

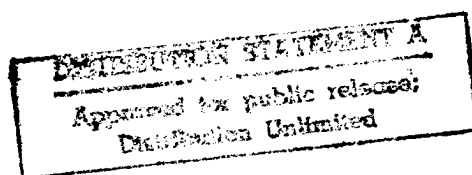
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Latin America Report

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29 February 1984

LATIN AMERICA REPORT

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JANUARY OIL PRODUCTION REACHES 441,000 B/D; 1984 PROSPECTS

Sao Paulo O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO in Portuguese 3 Feb 84 p 22

[Text] Rio de Janeiro--Minister of Mines and Energy Cesar Cals, speaking in Belem yesterday, confirmed that at the beginning of the second half of 1984, Brazil will be producing 500,000 barrels of oil per day, achieving the goal set earlier for 1985 more than a year in advance. He also confirmed a prediction that the Para coast will become a great oil production field and that the 1-PAS-20 well, currently being drilled, gives every indication that it will be a better commercial well than 1-PAS-11, which is producing a little more than 2,000 barrels per day.

He added that the prospects in the mineral sector in the Amazon region for 1984 indicate growth of 300 percent as compared to 1983, in some states.

With the trip Minister Cesar Cals will make to Bolivia on Tuesday, accompanying President Joao Figueiredo, and the trip planned by Secretary General Arnaldo Barbalho to Brussels to participate in a seminar on nonferrous ores, the Ministry of Mines and Energy is likely to be without a head beginning next Saturday, it was noted in Brasilia yesterday, because it has not yet been established clearly who will be in charge in the interim.

The average daily oil production reached 441,424 barrels in January, an increase of 36.6 percent over the average for January 1983, which was 323,000 barrels, and representing an increase of 135 percent over the average of 187,000 barrels the country produced in January of 1980.

These figures were announced in Rio yesterday by the production director of PETROBRAS [Brazilian Petroleum Corporation], Joel Mendes Renno, who also gave an estimate of the future production--about 10,000 barrels per day, rather high in terms of the national average--of a new well, Enchova-27, located in the Campos basin. The successive records set in Brazilian production, which now accounts for 42 percent of the domestic consumption of 954,000 barrels of oil per day, provide a guarantee of the prediction that the production peak of 500,000 barrels per day, originally planned for December, will be reached by the beginning of the second half of the year, according to Renno.

In 1984, PETROBRAS hopes to reach a production average of 460 to 465,000 barrels of oil, he said. Earlier, the enterprise expected to limit this average to 425,000 barrels, but the entry into production of new wells in the Campos basin, and the Potiguar basin as well, altered the expectations.

Campos Basin

In the Campos basin, which is the main oil-producing region in the country today, technicians are expressing their confidence in high producing capacity for the Enchova wells, characterized in large part by the presence of limestone, having the main advantage of maintaining high productivity even at great depths.

Limestone rock is found in the Enchova 27 well, and it is also likely to predominate in the Enchova 29 well, which is being drilled. PETROBRAS has succeeded by means of treatment involving hydrochloric acid injections in increasing production at these wells. There are other wells in the region where the oil is contained in sandstones, which are more common on the Brazilian continental shelf.

Renno said that since 1980, PETROBRAS has been establishing successive production records. The daily average in January of that year was 187,298 barrels. This figure increased to 188,776 the following year and 247,307 barrels in January of 1982. By January of 1983, the daily production had increased to 323,000 barrels, and it has now increased to 441,442 barrels.

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CSO: 3342/66

ESTIMATED 1984/85 ALCOHOL PRODUCTION; NEW PROJECTS; BUDGET

Alcohol Production

Sao Paulo O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO in Portuguese 1 Feb 84 p 24

[Text] Brasilia--Alcohol production should reach 9 billion liters for the 1984/85 harvest season, which will provide the operations of the automotive industry with two different prospects for the production of alcohol-fueled vehicles as foreseen by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MIC). The pessimistic prediction calls for production of 550,000 vehicles, while the "realistic" figure is 600,000 units, the secretary general of the MIC, Marcos Jose Marques, said yesterday.

He reported that the National Alcohol Executive Commission (CENAL) approved 10 more projects yesterday, with a production capacity of 150 million liters for the harvest. This brings the total of projects approved within the framework of the program to 481, with a production capacity of 10.7 billion liters for the harvest. To this is added another 410 million liters for the harvest corresponding to units existing prior to the beginning of the program, which have not been expanded.

Thus the potential alcohol production capacity for the country will be increased to 11.2 billion liters this year, leaving projects with a capacity of 3.1 billion liters to be completed, therefore, to achieve the 14.3 billion, which is the estimate established for the completion of the third phase of the program.

World Bank

Marcos Jose Marques explained that the government is seeking to persuade the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) to modify the rules it applies to all of its traditional clients, that is to say a counterpart guarantee in national currency by the governments of 45 percent on the total loans it grants for investment purposes. In this case, the government is asking the IBRD to guarantee 72.5 percent of the total this year, rather than just 55 percent, while beginning in 1985, the government will guarantee the portion normally required by the bank. This means that the government would guarantee a counterpart of only 27.5 percent.

The World Bank promised to pay out this year a \$42 million portion of the \$250 million loan agreed upon with the government for the execution of the second phase of the program.

But with the new government proposal for a change in the payment rules, the request has been increased to \$91 million.

According to Marques, this would mean the early disbursement of resources, with which the IBRD is in agreement, in principle. Marques also explained that the loan estimated at between \$250 million and \$300 million for the execution of the third phase of the program is in an advanced stage of negotiation, but he did not say when the negotiations will conclude.

Alcohol and Gasoline

According to Marques, there has been no government decision to alter the current price ratio between alcohol and gasoline, from 59 to 65 percent in favor of alcohol. But even with the change, he said, alcohol-fueled vehicles will continue to be competitive. Based on the present prices of 564 cruzeiros per liter of gasoline and 332 cruzeiros for alcohol, the difference is 232 cruzeiros per liter, in favor of alcohol.

If the ratio is changed to 65 percent, the cost per liter of alcohol will become 366 cruzeiros, still leaving a difference of 198 cruzeiros, not including the advantage provided by the exemption from the Single Road Tax [TRU], but taking into account the fact that alcohol-fueled vehicles utilize an average of 15 percent more fuel.

PROALCOOL Budget

Sao Paulo O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO in Portuguese 4 Feb 84 p 25

[Text] Belo Horizonte--The interim minister of industry and commerce and president of the CENAL, Marcos Jose Marques, said in Belo Horizonte yesterday that the PROALCOOL [Alcohol Production Program] budget for this year of 316 billion cruzeiros is to be increased by 135 billion, as a result of the advance disbursement to be made by the World Bank. He said that the IBRD will increase its contribution to PROALCOOL from 55 percent to 72 percent, which increase will be repaid by Brazil next year.

He added that at the meeting with IBRD representatives last Monday, "a favorable decision was announced" in connection with the advance disbursement, and that for the new loan of \$250 to \$300 million being requested, "the green light has now been given." According to Marcos Jose Marques, these resources will guarantee that the 1984/85 harvest will total 9.1 billion liters of alcohol, making it possible for the automotive industry to sell the whole of its production, which should total between 550,000 and 600,000 vehicles this year."

With the projects to be developed with the businessmen's own resources and financing, its president said that the CENAL should plan and "perhaps contract" for plants which will produce between 1.2 and 1.3 billion liters of alcohol in 1984.

CAVALCANTI ON ITAIPU COST, TREATY WITH PARAGUAY

Sao Paulo O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO in Portuguese 28 Jan 84 p 25

[Text] Brasilia--The president of ELETROBRAS [Brazilian Electric Power Companies, Inc], Gen Costa Cavalcanti, said yesterday that the Itaipu hydroelectric plant will cost the equivalent of \$18 billion, of which the transmission lines will account for \$3 billion, the project for \$10 billion, and financing costs alone, \$5 billion. In 1972, when the first projects were begun, the cost estimate was \$2.5 billion.

Costa Cavalcanti also said that the foreign debt of the ELETROBRAS group comes to \$9 billion, which will mean a debt service in 1984 of \$1.4 billion. ELETROBRAS will receive \$1.13 billion out of the jumbo loan on which the agreement was signed in New York yesterday. This will nonetheless be insufficient to pay the amortization and interest owed.

The president of the Itaipu Binational said that at the meeting of the Brazilian and Paraguayan foreign ministers, Saraiva Guerreiro and Carlos Saldivar, which took place at the Itamaraty Palace yesterday, it was agreed that the two governments will continue the projects on the basis of the schedule.

Costa Cavalcanti signed a contract in Brasilia to pass on to ELETRONORTE [Northern Electric Power Plants] a part of the World Bank resources, in the amount of \$28.39 million, for the inspection, repair and improvement of the Manaus energy generator units, over a period of 4 to 5 years. The IBRD [International Bank for Reconstruction and Development] will also finance a project costing \$250 million this year, for use in the program for replacing oil products with electricity.

Treaty Being Implemented

Gen Costa Cavalcanti, president of Itaipu Binational, said that there is no need for Brazil and Paraguay to alter the parameters according to which the price of Itaipu energy will be established, since the two countries are implementing the treaty signed in 1973. The Paraguayan foreign minister, Sen Carlos Saldivar, agrees with Cavalcanti. He gave assurance that he did not come to Brazil to discuss prices, because the treaty will be implemented.

Saldivar and the interim spokesman for the Itamaraty Palace, adviser Ricardo Carvalho, confirmed that the energy price was not discussed during the talks

the Paraguayan foreign minister had yesterday in Brasilia. The Itaipu Treaty established that Paraguay will sell the surplus energy to Brazil. Costa Cavalcanti announced that the first Itaipu turbine will produce energy for Paraguay next month, but it will only make use of a part of its maximal capacity of 750,000 kilowatts. During the last quarter of this year, two or three other units should be functioning at Itaipu, which by that time will be producing energy for both countries.

The interim spokesman for the Itamaraty Palace said that during the meeting with Saldivar, a clear priority for completing Itaipu despite the financial crisis was agreed upon. The importance assigned by the Figueiredo government to the construction of the transmission line to Brazil was also emphasized. According to the spokesman, foreign ministers Guerreiro and Saldivar discussed two other subjects: Paraguayan support for the candidacy of Ambassador Brena Soares for the post of secretary general of the OAS [Organization of American States], and the desire of the neighboring country to make use of the port of Rio Grande too to ship its soybean production abroad. At present, Paraguay is using the port of Paranagua, but it would like to have another alternative.

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CSO: 3342/66

FUEL CONSERVATION EFFORT ACHIEVED 15-PERCENT CUT IN 1982

Georgetown SUNDAY CHRONICLE in English 1 Jan 84 p 24

[Text]

FUEL conservation efforts by the Guyana National Energy Authority realised very close to a 15 per cent cut-back in 1982, surpassing the 10 per cent target, GNEA Chairman Abel Felix has said.

Calling the cutback "the projected waste in fuels in all the sectors," Cde. Felix, however, stressed that the \$80 million saved was not due to the reduction of activities of Guymine.

Speaking in the Supreme Congress of the People Friday, Cde. Felix said in 1981 Guymine's fuel bill was 35.5 per cent of the national bill and in 1982 it

was 35.1 per cent.

He said Guymine spent 4 per cent less on fuel in 1982 than in 1981 while the country spent \$80 million less for fuel imports.

"Since these figures of oil imports are based on export earnings, they do not in any way relate to production," he declared.

He observed that for instance, the figures did not say how much bauxite Guymine produced and could not sell but stockpiled. The figures also do not reflect the conservative efforts of Guymine which were substantial, nor do they relate to the production

in the other sectors of the economy. He reported that by the third quarter of 1982 the nation had drastically reduced its importation of certain items and others were completely banned causing the use of local items and further stimulating production of them.

Cde. Felix expressed confidence that with the new controls installed last year, the President's (1984) programme outlined to the Supreme Congress of the People, can be realised without any substantial increases in petroleum fuels imports.

CSO: 3298/449

TEXACO DENIES INVESTMENT CUT, PLANS PRODUCTION INCREASE

Refutation of EXPRESS Story

Port-of-Spain EXPRESS in English 17 Jan 84 p 1

[Text] Texaco Trinidad Inc yesterday denied a report that it had cancelled plans to invest \$6 million in reactivating wells in its land operations as a result of the 1984 budget speech.

A company statement issued by the Public Relations Department, read:
"Texaco Trinidad Inc has stated that the front-page article in the EXPRESS of Monday January 16, is false, misleading and damaging to the company. Textrin denies that any plans concerning investment for a well reactivation process were cancelled last week as a result of the Budget speech."

The company's statement added, "Textrin denied that any instructions to scrap all further plans for capital investment were issued following the budget speech. Textrin also denies that any responsible person in its organisation supplied such information."

Renewed Production Measures

Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 27 Jan 84 p 3

[Text] Texaco Trinidad Inc. is taking steps to increase the flow of its crude oil production.

Asked how soon work would start on the re-activating programme, Texaco said that tenders have been requested to activate a heavy duty workover rig.

The company said "the company has requested tenders to active a heavy duty workover rig, which should commence in the next few days.

"The company is also in the process of activating its national 50 drilling rigs. No estimate of readiness has yet been provided by the drilling department but will be as soon as the rig is ready."

Since last year Texaco Trinidad Inc. has been processing an average of 28,000 barrels of its own crude in addition to 37,000 barrels supplied by

Trinidad and Tobago Oil Company Limited Trintoc by arrangement in order to keep a Pointe-a-Pierre refinery operating at a level of 65,000 barrels per day.

It was learnt that there is a slight drop in Texaco's production hence the reason for its move to increase production to come back to a certain level.

Meanwhile, Texaco said that no crude oil has been received from abroad since the company lost its overseas customer in November 1982.

"However due to shortages of crude oil we have on several occasions imported straight-run fuel oil for further processing in our catcracker to keep throughput up to minimum levels to avoid a shut-down of this very important unit," the company said.

Texaco made the latter statement when asked whether it had imported crude from Ecuador recently.

CSO: 3298/456

GOVERNMENT EYES COMPRESSED NATURAL GAS AS VEHICLE FUEL

Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 21 Jan 84 p 1

[Article by Jeff Hackett]

[Text] Government is looking into the possibility of utilising compressed natural gas (CNG) as a motor vehicle fuel.

In fact, according to Mr Patrick Manning, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources who made this disclosure yesterday, a decision will be made shortly to proceed with the pilot project to test this fuel substitute.

Mr Manning did not say whether this intended move was motivated by the need to conserve petroleum or because of the increased price of motor vehicle fuels, through Government's budgetary measures.

The Minister was opening a Management Development Centre (MDC) seminar for displaced oil workers at the San Fernando Technical Institute.

Mr Manning said:

"Because of our nation's vast industrialisation drive, many opportunities exist for spin-off and down-stream industries. This is an open challenge to the imaginative entrepreneur. Let me give you just one example to stimulate your imagination. The Government is currently studying the possibility of utilising compressed natural gas (CNG) as a motor vehicle fuel. A decision is soon to be taken to proceed with a pilot project to test the substitution of this fuel. Immediately opportunities will present themselves for the retro-fitting of existing gas engines to utilise the new fuel. Is the hint good enough?"

The seminar's theme was "The Identification of Business Opportunities in the South" and the Minister, noting the fact that "on the supply side we have a wealth of human capital dislocated by external forces beyond its control and through no fault of its own," identified five development strategies in which they could play a role should the Southland and the nation decide to adopt these strategies.

Apart from the CNG idea, which was a downstream petroleum industry, the others are import substitution, "beating imported pseudo technology, locating and rationalising informal inventions and export of technical know-how. [quotation marks as published]

As regards import substitution, Mr Manning said that the alert entrepreneur should now begin to address himself to "our massive propensity to import food."

He asked:

"Can we not introduce plant technology and discipline in food production and processing? Can we not inject industrial systems and process into garment production, housing etc."

Local Inventions

As regards beating imported pseudo technology the Minister, noting that there was planned obsolescence built into imported consumer durables, wanted to know if we cannot recondition second hand motor vehicle engines or manufacture motor body parts.

On the question of locating and rationalising informal inventions, Mr Manning suggested that "if a craftsman regimented in the safety practice of the oil industry were to address himself to the problem (of unsafe systems) he could create and patent a safe generator--pressure tested, complete with pressure gauges, relief valves and other controlling devices."

Dealing with the matter of the export of technical know-how, the Minister said that "as our neighbours proceed apace with their development efforts--devising new energy sources, winning water, establishing processing plants and the like, can we not, with our wealth of industrial experience as adapted in the Caribbean context, offer them our services in the field of consultancy, technical applications etc?"

Mr Manning also made the point that there was a "technological psyche" where workers who were involved in technology for many years could easily assimilate retraining.

CSO: 3298/456

OPPOSITION SENATOR CALLS FOR CLEAR-CUT GOVERNMENT OIL POLICY

Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 25 Jan 84 p 16

[Text] The country lacks decisive leadership and a clear-cut petroleum policy, Opposition Senator Sahadeo Basdeo told the Senate yesterday in his contribution to the 1984 Budget debate.

He was at the time lamenting the fact that since the 1983 Budget, one year had passed and there was no decision taken in respect of the declining petroleum industry, while thousands of jobs were in jeopardy.

Senator Sahadeo recalled the temporary arrangements spelled out in the 1983 Budget whereby Trintoc was to supply crude to Texaco for refining so that the refinery throughput could be maintained at 65,000 barrels per day. That arrangement, he recalled, was to end in March, 1983.

It was almost one year now, and all the Government was able to come to Parliament with this year, was a rehash of the arrangements.

"What time-frame can we expect for a settlement on this issue," he asked.

Serious Cold War

He also charged that the Government went out of its way to appease Texaco in contributing to the laying-off of some 1100 workers. Likewise in its agreement to cutback the Supplemental Petroleum Tax (SPT) from 35 to 15 per cent, to lose out by \$160 million.

The Government, he said, was procrastinating, because reduction of the SPT had no meaningful effect. And then he pointed to the absence of fixing a tax reference price by the relevant committee for 1983.

In view of the circumstances, Senator Basdeo charged that there was a serious cold war situation existing between the Government directorate and Texaco. The tragedy was that Texaco was not going ahead with its planned work as promised, while Tesoro on the other hand, was sitting on the periphery awaiting the auditors before taking any action.

He noted that the ministerial committee on petroleum had met on several occasions, but from all appearances it had not come closer to a solution of the problem.

Senator Basdeo said he was very concerned about the under-utilisation of local refinery capacity at Trintoc and the possible consequences of the Texaco refinery to the taxpayers should the Government decide to buy that refinery.

The Opposition Senator sought more details on proposed crude arrangements with Venezuela.

He told the Senate: "The longer we take with the rationalisation of the refining industry the more will be the burden on the Treasury."

Senator Basdeo also recalled that the 1980 Budget had allocated \$815 million for the upgrading of Trintoc and up to now nothing had been done. "We must act quickly on this matter," he added.

In dealing with foreign affairs and export development, Senator Basdeo agreed with Senator Aldwyn Poon Tip on the establishment of joint ventures, but he favoured a thrust towards India and Latin America.

CSO: 3298/456

VALUE OF CARICOM EXPORTS TO BRITAIN CLIMBS IN 1983

Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 17 Jan 84 p 4

[Article by Irvine Reid]

[Text] Bridgetown, Mon. (Cana)--The value of Caribbean Community (Caricom) exports to Britain climbed to 4.10 million pounds sterling between January and October 1983, against sales for the 10-month period in 1982, but the 13 English-speaking countries spent an additional 68.03 million pounds sterling on imports of the British goods, according to figures made available here.

The figures from the British Government's Overseas Trade Statistical Office, showed the value of British exports to Caricom countries rising from 259.58 million pounds sterling in the first 10 months of 1982 to 327.61 million pounds sterling in the corresponding period last year.

The value of its imports from the 12-member community, however, dropped from 254.72 million pounds sterling in 1982 to 250.62 million pounds sterling in 1983.

B'dos Exports

Only the Bahamas, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Belize and Guyana exported more to Britain in 1983 than they did in 1982.

The Caribbean's main exports to the U.K. are sugar, rum, molasses, bananas, and cocoa. The office, however, gave no breakdown of the commodities trading.

Jamaica's exports to the U.K. during the first 10 months of last year totalled 80 million pounds sterling, against 81.2 million pounds sterling in 1982. Imports were put at 107.3 million pounds sterling, up on the 45.7 million pounds sterling recorded for the same period in 1982.

Exports from St Lucia to Britain during the period January to October 1983 were estimated 18.7 million pounds sterling, compared with 13 million pounds sterling for 1982. Imports totalled 4.6 million pounds sterling in 1983, compared with 5.1 million pounds sterling the previous year.

Barbados exports to the U.K. for the 10 months of 1983 were valued at 11.6 million pounds sterling, down on the 14.3 million pounds sterling for 1982. Imports for the same months were put at 26 million pounds sterling in 1983, compared with 21.6 million pounds sterling the previous year.

TT-UK Imbalanced

Trinidad and Tobago, the oil rich Caribbean country, exported 50 million pounds sterling (TT \$170.5 m) worth of goods to the U.K. between January and October last year, compared with 55.5 million pounds sterling (TT \$189.5 m) for the same period in 1982. It imported 130.6 million pounds sterling (TT \$445.3 m) worth of goods from Britain in 1983, against 121.4 million pounds sterling (TT \$413.9 m) worth for the same period in 1982.

Trinidad and Tobago's Prime Minister George Chambers recently drew attention to the trade imbalance and promised to take up the matter.

From Guyana, the value of goods exported in 1983 was 28 million pounds sterling, compared with 36.5 million pounds sterling in 1982. Guyana imports from the U.K. were put at 11.3 million pounds sterling in 1983, compared with 11.2 million pounds sterling for the same period in 1982.

Antigua and Barbuda exported 1.5 million pounds sterling worth of goods to Britain between January and October last year, and imported 8.7 million pounds sterling worth of items. For the same period in 1982 Antigua and Barbuda imports from Britain cost 10.3 million pounds sterling in goods and its exports fetched 5.5 million pounds sterling.

St Kitts and Nevis sold Britain 1.7 million pounds sterling worth of goods up to October 1983 and 5.6 sterling [as published] in 1982. Its imports cost 3.3 million pounds sterling and 3.6 million pounds sterling for the corresponding period in 1982 and 1983 respectively.

St Vincent and the Grenadines exported 10.1 million pounds sterling worth of goods while importing items valued 3.3 million pounds sterling for January to October 1983. In 1982 exports stood at 8.6 million pounds sterling and imports 2.3 million pounds sterling.

Montserrat, Britain's smallest trading partner in Caricom sold just 126,000 pounds sterling worth of goods for the first 10 months of 1983 and imported 1.8 million pounds sterling. In 1982 exports were put at 167.00 [sic] pounds sterling and imports at 1.5 million pounds sterling.

Grenada exported 4.7 million pounds sterling in goods to Britain for the first 10 months of 1983 while imports were 6.7 million pounds sterling. For the same period 1982, exports stood at 3.8 million pounds sterling and imports at three million sterling.

Dominica exported 10.4 million pounds sterling in goods for the months January to October 1983, while it imported 6.1 million pounds sterling from Britain. For the same period in 1982 it exported 10 million pounds sterling while imports were to the value of 5.6 million pounds sterling.

FARM SECTOR SEEN IMPERILED BY PROPOSED TAX REFORMS

Income Redistribution Sought

Buenos Aires LA NACION in Spanish 16 Jan 84 p 7

[Article by Luis Jose Morea: "Serious Impact on Agricultural Enterprises"]

[Text] In a series of bills submitted to Congress for processing in special sessions, the Executive Branch has put together a tax reform whose aim is income redistribution mainly through direct capital taxes.

Although the proposed measures square with the theories and principles of a great many tax experts, inasmuch as they entail greater progressivity, the reforms of the capital and net worth taxes will create a strikingly difficult situation for farms and their owners.

A Low Profit Margin Activity

The measures to update the assessment base of several taxable assets (for example, the livestock of ranches that used the estimated cost or fixed price method) seem reasonable, since this gave rise to inequitable situations within the sector. Nonetheless, the possibility should also be envisioned of calculating market values when they are appreciably below updated costs.

Moreover, the bills call for the repeal of the rebate that has been virtually granted on real estate (land) in use because it is a major component of farm capital. This would mean that the farm sector would pay the same level of taxes as other economic activities (industry, commerce, etc), which is not fair given the low profit margin in farming.

This is because taxes must be paid out of the income that assets yield. If the tax quota is 1.5 percent of the farm capital, as it is at present, then it could normally absorb as much as 1/3 of the income from the activity in updated values (the situation is going to be perilous in the case of dairy farmers, who require sizable capital for their facilities and equipment).

We should remember that the 50 percent rebate on farm property was established when the 1973 government passed Law 20,629/73 (instituting the Tax on Capital and Net Worth). Its authors regarded this tax reform as a tool in development and income redistribution policy. The government that emerged from the 1976 military coup preserved this tax reform, with some changes, in its capital tax (Law 21,287/76).

Worsened Outlook

In both cases the reasons given for the rebate are similar. The 1976 government underscored that "...in addition, there is already a provincial real estate tax on rural property." We would also have to add in the so-called Road or Municipal Roadways Maintenance Taxes, which are calculated per hectare, to get a better idea of all the taxes on real estate used for farming.

The picture is complicated by the bill to also tax the interest that partners or shareholders have in the farms through a personal tax on net worth, which will not allow any credit for the taxes paid by the association or company. If such credit is not allowed, there will, in practice, be dual taxation, and the combined levies (on capital for the association or company and on net worth for the partner) could absorb all or a large part of the normal earnings from a farm in updated values.

Inconsistency with One of Alfonsin's Speeches

All of this does not seem consistent with the speech that President Raul Alfonsin delivered before the Legislative Assembly, in which he outlined the ideology behind the Radical government's policies. Referring to the agricultural sector, he said: "...Argentina's farmers, overwhelmed in recent times by an unprecedented tax and financial burden..." "...assuring farm profits will be a permanent objective..." "...the tax system will be simplified, seeing to it that it is equitable and progressive and assigning a primary role to the land tax..."

If the provinces make their land taxes, a main revenue source for their flagging budgets, equally progressive, then it is not at all clear how the administration is going "to assure farm profits." And all of this is happening in a country whose farm sector has made enormous efforts in recent years to generate income for the country, while the government was spending absurdly and irrationally large amounts of money that now have to be covered through measures that although seemingly fair in their underlying logic, could be counter-productive when applied. If to this we add the currently acute shortage of capital, prudence and restraint should be the elements to bear in mind when taxing capital, so as not to discourage its formation.

CONINAGRO Outlines Concerns

Buenos Aires LA NACION in Spanish 14 Jan 84 sec 3 p 2

[Text] The meeting yesterday between representatives of CONINAGRO [Agricultural-Livestock Intercooperative Confederation], led by its president, Orlando Gilardoni, and President Raul Alfonsin could be considered important for many reasons. Among them we could cite the issues addressed, the thoroughness with which they were discussed, the time that the president devoted to them and, in particular, the consideration and concern that he evinced at all times. Suffice it to say that in taking up the new taxes on the sector, Dr Alfonsin invited Finance Secretary Humberto Bertaina to listen to what the CONINAGRO delegation had to say. They mentioned, in particular, the taxes on unimproved land and the reassessment of livestock values. The dialogue with the finance secretary will continue next week. CONINAGRO wants only the land taxed, without levies on technology and machinery, which in its judgment would lead to a rapid rise in output and be the first step towards a single tax on unimproved land.

Other Issues

The CONINAGRO members voiced special concern over the current situation of cotton producers. Owing to a lack of funds, they are unable to perform harvesting tasks ("They can't even afford fuel," it was said), and although the Banco de la Nacion has credit lines available, it cannot grant the growers loans because of the extent of their indebtedness. A political solution is required to this problem without delay because otherwise the harvest will be considerably smaller. Dr Alfonsin, who is aware of the situation of the official banks, pledged to take care of the matter.

The situation in CAP [Argentine Organization of Meat Producers] was also examined. "We are not going to complain to this administration about things that it did not do," asserted a member of the confederation, "but we want the courts to clarify what was done with the enterprise and we want those responsible for this enormous abuse to pay the consequences." The CAP issue will be examined in conjunction with the Agriculture Secretariat to develop the most appropriate judicial solution.

Loans

Another issue that the delegation led by Gilardoni brought up was the marketing of the crops, especially insofar as storage, transportation and ports are concerned. As for storage, as the agriculture secretary said on Wednesday, the Bank of Reconstruction and Development will provide financing for the NOA and NEA as well as for private growers, who will also receive financing from the Inter-American Development Bank for silos and sector reactivation alike. The first of the above

loans will also be used for transportation and port facilities. The ports problem must be tackled as soon as possible, however. The port of Bahia Blanca is operating at below normal capacity because Unit 5, the largest, was damaged in an attack. It has undergone temporary repairs and continues to operate in this condition. The Ingeniero White section is awaiting an overhaul that will take 2 to 4 years. The same is the case with the port of Rosario (where funds will be earmarked for repairs, according to Reca) and other harbors. The upshot of all this, CONINAGRO pointed out, is a rise in operating expenses and, naturally, a drop in the price of grain. Dr Alfonsin also promised to attend to this serious issue.

8743

CSO: 3348/258

BRIEFS

GRAIN SHIPPING PROBLEMS--According to a dispatch from the TELAM news agency, more than 700 railroad cars loaded with grain are awaiting their turn to unload at the port of Bahia Blanca, which means that there is a backlog of about 40,000 tons of grain. The problem is said to be due to irregularities in the transportation and unloading of the fine grain harvest in the so-called outer harbor (Ingeniero White) and Maldonado. A railway source noted that "we are loading more than what is being unloaded," thus suggesting that the delays are being caused by the slow intake pace at the Ingeniero White terminal elevators. He added that between 180 and 200 cars a day are unloaded at the port, when it should be double that number so that the trains could return to the regional stations where the merchandise is waiting to be picked up. [Text] [Buenos LA NACION in Spanish 14 Jan 84 sec 3 p 2] 8743

CSO: 3348/258

WORKERS PARTY CHIEF ON TRIAL; PROTEST HELD AT MINISTRY

Court Warning to Moncur

Nassau THE TRIBUNE in English 21 Jan 84 p 1

[Article by Natasha Chea]

[Text]

WORKERS Party Chairman Rodney Moncur was warned by Magistrate Sylvia Bonaby to conduct himself better in court when he appears Friday or face a contempt of court charge.

The warning was made Friday during Moncur's trial in which he is accused of taking part in an illegal procession January 11.

Not represented by counsel and conducting his own defence, Moncur was told repeatedly to confine his line of questioning to the matter before the court and nothing else.

"I feel incumbent to warn you of your behaviour. My endurance has been stretched to the limit. Your behaviour today is only slightly better than the last time you appeared. The next time you appear, if you do not behave yourself I will charge you with contempt of court. Please behave yourself," said the magistrate.

During his arraignment last week, Moncur was ordered out of court because of his loud demands that his matter be transferred to another court. He pleaded not guilty to the charge and trial was set for Friday.

Four other men co-charged with him - Haldane Chase, secretary general of the Bahamas Union of Teachers; Philip Miller, leader of the Workers

Party; Van Deveaux, a Workers Party member, and Rudolph Murray - pleaded guilty to the charge. Sentencing was deferred to January 20 and then to the 27 when the case is expected to conclude.

The first of three witnesses to be called in Moncur's trial was ASP Kendal Lightbourne who told the court he saw Moncur and four others parading on Bay Street with placards about 5.15 pm that day.

Chase held a placard which read "Quote of the year: Let the chips fall where they may," and after taking the placard from him, he arrested him.

He said Moncur was walking with two small children who were also holding placards.

Moncur asked ASP Lightbourne if he were stationed elsewhere in the Bahamas and if he had testified recently before another place. The magistrate interrupted and told Moncur his questions were irrelevant and would not be allowed.

"I am trying to determine the veracity of this witness. In order for me to get justice I will have to point out discrepancies in this witness," replied Moncur. But the magistrate repeated that he must restrict his questions to the matter before the court.

Saying he had no further questions to ask of the witness, Sgt 141 McPhee was called. He told the court that he arrested Moncur who was marching with four others. Moncur was marching with two children and he held a placard which read, "U. of Wulff Road, should drug offenders be given bail? Ask Leslie."

He said he told Moncur he was under arrest for taking part in an illegal procession without the permission of the Commissioner of Police.

Asked by Moncur what the placard meant to him, the officer said "nothing." Asked if he knew who "Leslie" referred to, the officer said there are many Leslies.

Asked if he remembered what was said when he was taking the accused to the station, the officer said Moncur was saying something but he was not paying attention. He denied he heard Moncur say certain people were cocaine smugglers and that the real criminals were "outside in the guise of respectability."

Asked when did he tell Moncur he was under arrest, the officer said on Bay Street when he asked the accused if he had a permit and the answer was no. He denied Moncur's

suggestion that it was not until they had entered the station and he was taking him around the counter that he told him he was under arrest.

At this point Prosecutor Richard Gardiner asked for an adjournment as his last witness, Police Commissioner Gerald Bartlett, was unable to attend court until Friday.

Demonstration at Agriculture

Nassau THE TRIBUNE in English 25 Jan 84 p 1

[Article by Marcia Bethell]

[Text]

MEMBERS of the Workers Party demonstrated outside the Ministry of Agriculture, East Bay Street, this morning, under close police scrutiny. The demonstrators called for "more production and no more corruption."

Seven uniform police officers were lined in front of the Ministry, while the demonstrators marched, with placards, along the water front opposite the Ministry shortly after 10 am.

It is not known whether Minister George Smith was in his office at the time. His car was not parked in the space reserved for the minister. Permanent Secretary Idris Reid entered the building before the demonstration began and Peter Bethel, Member of Parliament

for St. Johns, arrived while the demonstration was still in progress.

