transitioning the entire broadcasting industry to Digital technology in less than a decade's time.
- It is what informs our own BCJ search for digital monitoring technologies to enhance the small army of citizen monitors that we have trained to help ensure that we have acceptable standards of output in protection of our children,
- and it is thinking that has guided the Commission in placing before Government a range of reforms of existing broadcasting Regulation and Laws, including a broadening of the definition of broadcasting.

We very much look forward to enablement of the Commission to pursue even more avidly those who treat our airwaves with scant regard, who engaged in the corrupt practice of payola and who continue to poorly serve our audiences either through inadequate technical reach or through obsolete analogue mentalities.

As we mark this Twenty-five years of the Broadcasting Commission, we also acknowledge the coming of age of our country, as it marks 50 years since Independence.

With the swearing in of Jamaica's 9th Prime Minister, the Honourable Andrew Holness, a few days ago, we now have the first PM of the post independence generation.

It is significant that the 9th Prime Minister is also the country's fourth Prime Minister in the last six years, and his appointment comes on the cusp General Elections. It would therefore be an understatement to say that we are living in times of rapid and monumental change. Indeed, the politicians are only now catching up with what has been the experience of many other countries and sectors in engendering rapid and quantum changes in the landscape in preparation for the next 25 or 50 years.

Indeed, this is a time for reflection on how far we have come, even as we acknowledge that we have not gone far enough and redouble our energies as we move into the future.

This is the background against which we come to this 25th anniversary event, an occasion on which I am proud to say, that the Broadcasting Commission is not only the most well established content regulator in the region, but one which has been a consistent leader in landmark policy decisions that have ushered in or supported important changes to broadcasting in Jamaica and indeed the Caribbean.

In conclusion, I must acknowledge that the achievements and reputation that the Commission has enjoyed over these 25 years have come as a result of the quality and commitment of successive Commissions, our highly competent staff and the co-operation of stakeholders, all of whom are represented here today.

Today is the day to hear our esteemed Guest Speaker and I look forward to his address.

We are delighted that you have all joined us, at a time when the Broadcasting Commission at the end of our current mandate, closes one chapter. As an industry we must together embark on a new journey, this time across the digital frontiers.

Thank You.