



# Central Manchester Member of Parliament's QUARTERLY REPORT TO CONSTITUENTS

Peter Bunting - Member of Parliament for Central Manchester

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## Dear Constituents,

I am pleased to bring you my second quarterly report as your Member of Parliament, covering the period January 1 to March 31, 2008. Since my last report, I was elected General Secretary of the People's National Party, a position which gives me responsibility for its strategic and operational management. I have also been appointed a nominated member of the Electoral Commission of Jamaica (ECJ) which is responsible for conducting elections and for the electoral process. Both positions carry a great deal of responsibility and require a substantial commitment of time. However, I am mindful that these appointments must not affect my availability to my constituency nor reduce the effectiveness of my representation. As a consequence, I resigned from the Public Accounts Committee and am putting measures in place to strengthen my support team in the constituency.



Peter Bunting (left) shares a light moment with Political Finance Advisor, Marcin Walecki (centre), and fellow ECJ nominated member Sen. Tavares-Finson while discussing options for public financing of political parties.

## PARLIAMENT

In my capacity as Opposition Spokesperson on Industry and Commerce and MP for Central Manchester, I continued to participate actively in the work of Parliament during the quarter. With inflation for the fiscal year approaching 20%, and 29% in the "Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages" category, this has been an issue which has occupied much of the Opposition's time. The Leader of the Opposition, the Opposition Spokesperson on Finance, and I have consistently pointed out the weaknesses in the Government's attempt at alleviating the effect of high prices through the J\$500M basic food subsidy programme. The government has now accepted the validity of our criticism of their approach and indicated that they will be discontinuing this initiative. They have accepted our suggestion of a more targeted approach involving an increase in the number of beneficiaries under the PATH programme.



The Bauxite/Alumina plant at Kirkvine.

As indicated in my previous report, the House Committee on the Economy and Production, which I chair, has been examining the socio-economic impact of the bauxite alumina industry on the communities where the companies operate, such as those in Central Manchester. We have had very informative presentations from a number of entities including the Jamaica Bauxite Institute (JBI), the National Environment and Planning Authority (NEPA), the heads of the four bauxite companies operating in Jamaica – ALPART, JAMALCO, WINDALCO, and the St. Ann Bauxite Company. We also had an extremely spirited and passionate presentation by Mark Cameron and Artie Phillips representing a group of citizens adversely affected by the bauxite mining and processing operations in Central Manchester. Many of these presentations are available on my website ([www.bunting.org.jm](http://www.bunting.org.jm)). While the report of the committee is only now being prepared, some important points are already clear:

- Central Manchester is the constituency most affected by mining, alumina processing, and mud disposal.
- After over 50 years of these operations in Jamaica, the JBI could not present any studies on the long term impact of these operations on the health, welfare, and environment of the affected communities.
- There is inadequate monitoring of the bauxite/alumina companies' compliance with the terms of their mining licences as well as the health and environment regulations.
- NEPA needs to adopt a risk-based monitoring approach which would suggest intense monitoring of a facility like Kirkvine which is an older, less efficient plant.



## CONSTITUENCY

During the quarter, I continued to hold regular office hours on Fridays where I saw approximately 300 constituents by appointment. I also maintained a regular programme of visits to communities for citizens meetings (e.g. Lamb Town, Cedar Grove), wakes, church services, educational institutions, and social events.

- Through the SESP and other programmes, over 300 constituents were assisted with a variety of programmes, including about 80 with housing assistance, 50 with economic enablement and 165 with farming assistance. Many constituents were successfully assisted with matters related to tax, pensions, health, and even immigration due to representation made on their behalf.
- The resurfacing of Sweden Street in GeorgesValley was accomplished during this quarter.
- The construction of the Royal Flat Basic School was also completed.
- The conversion of the MP's office to a Constituency Resource Centre was completed and a formal opening is slated for this quarter. The Centre will feature several services to constituents including internet access, information on government services, literacy training, job readiness training, and a skills databank.
- Constituency Development Fund - A list of projects and a budget for the first year of the medium term development plan for the constituency have been identified for the sum allocated by the Office of the Prime Minister. Work continues to complete the 5-year development plan during the next quarter.



## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- A permit parking system became operational in Mandeville last December and has now passed the familiarisation stage. Motorists, pedestrians and business operators now enjoy a less congested town centre.
- A Youth Information Centre will be built at Brooks Park on land to be provided by the Manchester Parish Council. The project, estimated to cost J\$21M, will be funded by the South Korean government. This Centre aims to reduce the incidence of violence and anti-social behaviour among youth, to provide information on HIV/AIDS and other STIs, among other things. The project should be completed by the end of December 2008.

## NEXT QUARTER

- Education – We are expecting to break ground at the Bellefield Primary School construction site this month.
- Business Development – continuing dialogue with the Jamaica Business Development Centre (JBDC) on a partnership between the Constituency Resource Centre and JAMBIC.

Thank you for your continued support. The task of building our constituency is intensifying but the first fruits of our efforts are encouraging!

Sincerely,