About seven demonstrators expressed their opinions with placards, which they held high for passing motorists to read.

"No more idle lands, no more idle hands, food production, not corruption," one of the placards read. Another asked for the Minister to "Give us the lands, we can handle it," "Where is the food, George Smith?"

A familiar character along the water front, a midget known only as "Shorty," walked along with the demonstrators shouting allegations against the Prime Minister. He was eventually approached by a police officer and asked to stop making noise.

CSO: 3298/447

GOVERNMENT AGRICULTURAL PROJECT 'ABOUT TO FIZZLE'

Nassau THE TRIBUNE in English 21 Jan 84 p 1

[Article by Athena Damianos]

[Text]

THE "greatest success story in Bahamian agricultural history" - Government's Hatchet Bay Plantation - is about to fizzle.

An announcement is expected to be made shortly that the financially troubled company will phase out certain areas of the operation. And, The Tribune has been reliably informed that:

- Hervis Bain, general manager of the Bahamas Agricultural and Industrial Corporation, which operates the farm, recently became redundant;

- A large number of Bahamians are to be retired from the Eleuthera farm;

- The Plantation lost over \$2 million last year.

- Sunshine Holdings is to take over management of the poultry side of the operation, and

- The Corporation will lease its store and the yacht club in Hatchet Bay to staunch PLP supporters because it's not profitable to operate them.

Informed sources told The Tribune that Mr Bain got "the axe" several weeks ago when he was told that the Corporation was going to reorganize and that his position had become redundant.

But, it was pointed out that the Corporation, which in addition to operating a store in Nassau and a cargo boat,

screens agricultural applicants, still needs a general manager.

The Tribune also learned that a large number of long-time workers - possibly 40 - who have reached retirement age will be dismissed. It is claimed that one of the employees who was to be dismissed is George E Johnson, father of Broadcasting Corporation general manager Calsey Johnson.

Unconfirmed reports are that Philip Bethel, Minister of Transport and MP for the area, screened the list of workers who were to be retired and gave instructions that certain names were to be removed from the retirement list. It is understood that Mr Johnson, an MBE and Justice of the Peace, was one of the person's whose name was removed from the list. Mr Bethel was in office Friday morning, but not available to confirm the report to The Tribune.

Bismark Coakley, president of Sunshine Holdings, Friday denied allegations that the company is to take over the poultry side of the Hatchet Bay operation. However, Tribune sources still claim that an arrangement has been worked out between Sunshine and the Corporation.

"Sunshine has nothing to do with Hatchet Bay," Mr Coakley

said.

The Tribune was told that the Hatchet Bay Yacht Club, which is included in the Plantation's assets, and the general store are being leased to two staunch PLP supporters in Eleuthera.

It was also confirmed, through independent sources, that a large sum of money at the farm cannot be accounted for. It is understood that this is indicated in the auditor's report. However, the last financial report made public was in October 1980, showing that the farm lost over \$2.5 million in its first five years of operation.

Section 16(2) of the Bahamas Agricultural & Industrial Act, 1981, says that the corporation has to provide the Minister with a statement of accounts within a reasonable time after the end of the financial year, but not later than June 30 every year. The Minister is then required to lay a statement of accounts on the table of House within a reasonable time after he receives them. The Act came into effect on March 4, 1982. Under this Act the earliest Minister Alfred Maycock could have produced the accounts for public scrutiny was June 30, 1983. So far - almost eight months later - still no accounts. And there has been no public accounting for almost four years.

The Tribune understands that the Plantation lost over \$2 million last year. In the 10 years before Government bought it for \$3 million in March, 1975, the farm showed a \$200,000 profit.

It also seems likely that the dairy part of the operation will be phased out completely. Some residents of Hatchet Bay and other nearby settlements have been warned that the farm will soon stop producing dairy products.

Sources in Eleuthera said the supply of poultry and dairy products has been sporadic for some time.

Prior to Government taking it over, the 2,500-acre farm supplied 60 per cent of the domestic market with eggs as well as providing milk, ice-cream and poultry. Today, the supply, at best, is sporadic.

In May, 1977, Prime Minister Sir Lynden Pindling visited Hatchet Bay and called the farm "the greatest success story in agriculture in Bahamian history."

"What we are witnessing here this afternoon is a triumph of the human spirit," he said.

Seven months later, 50 farm workers were laid-off without notice or severance pay.

Economic Affairs Minister Alfred Maycock, who is chairman of the Corporation, was not available for comment.

CSO: 3298/447

FNM EXPLAINS POSITION ON DRUG COMMISSION HEARINGS

Nassau THE TRIBUNE in English 24 Jan 84 p 1

[Text]

A SPOKESMAN for the Free National Movement said today that it continues to get questions from the public "as to why the party is silent and doing nothing with regard to the allegations being made at the Royal Commission of Inquiry."

"We know," said the spokesman, "that the community is deeply concerned about what is going on at Boulevard House but, as we have stated before, it would not be proper for the party, nor anyone else for that matter, to comment on the evidence being given at the Inquiry or to make any statements which could conceivably prejudice the proceedings."

"We draw attention to the warning issued by Inquiry President Sir James Smith on Friday of last week after comments by

certain individuals were published by the press and broadcast over radio and television."

"Sir James made it quite clear that such comments will not be tolerated and that persons who persist with them could be committed to the Supreme Court for contempt of court."

"So as much as the FNM would like to comment we are bound by law not to do so and we will not deliberately contravene the law. We expect the public to understand that we must act as a responsible alternative to the irresponsible PLP."

"Our supporters should rest assured that when the Commission has completed its work, the FNM will then know exactly what to do and will do it."

CSO: 3298/447

FNM YOUTH ARM HOLDS ANNUAL MEETING, ELECTS OFFICERS

Nassau THE TRIBUNE in English 24 Jan 84 p 7

[Text]

UNDER the theme "Opening New Doors In '84" The Torchbearers Association held its annual conclave on Jan 13-15 at the Mackey Street headquarters of the Free National Movement.

The conclave was officially opened by the leader of the FNM and MP for Delaporte Mr KGL Isaacs. The leader urged the party's youth branch to prepare themselves to fill the breach as older members of the party move off the scene. Mr Isaacs, also called upon the youth to join their senior colleagues and become candidates and be prepared to campaign in the next general election.

The meeting was also addressed by Mr Tommy Turnquest, 1983 president, who gave the annual report for 1983.

The meeting culminated with the nominations of the officers for 1984. Chairperson for the meeting was Mr Melvin Grant, 1st vice president, 1983 and assistant secretary general of the FNM.

On Saturday, January 14, the election of officers was conducted by Sen. the Hon. Chuck Virgil and 1st vice chairman of the FNM, and Mr L Garth Wright, secretary-general of the party. The results of the elections are as follows:

Mr Melvin Grant, president; Miss Daphane Duncombe, first vice president; Mr Whanslaw Turnquest, second vice president; Mr Wayde Higgs, third vice president; Miss Sharon Dean, secretary-general (unopposed); Miss Jacklyn Penn, assistant sec. gen. (unopposed); Miss Rhonda Sweeting, assistant sec. gen. (unopposed); Miss Marsha Mason, treasurer (unopposed); Miss Gloria Wallace, assistant treasurer (unopposed); Mr Tyrone Forbes, assistant treasurer (unopposed); Mr Percy Grant, chaplain; Mr Howard Pratt, assistant chaplain; Mr Tyrone Morris, executive member; Mr Mike Romer, executive member; Mr Basil Moss, executive member; Mr Calvin Grant, national council

representative; Mr Fred Williamson, public relations officer.

The new president Mr Melvin Grant, proposed a resolution to make Mr Tommy Turnquest, honorary president; the resolution was adopted by the delegates.

In the afternoon session a workshop was conducted by Mr Frank Watson MP for Carmichael and adviser to the Torchbearers, and Senator Chuck Virgil. At the workshop the role of the Torchbearers in '84, was outlined.

CSO: 3298/447

TRIBUNE CLAIMS IT MAY BE VICTIM OF POLITICAL DISCRIMINATION

Kingston THE SUNDAY GLEANER in English 29 Jan 84 p 13

[Article by Marcia Erskine]

[Excerpts]

Whatever the reason, newspapers the world over have seen some difficult times since the turn of the decade.

Largely due to financial constraints though sometimes for political ones, newspapers in this region too have been closed or had publication temporarily suspended.

The past three years have seen the closure of papers in Guyana, Grenada, and Antigua and last year we saw the unfortunate closure of the *Daily News* right here in Jamaica.

Now, the *Tribune* in Nassau, Bahamas, is in danger of folding because, the newspaper's management says, of political victimisation.

In an interview with the *Gleaner* Mrs Eileen Dupuch Caaron, Editor of the *Tribune*, said that there is no apparent restriction on the freedom of the press in the Bahamas, though it is felt in the *Tribune* that the paper is not a favourite of the Lynden Pindling Government, to put it mildly.

Sir Etienne Dupuch, Mrs Caaron's father, regarded as a statesman in Bahamian social circles, theorises that the "bad blood" dates back to his long association with the United Bahamian Party (UBP) from which Pindling's PLP won power in 1967.

From early in Pindling's regime, Sir Etienne said, the *Tribune* became "public enemy No.1 ..." and so it has been from that day to this.

The story is told that soon after taking office a high-powered Government official branded the *Tribune* "an enemy of the people" and proclaimed that public tenders for public printing would no longer be entertained but that Government contracts would go to the *Tribune's* competitor, the *Guardian*.

Under the UBP Government Roger Caaron, Eileen's husband, an English Barrister now turned Managing Editor of the *Tribune*, became a permanent resident of the Bahamas with the right to work. He was not obliged to renew his permit unless he changed jobs.

Work permit

Under the PLP however, he had to reapply for a permit each time an existing one expired and though the authorities offered 3-year permits, Roger Caaron for several years, received only one-year permits in each instance.

According to Sir Etienne "they tried to hold this as the Damocles Sword over all our heads... and one year they kept us in suspense so long that it was decided that Mr Caaron would be taken off the payroll, but would continue to work on the staff as a volunteer. Permits of other expatriate staff were not renewed and a later request to bring in temporary help so that Mr Caaron could visit an ailing relative in England was refused."

Mrs Caaron had meetings then with Sir Lynden, who said that from where he sat, the future looked good for the Bahamas and he wanted the Caarons to get in on the ground floor. She told him in turn that the family was contemplating giving up the paper because the Immigration Department was interfering not only with their personal lives by playing a "cat and mouse game" with permits including that of her husband.

By the time her mind was fully made up to leave, the Director of Immigration wrote offering Roger Caaron a 3-year work permit. This was in 1973 and this arrangement continued until election year 1982 when the one-year permits were reinstituted.

He was refused. He reapplied and was ignored. He later applied for Citizenship and was eventually interviewed in 1975. One year later, after enquiring about the fate of his application, he was told that it had been "properly completed, duly processed and is now awaiting a decision." This was seven years ago and he is still waiting.

The Government later announced that a new status would be available to foreign husbands of Bahamian women, giving them permanent status with the right to work in the Bahamas to support their families. But, Mr Caaron's application for this was also turned down.

Sir Etienne went ahead with migration plans however, resettling in the Cayman Islands while the Caarons opted to take over the paper.

Since then, a journalism training school, which the paper ran has had to be closed due to a lack of trained tutors. No permits for expatriate staff have been granted, and another office in Freeport had to be closed for the same reason.

Mysterious disappearance

Mrs Carron said that papers now have to be airfreighted to Freeport on Bahamasair and sometimes "mysteriously disappear" before being circulated.

The Government has asked the paper to try to procure Bahamians for the vacant posts in the organisation. The Tribune management claims they have advertised but can find no qualified persons to fill the technical posts. So, stalemate!

The paper's management has said however, that if its applications to bring in foreigners for the vacant posts are not approved, "pruning of staff" will become necessary in a number of areas.

Thus it seems, Sir Lynden's commendable wish to see his fellow Bahamians gainfully employed, may see some lose jobs that they now have. And, according to the Caarons, they may even contemplate closing if the "pressure gets too intense".

Hopefully, some compromise could be worked out between the two before any such closure occurs.

PRIME MINISTER PRICE'S NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE TO NATION

Belize City BELIZE SUNDAY TIMES in English 8 Jan 84 pp 2, 7

[Text]

As we welcome the New Year, let us look back to the Year 1983 and recall some events important to the national and international life of Belize, one of the world's independent nations.

There was the visit of Pope John Paul the Second. It was the first visit ever of a Pope to our land.

Belize was received at the White House by President Ronald Reagan and that also was a first in our history.

Last month Belize was present at the meeting of Commonwealth Heads of Government in New Delhi and had the honour of an audience with Her Majesty the Queen.

These were some of many events in a year in which we were beset by economic and financial difficulties and exposed to a region in turbulent transformation.

It was a year when we survived as a nation thanks to God's help and faithful work and support of the Belizean people.

It was a year when some of us were bereft of loved ones. To them we hold out the certain hope that in reality life is not locked in the horizon of this world but extends into eternity where we shall rise again transformed and immortal.

Life must go on. We must not lose faith in our people, and in our neighbours. With hope for better things to come, we look to the New Year.

In 1984, we await the visit of His Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury who will dignify our land with his presence, his blessing and his concern that we too are a deserving people.

It will be a year of continuing investment in development.

After much preparation, and with international cooperation enhanced by our status of independence, we shall begin to see the results of investment in the amount of over forty million dollars in projects of development, in particular the construction and reconstruction of roads and bridges.

These projects, which will improve the infrastructure for economic growth, will contribute to stability and peace because we hold that development is another name for peace and that regional development is a vital factor of regional peace.

That development ensures peace is a concept material to the intense endeavours to restore peace and stability to the Central American continent and the Caribbean Basin.

Let each nation concentrate on developing its people and its resources, yet undeveloped in vast spaces with in its existing frontiers, and that nation will build a stable economy for the well-being of its people.

Such dedication to keep one's house in order would save not only nations and peoples, but would benefit the region and achieve its fullness to satisfy the hopes and the aspirations of all

its people especially the young.

The New Year, we hope and pray, will bring to the Contadora Group a well-deserved success in restoring development, stability and peace.

We welcome the New Year with appreciation and gratitude to our international friends. We remind ourselves that the key word in economic development is cooperation - working together and helping each other. For, in today's world we all are interdependent.

We welcome the New Year with deep gratitude to our Belizean people and with faith and trust in their good sense that we are at our best when we maintain law and order, when we work together for the common good, when we do our duties in order to safeguard the rights of others, when we befriend our neighbours and respect their right to live and develop in peace.

Along the difficult way of trials, tragedies and disappointments, some may tend to lose faith in a better future.

To them we offer a pledge of certain hope that all is not lost, that the darkest hour precedes the light of a glorious day, that working together as one

people we shall overcome the threats to our national existence, that a life-style grounded on a strong moral foundation shall make us a prosperous nation and a happy people under God and our constitution.

So good a future was the prophecy of old

when Issiah foretold that "your people shall all be righteous and shall forever possess the land."(Isaiah 60,21)

A Happy New Year to all of you at home and to our friends abroad.

(Belmopan, Belize
January 1, 1984)

CSO: 3298/416

CABINET SHAKE-UP ASSESSED FROM VARYING PERSPECTIVES

Left-Right Conflict

Belize City THE BEACON in English 7 Jan 84 pp 1, 11

[Text] THE first meeting of the Cabinet for the New Year was not designed to conduct any of the country's business. Instead, it was another big fuss between the right and left wings of the PUP, in the wake of rumours that a shake-up of the Cabinet was imminent.

According to "inside" sources, neither faction is prepared to allow the Prime Minister to play a middle role this time.

The left has reportedly given the Prime Minister an ultimatum, which was packaged to his desk by Minister of State Vernon H. Courtenay.

Among the threats levelled at the P.M. by the leftists, is a plan to force early elections, most likely by a vote of "no confidence," if he throws his support to the right.

The next few weeks in Belmopan should prove quite eventful, especially in the face of this new threat by the left to break the power of the Prime Minister, and the right's belief that the left will eventually yield to pressure.

Background Manuevering

Belize City THE REPORTER in English 15 Jan 84 pp 1, 4, 12

[Text] True to prediction some high and mighty political heads did roll in a sensational Cabinet shake-down last Monday in Belmopan.

The axe descended amid heightened speculation exactly twenty five days after the PUP debacle at the polls, ascribed by the left-of-center Cabinet faction to a general lack of prestige due to (a) corruption in high places and (b) inability to deal with the electricity problems of the City.

Big Losers

Biggest loser in the high-stakes drama was Internal Affairs and Defence Minister Karl Lindberg Rogers, who pleaded ill health and handed in his resignation. As the only non-elected member of Cabinet, Rogers had aroused great resentment by his predictable voting pattern at Cabinet meetings (always supportive of the Prime Minister in acting as a check to the Courtenay-Musa-Shoman faction).

The other big loser was Energy and Communications Minister Louis Sylvester who was demoted to become Minister of Local Government (in charge of fire pumps and jails). Sylvester's star had been visibly on the wane because of the shocking way he managed the Belize Electricity Board. Sylvester survived a concerted attack on his position as the long-standing Chairman of the PUP at the Party Convention on May 29, 1983, but after the December City Council election Belmopan watchers felt the Energy Minister was walking on thin ice.

The blow, when it did come, was not as severe as some had imagined, proving that in spite of everything Mr. Sylvester is resourceful despite his absence from the crucial day-long Cabinet meeting last Monday, and surprisingly strong politically.

Mr. Sylvester did not attend the Cabinet meeting because he was busy caring for his mother, who was terminally ill. She died on Monday night, after the Belmopan decision had been taken but most likely unaware of it, and was buried Tuesday afternoon from the Scots Kirk.

The formal announcement, when it did come on Tuesday midday, said that Mr. Rogers had resigned for health reasons, and went through the charade of reading an exchange of letters between Mr. Rogers and the Prime Minister, Mr. Price.

Love Letters

In his letter of resignation Mr. Rogers recalled his 23 years in the high command of the PUP. He wrote to thank the Prime Minister for the privilege of serving Belize during this time. The achievement of independence by the PUP, he said, was for him, and most edifying experience of his career.

In what is perhaps the Prime Minister's longest love letter, he replied to thank Rogers for the close collaboration and similarity of thinking which has characterized their relationship. The country, the government and the party all owed him a debt of gratitude, the Prime Minister wrote. Mr. Price concluded with a sincere expression of appreciation for Rogers' promised loyalty to the PUP and prayed that God would bless him and help him to a speedy recovery to good health.

DIVIDED BOOTY

The Rogers portfolio of Defence and

Internal Affairs has been divided up between the big winner in the dog-fight—Mr. V.H. Courtenay, who now takes on the portfolio of Interior Minister with

responsibility for the Police, Immigration and radio broadcasts, and the Prime Minister himself who now takes on the portfolio of defence. Courtenay has also taken on the portfolio of Attorney General, which until now has been in the hands of Education Minister Said Musa.

To compensate for his loss of the Attorney Generalship Mr. Musa has been given the new portfolio of Minister of Economic Affairs and Development. The new designation takes in work which Mr. Musa has been doing for some time as the person dictating the tone and direction of development policy, and merely gives formal recognition to a status quo.

Another Minister to gain politically from the shake down is Mr. Joe Briceno, who now becomes Minister of Energy and Communications, inheriting the Sylvester portfolios in tact. As Minister of Energy, Mr. Briceno will now have full responsibility for the Belize Electricity Board and its supplies of diesel. As Minister of Communications he is the designated Minister in charge of

television and telephones.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

Two significant changes in the re-allocation of portfolios appear to deserve special attention. One is that the Prime Minister, perhaps with the memory of what happened to Maurice Bishop still fresh in his mind, has reserved the Ministry of Defence to himself. The second is that responsibility for Social Security, with its millions of dollars of worker contributions, is no longer part of the Ministry of Local Government. Again the Prime Minister has reserved authority and responsibility in this area for himself.

In the shake-down the Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr. Guadeloupe Pech, emerged unscathed, and so did the Minister of Labour, Mr. David McKoy, Mr. Assad Shoman, Minister of Health and Housing, also remained with his portfolio of departments intact.

UNDER DURESS

In all this moving around Belmopan has been careful to give the impression that the changes are all part of a general streamlining which is

now possible due to the vacuum created by the resignation of Mr. Rogers. It was not brought about as a result of any row among members of the government, and the Prime Minister was not under any pressure to re-allocate cabinet portfolios, a separate special release claimed one day later.

But the denial served merely to re-fuel reports that the Prime Minister acted under duress and had been forced to get rid of his faithful ally and collaborator because three of his Ministers had presented him with their own letters of resignation. In order to avoid these resignations, which would have split his party right down the middle, the Prime Minister was required to take some nasty-tasting medicine.

NOT POPULAR

This new apportionment of portfolios however, did not sit well with the people of Belize, and if the idea of change was to show new vigor and vitality in the party hierarchy, the actual results were the exact opposite. The Prime Minister was strongly criticized for his appointment of Mr. Elijio Briceno

to the sensitive Ministry of Energy. As the Deputy Minister of Energy under Sylvester Mr. Briceno was not entirely spotless in the Electricity Board scandal and street talk quickly pounced on a report that the Briceños had been selling diesel in Orange Walk.

"Monkey fi black dag", was the prevalent comment!

SEMANTICS

The reason given for the resignation of Rogers also did not stand up well under public scrutiny. During polling day, on December 14 Rogers manned the St. Ignatious polling station in the Mesopotamia division all day, greeting voters and exchanging pleasantries. He told people who inquired after his health that he was in good shape. His health had never been better.

The effect therefore of the dismantling of the Ministry of Defence and Internal Affairs has been to take power away from a Minister who was well and competent in his own way (and

who incidentally served the Prime Minister with a blind loyalty since 1960 to a Minister who was gravely ill less than a year ago.

This is called the semantics of politics.

One thing seems clear also. Rogers role in neglecting to follow the legal procedure in putting into force the Representation of the People Ordinance registration procedure regulations appears to have played no part in his ouster. Indeed, government lawyers were quick to pounce on the omission as a legal argument to prevent the opposition from digging into the voter registration files. On the PUP scale of values, that was a distinct plus for the wily Mr. Rogers, who less than four weeks later has tumbled from grace.

CONVULSIVE MOVEMENT

The appointment of Musa as head of the newly defined portfolio of Economic Affairs and Development has not been hailed with any noticable enthusiasm either. Musa, an

implacable Socialist, showed some concern for the plight of Belizeans, as is evidenced by the pamphlet "The Way Forward" - a work which he co-authored along with his friend Mr. Assad Shoman and which put forward a five-point plan for economic development. But that was fifteen months ago, and since then Mr. Musa has shown more interest in building a power base and in throttling the free press than in working for the economic uplift of Belize.

For the above and another less obvious reasons, it appears that this week's Cabinet shake-down is not the streamlining that Belmopan would like the country to believe, but the first sharp convulsive movement in the monolithic structure of the PUP that is probably signalling the beginning of the end for this party which has been ruling Belize since 1954. with precious little to show for its long years of autocratic rule.

Subsequent Resignations

Belize City THE REPORTER in English 15 Jan 84 p 1

[Text]

RELIABLE RE-PORTS say that two ministers of the Price Cabinet have resigned. The resignations are to take effect Monday, January 15 at midday.

Former Minister of Energy and Communications, Mr. Louis Sylvester and the Minister of Works Mr. Fred Hunter, delivered their resignations at the same time on Wednesday to the Prime Minister. They indicated that they had no desire to serve in a Cabinet dominated by "leftist."

Mr. Elijio Briceno, designated Minister of Energy and Com-

munications who succeeds Mr. Sylvester had also sent in a letter of resignation in solidarity with Hunter and Sylvester but has since sought and received permission from the Prime Minister to withdraw it.

Insiders say the Cabinet and indeed the whole party is in an uproar over the resignations. Mr. Price and his leftist friends are pretending that the resignations will not hurt the party, but that already ir-reparable damage has been done. Mr. Sylvester possibly the politician with the strongest power

base in the country, has told friends that he has no intention of accepting the offered portfolio as Minister of Local Government.

The resignations do not mean that the two men have left the People's United Party and they may still vote with the party on matters before the House. Their resignations should be seen more as a protest against the direction that the party has recently taken.

The P.M. still has enough votes to command a majority in the House, and the government is not in any danger of falling at this time.

Alleged Communist Leanings

Belize City DISWEEK in English 13 Jan 84 pp 1, 11

[Text]

In a dramatic move on Thursday, Jan. 12 th only three (3) days after the Cabinet changes announced by the Prime Minister, Minister Sylvestre, Hunter, and Briceno sent a letter to the Prime Minister resigning from the Cabinet. In their letter, they stated that the Cabinet changes went against the wishes of the people expressed at the PUP Convention in May, 1983. They also asserted that the reshuffle "creates a pro-communist

bias in the Cabinet", although in fact Cabinet membership remains the same except for the resignation of Mr. Rogers who resigned entirely for health reason.

Later in the day, however, Mr. Briceno withdrew his resignation.

The assertion by Sylvestre and Hunter that there is now a "pro-communist bias" in the Cabinet is as soundless as to be totally ridiculous. There has in fact been

only one change in the membership of Cabinet, and that was occasioned by the resignation of Mr. Rogers. All the other members of Cabinet are exactly the same as they were before the reshuffle. If there is any bias in that membership since 1979, so that Sylvestre and Hunter would have been serving in a "pro-communist" cabinet since then. So why resign till now?

The truth is that there is no "pro-communist bias" in cabinet now or

ever. None of the members of the Cabinet are communist. The real reason for the resignations of Sylvestre and Hunter is Sylvestre removal from the Ministry of Energy. Far from going against the wishes of the people, his removal from Energy was responding to an overwhelming demand by of people throughout the country,

but especially from PUP supporters in Belize City. Hundreds of citizens have written letter to the Prime Minister begging him to remove Sylvestre for the good of the country and party. Sylvestre refuses to recognize the wishes of the people, correctly interpreted by the Prime Minister reshuffling the Cabinet. Sylvestre

came to believe that he owned the Ministry of Energy as of right, and his only reason for resigning is that he was stripped of that Ministry. He has at least for now, managed to convince Hunter to join him in that resignation, no doubt based on the old times of friendship between the two men.

DISWEEK Assessment

Belize City DISWEEK in English 13 Jan 84 pp 1, 11

[Text]

Following weeks of speculations (including some really wild assertions), and just when people thought it was safe to assume that there would not be a Cabinet reshuffle after all, Radio Belize burst the dramatic announcement on the 7:00 news Monday, 9 January.

Deputy Prime Minister C.L.B. Rogers had resigned on grounds of health and the Prime Minister announced changes in his Cabinet. Despite groundless speculation to the contrary, it is clear that the true cause of Mr. Rogers' resignation was ill health, and that it was totally unrelated to the Cabinet changes which were, in most people's opinions, impending. Indeed, the resignation of Mr. Rogers handed to the Prime Minister on 6th January, in the first meeting they had since Rogers' return from the USA—came as a bolt out of the blue to the Prime Minister who was wrestling with the question of how to reshuffle his Cabinet in response to mounting requests from the Party and country to dump Sylvestre. of course Mr. Rogers' resignation made it necessary to make more wide-ranging changes, and the Cabinet changes announced by RB on Monday night are

CABINET CHANGES

George Price — Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Defense, with responsibilities including Establishment and Social Security. Defense and Establishments were previously in Mr. Rogers' portfolio, while Social Security was in the Ministry of Local Government and Social Security, formerly held by Mr. Briceno. Mr. Price divested himself of Foreign Affairs and Economic Development.

VH. (Harry) Courtenay — Attorney General and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Home Affairs. Never before have such important ministries been vested in one person. The Home Affairs Ministry includes all the matters traditional to that ministry except establishment, such as the Police, information and broadcasting, immigration, etc. This means that now responsibility for the BDF and the Police are separated, the former going to Price and the latter to Courtenay. Said Musa — Minister of Economic Development and of Education, Sports and Culture. Mr. Musa gave up the post of Attorney General to Mr. Courtenay and got Economic Development from Price. Musa has been for some time co-chairman with Courtenay of the Investment

Task Force, and his new appointment is expected to bring new energy to this field. He will no doubt continue to work closely with Courtenay, since foreign affairs and economic development can be closely coordinated to bring benefits to the Belizean people.

Eligio Briceno — Minister of Energy and Communications, formerly held by Louis Sylvestre.

Louis Sylvestre — Minister of Local Government, with responsibility also for Fire and Prisons. Social Security, previously with Local Government, was taken by Prime Minister. Fire and Prisons was previously part of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

[as published]
on the whole overwhelmingly favourable, at least to some degree. Many, are saying that Sylvestre should have been completely removed from Cabinet, and that in any case his replacement is not necessarily an improvement. Most Belizean however

Party militants throughout the country and, not surprising, especially in the Collect division which he represents are overjoyed at his remarkable comeback, both because of his improved health and in anticipation of the tremendous contributions he is expected to make to country, government and Party.

What Next?

As we go to press, however, it seems clear that the story is not yet over. Rumours abound to the effect that Sylvestre will not accept the post offered, since he sees this as such a dramatic humiliation

that he will not be able to live with it. In any case, there are still other steps to take as a result of Rogers' resignations from all public posts. The post of Deputy Prime Minister remains vacant. Rogers has resigned from the Senate also, leaving two Senate seats now to be filled (Coffin was never replaced.) And the post of Deputy Leader of the PUP is now also vacant. That post, however, unlike the first two mentioned, cannot be filled by the Prime Minister's action. The PUP Deputy Leader has to be elected by a national convention.

aware of the limitations and pressures, feel that this is about the best that Mr. Price could have accomplished at this time.

There is still some scepticism about Rogers' resignation, but his sincere pledge to remain an active member of the Party, and Price's warm and brotherly letter to him should convince all except those who wish to create mischief by pretending to read something else into the resignation of Mr. Rogers.

But comments are centred around the spectacular comeback of Harry Courtenay, who was out of the centre of political action for two years as a result of illness. First public signs of Courtenay's recovering strength came at the turbulent Party Convention in May last year, when he emerged with dignity and strength from heavy handed attempts by Sylvestre and his allies to humiliate and harass him. Courtenay's new and prominent position in the Cabinet is being interpreted as vindication of his positions in May in the Convention when he vigorously supported Musa for Chairman of the People's United Party.

Praise for Price's Action

Belize City DISWEEK in English 13 Jan 84 p 2

[Editorial]

[Text]

The Cabinet changes carried out by the Prime Minister have enabled him to scotch the image of a floundering and indecisive leader and assert himself as a confident leader willing and able to respond to the peoples legitimate aspirations and assert his leadership in a balanced and decisive manner.

Not everyone is pleased with the degree of surgery, claiming that this is a case of too little too late. But the overwhelming feeling is that Mr. Price has taken a significant step in the right direction, and that his removal of Mr. Sylvestre from the Ministry of Energy has gone a long way towards responding to the peoples' resentment. The removal of that old face and the presence of a new face at that ministry, even though we know we cannot expect miracles, something of a relief to all. No doubt the situation has been somewhat complicated by the resignation of Mr. Rogers, which he announced to the Prime Minister at the first opportunity after his return from the USA. Mr. Roger, unaware of what was taking place at home, resigned entirely of his own free will and entirely on health grounds. Naturally, his resignation made it necessary to reallocate his portfolio. But the Contributions made by Mr. Rogers to the People's United Party and to Belize must be fully recognized. In particular, his championship of independence both at home and abroad helped enormously, and his representation of Belize in international forums is a matter over which both himself and all Belizeans can be justly proud.

Allocation of the subject of economic development to Said Musa will no doubt bring a new emphasis and vitality to that crucially important portfolio. Mr. Musa is well equipped to take on this new role. At one and the same time he enjoys the confidence of the business community and the trusts of the people that he will act in the best interest of the majorities. Together with Courtenay, he can do a lot to improve our economic relation with the rest of the world and help bring real relief and benefit to our people. His new responsibilities open the hope for a new and more energetic approach to development and for a spur to the economy. The fact that the Prime Minister has taken the Establishment portfolio can also be a very positive move. There is no questioning the vital importance of close understanding and cooperation between the public officers and the government, and this move is a clear signal to the civil service of the crucial importance which the Prime Minister places on this relationship. It is now up to the public officers to embrace this opportunity and commit themselves to work tirelessly for the benefit of our country and people.

The fact that Mr. Price has himself also taken on the Ministry of Defence is also welcomed, since at this time the security of our country and its territorial integrity, threatened by the right-wing military dictatorship of Guatemala, remains a number one priority.

The move also responds to concern about having both the police and the BDF in the same Ministry.

All in all, the changes in government a tremendous and much needed boost to the fortunes of the People's United Party. If, as Party faithful hope, the changes indicate a real change of heart and not just a one-shot attempt to deal with the clamour of the people, then the PUP can create and maintain a momentum which will make it impossible to beat in the general elections. For this reason, it is obvious that all the oppositions media will violently attack the Cabinet changes; it robs their Party of the euphoria which the victory in the Belize City Council elections gave them. It deals with a part of the dissatisfaction which led so many PUP militants to obtain from campaigning, and so many other PUP voters to abstain from voting. If coupled with other measures and accompanied by a real change of heart, it in fact presages a resurgence of the PUP as dramatic as the recovery of Harry Courtenay. In short, it spells danger for the UDP.

But the very fact that they took place give an indication that the Party is still very much alive, and capable of energetically steering itself back to the course charted in its Constitution and Manifesto. If the Party can reorganize and democratize, if both Government and Party can become more open to and with the people, if they can mobilize as never before the support of our youth by dynamic and imaginative leadership, then the Party will stand a good chance of winning the next elections. This is not to underestimate the difficulties, but to state a fact.

By his action, Mr Price has stolen the thunder from the opposition. Whether the new horizons and possibilities will be enhanced to ensure electoral victory depends very much on what Mr. Price and his government and Party will do in the weeks and months ahead. They owe it to the country to act energetically and decisively to save the Belizean people from the disaster of having at this critical time, a government with the policies which the UDP now espouse.

