

REMARKS
HON. KARL SAMUDA
MINISTER OF INDUSTRY, COMMERCE, AGRICULTURE & FISHERIES
NEW EQUIPMENT UNVEILING & FACTORY TOUR BY SEPROD (International
Biscuits Limited)
2E Valentine Drive, Kingston 19
Wednesday, April 27, 2016 at 9:30 a.m.

It is my great pleasure to be here this morning to make brief remarks.

This company (Seprod) is one that I have observed over the many years because, incidentally, I represented this area at one time and it is within a stone's throw from my own constituency office across the road.

In 2015, Seprod celebrated an incredible milestone, its 75th anniversary as a leading Jamaican manufacturer, under the theme, **“Celebrating Seprod, 75 years of Innovation”**. Unquestionably, the largest manufacturer in Jamaica with an employment of 2000 persons, with annual revenue of \$15B, it has not only been able to maintain its size, but it continues to invest and indeed, last year invested some US\$15M.

You only have to speak with Paul (Scott) for 5 minutes, and he emits so much energy and enthusiasm and patriotism, that if I had the opportunity to bottle his energy and market it to Jamaica, we would not have a financial problem.

Investments continue to this day where we are witnessing here an investment of \$285M in a new piece of high-end equipment. This company is one of the most innovating, led by an innovator, with the potential to increase exports, and replace some of the J\$1.6 billion of imported biscuits into the country. The objective is to be innovative and hence competitive, thereby increasing our chances for export.

Government has a role to play in all of this. Government must play a role to facilitate this expansion. To merge industry, commerce and agriculture is a key element of what the Prime Minister speaks about: cooperation and innovativeness. He has put together

three elements of governance that will redound to the benefit of the entire administration, and the effectiveness of doing business. And, in this regard, we have no doubt that Jamaica will see a level of growth and prosperity that has hitherto eluded us.

Agro-industry is a key element of business and this is where Seprod plays such a critical role. It seeks to add value to whatever the raw material happens to be. And, it is through these levels of innovation that I say to you that I had the occasion recently to visit at the COTED meeting in Guyana where I enunciated that very principle, that gone are the days when we take our primary products, produce them no matter how attractive they may be, to the end producer of the final goods.

Those days are over. It is time for Jamaica and Jamaican businessmen to realise that the best value is to extend and add value to the product so that we can get the best benefit.

Local processing, ladies and gentlemen, creates jobs. But, in order to do that our role is to remove bureaucracy, get bureaucracy out of the way so that they can go on to do the thing that they know best, and that is to expand, grow and make profit.

The improvement of soft and hard infrastructure is the role of the Government, and that is what we are dedicated to do. Encourage growth in other sectors such as agriculture, technology, wholesale and retail, because some people say you focus so much on agriculture, what about wholesale and retail?

The fact of the matter is, ladies and gentlemen, you all know that without manufacturing there is no retail. But make no mistake about it, without the distributive trade the manufacturers' hands remain idle. So those are the synergies that must come together to expand the business of trade.

So the Government of Jamaica stands squarely behind the manufacturing sector. We have observed the level of expansion taking place so far in certain areas: animal feeds,

poultry, dairy products, and especially, we note that the baking products have increased by some 5.9%. The manufacturing sector employs over 70,000 persons.

We must look finally to the overseas market. Let us not become and maintain this myopic vision business. You think you are doing well in Jamaica because you are selling well in Jamaica. But for the country to grow and expand and to earn the foreign exchange, it is companies like Seprod led by Paul Scott that are going to drive that process. You are an inspiration to us the politicians. You are an inspiration to me the Minister. You give me encouragement; you give me a sense of pride in what it means to be a Jamaican entrepreneur.

I congratulate you. I congratulate this company that you lead. I congratulate the workers that contribute so much to it, and with the leadership that we have as the Government, led by the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, I am absolutely certain that your future is secure, safe, and is going to be prosperous in this entire process.