



Madam Chancellor, I present Sir Arthur Lewis, Professor of Public and International Affairs of Princeton University and late Vice-Chancellor of this University.

When Arthur Lewis won the St. Lucia island scholarship some thirty years ago, public investment in higher education in the West Indies extended no further than to the sole young man (no Eve had yet appeared in that garden of opportunity) who gained the single competitive scholarship awarded annually in each territory for university education—abroad. Singularity of the quantitative kind was a distinctive characteristic of the investment. Today such investment, whether public or private, is everywhere increasingly regarded as being on a par with dealing in the more golden of gilt-edged securities: it seldom fails to pay dividends which are on the average ample, on occasion spectacular, and in the aggregate incalculable.

In terms of dividends, Arthur Lewis clearly falls within the category of the spectacular. From the start he determined to put a qualitative significance into the singularity of his first scholarship. So he turned aside from the beaten paths of law and medicine and set out to study economics at the London School of Economics, then at a peak of its renown. There he achieved the uncommon feat of passing at once from brilliant student to honoured colleague in a galaxy of academic talent. In the strenuous years of teaching, research and public service that followed, three qualities stood him in excellent stead: that

singularity of objective we have already noticed, founded as it was upon an outstanding perspicacity of mind, happily united in its turn to an enviable perspicuity of style. His lucid and incisive publications progressively won him an international reputation in various sectors of the general field of economics, and an authority, of the same dimension, in a sector of crucial contemporary importance: the question of economic growth.

By 1947 he had secured preferment to a Readership in Colonial Economics in the University of London and in the following year succeeded to the Stanley Jevons Chair of Political Economy of the University of Manchester, which he held for the next ten years. By then his fame had spread abroad and Manchester had to share his rare talents with a variety of others who also sought to engage them. The whole post-war world bristled with problems of economic development that were especially severe in those areas defined with varying degrees of civility as developing, or under-developed, or plain backward. Under the aegis of the United Nations Organization, Lewis became, as it were, a peripatetic consultant physician to ailing national economies: in the Gold Coast as it was, Ghana as it is, the Caribbean, Western Nigeria, Asia and the Far East. Perhaps it was for the sake of economy that in 1959 he was eventually given a local habitation in New York, and the name of Deputy Managing Director of the United Nations Special Fund.

There the West Indies found him once more and called him home to be, eventually, the Principal of its University College. In the highest traditions of academic integrity he commenced his brief tenure of that office by asking fundamental questions, however awkward; and in seeking and supplying the answers to those questions – on a strictly economical basis – he liberalized the conception and boldly extended the scope of university education in the West Indies: in short order it proliferated into new areas, whole new institutions, abundant

new plant; it proffered its advantages to double the former number, in an arithmetical progression that no longer hobbled but strode into the future; it openly proclaimed its purposes and quickened its relationship to the whole society. As a coping stone to the new edifice, the passage from dependent college to independent university was swiftly encompassed. In total effect, an epochal change had been wrought in West Indian provision for higher education within a single generation, and from the eminence of the Vice-Chancellorship of the new university and the perspective of his own experience and labour, Arthur Lewis could view that change with peculiar vantage and satisfaction.

I request you, Madam Chancellor, by the authority of the Senate to admit William Arthur Lewis, Bachelor of Commerce, Master of Arts, Doctor of Philosophy, etc., Knight Bachelor, to the degree of Doctor of Letters, *honoris causa*.

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