Having lost Mr. Rogers the Party is especially fortunate in having gained the full and enhanced participation of Harry Courtenay. Mr. Courtenay's longstanding work in the field of foreign affairs will stand him in good stead as our new Minister of Foreign Affairs. His methodical and incisive mind, coupled with his fine practical imagination, will ensure that his management of the other subject in his portfolio will enhance both the performance and the image of Government within the shortest possible time. His willingness and ability public opinion of while maintaining the loyalty and discipline of the police force, and will also enable him to bring a new image to information in general and Radio Belize in particular.

Denial of New Resignations

Belize City BELIZE SUNDAY TIMES in English 15 Jan 84 p 1

[Text] The Government of Belize has denied press reports that there was a row among members of the government during a cabinet meeting held on

Tuesday, 3rd January 1984, and that Prime Minister George Price was under pressure to re-allocate cabinet portfolios.

A release from the Office of the Prime Minister on Jan. 10 noted that, under the constitution the allocation of portfolios is not a cabinet function.

A government spokesman said cabinet was involved in an exercise to review the country's economic situation and its cash flow implications.

CSO: 3298/416/417

CENTRAL BANK REFUTES STORY ON UNBALANCED BUDGETS

Belize City DISWEEK in English 13 Jan 84 p 3

[Text]

The Central Bank of Belize, under the governorship of Mr. R. C. Swift has issued a press release denying statements made in a REPORTER editorial on 8 January stating that Belize had failed to balance its budget for the past six years. The Central Bank release states that "the Minister of Finance has in fact presented and successfully implemented a balanced budget over the period in question." According to the editorial in the REPORTER, statistics provided by the Central Bank "provide a grim accounting of People's United Party Stewardship." It asserts that "the administration in Belmopan has not been able to balance the budget since 1977", and claims that the accumulated budget deficit for the last six years amounts to thirty-one million dollars. The editorial accuses the Government of "waste, inefficiency and corruption," and asserts that government has been lying in claiming to balance the budget every year. The Central Bank reply in turn accuses the REPORTER of manipulating its figures to give a very misleading picture of the budgetary situation.

The text of the Central Bank release follows:

(1) The editorial gives a very misleading picture of the budgetary situation in Belize in recent years. The table from which the Reporter's figures were extracted is published in the Central Bank of Belize Quarterly Reviews — for

"This same table shows that government ran a significant current account surplus for the years 1977-82, and a small deficit for the first nine months of fiscal year 1982/83.

"This small deficit was attributable largely to the world economic recession, and particularly to the low world price of sugar, and the devaluation of the Mexican peso. If these adverse economic circumstances persist indefinitely, it will become more difficult to generate surpluses in the current account. "all countries try to finance their capital programmes from a mixture of revenue sources, including current account surpluses, grant aid, concessional loans, and commercial borrowing. Belize is no exception. "From time to time all of the above sources have been utilised to finance Belize's capital. The "deficits" referred to in the Reporter editorial represent net expenditures on development programmes.

"Most of this expenditure has been financed through grant aid and concessionary borrowing. The remainder has been funded through commercial Short Term Bank borrowings. Belize has therefore managed to balance its budget in each of the past five years.

"The Central Bank of Belize maintains that a less partial interpretation of its data would confirm that the Minister of Finance has in fact, presented and successfully implemented a balanced budget over the period in question."

CSO: 3298/417

COLUMNIST ASSESSES UDP PROSPECTS IN NATIONAL ELECTION

Belize City DISWEEK in English 6 Jan 84 p 3

[From the "Krohnology" column by Stewart Krohn]

[Text]

It's not terribly difficult to give advice to a political party that's just massacred its opponent in municipal elections. The standard prescription is never change a winning game.

The United Democratic Party, even after the Yuletide holiday, is still riding high. Bouyed by their victory in Belize City, the UDP candidates look forward to riding their momentum into the seats of national power come late this year or early next. The PUP, meanwhile, is quarreling and demoralized.

Does all this sound familiar? The UDP has been here before; 1979 is not exactly ancient history. "There is no way the UDP can lose," said the pundite five years ago. When the ballots were counted, some Opposition leaders were so shocked that their only explanation became "disappearing ink".

The key to assessing the UDP's chances today is to look back at 1979. Are the circumstances the same?

Overconfidence

In 1979 one thing that killed the UDP was overconfidence. One would hope that they learned their lesson and apart from a bit of post election boasting by a few city councillors, it appears that they have. The UDP leaders have been studiously humble in their victory and are likely to stay so.

Leadership

In 1979 the leadership of Dean Lindo was turned from an organizational asset into a public relations nightmare. Such will not be the case this year. Manuel Esquivel, though hardly charismatic, is about as clean as a politician can be. Five years have even sanitized Mr. Lindo and he will be running hard in Fort George. Just about the only skeleton in the UDP's closet is Santiago Perdomo. His close ties with Guatemala make him suspect to many traditional opposition supporters and one gets the feeling that a close inspection of his activities as minister might raise a few eyebrows. The problem for the PUP, however,

is that whatever mistakes he may have made, they were accomplished as a PUP.

Issues

In the last election the UDP campaign was based on the three legs of "No Communism, No Guatemala, and No Independence." In the end, however, the PUP managed to blunt that attack by making the election boil down to a contest of George Price versus Dean Lindo. This time around, with Independence a reality and Guatemala and Communism politically archaic, the election may hinge on bread and butter issues. Are voters better off today than in January 1980? Those in Belize City seem to think not. No doubt the government will unveil an assortment of employment-producing projects that will seem to have the economy humming on election day and this may help them to recover some lost ground. The major point for the United Democratic Party to push, however, may be the state of its opponent. With the various factions of the ruling party in a state of war, the resulting chaos could make the PUP the single biggest issue in the election.

The Redistricting Factor

Even with its house in order, competent leadership and all the issues in its favor the UDP will still have to contend with new boundaries for the next election. The law says that each constituency must have between 2,000 and 3,000 registered voters. At present there are few, if any, constituencies that conform to these requirements. When the new lines are drawn under the direct or indirect hand of the PUP, it will create a whole new ball game. Some unfortunate politicians will see their home bases disappear with a stroke of its pen. Others may find themselves given a House seat on a platter. It is a situation in which a knowledge of mathematics and computers may become as important as a firm handshake and silver tongue. Manuel Esquivel, the former professor of physics, should be the right man in the right place to handle the challenge, but until the new map is drawn, all political bets are off.

PUP LEFT-RIGHT SPLIT DETERMINES COROZAL TOWN ELECTION

Belize City THE BEACON in English 7 Jan 84 p 2

[Text]

CAME the elections for Mayor and Deputy Mayor in Corozal Town for 1984 and Pup Hoare was elected Mayor and UDP Israel Alpuche his deputy. How did this happen in a situation where the Pups had a 4-3 majority? Very simple: the Right/Left split in the Pup had reached that Northern town in all its fury.

The Sylvestre/Hunter faction and the Shoman/-Musa communist faction have decided to do battle all over the country. Corozal was to be no exception.

The left had blamed the Right for the loss of Belize City. According to them, their communist candidates had beaten those of the Right. The Sylvestre forces replied that none of them had won

both had suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the United Democratic Party. They went on to point out that all the candidates had been hand-picked by The Gang of Three (Courtenay, Shoman and Musa) and that

their only candidate, Harry Liu had won the Pickstock Division even if by a mere thirty-two votes.

Anyhow, Gabriel Hoare decided that the Pup ship was sinking and he would go along with the wishes of the people and look the UDP way.

Accordingly he journeyed to Belmopan where he tried to fire his then Deputy, Olga Marin. He complained that she had missed more than three consecutive meetings without the Mayor's permission and should, according to law, be fired. Belmopan would not budge. He bided his time.

At the election, the three UDPs voted him as Mayor and he in turn voted along with them for a UDP deputy.

And now he is hotly pursued by the powers that be to remain a Pup. But the die is cast. He has decided to remain neutral and avoid the sinking ship. All he can expect is constant threats and

pressures over the next few months.

It remains to be seen whether he will follow the dictates of his conscience and respect the

will of the people. The odds are that he will go along with the people as many Pups are doing these days.

[Editor's Note: Reporting the same story, the Belize City DISWEEK of 6 January, page 1, has this to say:

"Gabriel Hoare has been reelected Mayor of Corozal Town in circumstances which many PUP's described as being 'disloyal to the Party.'

"Hoare was so intent on being reelected that he bargained with the UDP for that. The Corozal Town Board is made up of four PUP and three UDP Councillors. For Hoare to be elected he needed the support of his PUP colleagues which it was evident he could not have as these had expressed support for a new Mayor. Hoare it is said, approached the UDP Councillors requested their support and promised to in return give them a vote needed to get in a UDP Deputy mayor. [as published]

"The UDP accepted and Hoare was reelected Mayor with Rally Alpuche as his Deputy. Hoare's decision to do such a thing has been condemned by many who now say it is a move he may well live to regret in coming days if indeed he intends to continue a PUP follower."]

CSO: 3298/417

ORANGE WALK CANE FARMERS VOTE AT ANNUAL MEETING

Orange Walk Town PUEBLO in English 17 Dec 83 p 3

[Text] On Sunday 10th December 1983, the Orange Walk division of the Belize Canefarmers Association held its annual general meeting at the Peoples Stadium. Of the 8 Directors who were elected to represent the 8 branches of the Association, only 4 were present. They were Mr. Bonifacio Moh, the CFA Chairman; Mr. Silvano Cruz, the Vice Chairman; Mr. Ofelio Carballo, the Chairman of the Management Committee, and Mr. Victor Cawich, OW CFA Representative to the Sugar Board.

Conspicuously and conveniently absent from the meeting were Joe Briceno, Junior Vega, Mateo Uh and Adolfo Toledano, all of whom have gone on record as saying that they defend canefarmers interests. [as published] To prove that they indeed defend and look after canefarmers interests, they boycotted the general meeting and requested their branch members to follow suit. [as published] The general meeting was announced for days over Radio Belize and X E R00 (Chetumal).

Mr. Moh told canefarmers present that more discipline was needed to correct certain irregularities in the industry. He then informed farmers that he would create the "vigilancia", or watchdog committee, to oversee and correct irregularities, especially where thiefting is concerned.

A farmer, Mr. Nayo Baeza, in support told the gathering that the "vigilancia" is good, but that "castigo" (punishment) should be enforced to any farmer so caught. A farmer suggested that any farmer caught in irregularities, especially at the scales, to be expelled from the Association. Farmers applauded in support.

Farmers complained that pass administrations were too slack in keeping an eye in the production process and that this caused financial losses. [as published] Chairman Moh also promised farmers that contrary to past administrations, he would see to it that Orange Walk farmers be given a better deal in deliveries since in the past, Corozal farmers and trucks were not only given priority, but they actually filled a percentage of Orange Walk's daily quota when Orange Walk trucks loaded with canes ready to make their delivery.

Canefarmers expressed their disgust at the other four Directors that were conveniently absent. They were annoyed that these Directors failed to make an appearance, especially when the meeting was called to discuss canefarmers interests. [as published] The irate canefarmers noted that Joe Briceno, Junior Vega, Mateo Uh and Adolfo Toledano were opportunists who use the Association to butter their paws every month.

To calm the wrath of canefarmers, Mr. Moh told them that the four absent Directors were people who think and speak in reverse. "When they say that the care about canefarmers' interests, it is because they don't care", said Mr. Moh. [as published] This is hitting the nail right on the head. Joe Briceno in particular is known to say at the Crystal "yo defiando los intereses de los caneros". Well, if that were so, he proved that he didn't even have the courtesy of being present at Sunday's canefarmers general meeting.

[Editor's Note: Earlier, on 22 October 1983, page 4, the Orange Walk Town PUEBLO carried the following "editorial" on a new cane farmers' approach to the issue of a farmer-worker alliance in the industry:]

Sale of Industry

Canefarmers elections are over and it is now history.

It is also history that canefarmers have made a change of Administration.

Future negotiations must be conducted in a firm and intelligent manner. One factor often neglected in the past by capricious administrators is the "factory workers factor".

In the past, all efforts to form a "Farmers/Workers Alliance" have been frustrated by both Company and capricious administrators. It would be almost impossible and even foolish to reach any harmonious agreement without the working force of the two sugar factories.

If any lasting peace is to be achieved in the sale of the industry, then the workers factor must become a working factor in the exercise.

Factory workers can find good leaders to represent them in all working commissions effecting transactions for the sale of the industry. Why not? They can also become co-owners of the industry. As a matter of fact, they must become co-owners of the industry. Only so can peace be guaranteed.

The new leaders now have a golden opportunity to add one more chip to their bargaining power, THE FACTORY WORKERS CHIP.

CSO: 3298/418

PUP POLITICAL SITUATION IN ORANGE WALK ASSESSED

Orange Walk Town PUEBLO in English 17 Dec 83 p 4

[Article under general heading "Political Developments in Orange Walk"]

[Text] It seems that the Orange Walk South Area might be up for grabbings as 1984 draws nearer. Already there are rumours that at least five candidates may challenge Guadalupe Pech within the party. Out of these, it is expected that Joe Moguel (a banker) from San Lazaro, may be the strongest force to contend with. According to South villagers, under-the-water campaign to replace Pech with Moguel has gotten under way.

South villagers say that they have gotten feelers from the Moguel clan about "el cambio de lider dentro del partido". Well known political campaigners from the South who have traditionally supported the PUP have begun going around telling villagers that "es tiempo de hacer cambio de lider dentro del partido".

South villagers who have gotten the feelers are somewhat sceptical about Moguel. They believe that Briceno is behind Moguel especially since Briceno and Pech don't see eye to eye since the days when Pech was Minister of Trade and when Briceno caused Black Wednesday when he tried to reverse a Trade decision to allow Corozal to deliver canes at Tower Hill. Furthermore, villagers note the "special relationship" that exists between Moguel's wife Nati with Briceno and Football Politics. Villagers also note the "gas station affair" and believe Moguel may be hurtled against Pech and that Briceno is just using Moguel to get a crack at Pech. [as published]

It is the general opinion in the South that Mr. Guadalupe Pech won't be able to survive another elections. [as published] Like Briceno in the North, he's also "going".

Having grown old in power and with less dynamism, South villagers are becoming more disenchanted with Pech. They want to have new leaders.

Mr. Pech is indeed in a very critical position. Politically he has no power base to count on. It used to be that once he controlled South villagers by way of cane politics. Almost all the Representatives of the Yo Creek, San Lazaro and Guinea Grass branches of the CFA supported him blindly. No more.

New Representatives are of the belief that it is a dishonor to their reputation to be a flunkey, stooge, puppet or lambiscon of any politician.

At present Mr. Pech does not count with the support of any of the above-mentioned branches and even his brother-in-law and former CFA Chairman lost in cane politics. Even Trinidad which was once a Pech stronghold has abandoned ship. According to reliable reports, Trinidad villagers feel that for too long they were neglected and they have openly voiced and strongly too, that Pech must go. Hence the UDP's strategically holding its convention in Trinidad.

Mr. Price's October helicopter raid did little to improve Mr. Pech's image, especially in the villages of August Pine Ridge and San Felipe. The choppers caused irate villagers to burn portraits of the PM. These villagers were known to be PUP.

Ever since the UDP held a public meeting at Central Park in which they took a strong stand against Paraquat (not the choppers) UDP fortunes have taken a spiral. They made it seem that a UDP government would go against Paraquat. That was the impression the people got. This UDP meeting was tape recorded by two gringos. They have not been seen in town again since then.

Following the devastating defeat of the Briceno-Vega Clique, there has been heightened CIB activity. At least one CIB agent was transferred. An estimated five special branch agents for political surveillance are posted in Orange Walk, Belize's most complicated and sophisticated district.

CSO: 3298/418

ORANGE WALK RESIDENTS FEAR BDF INCURSION IN WAR ON DRUGS

Orange Walk Town PUEBLO in English 8 Oct 83 pp 1, 4

[Text] In large numbers, and seeming better equipped, one hundred plus strong, they rode into town. The boys, along with some female members, defenders of our freedom, have come to station themselves here on perhaps a semi-permanent base.

Some say they are on exercise maneuvers. Others say they came to chase away Guatemalan freedom fighters under persecution who have crossed over to our territory to avoid execution.

Perhaps the hidden truth is that they came to combat the drug trade. Last year, Mexican choppers almost eradicated the drug crop, and reports reaching us indicate that the choppers will once again be used. At 8:00 A.M. on Thursday past, the first choppers flew into town. They will be used on a greater scale.

Recent economic co-operation treaties signed between the Belize authorities and their American counterparts gives reason to believe that it is the US government funding the entire anti-drug project. [as published]

Belizean soldiers have recently been trained in Panama and Georgia, USA, all by US personnel and in US facilities.

The recent addition of the two planes to make up the air wing of the BDF has given the army greater mobility and one would hope greater efficiency.

The local citizenry is still sceptical in commenting on the presence of the troops. Last year, the BDF, perhaps a bit over zealous and/or trigger happy created an unenviable image amongst the local residents. They killed a young Belizean.

Uncalled for acts of violence and brutality gave way for the local population to almost hate the army.

For a fledgling young army such as the Belize army, there exists the need to create a Peoples Army image on the people. Because once a people learn to hate its army, very little can be done to change that image.

This newspaper will look into any reports of ill treatment on the local population by the army. There is no need to brutalize people who are not offering any resistance.

Only the courts along with its judges may decide on the guilt of an individual. It is not up to the army to decide that. We are not living under a state of emergency. Neither is there a civil war.

In times of peace, our army should dedicate itself to useful exercises such as cleaning up of our towns, cities and villages. This is done in other countries. Let them live amongst the people. Then the people will love them.

CSO: 3298/418

AMBASSADOR SAYS JAMAICA PLANS LOCAL MISSION OFFICES

Belize City THE REPORTER in English 15 Jan 84 p 7

[Text] JAMAICA'S newly appointed non-resident High Commissioner to Belize, Mr. Louis Boothe, has intimated to the Prime Minister of Belize, Mr. George Price, that it is the intention of the Jamaica Government to set up offices in Belize to take care of the needs of the many Jamaicans resident here.

The information was conveyed during remarks exchanged at Belmopan while the High Commissioner, who is also Ambassador to Mexico City, presented his letters of credentials to the Prime Minister shortly after he had made a similar presentation to the Governor General, Dr. Minita Gordon.

Plans for the Jamaican offices are foremost on the High

Commissioner's agenda. Mr. Boothe told the REPORTER. Here for a week, he has started discussions with a number of Jamaican businessmen, government officials and members of the diplomatic Corps.

Mr. Boothe is a career diplomat who has served both the Manley and the Seaga governments. Prior to the Jamaica's independence in 1962 he served as Adm Administrative Officer at King's House with responsibility for the Turks and Caicos Islands.

After independence he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and for many years headed the Department of Protocol. In 1975 he was appointed to the post of Ambassador and represented his

government in Moscow, London, Ottawa, Port of Spain, Washington, the Dominican Republic and the Bahamas before becoming Ambassador to Mexico. Today Mr. Boothe is also non-resident Ambassador to Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Panama.

While in Belmopan on Monday Mr. Boothe was conducted on a tour of the CARICOM Farms and later set up temporary headquarters at the Gort George Hotel, from where he has

been receiving a steady stream of Jamaican callers. Mr. Boothe was last in Belize in 1981 when he accompanied the Prime Minister of Jamaica, Mr. Seaga to the Belize Independence celebrations.

BRIEFS

UDP IN ORANGE WALK--On Sunday 18th December 1983, the UDP will hold a special convention in Trinidad to select the party's leader for the Orange Walk South Electoral Division. Three candidates are expected to vie for the post. They are Juan Blanco from Yo Creek, Onesimo Pech from Guinea Grass and Antonio Celiz from San Felipe. All three are school teachers with considerable support to cause sufficient trouble to incumbent Area Representative Guadalupe Pech. If the convention is democratic without outside preferences and intervention, it is expected that the UDP will emerge strong and more united than ever. Incumbent Guadalupe Pech better begin packing up. He's "going". [Text] [Orange Walk Town PUEBLO in English 17 Dec 83 p 4]

TV IN ORANGE WALK--Orange Walk may well become the TV centre of Belize. The gossip in high circles indicate that at least three more persons are planning to set up American satellite dishes in town. [as published] This comes about because of what people term as excessive high hook-up rates being charged by local Nibble & Company. In a friendly chat with PUEBLO, mayor Polo Ericeno confirmed that he has plans of investing monies to the tune of \$40,000 to provide services for consumers at low rates of \$15.00 per month. When confronted with the rumours that other persons were also planning on the same venture, Mr. Briceno said: "If other person go into di field, then there is no need for me to enter di race". [as published] In the meantime, Mr. Briceno's plans are to install the TV dish on the Town Hall roof and eventually work out a plan to make it a community project. He told PUEBLO after he makes back his investment, then proceeds would go to community projects. How noble! But we yet have to see if the recently enacted TV legislation will provide that loophole for it to be an open free-for-all TV race. [Text] [Orange Walk Town PUEBLO in English 24 Sep 83 p 2]

DISWEEK SLAP AT BEACON--They call it the LABOUR BEACON, it is anything but Labour. It is in fact a mafia style foreign big business sponsored rag sheet. Thousands are mailed every two weeks, using the post office to spread lies and filth. There is no regards for the laws of libel or contempt of court. They are more reactionary than the John Birch society. All the lies that's fit to print appear in the LABOUR BEACON, delivered at your doorstep free of cost of course. [as published] Manufactured on church street, Belize City. [Text] [Belize City DISWEEK in English 6 Jan 84 p 1]

CUT IN INTEREST RATES--In an effort to encourage investment and so increase the money supply to investors, the Central Bank of Belize has reduced by 2 percent its prime lending rate. A release from the Central Bank aired over Radio Belize said: The Central Bank of Belize after consultation with the Commercial Banks and in concurrence with the Minister of Finance announces that effective 12 January 1984, the Prime Lending Rate chargeable to borrowers will be reduced from 14% to 12 percent per annum. The Minimum rate of interest payable to depositors will be reduced for the Ordinary Pass Book 4%, Premium Savings 6%, one month fixed for Deposits 7%, three and six months Fixed Deposits 9% and twelve months fixed deposits 9 1/2%. Since its establishment in 1982, the Central Bank has twice reduced prime lending rates. On August of 1983, the interest rates to borrowers were reduced from 16 to 14% while the interest rates on fixed deposits were reduced by 3%. [Text] [Belize City DISWEEK in English 13 Jan 84 p 11]

CITY GOVERNMENT IN-FIGHTING--Upon taking office less than one month ago the UDP City Councillors appointed Gustavo Bautista as Mayor of Belize City. Flushed with the spotlight, he grasped at the UDP Manifesto for support and announced four new Commissioners for the City. Among them he named lawyer Dean Barrow, Commissioner responsible for personnel. Barrow accepted with a smile but after the meeting the rumblings began underneath and when he received his first taste of politics, he capitulated to Hubert Elrington. Streetwise, Elrington has axed his first head. He is now Commissioner for Personnel. [Text] [Belize City BELIZE SUNDAY TIMES in English 15 Jan 84 p 2]

CANE FARMER PROFITS--Belizean cane farmers grossed Bz\$42.98 million during 1983 for the sale of 1.13 million tons of cane. The December Sugar Board report says growing and reaping costs, loan payments and other expenses are estimated in the neighbourhood of about Bz\$39.5 million. It is obvious therefore, the Board says, that little profits, if any, were realised last year. The low prices of sugar in the world market continue at depressed levels with little prospect of improving in the near future. The Sugar Board points to the weakness of Sterling, in comparison with European currencies, as one factor that is also affecting Belize's income from sugar sales to the EEC. The only encouraging aspect of our sugar sales constitutes the small quota to the United States for which a reasonable price is received. In other news from the industry, the Sugar Board reports that consumption figures of local sugar up to 31st October, 1983 show that Belizeans consumed 3,515 tons of white and 728 tons of brown sugar during the first ten months of this year. Industrial users of sugar, mostly soft drink manufacturers, accounted for 663 tons of sugar in the same period. [Text] [Belize City BELIZE SUNDAY TIMES in English 15 Jan 84 p 3]

CSO: 3298/419

'PARALLEL' DOLLAR FLUCTUATIONS AFFECTED 1983 PROFITS, LOSSES

Santiago EL MERCURIO in Spanish 7 Jan 84 p B1

[Text] The local free-market value of the American dollar fluctuated widely last year from a floor of 86 pesos to a ceiling of 142 pesos, due mainly to intermittent rumors of changes in economic policy.

According to background information compiled by ECONOMIA Y NEGOCIOS, 1983 began with the U.S. currency quoted at 93.92 (average asking price), with an obvious rising trend, which did not reverse after the current finance minister, Caceres, took over the reins of the economy in February of last year. That month the dollar averaged 100.42 pesos, hitting a peak of 118.

In the two subsequent months the "parallel" dollar rose sharply, reaching a March average of 127.68 pesos and a peak of 138.

The announcement of the "Emergency Economic Plan" by Minister Caceres on 22 March reversed the trend in dollar transactions, which hit their peak in early April at an average price of 114.33 for the month and a high point of 142 pesos. This was the highest level at which the U.S. currency was sold last year, after which it began a steady decline.

It bears remembering that the Emergency Plan announced by Minister Caceres in March called for an end to free-market sales of the dollar and a new method of adjusting the currency's value. From then on it began to adjust in accordance with the changes in the consumer price index (CPI). Other measures announced at the time were the increase in tariffs from 10 to 20 percent, a higher tax on gasoline and the application of the VAT to Central Bank dollar transactions; among others.

Foreign Debt Rescheduling

The positive response by private international banks to new loan requests of \$1.3 billion (which was learned of in mid-May), along with measures to renegotiate debts, relief for mortgagors and a boost for public works steepened the drop of the parallel dollar to a low of 86 pesos in July.

From then until October the parallel dollar remained relatively stable. In October the market began to show signs of instability, as quotes of up to 96.5 pesos were recorded.

Confusion had arisen in economic circles. A delegation of government representatives, led by Minister Caceres, traveled to Washington in early October to attend the joint meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Also in attendance were former Ministers Manuel Martin and Luis Escobar Cerda as advisers, it was later clarified.

A series of rumors about changes then began circulating in economic circles, but they were later denied by the finance minister himself.

The price stabilized and then began heading up again in early December, in anticipation of further economic measures, hitting a high of 106.5 pesos. A few days before Minister Caceres's most recent speech, the price had begun to drop again.

On 16 December the finance minister announced a solution to the problem of the banks that had not been taken over, a new arrangement for the adjustment of the dollar (discounting international inflation), retention of the 20 percent tariff and a cut in salaries for the high-level executives of public enterprises.

Profits and Losses

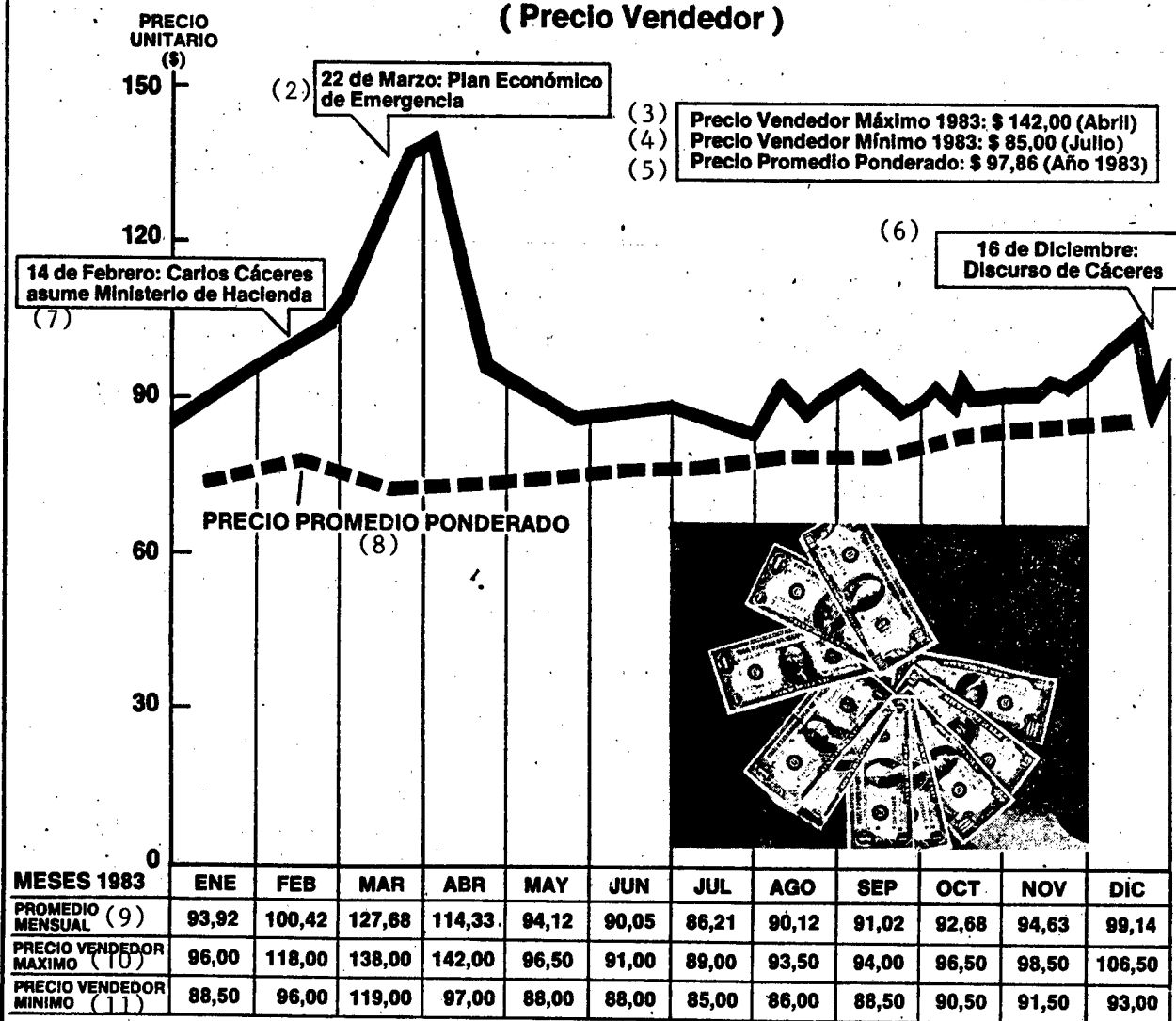
The dollar market is essentially speculative, a trait that became more obvious during the last few months of the year, sometime currency traders pointed out. If someone had bought at the early-year high of 96 and sold at the April high of 142, he would have made a profit of close to 48 percent. It would obviously have been different for someone who bought high and then sold during subsequent months, in October for example. In this instance the loss would have been more than 30 percent.

If someone had bought dollars in January at an average price of 93.92 pesos and kept them until year-end, he would have made about 6 percent profit, a yield lower than term deposits, which until a short while were paying an 8 percent real annual interest rate.

It bears noting that inflation for the year was slightly above 21 percent, which makes the above long-term dollar yield even worse.

Meanwhile, the price of the official dollar, as recorded by the Central Bank, moved from about 74.8 pesos in January of last year to 87.5 in late December, a swing of some 17 percent.

(1) **VARIACION VALOR DOLAR MERCADO "PARALELO" 1983**
(Precio Vendedor)



Key:

1. Asking price for parallel market dollar in 1983
2. 22 March: Emergency Economic Plan
3. Maximum asking price: 142 pesos (April)
4. Minimum asking price: 85 (July)
5. Weighted average price: 97.86 (year as a whole)
6. 16 December: Cáceres's speech
7. 14 February: Carlos Cáceres takes over as finance minister
8. Weighted average price
9. Monthly average
10. Maximum asking price
11. Minimum asking price

EUGENIO ORTEGA ON CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT ALTERNATIVE PROJECT

Santiago QUE PASA in Spanish 19 Jan 84 pp 16-19

[Interview with Eugenio Ortega, the coordinator of the Christian Democrat "Alternative Project," at his home by Gloria Stanley; date not given]

[Text] He regards himself as more of a politician than an ideologue. But the sociologist emerges more often in our conversation than the politician or the ideologue. "Would you like to know the system that we used in discussions during the seminar?" he asks. While he absent-mindedly gazes at the lazy movement of the trees in his garden, he thinks almost to himself about his major responsibility over the past 3 years: heading up the Alternative Project of a group of professionals belonging to Christian Democracy.

The husband of Carmen Frei, 43 years of age, and the father of 3 children (Maria Paz, 19; Eugenio, 16 and Francisca, 12), Eugenio Ortega has forced his fellow Christian Democrats to rethink their ideas about various issues of national life. A former manager of the Technical Cooperation Service (SCT), he was an ECLA adviser for 3 years and then a UN consultant on Latin American development programs. Since 1980 he has retained just a consultantship with the ILO and has devoted himself entirely to the recently disclosed Christian Democrat Alternative Project.

He considers his father-in-law as "his second father" ("He definitely left his mark on me. He was an honorable, kind person, but at the same time one with a great deal of character, a hospitable, intellectual person with a strong motivation towards Christian commitment who never lost his sense of balance between politics and private life") and notes that his wife's

political involvement has not caused conflicts of responsibility in their marriage. "We also share the household chores, and I think that I even cook better than Carmen," he says laughing.

[Question] Does the presentation of the Christian Democrat (DC) alternative program mean that the party has chosen, as in the past, to seek its own formula for government instead of a coalition plan?

[Answer] First of all we have to clarify the scope of our work. Those of us who authored this piece of work are DC professionals, most of us independent sympathizers, who want to provide Christian Democracy with the groundwork for discussing what could be a future project for society. Therefore, the party is not involved in these efforts. We feel that these ideas should be enriched in the future with input from business, labor, mining, farming, health care, etc. And then they should be contrasted with the thoughts of other political sectors and, obviously, with those of the Democratic Alliance.

