

Cash is the cause for the downfall in WI cricket



By **STAN WALKER**

Sir Hilary Beckles, Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies declared at a book signing at the second launching of his new book “Cricket Without A Cause”, which was staged at the Sportmen’s Athletic Club in Hartford, Connecticut, on Tuesday, October 31, that cash was the cause for the downfall in West Indies Test cricket.

The book is his analysis of the status of West Indies cricket and the factors which have caused the regional team to fall close to the bottom of the International Test rankings.

Sir Hilary, who served as a member of the former West Indies Cricket Board during the Julien Hunte administration, began his address by telling the group that turned up at the signing that although the book is about cricket, as an academic he was writing more about Caribbean people and their relationship to the world.

Stating that he considered the book as his most important work to date, he said that the crisis facing West Indies cricket was one that was deeper than just cricket. It is a reflection of the crisis facing Caribbean society.

“Cricket is a stage in which we (Caribbean people) perform,” he said. “It is a stage in which Caribbean drama is told. Our young men have lost its cause and the purpose that it was set for.”

Offering a critique with a view of finding out what is responsible for our loss of excellence in the sport, he pointed to several aspects which he said that we will have to do to get it back.

In speaking about some of the reasons that led to the downfall of our cricket team from ‘awesome to awful’, he said that for instance all of the people in the Caribbean were against apartheid, but the team at that time snubbed South African president Nelson Mandella, when he invited them to come to his country. They would not go because they wanted a raise in their salaries.

“Our young men have lost their way. They are doing it without a purpose. Within the new culture of ‘cash before country’ is to be found the root cause of the fall from Test excellence,” he said.

Sir Hilary mentioned the period and the success of the Sagcor high performance center (HPC) which was set up at the UWI Cave Hill campus in Barbados with him (Sir Hilary) as its chairman, and gave the impression that it is what is needed to get the West Indian Test cricketers back on track. Pointing out that nine of the present crop of players in the team came out of that program and their performance in the recent Test series against England, he said, “We are back. “I believe that within the next three years we will be back among the top Test teams in the world.”