[Question] You say that you do not represent the official thought of the DC. Yet at the seminar that was organized to analyze it, most of the addresses were delivered by well-known leaders.

[Answer] Yes, it is true that many people who carry weight have worked on this project, such as Jaime Castillo, who chaired the ideological commission; Edgardo Boeninger, who was in charge of the socioeconomic commission, and Alejandro Foxley, who headed the overview commission. But the important thing is that although it does reflect the latent thought of the DC, it is not a final document and has not gone through the party's decision-making bodies, such as the board, the congress or the political commission. If there are mistakes, they are ours and do not compromise the party. I think that it is important to get used to this modern system of work, to seek complementary input from others and to leave behind the rigid structures that are closed to input from within the party.

[Question] Getting back to my previous question, DC thought has become somewhat blurry lately by virtue of the party's involvement in an alliance in which many diverse ideas have a place. Is this project an attempt to redefine the DC?

[Answer] I think that all parties seek their own identity and want to have their own profile. But this does not rule out the possibility of very close political relations and alliances. It's like in marriage. The union affirms the identities.

[Question] And how much did it cost to keep a large group of professionals working for 3 years, with offices, secretaries, telephones?

[Answer] We financed the whole thing. This has been a cooperative effort by all of us professionals working on it. Moreover, all of us have other work and did not charge a cent to take part in this project.

[Question] A DC project that people even thought at the time was going to be developed over decades was left unfinished in 1970. Does this project embody the ideas that never got implemented or does it propose new things?

[Answer] I would say both. We have conducted a quite in-depth analysis of all aspects of national life. We have extracted positive things from our political experience and we have also pondered the mistakes we made. The 1964 program was very much in keeping with conditions in the country at the time, but obviously times have changed in Chile and throughout the world. We have also learned a great deal from the mistakes that this government has made. Today we value more highly than before the role of civilian society and of producer organizations and social solidarity. Moreover, we have balanced out our thought more with regard to certain matters.

[Question] You say that you have also pondered your own mistakes. What were these mistakes, in your opinion?

[Answer] We were presumptuous and thought we could conquer the world. Our group in one way or another possessed the truth and we were going to make the big changes in Chile. We were not objective enough in analyzing the virtues of our adversaries and in realizing our own weaknesses.

[Question] A messianic approach that had grave consequences for the country, first a Marxist government and then a military alternative.

[Answer] I always feel that a lot of foolish self-interested remarks are made about this issue. In a soccer game all of the people involved are responsible for the show: the players, the referee and the spectators. The fact is that in this country we were all actors. Therefore, the responsibilities are shared too. As far as the two breakdowns are concerned, I prefer to leave the judgments in that regard to historians.

[Question] In an article in the magazine REALIDAD Jaime Guzman analyzes what he regards as shortcomings of the DC. One of them he mentions is a phobia about the Right, which supposedly facilitated the advent of Salvador Allende. He feels that this phobia still exists.

[Answer] Pursuing that analysis, we could say the same about the Right; in other words, the Right's phobia about the DC created the conditions for that outcome. Politics over the past 30 years led to the emergence of the Falange and then of the DC, whose philosophy was one of overhaul and change, which was necessarily going to come into conflict with certain interests. There certainly have been difficulties with the Right on political and economic issues, but I wouldn't speak of phobias. There are different ways of viewing things. The important thing is to be objective and rational and not turn them into causes of wars. I would say the same about the Left.

[Question] The Falange branched off from the old Conservative Party. How is it that in a few short years the Christian Democratic Party has swung from the Right to the Center-Left, according to its own description?

[Answer] Perhaps accurate information is lacking about the party's political history. Frei won his first Senate seat in a coalition with the Socialist Party. We have always felt that the country needed a major Center-Left alliance to make changes, to provide for greater involvement and democracy and to pursue economic policies that would make development and equitable distribution compatible. This has been our traditional position, and I don't see how there has been a lack of continuity in our philosophy. We feel that for the country's democratic stability it is extremely important to have a stable Center-Left.

[Question] Why a stable Center-Left and not just a plain Center?

[Answer] I think that it is important to go beyond this sort of geometric definition of politics and instead to take stands on substantive issues. I have seen major evolutions among people on the Left, for example. They criticize the philosophy behind the government's role and the dictatorship of the proletariat and rethink the value of democracy, the function of society in development and its autonomy vis-a-vis political parties. I have also seen evolution among people on the Right, who are trying to seek solutions to the country's underlying problems, above and beyond images or ideologies, above and beyond Center-Right or Center-Left divisions.

[Question] But if such definitions are not important, then why is the DC so interested in defining itself as on the Center-Left?

[Answer] I am almost objecting to the Center-Left description. Our party has a substance, an ideology and, logically, seeks to transform society towards greater humanization, greater solidarity and greater growth for the individual. We are not statist, but we believe that the State has an important role to play. So then, given this outlook, we can probably find many other people who agree with us.

[Question] On the Right too?

[Answer] What has been called the Right, especially in recent times, has been less strong in its affirmation of human rights and democracy and stronger in its affirmation of private enterprise and the profit motive as the underpinning of society. This is the sort of capitalism that certain elements on the Right have proposed for Chile, but the only thing that it does is ultimately affirm Marx's historical materialism.

[Question] The entire right wing?

[Answer] I would be delighted to draw distinctions, to know who is who. What is important right now is a definition of what the Right wants, of what its ideological and political view is.

[Question] They are asking you for the same sort of definition, in particular, a clarification of your position on Marxist forces.

[Answer] First of all, they cannot criticize us for failing to take a stand on the philosophical and political content of Marxism. As can be seen in the country's recent history, we have had confrontations with the pro-Marxist-Leninist parties. We have never been Marxists. We have proclaimed the rights of the individual, democracy and a spiritual rather than a materialist approach to life. We have taken a clear stand on Marxist parties, but we feel that a distinction has to be made between a political philosophy and a stand based on Chilean political history, because some people who call themselves Marxists might actually uphold democratic values or strongly criticize the experiences of historical socialism. We would like to give people of that sort the opportunity to work along with us.

[Question] Do you believe in political "conversions" even though Marxist leaders have noted that the Communist Party does not rule out any strategy to achieve its aims?

[Answer] I think that many people on the Left have made a distinction between Marxian philosophy and Marxist-Leninist communism. We would like to see people on the Left who draw their inspiration from Marxian philosophy take a different historical position and say that Marxism is not just Lenin and communism. We think that such a differentiation is feasible, and we are seeing it in the world today. The evolution of the Socialist parties in Europe is important and has influenced many Chileans. What I find odd is that certain people are not too open to a dialogue with these sectors, to having intellectual and human experiences to learn about this evolution. Why deny the possibility that some people have engaged in harsh self-criticism?

[Question] Because traditionally Chilean communists have been the most dogmatic and submissive in the world.

[Answer] That's lumping all Marxists together. The people who do that ultimately want to bring back the UP [Popular Unity]. We feel that we have to differentiate between the Marxists who accept a democratic system and those who are still tied to the old Leninist blueprint and to their commitments to Moscow and their methods of action, such as violence and force, which we will never accept.

[Question] But Socialist leaders have very clearly pointed out that in the long run the communists will be their allies, with whom they hope to revive UP. And the DC is not part of that alliance.

[Answer] I think that there is some need for clarification here. We have defined our position very clearly, through Gabriel Valdes's letter to the Socialist Party. There have been some ambiguities in some of the Socialist Party's stands. But we have to remember Chile's recent history. They have been persecuted, exiled and killed. They have a history of ties with the Communist Party. And now they accepted the Democratic Alliance. This is a very important step and shows that history is made on the march.

[Question] Of course the alliance is looking weaker and weaker, precisely because of the vagueness caused by trying to bring such different positions together.

[Answer] I think that the alliance is very strong, because the country does not want to see the longstanding tradition of political conflict and division maintained. The country wants a reconciliation of political society, and this is what the alliance is doing, moving in step with history.

[Question] And what makes you think that the great majority of the country is going to follow the DC in this approach? So far the majority of people in the country have shown themselves to be strongly anti-Marxist.

[Answer] That depends on the circles you move in and where you make your inquiries. I have had quite a bit of contact with the people and I can tell you that first of all they want us to clarify what we can do to solve the jobs problem, unemployment. Secondly, they want democracy and, thirdly, they want to be able to work together from the bottom up. They are asking us to respect their independence and their rights and to function as servants of a nationwide grassroots movement in which Marxists and Christians can work together.

[Question] Does the DC still believe that the ideal society is communitarian?

[Answer] Not only do we still believe this; it is our basic tenet.

[Question] But it has not been tried anywhere in the world.

[Answer] The search for models seems increasingly unnecessary to us. The communitarian element has permeated various experiences. For example, we identify with the ideological content of "Solidarity" in its search for worker involvement in the autocratic Polish State.

[Question] Do you also feel, like other DC members, that the Labor Plan has been a disaster?

[Answer] I consider it a disaster for labor. I think that it has been one of the worst things that have been done.

[Question] And what does the DC propose to do about the financial system?

[Answer] There are two things that obviously have to be changed in banking. One is that the owners of the banks should not own companies. The temptation is too strong to make the banks the source of funds for their firms, with the consequences that we have all already seen. The other is the involvement in banks of credit-seeking groups. Why can't banks be owned by producer groups? Do they have to be owned solely by individual private owners?

[Question] In other words, you seek to change the nature of bank ownership.

[Answer] This banking structure unquestionably has to be thoroughly changed; and I am convinced that the great majority of manufacturers would applaud such a move. Personally I am not an advocate of nationalizing the banks; I don't think that is desirable.

[Question] That would ultimately depend on how the spheres of the economy are defined.

[Answer] We feel that strategic spheres should be defined in production areas in which the State would be the owner and manager. But we think that it is important to differentiate between the State and the government, because there could be spheres in which the Chilean State as a whole retains control but that would also enjoy some degree of autonomy vis-a-vis the government in power.

[Question] And how does the Alternative Project define the role of the State?

[Answer] We believe in and we have asserted in all our documents the need for an understanding; that is to say, we feel that the State and organized civilian society are partners, not enemies, and seek to develop the country. Second, we believe that the State should be the one to guide overall national policy. We are not interested in having an overseer State again. For example, if you say to me that the State should set prices again, I would consider that a mistake. But it should have greater control in certain key areas, such as banking and the financial market. It should play a major role and show greater concern for the neediest segments of the population. The State should take aggressive initiatives, but with the concerted involvement of society, to solve people's basic problems.

[Question] You place a great deal of emphasis on democratization. Yet some DC members are saying that the party's internal democracy is not working too well.

[Answer] I don't think that there is a single Christian Democrat, from the party president on down, who does not want democratization. I don't think that there is anyone who does not want the rank-and-file to become involved in development, because that would run counter to the party's identity.

[Question] There are objections to rigid internal discipline.

[Answer] No one feels hemmed in, I think. I think that it is good for a party to have discipline.

[Question] President Frei was faced with serious problems in the wake of the rifts within Christian Democracy. How are the government supporters getting along these days with the "chascones" [younger, more activist members]?

[Answer] I don't care for those descriptions, almost for aesthetic reasons. I think that our party is enormously rich in personalities, in its vision of things. It stands to reason that there are minor differences. In the case of the former divisions, real ideological problems were involved. MAPU [United Popular Action Movement] defined itself as Marxist-Leninist. This is not the case with the party today. There are no ideological or strategic differences, and I don't foresee any conflict like the one in 1968.

[Question] You are one of the ideologues.

[Answer] I don't define myself as an ideologue. My vocation is politics. What I am interested in is active politics, and that's why I'm a member of the party.

[Question] In other words, you could be on the DC's acting board?

[Answer] I don't see why not, like any other member.

[Question] And how would you describe Mr Gabriel Valdes's performance?

[Answer] As very fine. I think that he has been a great party president. He has been loyal to the internal consensus; the party has grown and has talked with other forces.

[Question] Could he be reelected at the upcoming vote?

[Answer] Why not?

[Question] Would you be in favor of that?

[Answer] I think that continuity is a good thing in critical times. But it wouldn't be a political mistake either to seek out other people.

[Question] Rodolfo Seguel told QUE PASA that the opposition's major problem today is that it does not have a political leader.

[Answer] I'm not that sure that Chilean politics is ultimately going to be determined by a political leader. I believe more in leaders who work in a team than in great leadership figures. I feel that the great figures like Frei, Alessandri and Allende belong to Chile's past. I have the feeling that there has been a qualitative change in politics here.

[Question] Many see General Pinochet as a leader.

[Answer] He might have been a major leader at one time, but I think that every day he is less of one and has less support.

[Question] Is the Democratic Alliance a government alternative, in your opinion?

[Answer] I see the alliance as an unfinished political process, as an alternative to the extent that it can intensify the movement towards an internal consensus, improve its relations with society and take hold of and channel social energies to put together a major mobilization, which is an important element in social stability and peace.

[Question] But can there be a peaceful mobilization?

[Answer] There is violence when force is used against the people. Discontent exists and must be expressed. If it is not channeled, there is violence.

[Question] Do you advocate a continuation of the protests?

[Answer] I don't know in what way, but I think that peaceful protest should indeed continue.

[Question] The interior minister has stated that opposition political leaders are organizing a nationwide work stoppage.

[Answer] I would ask the minister: What would have happened if the same logic were applied to him when he was in the opposition to Allende's administration?

[Question] But you support such a work stoppage?

[Answer] I do not rule out any strategy. We draw the line at nonviolence.

[Question] Former Senator Patricio Phillips and the president of the former National Party have invited various political sectors to sit down and talk. What is your opinion of such a gathering?

[Answer] I think that it is extremely positive. There has to be dialogue and there have to be loyalties in human society. All sectors must learn to live together in Chile.

BETANCUR ADDRESSES SECURITY COUNCIL ON ARMED FORCES ROLE

Bogota EL TIEMPO in Spanish 19 Jan 84 p 16-A

[Speech by President Belisario Betancur to the National Security Council at Narino Palace on 18 January 1984]

[Text] The following is the text of the speech that President Belisario Betancur delivered yesterday to the National Security Council at Narino Palace in the wake of the resignation of Defense Minister Gen Fernando Landazabal reyes:

"Being in charge of a university is not the same as being in charge of a regiment. You have devoted your lives to learning to obey and, as a result, to take charge when your time comes; but to be in charge of people who neither deliberate on nor challenge your orders. This is an exercise radically different from being in charge in civilian life. If I were to take charge of the smallest cavalry unit, I would immediately begin talking things over with the officers and the troops, asking for their views, pondering decisions, trying to get everyone to agree and even trying to guess the interests and feelings of the horses. My unit would not advance 2 kilometers. But if it were a question of hammering out an agreement among people who were not subject to this sort of discipline, who were accustomed to having different approaches and who had the ability to try them on their own, without my consent, I could probably achieve some results, as you have seen over the past few years. We have been educated for different functions and for different areas of service. That is all. The service you render is more dangerous, and therein lies your nobility." (From President-Elect Alberto Lleras' address to commanders and officers of the Armed Forces at the Patria Theater on 9 May 1958)

As a president who seeks to meet the requirement of having a memory in a country with a history, I spend quite a bit of time remembering and meditating in a bid to learn the lessons of our past and of our forebears. This is how I came upon the quotation at the beginning of this speech and upon other remarks and reminiscences, not only because of the lofty standing of their author but also because they set forth ideas that give Colombia a raison d'etre as a nation organized

in freedom and democracy and because they teach us to listen and think as a group and to operate as the same unsuspecting and sincere group of people who profess respect for each other.

In analyzing the essence of our military in a bid to strengthen it, we must first speak to the Armed Forces and their commanders, delve into the patriotic sincerity of the institution, comment on their reflections at the last meeting of this council and on the analytical memorandum of 30 December 1983 from the defense minister and establish what it is our mandate to establish under the constitution and the law, without upheavals either from outside or within the State, an entity of public law led by the president as the number one civil servant and commander in chief of the Armed Forces.

1. A Broader Horizon

It is unnecessary to comment on what we already all know about the significant role that the Armed Forces have played and play in Colombian life.

The nation's feelings of respect and affection for the military prove that this is not just rhetoric. This respect and affection are due not only to their cherishing of values and symbols of our nationhood that are evidenced to average citizens only in unusual situations (something that we are trying to remedy through more widespread civic education) but also to their ever increasing involvement in the country's progress, in creative undertakings of benefit to the society. We know about all that civilian and military action has done for the progress of outlying regions, and we also know that if they are not more involved, it is often because they are not asked to be or because they are not duly consulted.

Aware of this situation, the government is broadening the horizon with projects such as the naval base for the development of Malaga Bay, which aims at making the resources of the sea and the seacoast available to Colombians and at incorporating us into the great Pacific basin, and such as the air base for the development of the Vichada, so that we fulfill the material requirements of our nation and realize the dreams of a people for whom a half century ago President Lopez Pumarejo established as a target the limitless source of wealth called the plains, the Orinoco region and the Amazon region.

This bodes well for Colombia and its Armed Forces.

The country's horizons are being broadened, and the military is given the chance to participate with devotion in the daily tasks of a society striving to improve its quality of life.

The unity of institutions and community is thus strengthened, and new vigor is imparted to our democracy. Our democracy has visible defects and shortcomings because it is has barely begun to acquire

more of a human and social content, but it enjoys the support of almost all political parties as well as the guarantee of freedom. Therefore, we must be careful and see to it that it is not weakened and discredited because its members feel that those responsible for safeguarding it regard it as something with which they can do as they wish. The authorities must act firmly and keep authoritarianism at bay. Freedom must be guaranteed without lapsing into the libertinism that undermines it, and those who are in authority must exercise it within the limits established by law, without encroaching on jurisdictions that ought to be coordinated, each in its own orbit, in accordance with the separation of powers and functions, as the wise and prudent Montesquieu envisioned.

2. The Syndrome of the Maginot Line

This philosophy and this practice prevail against the temptation to use the power entrusted to us as something personal and, therefore, emotional. We have thus honorably remained loyal to institutions, not positions, much less to men, no matter how worthy they are or how lofty their dignity.

We have thus prevented the State from functioning on the basis of the hazy distinction between "totalitarian governments" and "authoritarian governments." A system that is based on a simplistic ideology and that at the moment of truth exalts the abuse of power to the detriment of citizen rights is not in keeping with our tradition, nor does it square with our people's desires. Of the same lineage as dictatorship, authoritarianism has as its hallmark the versatile chamaleon's skin in which interest groups disguise it from time to time.

This is also the path to a theory of national security that has been developed in the great power centers for their own benefit and that makes the permanence of a government hinge on requirements of those power centers, over and above citizen security.

This pattern is part of what analysts call the "syndrome of the Maginot Line," which has to do with the danger of nuclear war and which the president of Colombia referred to in discussing the frustrations and hopes of the United Nations in New York in October 1983:

"Thirty-eight years have passed, and in spite of our charter, the world is drifting away from this ideal: to analyze its injustices with a fresh mind. We should remember that since then there have been 150 wars in the name of the most wild-eyed causes, always as a function of an apparent and absurd polarization. But the victims have come from the ranks of the weak, not from the domineering centers; and the blood has flowed in remote regions, not in the strongholds of the real conflicting interests!"

3. Defending the Constitution

We can delve further into the history of our Western World, to the wild-eyed extremes of the early 1950's when shining stars of democracy like Generals Eisenhower and Marshall were described as communists, not to mention the present, when raving extremists claim that President Reagan is a leftist and that the U.S. House of Representatives is dominated by communists. No. "Mankind has suffered enough excesses, and it is difficult to convince it of a black-and-white, Right-and-Left dualism. This cancer attacking democracy must be destroyed before it spreads and returns us to the law of the jungle."

It is always better to convince than to conquer. There are few things as beautiful and as secure as the firm and serene exercise of democratic power, the power of consent that exercises its legitimacy by making use of its coercive resources to persuade but also to punish those who, after the civilized dialogue provided for by law has been exhausted, ought to receive the treatment that the community consensus establishes to insure its survival.

Pursuant to the constitution (that law of laws that has governed us for 100 years), the law is not subject to subjective interpretations, not even when it can be described as confusing, because this is why the spirit of the lawmaker, the courts and the Supreme Court exist. We should remember that they are the only designated defenders of the constitution. We, each in his own field, execute what the creators of the law and the guardians of that law order.

It was not in vain that what I have called the "apotheosis of the State of law" took place, doing honor to our institutions and to those who respect them, in relation to the economic emergency decreed by the government in December 1982. Decrees issued by the Executive Branch were annulled when our highest court changed its thinking, and the administration abided by its ruling without protest, as the president merely remarked: "I bow to the court." Later, Congress made the decrees law. Each branch of government did what the constitution authorizes it to and only that, because the law is our government and respect for it is our law.

4. The Fragile Thinking Reed

Yes, we must respect the body of laws and enforce them as they stand, not in accordance with our changing personal interpretations, because this is why the cumulative wisdom of jurisprudence exists. Any citizen who harbors doubts about a law is entitled to turn to the courts for the proper interpretation. He cannot decide by and for himself, neither as an average citizen nor especially if he is invested with authority, that the law is or is not valid. That is for others to decide.

In a shining moment for the Colombian nation, President Alberto Lleras arrived absolutely alone at the Patria Theater in May 1958, as the country was returning to the democratic path, for which some of us had been imprisoned alongside him and Laureano Gomez. The frail person of Lleras had as his only backing and weapon the Electoral Court's certification of him as chief of state, in accordance with the will of his people. The high military commands, with all their power, were waiting for him. The country could still breathe the air of uncertainty, suspense and rumors of alleged conspiracies that usually marks a return to constitutional normalcy. He made his appearance there as the "fragile thinking reed," as Pascal once called man, as the unarmed representative of the nation's disarmed power, before the holders and guardians of the core of government power, the foundation and the "ultima ratio" throughout the centuries of the authority established by society.

And against this background he was able to make brilliant and accurate comments such as these:

"Politics is the art of controversy par excellence. The military is the art of discipline. When the Armed Forces become involved in politics, the first thing that breaks down is their unity, because disagreements arise within their ranks. Keeping them divorced from government deliberation is not a whim of the constitution; it is a requirement for their functioning. If they begin deliberating, they begin with weapons in hand. There is not much danger in civilian disagreements when people are disarmed. But when someone has a machine gun, a rifle, a company or the Armed Forces to resolve a dispute when he runs short of arguments or loses patience, he will become violent and unreasonable and seek to crush his opponents, not reach an understanding with them, and a battle will ensue. Therefore, the Armed Forces should not deliberate, should not be a deliberative body in politics. Because they have been created by the entire nation, because the entire nation, with no group, party, color or religious creed excepted, the people as a whole, has given them weapons, has given them the physical power and the mission of defending the nation's common interests, has given them soldiers, has given them privileges, has exempted them from the rules governing civilian life, has granted them the natural privilege of having their own members judge their actions, and all of this on one condition: that they not descend with all their weight and strength on certain innocent citizens on behalf of others. This condition is indispensable, furthermore, because if the Armed Forces must represent the nation in facing potential outside enemies, then they need the entire people on their side, as well as nationwide esteem and respect, which they can retain only if they remain outside civilian battles..."

5. Monastic Rigor

When Lleras left the Patria Theater amid the applause of the military, we Colombians trembled with pride. And with good reason: the people

and the Armed Forces were united once again. Heads held high, we were not a subjugated country. As now, we were adhering to our own tradition, not to a tradition that opposing factions might try to impose on us.

This understanding is based on an inviolable golden rule: the Armed Forces are not a deliberative body and are not to become involved in politics, lest any such temptation disrupt the monastic rigor of their stern professional task.

Initiatives in the area of organization and improvement come from the military itself, therefore, without outside interference. An admirable example of this is the bylaw stating that once their active duty is over, forestalling gestures that could be misinterpreted, commanders should make way for comrades who deserve a brilliant culmination to their careers. Here we have a beautiful, honest and selfless practice proposed and ennobled by the men in arms themselves and accepted without reservations by the civilian authority.

6. Peace in Justice

Now then, because the president of Colombia also esteems these ideas, which inspire a Christian awareness of his duties, he does not show arrogance; rather, he seeks to make government power a calm force in a bid for peace in justice and to see to it that the government's unity does not dissolve in each personal deliberation or in each subjective dialectic.

Therefore, the president upholds the tradition that the constitution must be respected without circumventions, reservations or privileges. If the constitution grants him powers and duties, he exercises those powers and discharges those duties, transferring the powers without antagonism when appropriate but retaining them with fierce jealousy when the constitution states that they cannot be transferred. And he exercises power not so much as a person but as an official whose duty is to respect the law and make it respected, regardless of what it might cost, because this is the price that he must pay for making his lowly existence a dialogue with God and history.

7. The End of Exiles

I emphasize the institutional treatment of our rights and duties. This is a teaching method of those of us who have government duties, so that it is conveyed to our associates, encourages their contributions to the homeland and fosters upward mobility through the social pyramid.

If public opinion at times perceives problems and solutions superficially, it is due to the lack of openness of the government itself. And this is risky, as we have seen during the difficult financial situation in which the country has found itself for more than 2 years now.

We are not involved in a movie of good guys and bad guys, nor in a modern-day Roman circus propitiating the inflamed multitude with victims. We are giving evidence of our ability to be objective, discreet, serene, impersonal, without friends or enemies.

Our sole obsession is the country's good fortune, so that all feelings of ostracism among us end and so that every Colombian regards the constitution and our laws as his own and respects them so that others respect him through the constitution and our laws. To put it another way, so that no one feels as if he is an outsider or is being persecuted in his beloved country.

I would like to stress this point and, overcoming a personal inhibition, mention a recent family problem that the chief of state himself had to face. I am recalling this because, as was his painful but imperative duty, the president was obliged to place his respect for our institutions and the responsibilities of his high office above his personal effects, conveniences and feelings and to forbid any talk, either in his presence or his absence, of any sort of deals at variance with the law and that might weaken it. The dignity of his country and his own dignity were at stake in the matter.

Hence, we are dealing here with a clear and binding sense of duty, not with heroic acts.

8. The Pluralist World

We are now going to take a brief look into the whirlwind of international events, employing the same clear ideas as before. We will begin by asserting that our foreign policy, which is multipartisan and reflects the consensus of the former presidents and of the parties on the Foreign Relations Advisory Committee, has been applauded by the pope, by democracies and by socialists alike.

Among the many ways of approaching this issue, I remember the one taken by that unforgettable American politician Adlai Stevenson, the presidential candidate of the Democratic Party:

"I have been told," he said, "that one of the reasons why the astronomers of the world cooperate is that there is no nation from which the entire expanse of the heavens can be seen. Perhaps there is a moral here for domestic statesmen, whose political horizons are often limited by national horizons."

Colombia's presidential democracy has maintained pluralist foreign relations for decades now. Successive governments have foresightedly broadened our spectrum of diplomatic relations with countries having many different forms of government, without this meaning that we identify philosophically with them or that we renounce our democratic and Christian ideology.

This is inevitable in today's world. Coexistence, trade and technical cooperation among peoples governed by different economic and social systems are not only possible but useful as well, as evidenced by the opposing power centers themselves, which subordinate their ideological and practical differences to their uninterrupted relations.

This sociopolitical reality was one of the reasons why Colombia broke its degree of age-old isolation and broadened its horizons by joining the Nonaligned Movement, as announced in my inaugural address, under the constitutional provision that places foreign relations within the exclusive jurisdiction of the president of the republic.

9. Central America and the Caribbean

All of this has to do with peace, which society is clamoring for.

I have said that peace is indivisible, in Colombia, in Central America, in the Middle East, in the world. This is not a literary expression or a theory. It is a fact that we can see from the communications among our needy societies. Hence, the internal efforts to reestablish peace are linked to those of the Contadora Group, with the support not only of the Western democracies but also of the socialist countries, with some of which, such as Cuba, it is not necessary to reestablish relations if the will to work for peace exists.

If the Contadora Group achieves a political settlement in Central America through diplomatic channels, countries like ours will be able to consolidate their stability and devote themselves to resolving their major economic and social problems, because a disruptive and costly conflict will be over.

On the contrary, if the hopes for peace in Central America are dashed and the conflict spreads, internal reconciliation will be more difficult for the countries of Latin America. The practical result of a widespread conflict in Central America, influenced by the East-West confrontation, would be a polarization and radicalization of the political and ideological forces in the hemisphere and (why not be forewarned?) even collusion among adversaries once they are undeceived about the centers of power.

This would be a serious setback for the move towards democracy on the continent (as part of which Argentina has happily restored freedom) and could prompt a new wave of authoritarian governments that deny fundamental rights, such as freedom of speech and of the press, and that block the path to power through honest elections, which is the aim of every political party.

10. The Enormous Capacity for Reconciliation

I come to the end of this speech about the institutional status of the president of the republic as a man who, having listened, preaches

his gospel with conviction and firmness but without arrogance. I must also confess that in searching for peace I have an enormous capacity for forgiveness and reconciliation, because it is my ambition to build a decent and free country that enjoys peace and justice and in which the ideas that my fellow Colombians wish to profess can circulate unimpeded throughout our social fabric.

Most of our fellow countrymen support us today in our efforts at peace, in the knowledge that in the middle and at the end of this rocky road, the government will remain intact, with the moral strength it derives from selflessness and the certainty that in order for a State to enjoy validity and respectability, it must balance a sense of its own security with a sense of the security of its citizens and never belittle the latter to entrench a government in power.

11. A Lesson in Patriotism

We have given ourselves a lesson in patriotism. We have traveled to the depths of an emotion that grows when it becomes a concept. We realize that we are a country that knows itself, whose hallmark is democracy and the law, a country in which the names of streets and avenues, as the poetic novelist clamored for, have such meaning that they confuse legend and ancient ballads with actual history, giving life to deep-seated ideals.

It is because of these ideals that the president, who rose from a hut to the glory of power, cannot attend national holiday ceremonies as if they were just that many more ceremonies. He always trembles when he salutes the flag, when he hears the strains of the national anthem and when he marches amid the soldiers of the republic to melodies whose beauty prompts him to imagine the past glories but, above all, the future glories of his homeland.

I feel an indescribable pride in having heard your firm military step for a year and a half now alongside my own unpracticed step, which is no less firm, though, and to which our people, expressing their will freely and honestly, have given their blessing. I am also proud when I hear your proclamations and your impassioned addresses, your joys when the country shines forth and your sorrows when it is torn apart. We are now stanching the wounds and again and again extending the hand of democracy to our exiled brothers. But we are also cautioning them about the calm strength of the constitution and the laws that we swore to defend.

United we will see to it that the glories of the future awaken the pride of our children, of the soldiers who succeed us and of the Colombians who will live decent lives in this land, safeguarded and aggrandized by the sleepless vigilance and the spirit of sacrifice of our Armed Forces.

REASONS FOR U.S. WITHDRAWAL FROM UNESCO DISCUSSED

Havana GRANMA WEEKLY REVIEW in English 22 Jan 84 p 9

[Text]



IT IS such a convulsed world that international events occurring at the close of 1983 still merit comment. One of these events was the U.S. announcement that it was withdrawing from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), one of the 14 UN specialized agencies which also deals with communications and social sciences.

The regulations of UNESCO (set up in 1946) state that any member wishing to withdraw from it must give notice one year in advance. This means that the United States' withdrawal will not become effective until the end of 1984.

What prompted the United States to take such a decision? There are two well-known reasons. One is that the peace ideal championed by UNESCO recognizing that "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed," runs counter to Ronald Reagan's way of seeing things. Reagan's policy of unchecked nuclear arms buildup, aggressive adventurism and against détente threatens the world with destruction, and anything that opposes such policy is not to his liking.

The other reason, as substantial or perhaps even more so than the first one, was UNESCO's decision to examine the problems relating to world exchange of information and communications. One of the pillars of this study is the investigation conducted by the McBride Commission at the request of the overwhelming majority of the 150 member countries of UNES-

CO and, particularly, the members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The investigation revealed that a few dozen transnational corporations, mostly U.S.-owned, control about 80 percent of the newspapers in the capitalist and developing countries, 90 percent of the international radio stations and 95 percent of the TV stations. The extent of the control of the big news agencies like UPI and AP in dozens of countries was also uncovered. It is a fact that the U.S. information industry now ranks second in the country's overall exports, some 75 000 million dollars in 1980.

The reduction in size of electronic components, the increased range of satellite coverage, videotapes and other technological breakthroughs make for new forms of imperialist domination and force the underdeveloped world to be more dependent. This is why Reagan isn't happy over UNESCO's analysis, discussion and search for solutions to this problem. And this is also why the tycoons of world communications monopolies have charged UNESCO with "undermining freedom of information," "threatening the free flow of information," and seeking "to have governments exert control over information and communications."

This is also why they are saying that UNESCO has become "a forum of protest for the Third World countries," and that "it is too politicized." By threatening to withdraw from UNESCO and by refusing to give it another cent, the United States is simply trying to preserve imperialism's ideological contamination, cultural penetration and domination over more than 100 countries.

CSO: 3200/10

PRIME MINISTER COMMENTS ON SECURITY ISSUES, U.S. BASES

Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 2 Feb 84 p 1

[Article by George Harvey]

[Text]

PRIME MINISTER Eugenia Charles of Dominica does not want any United States military base in her homeland or in the Caribbean Community (Caricom) territories.

She added, however, that she remained free to call for military or other aid from any "friendly source."

Miss Charles declared: "I will do anything to save my people. My business is to make sure that my people are safe and secure."

She does not view Russia or Cuba as friendly sources — "certainly not by inclination."

The Prime Minister made these remarks during a Press interview shortly after formally opening the \$2.2 million (E.C.) Carib Spring bottling works in Dominica on Tuesday afternoon. The plan produces bottled natural water mainly for export.

The lawyer-politician was responding to public criticisms accusing her of, among other things:

- Spearheading the recolonisation of the region by her frontal moves ensuring the continued military presence of the U.S. in certain Caricom states following the invasion of Grenada.

- Undue interference in the internal affairs of Grenada.

American specialists or training security personnel in Dominica and other members of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) of which Miss Charles is chairman.

FORCE OF 40

Speaking specifically about Dominica, the Prime Minister said that a force of 40 men was being trained by the Americans.

She said it was necessary to give these policemen specialised training — not only in traffic, but that in the event of turmoil they should at least be "able to hold the beaches" until help arrives.

The Prime Minister disbanded her small army in 1981 and has survived at least three attempts from within and outside Dominica to topple her government by force.

The outspoken leader recently made statements related to events in Grenada. She called for the holding of early elections and also commented adversely on the return of former Prime Minister Eric Gairy from exile in the U.S. since he was overthrown by the Maurice Bishop clique.

She did not view her statements as interference in Grenada. She said she was expressing her views. She said that her call for quick elections emerged from the fact that she was the only regional Prime Minister to deal with a revolution and also "an interim government."

She said it was best for Grenada to have early elections — do not put it off "forever and ever." "She said the interim government was trying its best but could not take firm decisions "until people elect them."

On the Gairy issue, she said Grenada needed unity and the presence of Gairy was divisive.

Miss Charles flew to the United States yesterday on a funding mission for development projects.

OPPOSITION OBJECTS TO PROPOSED LEGISLATION ON SECURITY

Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 24 Jan 84 p 10

[Text]

ROSEAU, Mon., (Cana)—
WITH an eye on Grenada, and with itself having repulsed two alleged attempts to violently remove it from office, the Eugenia Charles Administration has put two pieces of proposed security legislation before Parliament, one of which introduces hanging as a penalty for treason.

According to the Charles regime, "the Treason Act" and the "State Security Act" are aimed at safeguarding parliamentary democracy, ensuring the fundamental rights and freedoms of its citizens as enshrined in the Constitution.

But the Opposition Democratic Labour Party of former Prime Minister Oliver Seraphine disagrees. In a statement, it said "The Labour Party views with alarm the introduction of a Treason Act which constitutes a threat to the existence of genuine democratic opposition in the State and a breach of the constitutional rights of the citizens of the Commonwealth of Dominica."

WHITE PAPER

The party, in a rambling statement, did not say how the rights of Dominicans would be breached.

In a White Paper on the "Treason Act" Attorney General Ronan David noted that treason has always been considered to be the most "heinous offence against society," since the dawn of civilisation, and that consequently the penalty meted out to persons convicted of the offence was "inevitably severe."

CSO: 3298/448

BRIEFS

SUBVERSIVES KIDNAPPING PEASANT CHILDREN--There is an exodus of peasants from the area of El Paisnal, San Salvador due to the constant kidnapping of children over ten years old by terrorists, charge members of the General Confederation of Labor. The CGT says that the subversives have given a deadline to the members of the cooperative La Esperanza, and the "El Chaparral" ranch in El Paisnal for turning over all children over 10 years old, or else to pay the consequences, according to the charges. This threat has forced the peasants of that region to move to the capital to save the lives of their small children, even though this means they have to abandon everything. The CGT "vigorously rejects this violation of the sacred right to live in freedom" and also condemns the disruptive action of the violent Left, which "with its use of force, is repressing the working people, who have said 'enough' to this painful spilling of blood." The CGT adds that recruiting children to carry on an irrational war for imperialism is not only an assault on the right to life, but also an injustice by any reckoning. The CGT takes this opportunity to call urgently upon humanitarian institutions and altruists to request economic assistance, food, goods, clothing, medical assistance and medicines in order to support these people, who, because they are displaced, need everyone's help to survive. [Excerpts] [San Salvador EL DIARIO DE HOY in Spanish 18 Jan 84 p 3] 12351

CRIMES BY CDF MEMBERS--Santa Ana--Numerous crimes have been committed by members of the Civil Defense Force of the village of Guarnesia in the canton of El Jute in the jurisdiction of Texistepeque. These crimes have even included the murder of several farmers. This testimony was given by witnesses questioned in the First Criminal Court, where a hearing is under way on the deaths of farmers Juan Fermin Sanchez and Miguel Francisco Menendez Crespin. Members of the Civil Defense Force of the area are being held provisionally for the double homicide; they are Commander Gilberto Gomez Pena and soldiers Narciso Batres Posada, Antonio Batres Posada, Marcos Sergilio Rivera Lopez and Israel Crisostomo Augilar. They were captured by teams of detectives after being denounced as the perpetrators of the murders of the two farmers. Witnesses testified that the aforementioned individuals had for some time been committing numerous crimes without fear, among which were more than ten rapes of minors, assault, robbery and the murder of several farmers. They were not denounced because

people feared becoming another of their victims. The accused individuals sometimes covered their faces with red handkerchiefs and tried to pass as subversives. [Excerpts] [San Salvador LA PRENSA GRAFICA in Spanish 16 Jan 84 pp 2, 42] 12351

FUSADES STUDY DISCUSSES DEFICITS--In the 5 years prior to 1978, according to a study by FUSADES [Salvadoran Foundation for Economic and Social Development], El Salvador had an average real economic growth rate of approximately 5 percent per year. This was a direct result of expanded activity in the agricultural, manufacturing and construction sectors. But the situation began to deteriorate beginning in 1978 owing to the influx of adverse factors from inside and outside the country. The deterioration was evident in almost all the accounts in the balance of payments. As a result, in 1980 there was a deficit of 490.5 million colons; in 1981 the deficit reached 197.8 million colons and in 1982 there was a surplus of 109.0 million colons. FUSADES explains that in the last 2 years mentioned the value of Salvadoran exports was further reduced, but that the deficit shrank because of net transfers to capital accounts. The deficit in the public, or governmental, sector increased from 593.8 million colons in 1980 to 688.2 million in 1982, owing mainly to daily expenses of the government. Despite the deficit, says FUSADES, El Salvador's foreign debt is still one of the smallest in Latin America, which means it will be possible to finance the nation's economic recovery through investment in the productive sector. [Excerpts] [San Salvador LA PRENSA GRAFICA in Spanish 12 Jan 84 pp 3, 11] 12351

BEAN HARVEST ENDANGERED--Bean producers are concerned about the danger of losing 40 or 50 percent of the current harvest because of the delay in the signing of agreements between the IRA [Institute of Supply Regulation] and the Agricultural-Livestock Workers, ASTA. The effects of poor marketing are being felt throughout the system at present, says the agricultural-livestock association, because the IRA, despite having received financing from the Central Bank, has not yet deposited the money in the Agricultural-Livestock Development Bank. According to those making the complaint, millet producers are also facing uncertainties because they are facing the same marketing problems as the bean producers. An ASTA communique issued yesterday afternoon says that basic grain producers know that the BCR [Central Reserve Bank] traditionally provides 150 million colons for harvest financing. At present, IRA's refusal to market the beans and millet could lead to intermediaries buying the harvests from the producers at extremely low prices and selling them to IRA later at higher prices. It is also said that, owing to the poor marketing policy of the IRA, there are currently 300,000 quintals of beans in storage. ASTA is telling the IRA and the Agricultural-Livestock Development Bank that their products are the collateral for the credits, and that these negative measures delaying the grain purchases are doing more damage to the producers' economy because of the credit rates they have to pay to the BCR. Given this situation, they are publicly asking the IRA to improve the purchasing systems and in this way to keep up to 50 percent of the national bean and millet production from being totally lost. [Text] [San Salvador EL MUNDO in Spanish 7 Jan 84 p 15] 12351

CSO: 3248/369

BURNHAM TRACES PNC ACHIEVEMENTS IN ADDRESS TO RALLY

Georgetown GUYANA CHRONICLE in English 20 Dec 83 p 8

[Text] President Forbes Burnham yesterday told a mass rally that although there has been a number of setbacks, Guyana has made tremendous, social and economic progress during the 19 years that the People's National Congress has been in office.

Addressing the rally which included senior government and party functionaries and members of the diplomatic corps, the President listed some of the achievements as:

The provision of free education from nursery to university,

Achievement of Republic status, and,

Implementing a People's forum such as the Supreme Congress of the People.

The rally coincided with a national "Market Day" which was attended by thousands of Guyanese who took the opportunity to purchase a number of commodities.

In his address from the Bank of Guyana balcony, the President, who Sunday was elected to serve another two-year term of office as Leader of the ruling PNC, also traced the events which characterised the 19 years of PNC government in Guyana.

Cde Burnham told the gathering that Guyana's major setbacks over the years resulted mainly from the bellicose nature of the imperialists and also from the massive increases in oil prices, one of this country's principal imports.

He recalled that in 1964, when the PNC assumed office, "sooth-sayers and prophets of doom" felt that the party would not survive for a year, but thanks to the unity of the Guyanese people, these "detractors" have been proved wrong.

The President observed that contrary to what obtained in the past, all Guyanese children were given equal opportunities to attend one of the so-called top secondary schools.

He noted that substantial progress has been made in the move to own and control the "heights" of this country's economy and said 1966 to 1975 have been years of accelerated development.

The economy was so strong that when the large increases in oil price occurred in 1973 and 1974, this country was able to cushion their effects through its income from sugar. At that time sugar prices ranged from 500 to 650 pounds sterling per tonne.

It was at this stage plans to construct the massive hydro-electric power complex in the Upper Mazaruni area got under way. However, the president noted that a second massive increase in oil prices compounded by a steep drop in sugar prices effectively stalled such plans.

It was around this time, 1975/1976, he observed that some of the economic problems which are still facing Guyana began.

Cde Burnham warned the gathering to beware of the "machinations of the enemies outside and their satellites and stooges within."

In stressing the need for a strong economic base, the President said that, "independence has to be supported by a planned and strong economy," and the just concluded Special Congress of his party has discussed plans to bring this about.

He also castigated the opposition for not coming forward with effective strategies and programmes which can assist the country's development.

In calling for unity within the party and nation, the PNC leader pointed out that the split in the New Jewel Movement in Grenada led to that country's invasion and subjugation (GNA):

CSO: 3298/450

BURNHAM SEES MILITIA ROLE IN DEFENDING THE ECONOMY

Georgetown GUYANA CHRONICLE in English 22 Dec 83 p 1

[Text] President Forbes Burnham yesterday morning told reserve officers of the Guyana People's Militia (GPM) that their functions do not only lie in the defence of their country's territorial integrity but also in the defence of the economy.

President Burnham, who is also Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces gave the advice as he presented the Instruments of Commission to 12 reserve officers of the GPM.

One female was among the batch of officers who successfully completed 15 months of part-time training which involved sacrificing their weekends and after work hours. The officers are permanent employees of state agencies, the teaching service and two are students of the University of Guyana.

This is the second batch of reserve officers of the GPM which has completed training. Another batch is already in training.

In stressing the importance of suitable leadership qualities among officers, President Burnham exhorted the new officers to lead not only by precept but also by example.

He said the importance of their task as reserve officers will be more demanding since they will be expected to mobilise and give leadership to people who do not belong to the regular army.

He urged that a lesson be taken from the recent invasion of Grenada pointing out that the militia is expected to play an important role in the defence of its country's territory.

In dealing directly with the strengthening of the economy, President Burnham called on the officers to set examples of commitment and efficiency.

The defence of our public corporations must be upheld, he noted, adding that it is important that our corporations remain in public hands.

He hinted at attempts from external forces for the return of some corporations to private hands.

He hinted at attempts from external forces for the return of some corporations to private hands.

The bauxite industry he announced will be reorganized and people will have to be mobilised to set proper examples.

The officers were also urged to use their imagination in meeting commitments. He encouraged the use of idle lands which he pointed out could become a healthy source of income.

The 12 GPM Officers to receive their instruments of commission are Basil London, Derrick Husbands, Lennox Valz, Raymond Eytle, Burchell Halls, Dennis West, Winston Jeune, Simon Nedd, Melvryn Nurse, Marcia Parris, Neville Annibourne, Herman Phillips. [GNA]

CSO: 3298/450

TEXT OF BURNHAM'S NEW YEAR'S ADDRESS TO NATION

Georgetown SUNDAY CHRONICLE in English 1 Jan 84 pp 1, 2

[Text] The rehabilitation of the bauxite industry, placing greater emphasis on utilising agriculture, forestry and ministerial resources, promoting a greater degree of decentralisation and devolution of powers and responsibilities are some of the important features of government's programme for 1984.

The New Year will also witness the restructuring and reorganising of the Guyana Rice Board to achieve greater efficiency, President Forbes Burnham announced last night in his New Year message broadcast to the nation.

"...This New Year upon which we have embarked seems promising but it is for us Guyanese to turn the promise into fact," he said in his broadcast in which he wished the nation a "happy New Year."

"We are all involved. We need will, determination, unity and resourcefulness. Let 1984 be the Year of Resourcefulness," he said.

He noted that during the New Year, there will be obstacles and that there will be attempted subversion as was witnessed in 1983 in the bauxite industry.

And, he added: "there will be attempts at destabilisation and conspiracies such as that by some traitors in Canada and the USA where a group of former Guyanese planned to assassinate government leaders and members of the Government and to establish a Facist regime."

He said reaction was afoot in this Hemisphere and called on Guyanese to be on guard to turn back the enemy--"those who would have us the slaves of a new imperialism."

"We have a country to build, a revolution to protect, gains to preserve and a future to ensure," Cde. Burnham added.

He noted that the fact "that we came through 1983 was due to our resolve and ingenuity."

The following is the text of Cde. Burnham's speech in which he also briefly reviewed the performance of the national economy in 1983:

"Happy New Year. That's what we are all saying to each other, in some cases only out of habit and form rather than real conviction or hope, 1983 is now behind us; 1983 the year of will when only the "Will to Survive" kept us going. Yet, here we are on the threshold of a new year, alive and I hope, kicking.

"That we came through 1983 was due to our resolve and ingenuity. For instance, we were all forced to make greater use of the fruits from wild palms as a source of edible oil and in addition have started the manufacture of margarine entirely from our own local oils. A significant percentage of our paint is now produced without imported additives and chalk is now a local product.

"Our sugar production has been below target, thanks primarily to the run-down condition of some of our factories. But on the other hand, we have embarked upon the exercise of making economic use of some of the by-products of the sugar cane. Meanwhile, Guysuco has moved to becoming a major rice producer and has had promising results in the field of inland fish culture.

"The rice crops also fell below target and the explanation has been the unavailability of sufficient land preparation equipment and somewhat unseasonal weather. I myself, am of the opinion that the former is the real explanation, and your government has already taken steps, which I have related elsewhere, to overcome this disadvantage.

"Interestingly enough, though our rice production in 1983 has been down on that of 1982, our rice exports rose by approximately twenty odd percent. This has only been possible because of stricter control and the huge increase in the production of ground provisions and other food crops. 1984 should witness a restructuring and reorganisation of the Guyana Rice Board to achieve greater efficiency.

"As a result of certain measures taken during the course of the year, official gold production has moved up and in 1984 should continue to increase even further. The diversity of our resources does permit us to shift emphasis to compensate for shortfalls in some areas. But this is not good enough. It is important, it is vital, it is imperative that our production in every field increases.

"Bauxite has not been a success story during the last twelve-month period. Markets were soft and production unsatisfactory. In spite of this, we were able to supply our historic markets and use this ore and its derivatives as our currency in counter-trade transactions. We shall have to spend substantial sums rehabilitating and replacing vital equipment and plant to ensure increased production to meet all demands especially those which flow from counter-trade arrangements already made or to be made.

Timber and wood production represents an important sector. During this year, two major enterprises, one public and one private, should move into gear and contribute to the fulfillment of overseas contracts.

The Special Congress of the People's National Congress and the Supreme Congress of the People both meeting last month, endorsed your government's emphasis on agriculture, forestry and mining, and on industries based on the products from these sectors. This emphasis will be recognised and reflected in the budget which will be presented during this month. But, statements and asserverations are one thing. Participation, production and productivity are another. Words without deeds are worth nothing.

"1984 should see a greater degree of decentralisation and devolution of powers and responsibilities to the regions and other democratic organs. Noteworthy in this respect is the undertaking by the people's representatives at the Special Congress and at the most recent session of the Supreme Congress of the People to ensure that the respective Regions and communities execute the task of the physical upkeep and maintenance of the various schools and school buildings throughout the country. Here is participation-- here is self-reliance.

"Yes, this new year upon which we have embarked seems promising. But it is for us Guyanese to turn the promise into fact. There will be obstacles. There will be attempted subversion as we witnessed last year in the bauxite industry. There will be attempts at destabilisation and conspiracies such as that by some traitors in Canada and the USA where a group of former Guyanese planned to assassinate government leaders and members of the government and to establish a fascist regime.

"We have been aware of their machinations and are prepared for them. If they ever get beyond their puerile plotting and planning, and essay to land in Guyana, we shall wipe them out mercilessly.

"Reaction is afoot in this hemisphere, but let us be on our guard and turn back the enemy--those who would have us the slaves of a new imperialism. We have a country to build, a revolution to protect, gains to preserve, and a future to ensure.

"We are all involved. We need will, determination, unity and resourcefulness. Let 1984 be the 'year of resourcefulness.'

"Happy New Year." (GNA)

CSO: 3298/450

BURNHAM OUTLINES NEW ECONOMIC STRATEGIES TO PNC MEETING

Georgetown GUYANA CHRONICLE in English 20 Dec 83 p 1

[Text] A number of economic strategies is being implemented so that Guyana's economy can show a positive turn-around next year.

Principal among these strategies are plans for placing more responsibility in the hands of the Regional Democratic Councils and also the acquisition of much-needed agricultural machinery and spares.

In addition, efforts will be made to increase the production of items which have counter-trade potential.

Concomitant with the implement of these plans, President Forbes Burnham expressed the view Sunday and yesterday that Guyana "can move forward in 1984 in spite of the difficulties now facing the country."

Sunday, while delivering the charge to mark the end of the Special Congress organised by the ruling PNC, the President outlined some of the steps which have been taken to effect a positive turn-around of this country's economy.

Some of these steps were suggested by ten Commissions which met on Saturday at the Congress to discuss strategies which can help this country socially and economically.

Strength

During their discussions, the Commissions gave consideration to the economic pressures being brought against this country for the ideological path it has chosen. They also based their deliberations on the fact that independence can only be assured through economic strength.

In supporting his view that Guyana can move forward next year, Cde Burnham revealed that equipment for economic development can be obtained from Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Colombia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the German Democratic Republic and the USSR.

Some of this equipment is already assured and Cde Burnham noted that one hundred tractors and agricultural spare parts will arrive from the DPRK shortly.

Other plans for 1984 include:

--The construction of two hydroelectric plants in the hinterland in the North-West and the Rupununi districts.

--Putting the glass factory on production stream.

--Construction of an agricultural research institute and,

--Commencement of work on the President's College.

Cde Burnham also said that he has been assured by the Guyana Sugar Corporation that greater use will be made of the sugar cane so that what was once discharged as waste will now be utilised in some way.

The President admitted however, that while beginning these projects are relatively easy, their completion is much more difficult since it necessitates much harder work and greater sacrifice than in the past.

CSO: 3298/450

PROCEEDINGS, SPEECHES AT SUPREME CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE

Assessment of Burnham Speech

Georgetown GUYANA CHRONICLE in English 21 Dec 83 p 1

[Text] Chairman Sase Narain and Vice-President Cammie Ramsaroop yesterday called on Members of the Supreme Congress of the People to give "greater" and "careful" consideration to the issues raised by President Forbes Burnham in his speech last Friday.

The President's speech was delivered at the opening of the Second Session of the Congress and debate on it was to begin yesterday afternoon.

However, after the session was called to order, Cde. Ramsaroop moved a motion for the postponement of the debate in order to allow for "careful and elaborate consideration" to be given to the issues raised.

In putting the motion to the House, Chairman Narain urged "greater consideration" of the speech and expressed the hope that the deliberations next week would motivate members towards greater effort in 1984.

The motion was unanimously adopted and the debate was adjourned to next Wednesday, December 28.

Before the adjournment was taken, Chairman Narain who is also Speaker of the National Assembly extended greetings for the festive season.

Cde Ramsaroop reciprocated on behalf of the Government and United Force Member M. A. Abraham associated himself and his party with the sentiments expressed.

When the Supreme Congress resumes sitting next week it will debate a motion standing in the name of Cde. A. Satar, Vice-Chairman of the National Congress of Local Democratic Organs (NCLDO) calling for the approval of the policy adumbrated in the President's address.

Hoyte on Regional System

Georgetown GUYANA CHRONICLE in English 29 Dec 83 pp 1, 8

[Text] The Supreme Congress of the People yesterday began the delayed debate on the President's speech at the opening of its second session with a call from Vice-President, Production, Cde. Desmond Hoyte for the creation of a new "production culture."

Arguing that unless the nature and purpose of production were clear the nation would fail to achieve its objectives, he outlined a strategy to correct the "crippled" and "peripheral" economy Guyana inherited from the colonial era.

Cde. Hoyte, who was among the numerous speakers listed to make their contribution before the marathon session was adjourned last night, called for a change of attitudes which he said were "deep-seated" in Guyanese.

He added that political will and courage would be needed to change some things and put in place mechanisms and institutions required to right some of the wrong that was extant in the economy.

One primary objective for production, he said, was to satisfy the demand at the individual, regional and national level for items for everyday use, including food.

He stressed that the achievement of self-sufficiency in food was necessary for two reasons--because that effort is the starting point for any kind of meaningful development that can be achieved and because food security is an absolute necessity for the maintenance and preservation of political security and independence.

Development

After tracing the colonial policies which fostered dependence on imports and foreign tastes, Cde Hoyte pointed to the fact that even in recent times the country abandoned wood-burning generators for fossil fuel usage at the Guyana Electricity Corporation thereby destroying the employment opportunities for thousands of people and rendering the nation dependent on an outside source of energy which is so crucial to development.

Cde Hoyte took the floor after Vice-Chairman of the National Congress of Local Democratic Organs Cde A. Satar had formally moved for the adoption of the policies adumbrated in the President's speech and his motion was seconded by Cde S.L.V. Wade of Region 5 (Mahaica/Berbice).

The Vice-President said the dependency syndrome had to be changed.

He acknowledged that "we are dealing with problems of centuries and attitudes that have become deep-seated" but he warned that to continue this way would lead to backwardness.

"I want to suggest that the production process we should put in place must be based on the maximum use of indigenous material, particularly the maximum use of indigenous food," he told the assembly.

Linkages

He recognised too that it was easy to mouth certain things but the test was in the application of the principles and there is an absolute necessity to use local material at all times.

In this process, there is need to create linkages so that the concept of waste, only known in poor countries, would be eliminated.

"We must be geared to use all waste to create wealth for further development," he emphasized.

He explained that because of necessity, Guyanese were doing marvellous things which, years ago, they would have said they were incapable of doing.

He mentioned chalk production by Guymine and the development of an adhesive from cassava starch now being used by SAPIL, saying that it is equal to if not better than that which used to be imported.

Cde. Hoyte said the need to satisfy the demand locally for things needed for every day existence, was to constantly expand the local market and satisfy it before concentrating on exports.

According to him, the Japanese success came about because they first developed the internal market, but Guyana needed to expand production too so it could continue to play its role in the Regional Integration Movement and in the wider world.

One vital institutions in the production drive, Cde. Hoyte said, is the regional system which should be used to mobilise people and educate them for development within the Regions.

He said every Region has a mix of resources sufficient to make it a strong and viable economy and the Regions should identify those resources, plan to exploit these and mobilise the people to manage them.

Security

Cde. Hoyte proposed that every Region ought to aim at producing all the things necessary for daily existence through proper organisation and a systematic approach.

Trade unions should motivate people to stimulate production and sensitive them to the fact that only through expanded production can job security be assured.

He posited that the new production system should be supported by a strong marketing thrust and research activities.

"It has to be conceptualised, planned, implemented and monitored carefully. There is no room for slackness and carelessness or the whole effort would be defeated," he submitted.

More on Regional Involvement

Georgetown GUYANA CHRONICLE in English 29 Dec 83 p 1

[Article by George Baird]

[Text] Vice-chairman of the National Congress of Local Democratic Organs Cde. A. Satar yesterday called for peanut production to be regarded as an equal partner of rice and sugar in the nation's drive for self-sufficiency.

Moving a motion for the approval of policies adumbrated in the President's speech, Cde. Satar told the Supreme Congress of the People that peanut production can feed the nation and he called on the House to accept the philosophy of self-reliance.

Cde. Satar who spoke of the increase in production of plantains and cassava in Region 3 this year, said if every Region undertook to supply 12 basic food items in 1984, the goal of self-sufficiency could be achieved.

Based on some estimates he prepared, Cde. Satar quantified in millions of pounds the needs of each Region for food items.

He said the various agencies should supply inputs to farmers, new lands must be farmers, new lands must be identified and more youths should be involved in agriculture in the high lands.

He called for the declaration of war against the acoushi ant which he said was a major hindrance to cultivation of the high lands.

Cde. Satar proposed the establishment of settlement schemes in all the Regions and said the funds from production in these schemes could be used to establish "people's communities" in the new areas thus reducing unemployment and crime among young people.

He also called for efforts to realise a 100 percent collection of rates and taxes in 1984 and the wide distribution of cotton seeds to every person with available land space so that the Textile Mill would be adequately supplied with cotton.

Togetherhness

Cde. S.L.V. Wade of Region 5 (Mahaica/Berbice) started his presentation by tracing cooperative efforts in the nineteenth century but after being advised twice by Chairman Sase Narain, he outlined the role of the institutions created by the People's National Congress government in recent times to promote cooperativism.

He said that just as how "our forefathers achieved through togetherness" Guyanese today can do likewise.

Speakers yesterday were dealing with the motion to approve of the policies adumbrated in President Forbes Burnham's speech.

However, a notice paper was also circulated yesterday with a motion to be moved by Cde. J.M. Munroe urging greater involvement of the Regional Administration in the education system.

The motion would have the Supreme Congress recommend:

--That the Regional Administration in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture take steps to have every school engage in agriculture and other worthwhile income generating projects,

--That income generated within the Regions by these and other means be applied to maintaining and furnishing schools and to provide other support facilities; and

--That steps be taken to formulate and implement appropriate arrangements for the involvement of the communities in the management of schools.

Cde. Howard London, also of Region 5 called for the setting up of mechanisms in 1984 to allow the Regions to give account of their stewardship at stated periods through the National Congress of Local Democratic Organs.

He also suggested certain prerequisites including a period of service which is obligatory before students are offered overseas scholarships.

He was still speaking when the tea adjournment was taken yesterday afternoon.

Role for Regional Councils

Georgetown GUYANA CHRONICLE in English 31 Dec 83 p 1

[Text] Minister of State in the Ministry of Regional Development Harold Singh has urged the Regional Democratic Councils to see themselves as catalysts for regional development.

Speaking during the debate in the Supreme Congress of the People yesterday, he said the Councils should examine past experiences and present evidence and use those for planning and implementing and evaluating projects.

Cde. Singh who pointed out that the impact of the regional system can best be felt in rural areas, identified the acute need for increased production as one area in which the Councils can help to expand activities.

He stated that if production was to increase the RDCs must be able to satisfy the needs of the farmers who must be provided with skills, training and re-training.

Cde. Singh warned regional officials not to leave farmers with the impression that there were no solutions to their problems but rather should feed unsolved problems from the Regions to the central government.

He called for a reduction of polarisation by ensuring that a wider strata of people are involved in plans and decision-making, and expressed confidence that the RDCs would live up to the challenge of motivating more and more people to produce for survival and export.

Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture J.B. Caldeira referred to the use of food as a weapon by capitalist countries. He expressed the view that Guyana should not turn back from its socialist path because socialism will eventually triumph.

"What we need now is unity of the working class," he told the House. He was optimistic that the farmers would accept the challenge to produce food in abundance.

He referred to the better opportunities now available to his children, particularly in the area of agriculture, and added: "We can and must grow more food. We can and must eat what we produce."

Cde. N. R. "Nellie" Charles from Region 7 (Cuyuni/Mazaruni) suggested that in the food drive much more attention should be given to the distribution and cultivation of land in the hinterland areas.

Noting that time and again farmers had suffered loss, she asked for acoushi ant bait and soil treatment facilities to be extended to those areas.

United Force MP, Mr M.A. Abraham agreed that agriculture could lead to economic recovery in Guyana and said he had no quarrel with the wish of the President for every Guyanese to become a farmer.

But the bespectacled schoolteacher who began his presentation by informing the House that Lethem had been without electricity and water since Christmas Eve Day (residents are using water from the Moco Moco Creek) spent all his time urging a turn away from socialism to free enterprise capitalism.

He also repeated his now familiar request for the importation of wheat flour which he described as the "salutary legacy of our colonial masters."

The debate broke off for members to exchange New Year's greetings and for refreshments provided by the Chairman, Speaker Sase Narain.

More motions arising from the President's speech are to be debated when the Supreme Congress resumes sitting next Wednesday, January 4, 1984.

Energy Programs

Georgetown GUYANA CHRONICLE in English 31 Dec 83 pp 1, 4-5

[Text] The two mini-hydroelectric schemes announced by President Forbes Burnham two weeks ago are part of the second energy programme designed to complement and support the 1984 priorities outlined in the opening speech to the Supreme Congress of the People.

The programme will deal with development of renewable energy sources and the emphasis will be on those indigenous sources which are firstly abundant, secondly require the minimum of capital and infrastructural changes and thirdly, pose no difficult and complex technological innovations.

Explaining this against the background of energy wastage, Chairman of the Guyana National Energy Authority Abel Felix, told the Supreme Congress yesterday that the first choice must be "our extensive hydro-power potential" and the two schemes announced earlier are designed to provide energy in two remote areas for their development.

There is also active developmental work being undertaken by private individuals on "a run of the river minihydro installation" in conjunction with peanut processing.

The second choice is obviously biomass which can include trees, shrubs, other wood vegetation, grasses and agricultural residues, forest residues, energy crops such as sugar, algae and other aquatic plants, manures, domestic and industrial wastes, human and animal excreta, Cde. Felix said.

Biomass is stored solar energy and the GNEA head said they were working towards ensuring that these many energy sources in the agricultural and forestry sectors are harvested so that there would be a reduction in the use of hydrocarbon fuels.

Declaring that there would have to be tighter controls on fuel importation; Cde. Felix said in 1984 the biogas programme will be very active and farmers with cattle and pigs were being encouraged to construct biogas digesters which will enable them to obtain enough fuel for their domestic use.

Additionally, the biofertiliser accruing from the manufacture of gas will be available for the crops.

Cde. Felix announced too that through the assistance of the United Nations University, finance has been approved for the expansion of the biogas services and the FAO is to work with Guyana in the biogas area on a regional basis as well.

Following the commissioning of the bagasse baler recently, Cde. Felix said it is now possible to store in open air for long periods and briquetting and

gasification are now under consideration as likely steps to be implemented for power generation.

With the use of rice husks, a specially designed boiler obtained from India is already in operation at the Guyana Rice Board site at Anna Regina producing processed steam.

"Its performance is being monitored so that greater use can be made of this type of fuel throughout the rice industry," the assembly was told.

Wood gasification is being actively pursued as a method for the utilisation of wood waste since one of its many advantages is that it costs between 15 and 20 percent less than a straight steam installation of a comparable size.

Charcoal production is being encouraged on a large scale as well as the use of firewood and during 1984 these products are to be considered as commercial energy sources and their use quantified.

They will also be used in industrial applications and tests in this direction were very encouraging, Cde. Felix added.

The GNEA head explained that the energy programme for 1984 followed studies of statistics obtained since the 1981 energy programme was put into effect because of the uncertainty in an escalation of oil prices and of uncertainty in supplies, either or both of which could lead to complete bankruptcy.

While outlining the whole background of Guyana's energy and fuel imports, Cde. Felix expressed gratitude to the "friendly Caricom sister State of Trinidad and Tobago" for "a generous arrangement" through which "for the time being" Guyana's needs are met.

"This has spared us the pains of additional pressures from those who would like to recreate us in their own image and likeness; and it is necessary for us to remind ourselves as a nation, of the precarious position in which we are attempting to undertake development," he commented.

Cde. Felix disclosed that the first approach to conserve fuel supplies was the reduction of imported fuels by 10 percent followed simultaneously by an information programme to stimulate demand conservation using the cost as a criterion motive.

He reported that the information collected during the exercises has confirmed the earlier projection of energy wastage in the country and revealed that tighter controls in energy management was required.

He criticised special interest and pressure groups who frequently proposed simplistic solutions when the difficulty arises because the ramifications of the energy problems are both widespread and complex.

He said such groups tend to take a narrow view of the nature of the problem and the real danger is that they, because of the very nature and importance of energy to national life, can greatly influence the demand equilibrium,

causing irreparable damage by pressuring movement of fuel away from the areas where it is most needed.

"This is bound to have a negative impact on any developmental plan. To some, the energy problem has to do with a full tank of gas, the amount of blackouts which occur, or the long lines at the gas stations," he warned.

Reid Address

Georgetown GUYANA CHRONICLE in English 5 Jan 84 pp 1, 5

[Article by George Barclay]

[Text] Prime Minister Cde Ptolemy Reid yesterday called on members of the Supreme Congress of the People to help to make farming more attractive. The world, he said, starves, because farming was made unattractive.

The Prime Minister painted a grim picture of today's world in which millions of dollars are spent on weapons of destruction rather than on food cultivation.

He told Congress that the Guyanese nation needs to mobilise "our entire country for defence" and explained that defence was not confined to the military as it also had to deal with food...the weapon used in the war to destroy humanity.

Comrade Reid was winding up debate on the motion which had called on the Supreme Congress of the People to give approval of the policy adumbrated in the President's address to the 16th Congress on December 16 last year.

The motion was approved.

The President's address which was entitled "The Development of Our Nation" had included such subjects as "The World Situation," "International Economic Scene," "North/South Dialogue," "Interference and Intervention," "Pivotal Role of Agriculture," "South/South Cooperation," "Looking Ahead," "Production and Productivity," "Genuine Development," "Latin America and the Caribbean Region," and "The Agony of Grenada."

The Prime Minister commended those who participated in the debate on their fine contributions. He also touched on the various topics as outlined in the President's address and placed great emphasis on the concepts of self-reliance, unity, defence, mobilisation and agriculture.

The key to proper development, he said, is "to use our own resources to the maximum.

Speaking about achievements over the past year, the Prime Minister declared that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs lived up to expectations. Guyana, he said had been able to strengthen her relationships with Socialist and other developing nations.

"We concluded agreements that will be able to help us weather the storm. Relations between this country and Venezuela and Suriname, have also improved," he pointed out.

But he emphasised that if Guyana is to survive "we must defend our revolution."

He scoffed at an early remark by the United Force member M. A. Abraham who had said that socialism was keeping back Guyana and who advocated capitalism.

Prime Minister Reid referred to two Socialist countries, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and China to show the type of democracy the people enjoyed and how happy they were.

Pointing out that farming must be made more attractive, Cde. Reid called on rural Guyana to accept the challenge and use the rural areas for the production of food that Guyanese can grow and eat. He observed "unless we work together we will perish."

Protection of Gains

Georgetown GUYANA CHRONICLE in English 5 Jan 84 pp 1, 3

[Text] The need to consolidate and protect this country's gains has been emphasised on the final day of the Second Session of the Supreme Congress of the People.

Three of the four speakers at yesterday's session stressed the importance of sport, culture, peace and stability in Guyana's developmental efforts.

The speakers, Rudy Bishop, Denzil Hinds and Joshua Chrowritmootoo were contributing to the debate on a motion seeking to have the Supreme Congress of the People approve the policy adumbrated by President Forbes Burnham in his address to the Congress on December 16 last.

In his contribution to the debate, Cde. Bishop told members that significant progress was made in the areas of sport, culture, and the improvement of the environment.

Bishop recommended that:

--More cultural activities be included in the curricula of schools around the country;

--A national recording studio be built to facilitate local recording artistes;

--The building of the National Sports Stadium be given some priority;

--More playing fields be built; and

--Health resort centres be set up at places like Mainstay in the Essequibo and Number 63 Beach on the Corentyne.

Bishop noted that Sport and Culture are important unifying factors in a country's development and praised the PNC Government for the part it has played in developing these two areas of national life.

He observed that the idea of CARIFESTA came from President Forbes Burnham and reminded members of the Congress that Guyana was one of the first Caribbean countries to take positive action to pay regional cricketers to stay at home and share their talent during their off season.

Reverend Denzil Hinds, observed that the world is characterised by an escalating arms race, which has adverse effects on peace, stability and development.

Hinds warned members that events in Grenada were just examples of the intolerance of imperialism to small developing countries which attempt to chart their own destiny.

He called on the Central Government to take steps to mobilise international support for Guyana and also to ensure that this country's political independence is maintained.

In a somewhat philosophical contribution to the debate, Cde. Chowritmootoo stressed the importance of a smooth transfer of economic power to the masses.

Chowritmootoo noted that if political solutions are to be found for some of the problems facing this country, there must be a willingness to carry out experiments.

Adoption of Burnham Policy

Georgetown GUYANA CHRONICLE in English 5 Jan 84 p 8

[Text] Six motions, the contents of which are related to several aspects of this country's development were approved without opposition by the Supreme Congress of the People yesterday afternoon.

One motion which sought to have the Supreme Congress of the People approve the policy as adumbrated in President Burnham's address was approved after four days of debate.

The Congress also approved a motion expressing its sincere thanks and appreciation to President Burnham for his address which was made at the National Cultural Centre on December 16 last.

With the approval of the other motions, the Supreme Congress of the People recommended to the government that:

--Appropriate resources be allocated for the development of all subsectors of the agriculture sector and the agriculture research.

--The introduction of better marketing arrangements be speeded up.

--The provision of incentives such as land and crop protection and accelerated distribution of land to farmers be expedited.

--There be increased efforts by the Regional Democratic Councils to be involved in the optimum utilisation of land resources.

--There be greater penalties for those involved in economic crimes.

--Strengthening of the monitoring mechanisms so as to effectively police the nation's mineral and forestry resources.

--The Regional Administrations cooperate with the Ministry of Education to make schools income-generating units and also for them to implement appropriate arrangements for the involvement of the communities in the management of schools.

The congress also called for a vigorous condemnation of all acts of intervention and interference in whatever forms in the internal and external affairs of states and that the Guyana Government take all steps to protect its political independence. (GNA)

CSO: 3298/450-1

DEVELOPMENTS OF LABOR FRONT, VIEWS OF UNION LEADERS

Incentives for Sugar Workers

Georgetown GUYANA CHRONICLE in English 31 Dec 83 p 1

[Text] The Guyana Sugar Corporation and the unions representing the workers in the Sugar Industry have agreed on the payment of the Annual Production Incentives at a meeting held at the Ministry of Manpower and Cooperatives under the Chairmanship of the Comrade Minister of Manpower and Cooperatives, Cde. Kenneth W.E. Denny. This was disclosed by the Ministry of Cooperatives and Manpower.

The parties agreed that a minimum of five days' pay would be paid out to all workers who qualify in accordance with the existing criteria.

Estates which have made their targets as set out by the Corporation would be awarded additional days in keeping with the customary understanding.

Polydore on Patriotic Front

Georgetown GUYANA CHRONICLE in English 3 Jan 84 p 5

[Article by Albert Alstrom]

[Text] The General Secretary of the Guyana Trades Union Congress Cde. Joseph Pollydore said that during last year the country made progress towards achieving self-sufficiency in locally produced foods.

He added that the country's agricultural drive continued to show evidence of success by a number of young people being attracted to agriculture and the substantial increase in the variety of produce available in our markets.

The General Secretary said that we must be careful however, not to overstate the ultimate goal and meaning of this self-sufficiency.

"We should avoid giving the impression or building the expectation that this welcome development in agriculture by itself will bring revolutionary improvements to the country's economy and to the living standards of the people."

Cde. Pollydore said that in view of the present agricultural thrust all Guyanese should feel themselves committed and be prepared to contribute in whatever way possible to the completion of those agricultural development

schemes including the M.M.A. now under construction. We should also work towards the completion of those schemes notwithstanding the economic constraints and external pressures.

The cost of living continues to increase, Cde. Pollydore said: "The full impact of this increase is not reflected in the official consumer price statistics, since many essential items are purchased at fantastic prices at outlets supplied by Guytraders."

"The fact that one can buy almost any scarce item he needs from these outlets," Cde. Pollydore said, "suggests that it is not out of place to ask for a 'freeing up' of the system which would allow free competition among Guytraders."

He said that the People's Progressive Party continues to call for the establishment of a National Patriotic Front as a means of forging greater unity among the people of this country in their task towards economic development and in meeting the threat of external pressure against the country, and wonders what prospect will be there for some progress towards this objective.

Call for Trade Union Unity

Georgetown GUYANA CHRONICLE in English 3 Jan 84 p 5

[Text] The Guyana Labour Union, the oldest union in the Commonwealth, is to strive for greater unity in the trade union movement and a better way of life for its members in 1984.

This was disclosed to the CHRONICLE Saturday by G.L.U. General Secretary Stanton Critchlow who was referring to his union's achievements for 1983 and making projections for 1984.

Looking back at the achievements in 1983, Cde. Critchlow said that as a result of union representation a large number of the membership from the public and private sectors had benefited from improved wages and working conditions. Anomalies had also been corrected in private and state enterprises, he said.

However, Cde. Critchlow noted that in 1983 private and state owned enterprises suffered alike as a result of the foreign exchange problem which in many cases resulted in shortages of spare parts and other commodities.

The G.L.U., he said, was sure that with greater trade union unity and the availability of moral and monetary incentives, the workers will be motivated to produce more.

The G.L.U., he said, believes that 1984 will be a trying but successful year.

He added "Once we have faith and the will to survive we can overcome a number of problems that might confront us and therefore ensure industrial progress."

He observed that in Guyana there is need for all in the trade union movement to work harmoniously together so that they would be able to bring greater unity to the trade union movement.

And, he vouched that he and his organisation will work toward the achievement of that goal.--G.B.

Bargaining Issue

Georgetown GUYANA CHRONICLE in English 5 Jan 84 p 3

[Text] The Guyana Field Foremen and Supervisors Union has served an ultimatum on the Chief Labour Officer, on the question of a poll in the sugar belt.

Cde Cleveland Charran, General Secretary of the Union said that his organisation has given the officer until Monday January 16th to make a decision in relation to the holding of a poll in the sugar industry to determine whether the union has majority support among the charge and leading hands in the industry.

An executive of the Guyana Agricultural and General Workers Union (GAWU) which represents the two categories of workers in the sugar industry said that his organisation will never agree to a fragmentation of the bargaining unit in the industry.

He went on to say that the GAWU is not opposed to a poll for the total work force and added that if each category of workers was to call for a different union, the industry could be plagued with frequent unrests.

An official of the Guyana Trades Union Congress said that the matter had already received the attention of the organisation. He added that it has been brought back to the organisation and the TUC will discuss it once again.

CSO: 3298/452

TEXT OF BURNHAM CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE TO CASTRO

Georgetown SUNDAY CHRONICLE in English 1 Jan 84 p 24

[Text] President Forbes Burnham has lauded the efforts of the Cuban people to maintain and consolidate their independence.

The President's praise was contained in a message sent to Cuban Leader Fidel Castro Ruz on the occasion of Cuba's National Day today.

President Burnham also acknowledged the close relations existing between Guyana and Cuba.

The President's message reads: "It is with great pleasure that the Cooperative Republic of Guyana joins the Republic of Cuba in celebration of the 25th anniversary of the triumph of the Cuban Revolution.

"The heroic and unrelenting efforts of the government and the people of Cuba have led to, after a mere quarter of a century, the firm establishment of a society determined to maintain and consolidate its independence.

"As a sister state in the Latin American system, in the Non-aligned Movement and the United Nations, Guyana and Cuba have worked cooperatively in the struggle to preserve the principles from which the behaviour of all states must be based in order to secure and guarantee international peace and stability.

"Our bilateral relations have reflected close and fruitful cooperation, especially in the cultural and economic fields. For the years ahead, we look forward for an even more productive association as part of the thrust by countries to the South to expedite their development through joint action.

"On this happy anniversary, therefore, I am pleased to send, on behalf of my Party, Government and the People of Guyana, our warm congratulations to Your Excellency, the Party, Government and People of Cuba, for the remarkable achievements of your revolution.

"Please accept also, our fraternal good wishes for your personal welfare as Leader of the Cuban people and for the future happiness and the prosperity of your compatriots." (GNA)

EXPANSION, NEW EQUIPMENT PLANNED FOR LIBYAN PROJECT

Georgetown GUYANA CHRONICLE in English 4 Jan 84 p 8

[Text] The Guyana-Libya Arab Agriculture Development Company is to receive machinery and equipment valued at one million (G) dollars within the next two months for farming and land development activities at its holding at Onverwagt.

The purchases which included seven tractors, a bulldozer and a powerful irrigation pump, were finalised by Chairman of the Company's Board of Directors and Managing Director Al-Asheg, during a visit to London last year.

The two-year old company in which Guyana has a 51 percent shareholding, has also bought trailers, a speedboat, a generator and workshop equipment, such as welding sets.

Cde. Al-Asheg yesterday said the first shipment is due to arrive in Georgetown by the middle of this month. Another shipment should reach Georgetown by the end of February, he said,

And, outlining the company's programme for 1984, Cde. Al-Asheg said a land development programme encompassing some 1200 hectares (3000 acres) will be launched. The company, he said, hopes to plant this land as well as the 480 hectares (1200 acres) it already cultivates, during this year.

Last year, some 2400 hectares (6000 acres) were allocated to the joint agriculture concern, adjacent to its present holding.

Meanwhile, the company is still awaiting reports on feasibility studies on the establishment of a cattle farm in the Mahaica-Mahaicony-Abary area, and a pepper and pineapple farm. The feasibility studies were conducted some time ago by a three-member team from the Ministry of Agriculture. (GNA)

CSO: 3298/452

RICE EXPORTS INCREASE WHILE PRODUCTION SHORTAGES ARE NOTED

Praise From GRB Chief

Georgetown SUNDAY CHRONICLE in English 25 Dec 83 pp 15-16

[Text] A tribute to rice farmers was paid yesterday by General Manager of the Guyana Rice Board, Cde. Leon Dundas. He noted that these producers continued their work throughout the year despite the shortage of mechanical spares for vital machinery such as tractors, combines, and mills.

He said that the Board will be doing everything possible to relieve the situation in 1984, and "officers of the GRB will have to be more active in the field by being nearer to the farmers."

Cde. Dundas revealed that the future of GRB seems bright as many orders for rice are expected from foreign countries. Countries that imported rice from Guyana this year are reported to have commended the GRB for the quality of rice supplied. This quality is expected to improve in the new year when a new Sortex machine, capable of extracting coloured grains and paddy more efficiently than the present machines, goes into operation.

And, the GRB has released figures indicating that more rice was exported and more bags of rice per acre were reaped this year.

Although export figures for the last month of the year were not yet available, statistics showed that exports up to November of 1983 totaled 39,208 tons, but the figure for the entire year of 1982 was 34 881 tons. The Board now has two vessels being loaded for shipping to Trinidad and Tobago. The m.v. Alvin R. is being loaded at Springlands with 1500 tons of rice while m.v. Kate is being loaded in Georgetown with 500 tons of rice.

Rice production for this year showed an increase by one bag per acre over 1982. In spite of the shortfall in acres put under production, the GRB surpassed its harvesting target in both crops. This was facilitated by the fact that the Board had set its target based on last year's production results which revealed an average of 20 bags per acre. The increase in production, a regular pattern over the last ten years, was attributed to the improvement in the rice varieties planted and land development works.

One hundred and twenty-one acres with a harvest of 90 535 tons were targeted for the first crop for this year, but 127 010 acres were ploughed and only 84 541 acres were sown because of a delay in the December rains. Seventy-six thousand acres, 90,2 percent, were harvested yielding 60 139 bags per acre, while the expected harvest of the acreage actually sown was 60 000 tons. 8 539 acres were damaged to lack of water and high salinity.

The second crop target was 140 000 acres with an expected harvest of 103 000 tons, but only 128 527 acres were prepared and only 109 727 acres sown because of the lack of water supply.

The acres sown were projected to yield 83 639, but so far 105 607 acres have been reaped, 96 percent, for 83 964 tons of rice.

Effects of Blast Disease

Bridgetown SUNDAY ADVOCATE in English 1 Jan 84 p 3

[Text] Georgetown, Guyana, Saturday (CANA)--Guyana's rice industry, the country's number three foreign exchange earner, is expected to end 1983, nearly 50,000 tons short of its production target due to a disease outbreak, according to Guyana Rice Board (GRB) officials.

The industry, which employs about 120,000 people had projected output of 193,535 tons of rice for this year's two crops, but production is not expected to exceed 144,103 tons, officials said.

A disease called "Blast" adversely affected the crop, the officials said and only swift action prevented destruction of the entire crop.

The first or spring crop was estimated to produce 90,535 tons but experienced an almost 33 percent shortfall to a low 60,139 tons.

While the industry had planned to cultivate 121,000 acres if actually planted 84,541, acres.

For the second or autumn crop, the industry targeted 140,000 acres but actually planted 107,727 acres because of inadequate water supplies.

When farmers were ready to plant their paddy, Guyana was experiencing unusually prolonged dry weather, and irrigation pumps were inadequate.

As a result, from an original target of 103,000 tons, the autumn crop is expected to yield just over 84,000 tons.

Officials said the figure now available is 83,964 tons, which is 96.7 percent of the acreage cultivated.

Rice, together with bauxite and sugar, provide 85 percent of all Guyana's foreign exchange.

War on Rats

Georgetown GUYANA CHRONICLE in English 5 Jan 84 p 1

[Text] East Berbice, (GNA)--The Guyana Rice Board is now waging a grim battle against rats which have threatened the rice crop in the Mahalcony-Abary area.

So far, several hectares of rice and other farm crops have been damaged by the rodents, and these are moving into storage bonds in the area.

GRB Production Manager, Leroy Small, yesterday said that rat bait was being placed in the rice fields and bonds.

Several plots have been hit by the rats which have made a sudden attack on other farm crops in the area.

The situation, he said, is nearing alarming proportions but he pointed out that with the cooperation of Guysuco Blairmont Estate and the Regional Administration, the pests should be eradicated within a week.

The GRB had obtained special chemicals from Guysuco, to be mixed with rice and placed in special bamboo traps.

The first report of the infestation was made by rice farmer Chaterpaul Abraham who claimed that over 10.4 hectares of his rice crop was damaged.

He said that over 800 hectares of rice and other farm crops were damaged by pests in the agriculture district.

CSO: 3298/453

BRIEFS

AGRICULTURAL REORGANIZATION--The dissolution of the Drainage and Irrigation Board and the transferring of its functions to the various regional administrations can serve to improve the efficiency of this country's agriculture sector, said Vice-President, Production, Desmond Hoyte. Cde Hoyte made the remark yesterday as he piloted the Drainage and Irrigation Board (Transfer of Functions) Bill 1983 through the National Assembly. [Excerpt] [Georgetown GUYANA CHRONICLE in English 13 Dec 83 p 1]

CORENTYNE BLACKMARKETING--East Berbice--(GNA)--The Regional Administration of East Berbice-Corentyne was Friday called upon to investigate reports of large-scale blackmarketing of essential items by businessmen and market vendors on the Upper Corentyne and to take action so as to ease the hardship suffered by the public. The call was made by Councillor Muntaz Alli of the Regional Democratic Council who reported that sugar, matches, soap and salt were being sold at exorbitant prices on the Corentyne. He said that sugar was being sold for as much as one dollar per pound and matches at 50 cents per box, soap at 3.75 dollars per bar and salt at a dollar per pound. The Councillor suggested that the three sugar estates in East Berbice make arrangements for sugar workers to receive quotas. Cde Alli also suggested that a survey be carried out in the Region to determine the population growth with a view to increasing the sugar quotas for the Region. And another Councillor Budhram Mahadeo has called on the Region to carry out aerial spraying of the rice crop on the Corentyne so as to get rid of pests and insects which are destroying farmers' crops. The two Councillors were speaking at a Regional Democratic Council meeting the final for 1983, at the Regional boardroom in New Amsterdam. [Text] [Georgetown GUYANA CHRONICLE in English 3 Jan 84 p 3]

JAGAN NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE--Leader of the People's Progressive Party Dr. Cheddi Jagan has said in his New Year message that 1984 is not a time for complacency. Warning that the Grenada bombing and slaughter "gave us a taste of what the fascist-minded hawks" have in store, he said the solution was not to be found in emigration, in exodus to North America. "Moribund state-monopoly capitalism in the Caribbean and Latin America are two sides of the same problem," he stated. He went on: "There are no quick-fix answers. Those who think that the US imperialists and those with whom they conspire and secretly finance will provide panaceas for all our ills must think again." Dr Jagan urged that 1984 must be a year of struggle, a year of unity solidarity and action. "World peace must be preserved. The US and puppet troops must get out of Grenada. US Military manoeuvres in the Region must cease. The Caribbean must be made a zone of peace," he stressed. [Text] [Georgetown SUNDAY CHRONICLE in English 1 Jan 84 p 24]

AIR JAMAICA, PILOTS SETTLE WAGE, ALLOWANCE DISPUTE

Kingston THE DAILY GLEANER in English 20 Jan 84 p 1

[Text] The dispute between Air Jamaica and its pilots over wage and fringe benefit improvements was settled at a meeting at the Ministry of Labour chaired by the Minister, the Hon. J.A.G. Smith, yesterday.

The pilots have agreed to an increase in wages equivalent to 9% of gross taxable salary effective from June 1, 1983 to May 31, 1984.

Hourly rates are to be paid at time and one-half after 70 hours from January 1, and overseas allowances are to be increased, to a sum equivalent to 2.96% of emoluments from June 1, 1982, and to the equivalent of 2.94% of total emoluments from June 1, 1983.

Travelling allowances are to be increased by 50% from \$170 per month to \$255 per month from June 1, 1983, and a further increase to \$300 per month from January 1, 1984.

The airline and the pilots also agreed to discuss the following matters at the local level: reduction of the differential between the 727 and A300 pilots with effect from June 1, 1984; "RedCircling" (privileged status) for those D.C.8 pilots who were transferred to 727 aircraft when the company phased out the D.C.8 aircraft; Increase of the overseas per diem allowances.

Mr. Smith had decided on January 9 to refer the matter to the Industrial Disputes Tribunal, but deferred his decision a day later and decided to hold further conciliatory talks with the pilots' union: the Jamaica Airline Pilots' Association (JALPA).

Mr. Smith was assisted by the Director of Industrial Relations at the Ministry, Mr. Anthony Irons, and Mr. M.D. Marsh, of the Ministry of the Public Service.

Air Jamaica was represented by Mr. Noel Rennie and Mr. Peter Samuel, and JALPA by its president, Captain Ludlow Beckford, and other members.

TRADE UNION LEADERS FIND WORKERS' STRENGTH ERODED

Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 23 Jan 84 p 12

[Text]

KINGSTON, (Cana):

LEADERS of major trade unions here say the position of Jamaica workers eroded drastically in 1983.

"The year 1983...witnessed a continuing erosion of hard-won rights of workers and the reduction of economic status," said Hopeton Caven, the General Secretary of Trade Union Congress (TUC) one of the member unions of the Joint Trade Unions Research Development Centre (JTURDC).

Reviewing the year in the Centre's newsletter, he added: "The value of workers' input in the decision-making process and that of their representative organisation, came to be fully recognised in the 1970s.

Nowadays, the importance of these contributions has been either downgraded or deemphasised.

EMPTY

"At the same time there are ringing through empty exhortations to produce. Not surprisingly, workers are left disgruntled, demotivated and uninspired."

Added Lascelles Beckford, vice president of the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union (BITU): "The trade unions of Jamaica are finding it more difficult to obtain wage increases and improved conditions of employment for

workers as employers are not considering such claims based on justification and need of workers, but interjecting at all times word crisis and economic position of the country."

The trade leaders acknowledged that the international recession and Jamaica's particular problems, especially the crisis in foreign exchange, had helped to cause problems, but felt that workers have been made to bear a disproportionate amount of the burden.

ALARMING

Caven said that in the new environment here, the rights of workers to representation by a union of their choice, has come under pressure from employers, while action by the governments' legal arm to remedy the breaches "has been lethargic, if anything."

"Equally alarming," he added, "is to find those processes and machinery for consultation between the highest reaches of government and workers organisations, refined in the 1970s, now almost completely dismantled.

"Worse still, workers representation on statutory bodies and national committees has, again, been either downgraded, reduced to a token, or denied."

Beckford, whose BITU is aligned to the ruling Jamaica Labour Party (JLP), spoke of growing union and worker distrust for the Industrial Relations Tribunal (IRT), the body set up in the 1970s to help arbitrate industrial disputes.

"The industrial disputes tribunal continues to be of concern to us."

"Invariably, it makes decisions against workers and when they are in favour of workers they are over-turned by the courts because of imprecise language," Beckford remarked.

REJECTED

He said unions continue to press for the appointment of persons

with experience in labour and industrial relations to be chairmen of the tribunal.

The union leaders also rejected suggestions that the organisations and workers have not cooperated in the national interest, saying that they had done so "as never before."

For 1984, Hyloroyd Thompson, president of the National Workers' Union (NWU) said that his organisation would support positive initiatives towards growth, but stressed: "...but it is important to note that production does not rest on the efforts of workers alone."

Beckford said that the Jamaican trade union movement had continued the search for solutions to the problems faced, taking appropriate "action in the interest of the workers whom it represents."

E. Lloyd Taylor, whose Jamaica Association of Local Government Officers (JALGO) speaks mainly for those public sector workers outside the ambit of the central government, called for a return of "normal patterns of approach to solving" industrial problems."

SHEARER ADDRESSES CARICOM COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING

Kingston THE DAILY GLEANER in English 28 Jan 84 p 1

[Text]

A call to the CARICOM Council of Ministers to be outward-looking — to “extra-regional markets and extra-regional economic relations” — was made by Jamaica’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Rt. Hon. Hugh Shearer, at yesterday’s meeting of the Council in Georgetown, Guyana.

Making his contribution to the deliberations of the Council, at its opening session, Mr. Shearer said that, in addition to the localised problems which were facing CARICOM within its own boundaries, “we must also deal with our interests in extra-regional markets and extra-regional economic relations.”

“We are all committed, in one way or another, to export-oriented economic strategies,” he said, “and we must all look to extra-regional markets to sell the volumes which can sustain our development.”

“But we are all confronted, in one way or another, with strong protectionist measures which restrict or close out our exports to developed country markets. These are matters which must engage our attention.”

Mr. Shearer commented that, at present, the region was in the midst of the ACP/EEC negotiations for a successor to the current Lome Convention. The CARICOM countries must once again play their full part in advancing their interests and the interests of the ACP Group as a whole, he declared.

Noting that most member States of CARICOM have been designated beneficiaries under the Caribbean Basin Initiative (C.B.I.) and that the region was looking forward to the speedy implementation of remaining States, Mr. Shearer urged that the region “seek to make use of the wider possibilities to increase and strengthen our trade with that market, expand tourism, and promote investment opportunities.”

Looking inward, he commented that since the last meeting of the Council in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, last July, the region has been severely shaken, as the repercussions of the global recession have been brought home to us, perhaps even more sharply than before; and also as a result of the traumatic political upheavals in Grenada last October.

“These experiences have generated strong feelings — and strong words throughout the region, and doubtless they will continue to provide subject matter for writers and debaters for a long time to come. If I may borrow

from the comunique of the Commonwealth Heads of Government conference recently concluded in Delhi, however, the emphasis should now be reconstruction," he continued.

"What we, as leaders in our countries, have to recognise as of paramount importance and urgency is the challenge that we must overcome if we are to come to grips with the fundamental problems that confront us all — the problems of underdevelopment, unemployment, under-production, and all the various ills that call so urgently for attention in all our countries.

"These are the problems that compel — and demand — a response from us."

Mr. Shearer said it was interesting to note that the Latin American countries, in particular, were trying to come to grips with these problems. This, he said, was not surprising, since so many of them have been so gravely affected by the global recession, and have accumulated a burden of debt which was all but overwhelming.

"I believe that it is in the interest of CARICOM that we should take careful note of the outcome of the Latin American Economic Conference held in Quito two weeks ago," Mr. Shearer told the meeting.

CSO: 3298/440

PNP DEMANDS THAT GOVERNMENT TELL TRUTH ABOUT IMF

Kingston THE DAILY GLEANER in English 18 Jan 84 p 1

[Text] A "demand" that the Government tell the country "the truth about the negotiations" with the International Monetary Fund has been made by the People's National Party in a statement issued by the chairman, Mr. P.J. Patterson.

Recalling that on November 23 last year the Prime Minister announced that the Government had a new stand-by agreement with the I.M.F. and that this would take effect on January 1, this year, the P.N.P. chairman asked the following questions:

--Where is the agreement?

--What are the major conditions already agreed to?

--What else is being demanded of the people?

According to the statement, there is "no such agreement". Negotiations are going on between the Government and Fund concerning a new agreement, and "the harsh economic measures" recently introduced by the Government are what are called "prior conditions" to any such agreement, the P.N.P. chairman said.

Mr. Patterson commented that the prolonged nature of these negotiations would suggest that serious difficulties have arisen relative to the new agreement.

Accusing the Government of "deception and secrecy" in the conduct of the negotiations, the P.N.P. chairman made the demand on the Government to tell the truth about the negotiations.

"The people have a right to know the truth", the statement said.

CSO: 3298/440

TRADE, MONETARY ISSUES DRAW NATIONAL ATTENTION

PNP Call for Trade Order

Kingston THE DAILY GLEANER in English 18 Jan 84 p 2

[Text] A call has been made by the People's National Party on the Government to issue a Trade Order which would remove confusion with regard to the Government's import policy which the P.N.P. sees as existing at present.

A statement issued by Mr. P.J. Patterson, chairman of the party, recalled that, on November 23 last year when the Jamaican dollar was devalued, the Prime Minister announced that a new import regime would be introduced.

"To date, there is still no Trade Order indicating precisely which items need licences and which do not", the statement said.

"Since there is no Trade Order, the Trade Adminis-

trator's Department cannot issue licences. At the same time, no one can arbitrarily decide to import items, since the Customs officers do not know whether or not the items require a licence.

Calling for "the immediate promulgation of a Trade Order to reduce the present level of confusion", the P.N.P. chairman said that the present certainty and confusion have led to a situation where inventories have been run down and several factories are out of vital raw materials.

On Friday, January 6, the Prime Minister gave the outline of a new import policy to members of the private sector at a meeting at Jamaica House. At that meeting, Mr. Seaga named categories of imports which would be free of licensing and quotas.

Further PNP Urging

Kingston THE DAILY GLEANER in English 20 Jan 84 p 2

[Text] Another call has been made on the Government by the People's National Party to do something about the problems of import.

Mr. Seymour Mullings, a Vice-President, has issued a statement with respect to capital goods and raw materials imported under the Rehabilitation Fund, and which are needed for production by the construction industry and by other productive sectors.

Mr. Mullings said that many importers under the Fund have had goods lying on the wharves for weeks while others have had goods lying at overseas ports ready for shipment, but these goods cannot be cleared or shipped because the Government has failed to take action in regard to the extension of letters of commitments, to facilitate the financial documentation necessary to permit the shipment, and the clearance of the goods.

As a result importers are under pressure by exporters, many of whom are threatening to take legal action. Damage is being done to the credit of importers with their suppliers and the credibility of the Government has also been further damaged the statement said.

Restricted Imports Deletions

Kingston THE DAILY GLEANER in English 20 Jan 84 pp 1, 18

[Text]

Detergents, engine-oil for motor vehicles, plastic and paper containers for exporters, leather and radiator flush are some of the items which the Minister of Industry and Commerce, the Hon. Douglas Vaz, has removed from the restricted list of imports.

The Minister made the announcement on Wednesday at a meeting of private-sector personnel held at the Ministry.

Explaining the Government's import policy for this year, Mr. Vaz said that the items removed from the restricted lists could not be automatically brought into Jamaica without an import licence. He said that many had expected that the whole licensing system would be dismantled and that the country could be flooded with consumer goods.

"We are not running a corn-flakes economy," the Minister said, adding: "Licences will not be easily available for consumer goods. If someone finds it difficult to get a licence for a consumer item, this is not because of bureaucratic bungling. Don't blame the Trade Board for this, as they are under specific instructions".

Mr. Vaz said that the producer — particularly the exporter — would get first access to the limited foreign exchange and then what was left would go to the low-priority area. He said he would be tabling in Parliament next week a comprehensive list of all the items which needed licences.

Responding to a question about illegal imports, Mr. Vaz said that the Customs Department would be considerably strengthened to deal with that. "Custom-strengthening is the final crunch," he said.

Mr. Vaz said the fears about de-regulation creating chaos had not materialised, and he did not feel that the further de-regulation of 62 items, this year, would cause any chaos. Not enough people focussed on the positive side of de-regulations, which was the effect it usually had on cutting prices, he said.

Using the example of plywood, which will be freed from import licensing, the Minister said that that could result in much lower costs for the product here. A piece of plywood in the United States was being sold for \$12 and the comparable piece was being sold for \$138 in Jamaica.

"I don't know what kind of conversion rate you have to use to come up with that figure", the Minister declared. He added that certain car parts had also been de-regulated and that that should help to lower costs and the "rip off" in that area.

"We open up the domestic market not only to make our producers more competitive but to give consumers a better deal," the Minister said.

Mr. Vaz expressed the view that it was not de-regulation which was driving people out of business, but the failure to put in plant and machinery.

Pointing out that raw materials and essential capital goods had been exempted from import licensing, the Minister told the businessmen: "You have been freed from the excuse of saying all your problems stem from the Trade Board. What will your excuse be, now, if you don't produce?"

Optimistic about the growth in manufacturing, this year, he predicted that the year would be "bullish".

The Minister said that devaluation had made a number of projects more attractive now, and one which had been stalled for 1½ years was now set for take-off since the devaluation.

"I am expecting a good year in Industry. I wish you all the best", he said.

The following are the list of items which have been de-regulated for 1984, as announced by the Minister of Industry and Commerce:

1. Cat Food, 2. Dog Food, 3. Ice Cream Cones, 4. Abrasive paper, cloth discs and belts, 5. Bathroom fixtures, 6. Ball-point pens, 7. Brooms, mops of all types, excluding wire brushes, 8. Correcting fluid for typing, 9. Cartons of all types, 10. Containers of all types — Plastic, Paper) for exporters, 11. Cake boxes, 12. Cushions, 13. Driver's licence-holders, 14. Detergents, 15. Engine oil for motor vehicles, 16. Fibre glass tables, 17. Food mixers — domestic, 18. Grinders, Food, 19. Gear oil, 20. Hot plates.

21. Insect Screens, 22. Insecticides for household use, 23. Jewelry of gold, platinum, silver etc., 24. Ladders, 25. Mixers, Liquid and/or food, 26. Mincers, Food, 27. Mosquito destroyers, 28. Poultry feed — pan waterer, 29. Rubber mats, 30. Razor blades, 31. Radiator Cores, 32. Safety Caps, 33. Shower trays, basins and baths, 34. Spectacle frames, 35. Threads, 36. Twine, Packaging, 37. Greige, 38. Walking sticks of wood, 39. Zippers, 40. Bleaches — in consumer packages or not.

41. Cleaning and sanitizing agents in consumer packages or not, 42. Detergents — in consumer packages or not, 43. Engine cleaner, 44. Foam, plastic, rigid and pliable, 45. Leather, 46. Nut busters, 47. packaging products of all types — for exporters, 48. Radiator flush, 49. Barbe wire, 50. Drum dollies, 51. Drum handling equipment, 52. Metal Pallets, 53. Pallet pullers, 54. Safety ladders, 55. Shingles of wood, 56. Battery cables, 57. Binders, loose leaf, data, 58. Crates, 59. Food warmers, 60. Nylon chair straps, 61. Wheel balancing weights, 62. Rectangular Hollow Section.

Improvement in Jamaican Dollar

Kingston THE DAILY GLEANER in English 20 Jan 84 pp 1, 18

[Text] THE JAMAICAN DOLLAR has improved in value against the US dollar. The rate of exchange goes down as from today after commercial bankers revolted at a higher bid made at its auction on Wednesday to determine the rate of exchange for the two currencies

The new exchange rate of the Jamaican dollar against the U.S. dollar is J\$3.25 = US\$1 (buying) and J\$3.30 = US\$1 (selling) representing a reduction from the rate for the U.S. dollar of J\$3.38 (buying) and J\$3.40 (selling) applicable up until yesterday.

According to reports reaching the Gleaner the new exchange rate should have been J\$3.55 = US\$1 based on the highest bid at Wednesday's auction. A press release from Jamaica House yesterday confirmed that a new Parity Order has been signed by the Minister of Finance setting a new band ranging from J\$3.25 to US\$1 to J\$3.55 to US\$1.

Mr. Ron Sasso, Managing Director of the Royal Bank, told the Gleaner that the highest bid at the fortnightly auction is normally adopted as the new exchange rate. He said however, that the commercial banks have disagreed with the decision to trade at this level and will instead open trading today at the lowest level of J\$3.25 = US\$1. This decision, he said, was taken after Wednesday's auction at which the new band was set, when a group of commercial bankers had a meeting among themselves.

Mr. Sasso explained that each bank gives up daily 25 percent of the foreign exchange bought that day to a pool and by midday all nine banks know how much foreign exchange has been pooled. By 4 o'clock the same day, each bank puts in sealed bids for that foreign exchange. The bank which bids the highest gets the foreign exchange and the rate is thus set.

In recent weeks, Mr. Sasso continued, the banks have been literally trying to outbid each other so as to buy back most of the foreign exchange and this has accounted for a rapidly escalating rate of exchange. He said that "the bankers feel, however, that the direction in which the exchange rate is moving is all wrong and must have an adverse effect on all the people of this country. It will also have terrible repercussions for the banking system if we allow the exchange rate to escalate any further."

Mr. Sasso said that in the interest of seeing the exchange rate "contained at a realistic level, the commercial bankers have decided to begin trading at the lowest level of the new band."

He said that although the bankers have decided to trade at J\$3.25 = US\$1 (buying) and J\$3.30 = US\$1 (selling), they were still within the band set by the Government.

He explained: "We feel that the rate we are adopting is more appropriate since the country cannot afford as rapidly escalating a rate as this could be if we allowed it to get out of hand. It could be like a hangman's noose around our necks. So we feel better using the bottom rather than the top level. This is the consensus of all the commercial bankers. We feel it would not be in the interest of the country and in particular the poor whom we serve, to let the exchange rate move any faster. We simply cannot support a higher rate that must push up already high prices of food and other essential goods. It would be murder! So we put in bids yesterday at what we considered to be the real value of the foreign exchange."

The move by the bankers follows a mood of dissatisfaction since the last fortnightly review on January 4 when, as reported in a column in the Gleaner this week, a number of commercial bankers were upset by the trend of one bank in particular which always put in a bid at the highest level of the band set thus forcing other banks to accept exchange rates at the highest level.

This new change in the exchange rate is the second since the devaluation of the Jamaican dollar was announced by Prime Minister Edward Seaga on November 25 when the first Order setting a rate of J\$3.15, with a spread of 15 cents up and down, was set.

It was stated then that the rates were subject to fortnightly reviews in the light of prevailing conditions in the marketplace. A subsequent review on January 4 set a new rate of J\$3.40. Accordingly a new Parity Order was made creating a new median of J\$3.25, which with the continuing spread of 15 cents either way, permitted the rate to go to \$3.40.

Auctions are conducted daily, except on Fridays and out of each daily auction the rate for the following day is determined within the particular band then prevailing.

The next auction is scheduled for Monday January 23, at which time the rate for Tuesday, January 24, will be established.

Vaz on Import Licensing

Kingston THE DAILY GLEANER in English 20 Jan 84 p 22

[Text] Dismantling of the import licensing system, recently announced by the Prime Minister, did not mean a "free for all" for everyone, the Minister of Industry and Commerce, the Hon. Douglas Vaz, said on Tuesday.

What it meant was a "free for all" for those who would be importing to produce and export to earn foreign exchange. It was not a "free for all" for consumer goods and non-essential items which would still be subjects for the restricted list, he told the Gleaner.

Asked about the availability of foreign exchange in the tight market situation, the Minister said this would be secured through the Export Development Fund which would be put in place again by next week.

Mr. Vaz had earlier made his first speech since being re-appointed Minister of Industry and Commerce, at the weekly luncheon meeting of the St. Andrew Rotary Club at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel, New Kingston.

Speaking then, he had told the group that he would be meeting, Wednesday, with representatives of the private sector to spell out the new Government policy of restructuring the import licensing system, designed to give manufacturers "a free rein by exempting raw materials from quotas and licences".

Mr. Vaz, without going into detail, said "there were some out there" whose mentality thought it would be a "free for all"; but this would not be so.

It was aimed at foreign-exchange earners, and those who earned foreign exchange would be allowed to keep all of it to earn more (before a part of foreign-exchange earnings by manufacturers was kept back by the Bank of Jamaica to go towards paying the country's oil bill.)

Mr. Vaz called on the Rotarians, whose organisation lays emphasis on leadership, to make a renewed attempt this year to point out the importance of selfless service, patriotism and goodwill.

"In Jamaica today, if you announce one set of price increases, be sure that any number of things will go up immediately, whether or not those things are related to what was legitimately raised," he said.

"Everyone tries to find some connection between this commodity and what is raised, to pressure the consumer for more. When people protest about the illegitimate increases, you hear: Is the Government fault, this Government is not for poor people.

"When the parallel market was formalised after some period of operating unofficially, there were sharp increases in a number of items which had for long been bought with parallel-market dollars; the unscrupulous traders seized on the opportunity to jack up prices to make excess profits.

"And though the recent devaluation should not have a profound effect on a number of items, because they were already absorbed in the system, consumers are being faced with a round of unjustified increases".

Mr. Vaz said morality was not ingrained by legislation, so totalitarian control was not the answer. What was needed was for organisations such as Rotary to launch and sustain a moral campaign to review such notions as loyalty to country, the brotherhood of man, integrity and unselfishness.

Organisations such as Rotary should get together with the Church and civic-minded groups to save the nation from "the cancer of selfishness and hedonism" that was afflicting it, he said.

Despite all the negativism and complaining, the Department of Statistics and the National Planning Agency had revealed that projected growth for last year was 1.7 per cent, compared to cumulative negative growth of 18.1 per cent over the "self-reliance" period 1973-80.

In Agriculture, projected growth was 8.2 per cent compared to accumulative negative growth of 4.6 per cent over 1973-80. Projected growth in Manufacturing was 4.1 per cent as compared with a cumulative negative growth of 31.4 per cent over 1973-80. Gross capital formation last year was projected to grow by 15.6 per cent compared with 88.2 per cent decline over the years 1973-80.

"Otherwise, the weather is fair and we plan to set sail smoothly," Mr. Vaz declared.

CSO: 3298/441

CARL STONE ON ECONOMIC 'BURDENS,' POLITICAL SITUATION

Kingston THE DAILY GLEANER in English 18 Jan 84 p 10

[Article by Carl Stone]

[Text]

THE VOTER response to the extension of the period for voter registration indicates a dramatic change in political mood since the original registration period closed in November. Some voters who were hostile or indifferent then have suddenly become interested in getting their names on the voters list.

Some 2.7% or 25,000 voters, it is estimated, have been added to the voters list in what has been described by the *Gleaner* as a rush to get on the list.

Contrary to my Monday projections, a significant number of formerly apathetic voters have been roused by recent events to get their names on the list to give themselves a chance to make a choice between the JLP and the PNP when the time comes.

To be sure, registration levels are still below what they were in 1980 but this sudden increased wave of interest in registration since November has ominous meaning for the JLP and bright prospects for Manley's PNP when the next day of reckoning at the polls comes around.

Lets get our numbers in perspective.

In 1976 there were 871 thousand voters. Between 1976 and 1980 the number of registered voters increased by 13.7% to 990 thousand. This large increase was due partly to population increase and partly to increased interest in voting among normally politically apathetic citizens. By my estimates this level of registration represented some 95% of eligible voters.

It is estimated that in the period

since 1980, there should have been a 9.41 increase in the number of registered voters. However, instead of an increase over the 990 thousand figure for 1980, political apathy cut registration to 925 thousand when the earlier registration period closed on November 28. That 925 thousand was some 15% less than the normal projected increase in registered voters.

Even with the dramatic 25,000 voters added due to this new wave of voter interest, there is still a 12% shortfall due to the political apathy I wrote about on Monday.

Inspiration

My investigation of this new wave of voter interest suggests that a very significantly large portion that of it is inspired by the government's recent harsh economic measures which has stung many voters out of their apathy and angered them enough to make the effort to get on that voters' list to vote out Seaga and the JLP. In the same way that an election held at this time would have produced a massive PNP victory (even larger than the JLPs 1980 effort), voter registration is reflecting the intensification of anti-government sentiments across the country.

As these economic measures take their toll of the poor and the middle class alike and more economic pressures are added to them in response to the dictates of the IMF, the political stocks of Manley and the PNP are going to grow exponentially.

All this is to say that our two-party system is alive and that many voters

have great faith in it as they shift down JLP disillusionment to pro-PNP support, just as they did shift in the reverse direction between 1976 and 1980. But for that fact, we would most likely have already had a round of protest violence that would make 1938 look like a Sunday school picnic.

Build-up of anger

But how much more burdens can the people take? In our mainly peasant influenced political culture, we are accustomed to putting up with a lot and accommodating to hardships. But there comes a point at which we begin to feel that the cup is full and overflowing and we just are not about to take any more. When that time comes a normally peaceful and long-suffering people will tend to erupt into sudden rage and destructive anger.

Jamaicans could well be approaching that point. Those who feel the cup is not yet full and that the people can bear more burdens may well be playing with fire that will burn us all when this long-suffering patience turns to violent anger.

Beginning with the announcement of the massive gas price increase on that fateful Friday night, the political initiative has passed decisively to Michael Manley and the Peoples National Party. As these economic burdens increase and as new ones are added to them, Seaga and his 60 representatives in our first one-party Parliament are likely to become virtual hostages of the build-up of anger among the people. Only the prospect of electing a new government would then in my view be likely to avert serious political disorder if these trends continue for much longer. This could well put the issue of fresh elections very sharply on the national political agenda. The whole set of issues surrounding the calling of the December 15 election is both going to continue haunting the JLP as well as likely to become instrumental in passing moral authority to Manley and the PNP.

POLICE STEP UP WAR ON CRIME; PAPER URGES COOPERATION

GLEANER Editorial

Kingston THE DAILY GLEANER in English 19 Jan 84 p 6

[Editorial]

[Text]

Since the beginning of the year, the country finds itself.

there has been an upsurge of violent crime which demands the urgent attention of the society. The Police appear to have contained the development of gang warfare in sections of the Corporate Area — Western Kingston and South-West St. Andrew — but it has been a bad scene. Yet the Police either do not know or are reluctant to tell the country the origin of the gang warfare. Was it a personal feud or was it political? The PNP has entered the picture with claims that some of those killed were its supporters, but even here the Police have neither confirmed nor denied that this was so.

But it is not only in the beleaguered West that violent crime is rearing its vicious head. The brutal slaying in Worthington Close in St. Andrew of the Manager of Morgan's Harbour, the equally brutal slaying in Meadowbrook, St. Andrew at a bus stop of the Manager of R&T Store, the vicious slaying of a cab driver in Mountain View Avenue, St. Andrew, the killings and robberies in Clarendon and other parishes suggest that the criminal elements are determined to exploit the delicate and sensitive economic situation in which

At the same time there are grumbings by the leftist parties — the PNP and the WPJ — of harassment of their supporters by the Police. Yet at this time, there is need for the closest of co-operation between the Police and all law-abiding citizens and groups of citizens in order to put down the incipient surge of violent crime which threatens any serious attempt at economic recovery.

As we have said before, a Government's first responsibility is the security and safety of the state and the citizens within it. All else depends on the success in this vital area.

We call on the Minister of National Security to tell the country about this latest upsurge of violence, of the success or otherwise of dealing with it, and of the steps which the Government is taking to combat it. And we urge every citizen and every organisation to give support to aid co-operation with the Security Forces in apprehending and bringing to justice those who would wreck the country with violence.

Joint Police-Military Action

Kingston THE DAILY GLEANER in English 20 Jan 84 p 1

[Text] Police, assisted by soldiers, have been engaged in stepped up anti-crime operations islandwide, mainly in the Corporate Area, and St. Catherine, since the beginning of the year. As a result about 350 persons were detained and eight guns seized by the security forces.

Of the persons detained, 290 were interrogated and released. The others are still in custody facing charges of illegal possession of firearm, and other charges alleging shooting with intent, rape, wounding, larceny, possession of ganja, and a variety of other charges.

They will be facing identification parades, the Gleaner was told yesterday.

Security forces in the raids, seized a large number of household articles, including television sets, radios, cameras, component sets, toilet bowls and basins, gas stoves and motor cars.

Security forces in their operations seized a M-16 rifle, a submarine gun, a 9 mm pistol, three .38 revolvers, a .22 revolver and homemade shotgun, and eighty rounds of ammunition.

Police High Command said in a release: "These measures will continue to maintain normality."

It asked for the co-operation of the public.

CSO: 3298/441

BRIEFS

CANADIAN GRANT--A grant of approximately J\$16-M (Can. \$6-M) have been granted to Jamaica by Canada, to be used for the purchase of Canadian sardines and dried saltfish. A "memorandum of understanding" on the grant was signed at Jamaica House yesterday by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Edward Seaga, and the Canadian High Commissioner to Jamaica, Mr. David Reece. This is the second food aid agreement to be signed between Canada and Jamaica in the fiscal year 1983-84, and brings Canada's food aid assistance to Jamaica in the period to J\$21,720,000. The first agreement, for J\$5,720,000, was signed in June of last year. Speaking at the signing, the Prime Minister said that this latest grant was designed to assist Jamaica's balance of payments programme, through the purchase of basic food commodities which will be sold for cash. Funds from this sale will be used to carry out various development projects in the island, he said. Mr. Seaga said that the grant will be used to purchase 172,000 cases of sardines and 800 metric tons of saltfish. He added that while the country would seek other foreign exchange support, it will also be able to generate some local funds to fund a number of development projects. On his part, Mr. Reece said that the Canadian Government, through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), "was pleased to be able to assist Jamaica in meeting its requirements for fish products during this period of financial constraint". The High Commissioner noted that this assistance was being provided as a grant with no repayment required. Canada's total development assistance to Jamaica during this fiscal year will be approximately Can. \$21,113,000. [Text] [Kingston THE DAILY GLEANER in English 17 Jan 84 p 1]

PNP PERSONALITIES--I hear that former PNP Member of Parliament, attorney Francis Tulloch--who "resigned" from the mainstream of party politics several months before the 1980 general elections and did not contest his seat--has been returning to the forefront of politics. Another Montego Bay lawyer who is being groomed by the PNP is Carl Miller. He has long been tipped as a future election candidate somewhere in St. James. [Text; From the anonymous column "Listening Post"] [Kingston THE DAILY GLEANER in English 28 Jan 84 p 5]

CSO: 3298/442

METROPOLITAN AREA COST OF LIVING RAW DATA

Various Family Budgets

Mexico City EL DIA in Spanish 'Metropoli' supplement 14 Nov 83 p 3

[Article by Cristina Martin]

[Text] The minimum wage does not even cover food costs for a family of five. On the average, about 700 pesos are spent on food per day due to the increased cost of basic products.

In addition to the above, rent, electricity, gas, clothing, transportation and normal educational expenses for the children must be paid. Therefore, the families must work "real miracles" to survive.

'Metropoli' verified this during a survey of people who live in developments in the first section of the city. They complained that the monthly wage was not enough.

Mrs Felipa Saldivar reported that her family consisted of her and her husband and three school-age children. Only the husband works and he receives minimum wage. However, they spend 700 pesos per day on food, pay 4,000 pesos for rent each month and 30 pesos per day for transportation.

She pointed out that they have had to give up milk and rarely eat meat because it is so expensive. However, expenditures for food alone are more than their daily income.

She said that they also spend 206 pesos for gas every 2 weeks and her last payment for electricity was 1,600 pesos. This family lives in the Guerrero development.

Marcos Serrano and his wife, Antonia Garrido, indicated that their daily investment in food is about 500 pesos, monthly rent is 3,500 pesos and their income is less than 20,000 pesos per month. Only the husband works and they have four children.

Mrs Andrea Garcia collects materials like soft drink bottles, beer cans, boxes, paper scraps and other articles that she then sells to industries.

She has eight children and spends 800 pesos per day for food, according to her. She said that, in her "business," there is no set income. "Sometimes I earn a lot and other times little." She preferred to do that than receive a wage "because the minimum wage does not cover anything."

The Andrea Garcia family lives on a piece of land where there are three single-family homes made of wood, cardboard and metal plate. They pay 30,000 pesos per month to rent the lot.

Sabina Mateos Crispin is the mother of four children. She stated that her husband's wage does not cover "even food" because she spends 700 pesos per day for food. She has to help by doing laundry for others.

She stated that clothing and shoes are practically beyond their means. The few times they buy these products "we have to stretch our money in order to eat." This family lives on Magnolia Street in the Guerrero development.

There are community baths and laundries there and the housing might consist of only one room. Nevertheless, they pay 3,650 pesos for rent. "We live like this because we cannot pay higher rent. The way things are, they ask up to 20,000 pesos for a little apartment."

Ines Lugo, another mother, told us: "I give my children eggs and beans to eat. Sometimes I buy meat or ham and almost always vegetables which they do not like."

In spite of the fact that she has almost given up eating meat, daily expenditures for food range from 300 to 400 pesos per day. She lives with her in-laws and they go together on basic purchases.

She has three daughters, two of them school age. The oldest is a slow learner. She has to take her to the school at Colegio Militar which means an additional transportation expense.

As to clothing and shoes, she revealed that these are very expensive. Therefore, she only buys them when they are indispensable.

Mrs Tello indicated that she has only one daughter. Her husband receives a wage of 40,000 pesos per month which barely covers their needs: food, rent, electricity, gas and transportaiton.

If a family of three with an income of 40,000 pesos per month has just enough to satisfy its needs, how will those who have five, six or seven children survive on the minimum wage?

Bread Increases in NZT

Mexico City EL DIA in Spanish 'Metropoli' supplement 4 Nov 83 p 9

[Text] Sweet rolls priced at 5 and 7 pesos rose to 7 and 9 pesos respectively in the majority of the bakeries in the NZT [Naucalpan, Atizapan and

Tlalnepantla] area. White bread--buns and loaves--increased to 4 pesos in other areas despite the official price of 2 pesos.

A group of housewives from the La Florida and Loma Linda developments headed by Teresa Jimenez de Rocha and Hermelinda Yanez Rojas reported this.

Our informants indicated that the bakers raised the price of sweet rolls and decreased production of white bread--buns and loaves--to force the housewives to buy the former. It brings more profit since it is outside official control.

They asked that the Commerce Delegation in Mexico State do a study so that sweet rolls would come under official control. They also asked that the bakers be required to produce more buns and loaves in order to protect the budgets of the lower-income groups.

The bakers have also raised the prices for white bread and sweet rolls in Ecatepec, Coacalco, Tultitlan, Nezahualcoyotl, Tezcoco, Los Reyes la Paz, Huizquilucan, Villa Nicolas Romero, among others.

Clothing Prices Cited

Mexico City EL DIA in Spanish 'Metropoli' supplement 9 Nov 83 p 9

[Text] Clothing prices have gone up about 500 percent in recent months. According to the clothing industry, this is caused by the current inflationary situation, the lack of raw materials, high production costs, lack of repairs for the machines used in that branch and the wage demands of the textile workers.

The above was verified by visiting several self-service stores at Plaza Satellite in Ciudad Satellite and in the NZT zone. In some cases, poor quality clothing is sold but, in order to attract people, they put on labels with foreign names to make them appear imported. They then set a much higher price on these than they are really worth.

Many low-income families complain that, in addition to the fact that they do not have enough money to buy articles of prime necessity like food, clothing prices have gone up incredibly. A skirt costs 2,500 pesos; a dress, 3,000 to 5,000 pesos; tweed pants, 1,700 to 5,000 pesos; etc.

NZT Fish Varieties

Mexico City EL DIA in Spanish 'Metropoli' supplement 15 Nov 83 p 8

[Text] In all the authorized stores, public markets, etc., in Valle de Mexico, fish and seafood merchants have raised prices up to 50 percent compared to last week.

During a survey carried out in the NZT [Naucalpan, Zaragoza, Tlalnepantla] zone, the reporter verified that red snapper in slices and sea bass cost 800 pesos per kilogram.

Filletts of the same varieties cost between 950 and 1,000 pesos per kilo.

Catfish is being sold at 600 pesos while the sierra, the most commonly eaten fish, is priced at 450 pesos. Mullet costs the same as the sierra.

Shrimp costs 2,000 pesos.

Due to the high prices, several housewives interviewed at random stated that they have stopped eating any type of fish or seafood.

The fish merchants complain that sales have declined because the housewives have stopped buying seafood.

Nopal Cactus, Romeritos

Mexico City EL DIA in Spanish 'Metropoli' supplement 19 Nov 83 p 9

[Text] Nopal cactus and romeritos went up just like fish did.

After a survey of the markets and stands in developments in the NZT zone, the reporter observed that the prices of these articles which are used for New Year's and Holy Week shot up more than 150 percent compared to prices in previous months.

Nopal cactus--four small pieces--went up to 50 pesos while "romeritos" went up to 200 pesos per kilogram in the public markets in Naucalpan, Tlalnepantla and Atizapan.

The housewives and other consumers interviewed at random complained that the nopal cactus (four pieces) was priced at 20 pesos and "romeritos" at 50 pesos per kilogram depending on maturity and branch length. There are abundant supplies in the markets of the lower-income developments but they are beyond the reach of the family's income since most of the heads of households are borderline workers.

The merchants invoked the justification that "we buy them this way in La Merced and in Iztapalapa." According to the wholesalers, these prices go up because "the cold has already started."

Stew Meat at 260 Pesos

Mexico City EL DIA in Spanish 'Metropoli' supplement 21 Nov 83 p 9

[Excerpt] Naucalpan, Mex., 20 Nov--A kilo of stew meat with bone--most commonly eaten food--rose to 260 pesos in all the butcher shops of the 34 public markets in the area.

The above was announced by CTM [Confederation of Mexican Workers] leader Eduardo Roman Robles.

He added that just last week it was priced at 200 pesos.

Horse Meat at 300 Pesos

Mexico City EL DIA in Spanish 'Metropoli' supplement 21 Nov 83 p 9

[Text] Ciudad Nezahualcoyotl, Mex., 20 Nov--An average of more than 10,000 kilos of horse meat is sold per day in more than 80 butcher shops in different developments in this municipality. The public is led to believe that it is beef.

Miguel Zepeda Martinez, leader of the Butcher Shops Union of Valle de Mexico, announced this. He indicated that those butcher shops are protected by health inspectors.

Zepeda Martinez said that the owners of those businesses create unfair competition since they tell the public it is beef and sell it at 300 pesos per kilogram, 100 pesos cheaper than real beef.

This representative of butcher shop owners revealed that they have already presented these accusations to the appropriate authorities but they have never been heeded. The illegal butcher shops continue to sell horse meat that comes from clandestine slaughterhouses located in this town and in Iztopalapa.

Further Bread Jumps

Mexico City EL DIA in Spanish 'Metropoli' supplement 22 Nov 83 p 9

[Excerpt] Bakers decreed increases of up to 30 and 40 percent for sweet rolls and bread slices sold in plastic bags because of the increase in gasoline and diesel.

Some types of "wrapped" bread rose from 4 pesos to 6 pesos. Sweet rolls that were sold for 7 and 9 pesos rose to 8 and 10 pesos.

These increases are exorbitant, according to CTM leader Eduardo Roman Robles.

He revealed that there is no reason for the price increase since bread increases were authorized last year. Buns went up from 1 to 2 pesos but are actually sold at 3 and 4 pesos. They raise the price of sweet rolls whenever they want.

Eggs for 120-150 Pesos

Mexico City EL DIA in Spanish 'Metropoli' supplement 23 Nov 83 p 9

[Text] Four union organizations--COR [Revolutionary Labor Confederation], CROM [Mexican Regional Labor Confederation], COCEM [expansion unknown] and FTEM [expansion unknown]--accused the SECOFIN [Secretariat of Commerce and Industrial Development] Delegation in Mexico State of being lukewarm. It has not been able to act firmly concerning the sale of eggs and other basic articles.

Leaders Jesus Alvarado Bonilla, Raul Primitivo Tobon Camacho, Jesus Moreno Jimenez and Jose Luis Moreno Velez explained that the SECOFIN inspectors pamper the large businesses that sell eggs to housewives and consumers in general.

They explained that Article 86 of the decree issued by the federation authorized the price increase for this basic food. Its part "B" indicates that the wholesale price is 89 pesos per kilogram and the wholesale intermediary price is 92 pesos per kilogram. Loose eggs or eggs in paper bags are priced at 99 pesos and selected and packed eggs are priced at 103 pesos. The truth is that "the price of eggs ranges from 120 to 150 pesos" in many developments in the suburbs of Naucalpan, Tlalnepantla, Nezahualcoyotl, Chalco, Atizapan, Coacalco, Ecatepec and other areas in the outskirts.

Inaccurate Weights, Measures

Mexico City EL DIA in Spanish 'Metropoli' supplement 25 Nov 83 p 9

[Text] The markets and market carts that operate in the municipalities of Valle de Mexico apparently have their own system of weights and measures since they always show "kilos" at 700 or 800 grams.

The above was stated by a group of housewives headed by Maria Luna. They demanded that SECOFIN as well as the attorney general's delegation for consumer protection carry out a campaign for "complete weights" so that these merchants will not continue to cheat housewives and consumers in general.

Our informants indicated that kilograms rarely reach 1,000 grams and prices are changed. Also housewives are usually treated abusively.

The housewives complained that price inspectors are perhaps occupied with verifying the scales of large commercial shops and have little time left to visit the carts and markets.

The housewives said that they will be eternally grateful for any measure carried out by the authorities since they painfully and sadly see that their money buys 700 or 800-gram kilos and liters of only 900 milliliters.

Milk at 50 Pesos

Mexico City EL DIA in Spanish 'Metropoli' supplement 28 Nov 83 p 9

[Text] There has been a new increase in the price of milk in the outskirts of the Federal District. The official rate of 38 pesos for milk packaged in cardboard has jumped. It is now being sold at between 45 and 50 pesos per liter.

'Metropoli' toured many stores in different developments and the following is the result of that survey.

"Second-class" milk at 25 to 30 pesos per liter can no longer be purchased even at the barns themselves since "raw" milk costs 35 and 40 pesos at the barn door.

Dairymen as well as merchants in supermarkets, bakeries and grocery stores sell milk at home delivery prices--that is, 40 or 45 pesos.

Grocers in Naucalpan, Tlalnepantla and Atizapan complained that the product has become scarce. When they ask for four crates--20 liters each--only one or two are delivered to them.

The survey showed us that milk is sold at 45 to 50 pesos in residential developments in the NZT zone.

7717

CSO: 3248/384

EMERGENCY ZONE LEADER FORMULATES NEW ANTISUBVERSIVE PLAN

Lima CARETAS in Spanish 23 Jan 84 pp 14-19

[Text] The new political-military chief of the emergency zone, EP [Peruvian Army] Gen Adrian Huaman Centeno, has taken measures since last week that represent a radical change in the direction of antisubversive operations. Emphasizing the need for economic and social solutions before military ones, Huaman has also taken steps to investigate and punish human rights violations, allegedly committed by members of the security forces. In the midst of the explosive response by Sendero and using Attorney General Miguel Caverio Egusquiza as a civilian counterpart, Huaman is trying to carry out a long-term strategy. However, there is still lack of coordination and some opposition.

There are several points on the agenda of the Defense Council for this Monday, the first meeting of the year. First there will be recognition of its new secretary general, EP Gen Jorge Flores Torres. Then the border incident on 15 January with Ecuador will be discussed in detail.

Later there will be a report on the situation of subversion in the areas not included in the emergency zone. The main event will be EP Gen Adrian Huaman Centeno's explanation. Huaman will report on development plans and the new counterinsurgency strategy in the emergency zone.

Huaman is a man of few words. In spite of this which--among other things--makes him avoid the press like the plague, it is already obvious that he is not only trying an important change in strategy but he has been preparing it under the direction of Julia and his command for some time.

Fellow Countrymen Visit

When Attorney General Miguel Caverio Egusquiza spoke for the first time last June of "dialoguing with Sendero" (CARETAS No. 754), this statement was criticized by different sectors and people. This was not so much because of its content but the way and the occasion when it was made: the burial of a murdered district attorney.

However, in the following days there were also those who supported Caverro's initiative for different reasons. The majority of those who visited him in solidarity were interested politicians. However, there was also a visit by an army general who went to the attorney general's office in civilian clothes (CARETAS No. 764). It was EP Gen Adrian Huaman, then chief of the Armored Division.

When CARETAS asked a little later at the Ministry of War about the reason for Huaman's visit to the attorney general, an officer explained that it was because they are both from the same province. Caverro is from San Martin and Huaman is from Apurimac so this was not precisely correct.

Last week, however, several different events finally explained that visit and also showed an appreciable change in the counterinsurgency strategy. First, Huaman signed an unusual joint communique with the senior district attorney of Ayacucho, Jorge Zegarra Dongo, in Ayacucho on Sunday, 15 January. It requested "all those people who, in one way or another, feel that they have had their rights violated or infringed" to send their accusations to the political-military chief and the senior district attorney "so that corrective measures can be taken."

On Monday, 16 January, Huaman went to Lima and visited Caverro Egusquiza twice during the week. On Thursday, after saying goodbye to Huaman, Caverro issued a press communique indicating, among other things, that: "broad facilities" are being "granted" so that judges and district attorneys fulfill their functions without hindrance; investigations of the Uchuraccay massacre have intensified; the military-political command is investigating accusations about "disappeared" persons "case by case"; and the attorney general would go to Ayacucho soon.

Actually the trip and the communique had been agreed on some time earlier. According to what CARETAS could learn, Caverro will go to Ayacucho on Wednesday, 25 January, the day after Huaman who will return on Tuesday.

The program for Caverro's visit includes lunch at the "Cabitos" barracks and a flight to Andahuaylas in Buffalo, if weather permits. In Andahuaylas there are apparently many cases of prisoners with incomplete police records or even without any record. Caverro and Huaman will make arrangements to release several prisoners there. After returning to Huamanga, Caverro would give instructions to Jose de la Rosa, ad-hoc attorney general for cases of terrorism, to present the indictment that accuses the police of the Socos massacre (see CARETAS No. 776 and box). Actually the draft of the indictment has been ready for some time, waiting for the right political occasion to present it in court.

That same day or the next, some of the pending procedures in the general proceedings on the Uchuraccay massacre will be carried out. It is possible that Caverro and Huaman will go to Socos or Uchuraccay if time permits. After taking --and publicizing--all these measures, Caverro would return to Lima on Thursday, 26 January.

New Strategy

Certainly, the measures have a definite political objective. They also have a significance that--in Huaman's case--goes beyond the search for effect and implies the beginning of a new counterinsurgency strategy. Huaman is a friend of Julia, a Quechua-speaking native of Andahuaylas. He is the new facade that the armed forces--particularly the army--presents for the troubled zone.

On Friday, 20 January, Huaman joined the group of Ayacucho people living in Lima who visited the president of the republic between 4 and 6 pm. The delegation of about 30 included Monsignor Richter, all the directors of the Club Departmental Ayacucho, its former presidents and other important people from the department.

The delegation presented the situation of shortages to the president along with a long list of needs--mainly public works, support for agricultural production and technical education. When Belaunde gave the floor to Huaman, the latter indicated that the demands of the Ayacucho people basically coincided with his plan of action.

Belaunde listened perhaps for the first time to EP General Huaman's opinion of the essential aspects of the fight against Sendero subversion. (Huaman had visited Belaunde the day before, Thursday, but did not really have a chance to speak.)

Huaman's message is clear: the political-military chief wants to confront the economic and social problems of the region as an indispensable part of pacification. He also feels it is necessary to first confront and resolve the legal problems.

Change of Pace

This obvious change in the military focus is very different than that of recently relieved EP Gen Clemente Noel. If it implies censure of his strategy, it will probably be tacit. One reason is that Noel merely carried out--with some degree of autonomy--preestablished plans for operations.

However, it is obvious that, with the change of command, the opportunity will be exploited to begin a campaign aimed at winning the sympathy and following of the people.

It is difficult to think, of course, that Huaman--or the army--feels that this position is going to have any effect on the trained Sendero cadres or that it is going to affect the fanatical conviction that makes them see themselves as the "Fourth Sword" of Marxism and the vanguard of the world revolution. This tragic messianism is obviously immune to dialogue.

The intensification of attacks last week in Ayacucho and in Lima indicates that Sendero views this new strategic focus with alarm.

Disappeared

Meanwhile, Huaman himself seems to have chosen--as starting point for those measures--actions to clear up the situation of the alleged disappeared and also alleged atrocities.

That is the reason for the prior ties with the attorney general's office with whom the investigations will be coordinated.

Also a delegation of the International Red Cross--five people headed by Georges Heumann--will be in Huamanga this month. Its main purpose is to visit prisons throughout the country in order to submit confidential reports to the government. Heumann said: "We are discreet in order to be more effective." However, part of its work will unquestionably deal with the conditions of those arrested for alleged terrorism who are being held in prisons and police departments.

Representations

Within the global plan of action that Huaman appears to have designed, Caverro's representation does not necessarily mean anything concrete. It was he who visited Cabitos when he came to Ayacucho to attend the burial of district attorney Allpacca and stated that there were no prisoners there.

Now no one denies that Cabitos has housed several people arrested for alleged terrorism. Many of them were innocent and their imprisonment sometimes became a cause celebre. The case of anthropologist Jaime Urrutia is one example (CARETAS No. 747).

The important thing in relation to Caverro is the political objective of the emergency zone chief and what this will represent in practical terms in the normal relations with the district attorneys in the zone.

What stands out in all the initiatives undertaken by Huaman is the lack of coordination with the Executive Branch. Apparently neither Minister of Interior Luis Percovich nor Belaunde himself knew beforehand of the joint plan of action between Huaman and Caverro. This will certainly provoke more than irritation.

Stanch Wounds

Outside of that--which is not yet very clear--the truth is that the strategy that Huaman has begun to outline can substantially help stanch wounds and change the mode of struggle in Ayacucho.

It can also help explain, for example, the accusations made by Amnesty International--which this magazine published--that have remained unanswered.

The potential complications that this means for Huaman himself are obvious. The first spectacular case could be Socos.

Clean War

The start-up of the new strategy by Huaman unquestionably has something to do with the anniversary of the Uchuraccay massacre. Several of the actions are neutralizing but to reduce them to only that would be an absurd simplification.

The Peruvian armed forces, particularly the army, are closely tied by training to sociopolitical analysis. This is very good. The problems of security in a country like ours have a lot to do with the sociopolitical aspect.

Of course, there can be different lines and schools of thought in this analysis. The carrot and the stick arouse different reactions.

A top ranking naval officer told CARETAS that the new strategy is based not only on the conviction that Noel's orientation had become increasingly harsh, alienating support, but that the setbacks Sendero suffered in Ayacucho and its relative retreat permitted a greater opening, some respite in purely military operations.

What is happening now in Argentina is also a powerful factor in this evaluation. For the Peruvian armed forces--which are closely tied to the Argentine forces--the advantages of fighting a clean war are becoming obvious.

Although this week is filled with the memory of Uchuraccay (see separate note), there is no risk in the investigation. The events there have already been explained and it is only the procedural aspect which suffers from slow judicial administration.

There are other cases--Socos, Infiernillo and several other places--which require investigation and identification of victims and executioners.

If achieved, a good part of the credit will go to an apparent change in policy by General Huaman.

7717

CSO: 3348/255

BILATERAL AIR SERVICES AGREEMENT SIGNED WITH CANADA

Castries THE WEEKEND VOICE in English 7 Jan 84 p 1

[Text] Prime Minister John Compton and visiting Canadian External Affairs Minister Jean Luc Pepin yesterday signed the first bilateral air services agreement between the two countries.

Pepin was here at the start of a three-nation Caribbean tour.

The signing, at La Toc Hotel follows the conclusion of discussions leading up to the agreement last September.

On his arrival here on Thursday Pepin said: "The agreement with St. Lucia is just another indication of Canada's concern for the development of tourism and other areas of St. Lucia's economy.

He said that under the air agreement the St. Lucia Government has employed the Trinidad and Tobago national carrier BWIA to operate a direct service out of Toronto.

He said that at any future date with the agreement St. Lucia can operate the route using its own airline. The air service is to start later this month.

The Canadian Minister said he will also take the opportunity to hold multi-lateral and bi-lateral talks on matters related to trade and political relations.

Speaking at yesterday's signing ceremony Pepin outlined areas in which Canadian assistance to St. Lucia had been given over the years. These included, water, education, airport development, agriculture, and management assistance.

Prime Minister Compton said that by entering into the agreement, Canada had again led the way and shown to Caribbean Governments that the designation of BWIA would be accepted if the Governments so desire.

He added: "For several years now, before and since independence, both St. Lucia and Antigua have been advancing the case of having BWIA provide a service between St. Lucia, Antigua and London."

"But our pleas have met with a wall of stiff resistance from the British Government in its apparent determination to protect the monopolistic position of British Airways in the Eastern Caribbean.

"This attitude is most unfortunate and can be misconstrued as a determination to take advantage of a colonial situation in a post-colonial era."

CSO: 3298/423

WATER AUTHORITY-UNION DISPUTE ERUPTS IN 'UGLY INCIDENTS'

Castries THE WEEKEND VOICE in English 7 Jan 84 p 2

[Text] **THE** recent dispute between the Central Water Authority [CWA] and the National Workers Union [NWU] has produced some very ugly incidents which have marred the whole concept of industrial relations practices in St. Lucia. The dispute arose over the failure of the two parties to agree on a wage increase structure for the Authority's employees during negotiation of a new collective agreement. Last month, when it became apparent that the two sides were far from reaching an agreement, a number of incidents of tampering of pipelines were reported by the CWA resulting in interruptions in the water supplies in several parts of Castries. And during the New Year weekend, when

consumers thought that all was back to normal, a new wave of vandalism was unleashed causing further cuts in water supplies.

Who is responsible? Was the damage done by disgruntled employees? The NWU this week released a statement clearing its members of any blame.

"We can in no way link our members with the incidents discovered at Morne Serpent, La Toc and Reduit Park on December 14 and 24, 1983 which resulted in the cutting off of water supplies to Bishop's Gap, Cedars, the Morne, Marchand, Entrepot, Ravine Chabot and Reduit Park," the Union said.

But the most recent case of sabotage, last weekend involved the Talvern Hill 20

pipe network. According to a CWA spokesman, PVC piping in the area was brutally damaged with boulders.

Even the iron cast pipelines did not escape damage as they were apparently continually banged with stones which partially damaged the heads of air valves.

In other areas, supports were knocked away from under lines which subsequently sagged or broke and fell into the gullies.

CWA officials say that the damage is costing the company money to repeatedly repair pipelines some of which were previously vandalized.

In the Hill 20 region lines were damaged and repaired on Sunday and Monday respectively only to be damaged again on Tuesday.

OPPOSITION LEADER MITCHELL PESSIMISTIC ON ECONOMY

Georgetown GUYANA CHRONICLE in English 28 Dec 83 pp 1, 5

[Text] Kingstown, St. Vincent (AP)--James Mitchell, leader of the opposition of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, said Tuesday the country is facing the Christmas season with its main economic activities in the doldrums.

In what could be viewed as a reply to Prime Minister Milton Cato's broadcast Christmas message the day before, Mitchell said those who sit by and allow the country to rot in the interest of a select clique will one day pay the heavy penalty for indifference.

Cato, in his holiday message, predicted that economic figures for 1983 will reveal that a four per cent growth rate was achieved during the year. The Prime Minister said St. Vincent and the Grenadines is benefiting from economic recovery in the world's industrialised countries.

Mitchell, in his statement, noted that tons of the island's bananas remain unsold because of a glut on the United Kingdom market.

Further, the opposition leader said, the arrowroot industry is saddled with debts and excess stocks of arrowroot starch from last year's crop, while an "already unimaginative" tourist industry confronts a slump caused by what he called the "Grenada syndrome."

Mitchell's statement said that the greed of a few, at the cost of anguish to the many, was a recipe for disaster, and caused hatred and frustration that could create the circumstances for riot, rebellion or revolution.

The alternative was simple, Mitchell added.

"It is not too much for each of us to demand that our country be run fairly," he said.

Mitchell said that the Caribbean loves its cycles of boom and bust but he warned that if there was going to be a single boom again, the region must do some serious thinking, planning and re-evaluation.

CSO: 3298/455

CHAMBERS' REMARKS TO PARLIAMENT IN DEBATE ON BUDGET

Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 27, 28, 30, 31 Jan, 1 Feb 84

[27 Jan 84 p 9]

[Excerpts] The GUARDIAN today begins a five-part series on the winding up of the 1984 Budget Speech in the House of Representatives by Prime Minister George Chambers. It continues tomorrow.

Mr Speaker, it is 12:17 a.m. and I do not propose to get into the sharp differences which have arisen between both sides during this debate.

I think my colleagues, both at the front and back have adequately represented Government's position in this debate and I merely want to make a few observations.

Mr Speaker, of course you were not in the Chair when this unfortunate incident occurred, but according to my notes a member opposite in this debate stated that TRINIDAD GUARDIAN was able to predict and publish the 1984 Recurrent Estimates five days before the budget and he went on to say that the Editor of the newspaper is my brother-in-law.

I am shocked--I repeat that you were not in the chair--I am shocked that the imputation of irresponsibility on my part and dereliction of duty on my part, which are obviously implied by that comment was allowed to pass in this chamber without that member, I will not identify that member, I wish to quarrel with nobody--but Mr Speaker, if a member says that the GUARDIAN was able to publish the Recurrent Estimates five days... (Interruption) in a short while I shall let you have your say--five days before the budget was delivered and that my brother-in-law is the Editor of the GUARDIAN, that is not only imputing improper motives to me, it calls into question my honest and my fitness to hold the office of the Prime Minister elected by the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

To make a statement like that and to go on the suggest that the GUARDIAN and the EXPRESS supported me and the budget, is not only to be guilty of gross impropriety insofar as the Standing Orders are concerned, but is to display a total lack of appreciation of what is going on in the country.

To say the GUARDIAN and the EXPRESS are supporters of mine, George Chambers, is the joke of the century.

Mr Speaker, I think it is in very bad taste and I do not wish to say anymore about it. I have made my point. Leave it there.

[28 Jan 84 p 9]

[Excerpts] To make bad matters even worse there was an attack on the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, Mr Barsotti... (Interruption) excuse me, please, may I have some quiet?

Mr Speaker: I am raising to ask for order in the House please.

Hon. Chambers: I would like to say something. I have worked with Mr Barsotti for many years. In England whoever holds the post that Mr Barsotti holds would be the head of the Public Service there.

I know of very few public servants in this country who have discharged their responsibilities with the impartiality, objectivity and selflessness of Mr Frank Barsotti.

If anybody, on either side of the House, wishes to exercise his fundamental right as a citizen to complain against Mr Barsotti's behaviour on any matter he or she is free to write to the Public Service Commission.

The Public Service Commission will deal with it and in due course publish its findings. I do not believe we are doing ourselves any good to continue to drag the names of people into our debates in the House who are totally incapable of defending themselves. (Interruptions)

Morons

Dr Hosein: He said this side had political morons.

Hon. Chambers: I repeat, Mr Speaker, if anybody wishes to make a formal complaint against Mr Barsotti, under the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago any citizen can do that, the procedure for doing that is to make out a case to the Public Service Commission and they will deal with Mr Barsotti.

For myself, I merely wish to put into record my absolute confidence in that hardworking public servant.

I wanted to ask my friend from Couva South one or two questions.

In the first place, if I might respectfully suggest, with the greatest respect I think the Hon. Member from Couva South is capable of making a tremendous contribution to the deliberations of this House and I would respectfully suggest to him that he might wish to mellow his tendency for personal and bitter attacks and concentrate on some of the issues that we discuss here.

Contribution

I always listen to him and he is capable of making a serious contribution. Unfortunately, it is always engulfed and the value is invariably lost when he embarks on some of these bitter attacks.

There are one or two things that I wanted to ask him more particularly with respect to his contribution on oil. If I am wrong I suppose he can intervene and tell me so.

I think it is a fair conclusion to draw from his comments that he--and I do not know if it is his party's position--was advocating the purchase of Texaco's operation? He has not responded so therefore I take it that...

Mr K. Ramnath: Do not be unfair.

Hon. G. Chambers: I was asking, whether or not a fair conclusion to draw from your comments would be that subject to proper marketing arrangements, either you or your party or both suggested or came towards suggesting the purchase of Texaco's operation?

It was not clear and I am just asking that if you would clarify that for me.

Mr K. Ramnath: Mr Speaker, I hope that this request is made in the greatest sincerity and honesty.

Mr Speaker: Order please. It is the second time that the Prime Minister directed this to you.

Mr K. Ramnath: I hope what he is asking is not an attempt to embarrass me. What I said in the debate....

Hon. G. Chambers: If you think saying it will embarrass you and you prefer to tell me privately it is all right. Nothing that I am asking you here is intended to embarrass you.

Clarification

I am trying to interpret because your contribution was very cleverly phrased and I took notes and I followed it very very closely and on that basis I seek some clarification from you. You may be assured that I have no intention of embarrassing you.

Mr K. Ramnath: Well, I do not think at this stage I would be prepared to answer direct questions on any matter that I have raised and if the Prime Minister would want I would be prepared to discuss it with him or with one of his representatives at some later stage.

Mr Speaker: Quite understandably.

Hon. G. Chambers: I appreciate that Mr. Speaker, and even if I do not approach the Member myself I am sure he will be approached to advise us on his thinking on the matter.

If I might chide him a little, however, I have a note here saying he said August 8, reversed the mandate of November 9, I have heard this said on the other side on a number of occasions--I may be wrong because my information is gleaned from the daily newspapers and therefore I might be wrong.

But as I understand the position there was a local Government elections on August 8--that is what I understand--and on the basis of the results of that election no single party in Trinidad and Tobago polled more votes than the PNM.

So that when people speak of defeat, defeat by whom? I do not know. We have to be careful you see. I wish to say no more for the time being.

But on that basis, which has been unchallenged, and that remains a fact, no single party in the country polled more votes than the PNM. I would leave that there.

I want to just make a comment on the contribution of my distinguished friend because I recognise that he speaks with a certain sincerity and with a certain feeling.

As my colleague from Diego Martin West has said, I understand where his basic sympathies lie and I have understood that for a very long time.

But I want to tell him that I have been very impressed by what he said concerning housing and the extent to which he has been able to mobilise 250 people.

Difficulties

One of the difficulties--and I wish him, of course, every success in his discussions with the Minister of Housing and Resettlement with whom, in my discussion with him over the last several months, I have been drawing his attention to the fact that--not only as a consequence of the financial situation in the country but more importantly, the cost of doing what we are doing....

We are obviously going to have to move towards more land distribution and some sort of assistance to people rather than putting them in houses.

But there are some things to which I want to ask you to address your minds. I heard you say your view was that the way to solve the housing situation was to encourage people to start from what is manageable--a little room 12 x 12, or something like that of board....

Mr J. Humphrey: I said affordable.

Mr Chambers: I listened and, as I say, I wish you very, very well.

[30 Jan 84 p 9]

[Excerpts] One of the difficulties you are going to encounter and one of the difficulties about housing generally that you are going to have to face up to in this country is expectations.

It has nothing to do with affording. What is happening in Trinidad and Tobago and my friends at TTT have drawn this to the attention of the national community over and over, is not a question of what is affordable.

Mr Humphrey: Mr Speaker, what I described was on the basis of what I have witnessed in fact. What I have witnessed is that people start with a little board house--what could be aptly described as a shack--and then gradually through their own efforts they improve into a high permanent house of very good quality, but it takes time and a great deal of effort.

The expectations are certainly there. We would not be human beings if we did not have great expectations.

But the thing I have witnessed and this is what we should invest our resources in is that while the great expectations are there, the recognition to achieve those expectations requires hard work on the part of those involved.

The Start

That is what I am trying to do. Just give them the start and stay around to help them organise in their cooperative and let them by their own efforts achieve their great expectations and therefore, not put a burden that the State cannot possibly support.

Hon. Chambers: What I can tell you is that if there is widespread acceptances of going into a board house, starting with a room 12 by 12, we will have no problem in Trinidad and Tobago.

We could solve it in six months. We shall see. I shall follow your development with interest. I caution you--not that I do not wish you to succeed, and I am sure that you will get a good audience from the Minister--about expectations and one of the things that we hope to achieve by adjustment is moderation in expectation.

My friend from Diego Martin Central whose comments caused such a furour just now. He is not have but I take note of the comments he made questioning the impartiality of State-owned TTT and I gathered that he singled out the Review of the Year 1983 and the 1984 Budget for the particular comment. I have sent for the Hansard and this is what he said:

"I am going to say quite clearly that as long as this Government or the PNM is in power there would be no interference with the freedom of the Press."

That is what is in the Hansard. This is in the Hansard which has not yet been corrected and this is what he said (Interruption) But this is what I am reading.

"I am going to say quite clearly that as long as this Government or the PNM is in power there would be no interference with the freedom of the Press."

I do now know that we need to make too much heavy weather of that. Firstly, Mr Laquis does not speak for the Government. He speaks for a constituency and he is entitled to express a view like anybody else.

It is a matter for Government and I think that insofar as the Government is concerned, there is no question about the continued freedom of the Press.

It is entrenched in the constitution and I do not even think that we have the majority to do anything about it.

A Banker

As I call the name TTT and I look at the Hansard here, that budget I quoted from when I was making references to your comment, was presented on Monday, January 21, 1974.

I would not identify the reporter but speaking to a banker before the end of the year, a reporter from TTT is asking a banker if he could tell him why the budget is so late. It is the latest budget ever presented in Trinidad.

The 1974 budget was presented on January 21, 1974. That is almost as bad as the newspaper's comment that in the history of PNM's 25 years we have never lost Local Government elections. I do not have the foggiest idea where these people do their research.

Mr N. Mohammed: Was the banker any relation to the Prime Minister?

Hon. Chambers: No, Sir, not that banker.

Mr Panday: Mr Prime Minister, would you not agree that TTT acted very unfairly in this budget as far as making both sides' views to be heard? And if the Speaker was responsible for that then he acted irresponsibly, too?

Hon. Chambers: You have put me on the horns of a dilemma, because to answer that I may have to challenge the Speaker and the Speaker gave his ruling and I cannot do anything about that.

Mr N. Mohammed: On that point the Leader of the Opposition has raised, is it possible at all--I am asking through you, Sir--for the Prime Minister to meet with the Leader of the Opposition to discuss that particular problem, that is, the use of the media in broadcasting, televising proceedings in Parliament with a view to being impartial?

[31 Jan 84 p 9]

[Excerpts] I am always happy to meet the Leader of the Opposition. There is no difficulty in communication between the Leader of the Opposition and myself. There is no problem there, we could talk about it.

In the final analysis, it is not a question of the impartiality of TTT or 610 Radio or Radio Trinidad. In the final analysis the whole Third World has been moving to a concept of a new international information order.

This is not something new to Trinidad and Tobago. I listen to the news on the radio stations. I recalled on the eve of my departure for New Delhi a Radio Trinidad news bulletin, as the lead story, said there was an emergency Cabinet meeting to decide who will act for me.

Good Heavens: Anybody who understands the Constitution or any part of it under which we live will understand that the Cabinet has nothing to do with the appointment of somebody to act for the Prime Minister. What does the Cabinet have to do with that?

Radio Stations

I made a jocular comment about it and I understand that in my absence I was under severe attack for threatening the freedom of the Press.

I was not here and as usual I do not take these things on. There are too many instances, and it is a fact, of the newspapers and the radio stations giving out for general consumption information that is absolutely improperly researched, badly presented and wholly inaccurate sometimes.

Mr Speaker, there are two comments I want to make. One deals with a statement by the Member for Chaguanas to whom I want to respond but who is unavoidably absent.

He spoke about the militarisation of Third World countries in the context of Governments of the Third World being unable to satisfy the aspirations of their young population.

I do not know I agree with the comment. What I should like to draw to the attention of the Hon. Member is a comment made within the last four or five days, at most a week, by a former British Prime Minister no less, talking about the whole question of growing militarism in the Third World.

His comment was that the International Monetary Fund, which incidentally is a United Nations institution, and the basis of the United Nations is peace and development.

He was saying on the basis of present conditionality the IMF was forcing a number of democratic countries to be overthrown by virtue of the harsh measures it was imposing on developing Third World countries.

I am not suggesting that I endorse that view. I merely state that it is a view. I state it only to underline the importance of the role which little Trinidad and Tobago will have to play in this whole question of the new international economic order.

When a former British Prime Minister can make a statement like that, it suggests that there is some breakthrough in the dialogue. We have been talking for so long; it suggests that at least we are beginning to get through.

That is to say, the developing world, that the terms and conditions under which some of these agencies are operating are now inequitable, that too many countries have come on the scene since the Brettonwood system was established.

As I said in the Budget speech, the industrialised and developed countries are simply going to have to face the fact that there are so many countries in the world which wish to have a decisive part in the decision making process, relating to the trade and payment system governing international affairs.

[1 Feb 84 p 9]

[Text] I wish to make one final comment. It would be difficult for me to end my short reply without making some reference to Tobago.

Several Members have raised the question of Tobago in the course of this debate, some more constructively than others but the fact is that it has been raised.

Among the things said was that I ignored the recommendations of the National Economic Planning Commission. I have done no such thing.

The terms of reference of the National Economic Planning Commission are clearly identified in the Cabinet decision and in the letters addressed to each Member of the Commission.

I wish to say nothing to give the impression that I want to do anything to prevent any Member of the Commission from introducing matters for discussion by the National Economic Planning Commission.

The fact of the matter remains that the Commission has nothing to do with the estimates as such so that the Commission cannot properly consider a note from the Tobago House of Assembly on its requests for 1984 provisions.

I did nothing to prevent the matter from being aired and discussed.

Task Force

What the Commission did with the document entitled "The Imperatives of a Twin Island Economy" is that they took a unanimous decision that the document merited specific comment from the Task Force.

The National Economic Planning Commission is an ongoing body. It does not have to do something today to answer tomorrow. I think the chairman of the Task Force has already been contacted by the secretary/member of the Commission and the Commission will meet in due course and forward its report.

I believe on the question of Tobago a lot more care ought to be exercised in the choice of language because it is very easy to get you so offended by something I say, which I could never take back, and similarly it is easy enough to get me offended by something you say.

I think we have to deal with this matter at a level of maturity that to date does not seem to be appreciated. I do not wish to get involved in any argument about it.

I would say, however, that there is a growing perception, and this is regrettable, in the minds of a substantial number of people both in Trinidad and in Tobago--and I want to choose my words meticulously--that the population of Tobago resident in Tobago is being manipulated in the pursuit of political objectives inimical to the interests of the people of Tobago and the unitary state.

That is a perception; I am not expressing a view. I want to caution that we exercise some maturity in dealing with this matter because there is
/Interruption/ I am not quarreling with anybody.

I am just telling you what is a perception in the minds of many people.
/Interruption/ Nothing is wrong with a diplomatic quarrel.

We must make sure that we keep it diplomatic and in keeping it diplomatic neither the unitary state of Trinidad and Tobago nor the people of Tobago suffer as a consequence.

You see, I do not know what the perception of others might be. As far as I know, the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago, makes for a unitary state, and as an elected Prime Minister my first responsibility is to uphold the Constitution.

I do not have any choice on that matter. I believe what we need to do is understand--I do not want to go into the details as Minister Jacelon did.

Indeed Minister Jacelon openly confessed that the lady was in love with him, and I have heard no denial of that.

Miss Nicholson: Mr Speaker, through you, the first thing I want to state is that this matter is a very serious matter and the jokes surrounding it, I do not enjoy them. In the last few days since I am here I have gotten the impression that the Tobago matter is a matter of mockery for the other side, and I want the Prime Minister to recognize that.

I got the impression, too, very clearly, especially when I heard the contribution of the Member for Port-of-Spain South--with complementary remarks from others who were really encouraging him--that Tobago is a colony of Trinidad.

I think that this is a fundamental issue. I should like the Prime Minister and his side to recognise that Tobago is not a colony when it was referred to as the Isle of Man.

Hon. Chambers rose.

Miss Nicholson: Sir, when I am finished. And the Falkland Islands. I feel strongly about those issues because I am taking the matter of Tobago very seriously.

The next point I want to raise is that.../Interruption/

Hon. G. Chambers: I recognise that the Member is serious and would like to assure her that in the cut and thrust, as my friend here likes to say, of Parliamentary debate, some people laugh here and some laugh there depending on who says what.

Nobody is taking Tobago for a mockery, nor treating it with mockery, but we must be careful that we do not give the impression to the national community

that not withstanding what you do that there are certain elements in Tobago who are not prepared to be appeased.

I think if we convey that impression to the national community it would be a bad signal and I would like to appeal for maturity in approach and care in expression of views.

I do not want to take that any further, except to assure both Members for Tobago that nobody is treating or is prepared to treat Tobago less than serious.

I want to give them that assurance but I want to repeat that we must not so behave that people perceive that some people are not prepared to be appeased no matter what you do.

I think the Hon. Member for Tabaguite drew attention to the fact that this matter is before the Courts; the independence of which he and I are committed to uphold.

Notwithstanding the arguments of the Parliament, notwithstanding the fact that sometimes people are short tempered, I am satisfied on the basis of what I know and on the basis of what I see that on both sides of the House we argue, but I am satisfied that on both sides of the House we all wish to see this country move forward.

I trust I would be able to rely on my Hon. friend from Couva North to join me in repeating my preparation of the Budget, that we demonstrate a resolve to unite to solve the problems of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, not for our sakes, but for theirs and their children. Thank you, Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

CSO: 3298/457

DEBATE OVER, OBJECTIONS TO PROPOSED BUDGET CONTINUE

Local Government Funding

Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 17 Jan 84 p 12

[Text] Councillor Latchman Seecharan, chairman of the Victoria County Council described as "most regrettable and wicked," announcement by the Government that Local Government would receive a total sum of \$293.2m for 1984.

He said that if that sum were divided equally between the seven County Councils, each would receive \$41.8m and since in 1983 Victoria County Council spent \$40m in recurrent expenses alone, it meant that the remaining \$1.8m would be allocated for increases in wages, salaries and increased costs for transport, materialism and office supplies, etc.

Extreme Hardships

The result, he said, would be "absolutely nothing for developing work."

Such a situation Mr Seecharan said was "decidedly wicked for it means that thousands of casual workers who depend upon a little five days and a little 10 days, would be denied the opportunity to get work and would face extreme hardships not only for themselves but their families as well.

He said it was "appalling that the people now had to pay for the mismanagement and wastage of taxpayers' money by the Government."

Panday on COL Increase

Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 18 Jan 84 p 1

[Article by Norris Solomon]

[Text] The cost of living will rise by more than 50 percent because of the measures contained in the 1984 Budget, according to Opposition Leader Basdeo Panday.

Leading off the debate on the 1984 Budget yesterday in the House of Representatives, Mr Panday (Couva North), spoke for more than two hours. He said every item was going to rise in cost and those who felt that it was not a "hard budget" had not read the Budget.

In wideranging comments, he described the Budget as open-ended, "a con job" and said that it hid the extent and range in price increases.

"It is more dangerous for what it does not say," Mr Panday said.

The Opposition Leader speaking apparently with the backing of studies done by search officers of the Opposition Leader's Office, said that foodstuff will rise by about 13 percent, household services by about ten percent, clothing by about six percent. He noted that with increased prices for petroleum there would be rises in the cost of transportation for person and goods.

Mr Panday felt that Government had not paid attention to the agricultural sector and said that an Alliance government would have introduced agricultural insurance. In addition, he felt that what was needed was an entire new system of marketing.

"We would have established farming communities with all facilities including schools, water and electricity in efforts to stop the urban drift," he said.

Mr Panday said that a caring government would have used the oil windfall over the years to develop agriculture and ensure a downstream in agro industries... "that is what an Alliance government would have done," he said.

Bankrupt in Ideas

Reiterating his calls for a change in the system, Mr Panday said that the "PNM oligarchy was bankrupt in ideas," The country, he said, was too small for its intellectual manpower to be divided into two opposing halves.

Drawing attention to Opposition efforts for pre-Budget discussions with Government, he said the Government had thrown away another golden opportunity.

Commenting on statements in the Budget, Mr Panday said the people were not concerned with the militarisation of space, but more with the PNM militarisation of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Opposition Leader charged too that there were contradictions in the Budget Speech and he felt that the problems of Trinidad and Tobago were due to the failure of Government to restructure the economy and to deal with corruption, inefficiency and maladministration.

The Budget, he said, must become an instrument to reemphasise and revise a long-term development project and to ensure that projects were completely within the fiscal year.

Mr Panday said that the standard of living must be measured by the standard of living of the people.

In order for agriculture to be successful, it must be linked with fishing, he said, and after explaining some of the plans the Alliance would have put into effect, he said that no new ideas were forthcoming in the Budget.

'Unkindest Cut'

Referring to proposed energy-based industries as the LNG plant, he said if it was economically feasible then the PNM oligarchy must not be there.

The Budget, he said, would result in a substantial increase in the cost of living by about \$3.2 percent. He could not see the reason for increase in price for wash grey sugar while granulated remained the same.

Mr Panday also said that Tobago seemed to be dealt the "unkindest cut of all." He felt that the increased travel cost would invite charges of vindictiveness.

The Opposition Leader described the Budget as "confused," saying that it was not part of an overall plan to develop, it was simply a method of raising money to keep the PNM in power for another year.

The Budget, he said, was merely a money grabbing exercise, but was directed against the poor and middle class people. "It will hit people on fixed income and the producers and merchants will merely pass on the taxes to the man," he declared.

He claimed too that an Alliance government would have solved the housing problem in less than ten years by putting the accent on building land.

Mr Panday called on Government to leave the people and their videos alone and claimed that the video was a powerful instrument of educational learning.

Referring to wages, he said that if Government was going to introduce a wage freeze, then the disparity must be looked into.

Impact on Prices

Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 23 Jan 84 p 18

[Article by Heather Roberts]

[Text] Fiscal measures in the 1984 Budget have begun to affect the pockets of citizens. In a survey of supermarkets, it was found that a number of food items and alcoholic beverages have registered increases in prices. For example the price of a sandwich loaf has gone up from \$2.40 to \$2.75, an increase of 35 cents or 15 percent.

Scotch whisky shows the highest increase--46 percent. Nevertheless, some supermarkets claimed that certain prices had not been increased because they had not bought new stocks.

According to Merchandising Director of Hi Lo Supermarket, Mrs Margaret Lopez: "Perhaps by the next four to six weeks the new prices will fall into place." She added that it was too early to define customer behaviour in relation to the new prices.

Buying Slump

"There is usually a slump in buying after the Christmas season," she added.

But the price of chicken at Hi Lo went up from \$5.71 per kilo to \$6.00 and the price of local beer went up by \$7 per case.

Mrs Lopez expects increased prices for whisky and cereals when fresh stocks are received.

Allum's Supermark in Carlton Centre, San Fernando, has not embarked upon any wide-scale price increases because new stocks had not yet been bought.

The director, Mr Sinanan Persad, said when stocks were replenished the prices should go up.

He added: "The price of bread has increased and chicken too. Sugar has gone up but scotch whisky has remained the same. We want to be fair with our customers so we shall wait for our new stocks to raise our prices."

Mr Persad noted that January was always a slow month for sales and consumer reaction to the Budget could not yet be judged.

Mr Leslie Aqui, Managing Director of Tru Valu Supermarket, St James, said that the increase taxes levied on certain items and the lessening of subsidies on oil, would eventually lead to increases in the prices of foodstuffs.

Mr Aqui said: "Like everything else, food prices must go up."

Disincentive to Agriculture

Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 25 Jan 84 p 1

[Article by Jeff Hackett]

[Text] Independent Senator George Bovell yesterday described the 1984 Budget as "punitive to the agricultural sector" and seemingly a "disincentive to agriculture."

Mr Bovell, a turfite and agriculturist, in a lengthy contribution, which he read from a thick prepared text dealing with all aspects of agriculture (with the racing industry thrown in for good measure), noted that Prime Minister George Chambers, in his budget presentation, spent a mere three minutes on agriculture.

He added:

"This surely must be in reverse proportion of the role that agriculture must play in our future. For certainly, with falling revenue from oil and the difficulty the country is facing in developing export industries, the only real hope for increased employment and the reduction in our adverse balance of payments will be the increase of all agricultural production, with the

emphasis placed on local food production to reduce the food bill now fast approaching one billion dollars."

The Senator further stated that "this budget certainly appears to be a disincentive to agriculture and can only be described as punitive to the agricultural sector."

Senator Bovell lamented the situation in the various areas of food production, providing the Senate with detailed as well as comparative statistics, pointing out that production had dropped to 25 percent of what it used to be.

Punitive Tax

"As a farmer and businessman, Mr President," Senator Bovell said, "I do not blame but sympathise with the local companies, but also as a Trinidadian farmer I cry and ask, 'how have the mighty fallen?' Really, is there nothing that we can grow for ourselves?"

He was particularly unhappy about Government's decision to raise land tax from 24 cents to acre to \$20 an acre. [as published]

He pointed out that this "punitive land tax" has "every section of the farming community astounded, dismayed and angry."

Senator Bovell added:

"The increase from 24 cents per acre, which admittedly was too low, to \$20 per acre is an increase of 8,233.33 percent and in no way can be justified."

The Senator said that "the small to medium cocoa-coffee farmer with approximately 60 acres of land" who would net probably \$5,000 annually will have to pay \$1,200 of this in land tax at a time when all costs were going to rise.

He felt that the result would be "more land abandoned, more people out of work."

The small rice grower, with 50 to 100 acres of swamp land who can only use five acres that is suitable for growing rice, would also be in a quandary.

"Where is he going to find the money to pay the land tax? He can't even sell the land because no one will want to buy swamp."

He further noted that the large land owner with 2,000 acres would be required to pay \$40,000 in land tax alone "after having had to face the budget increases."

Senator Bovell urged Government "to re-think this tax increase for I am sure they have not seriously considered the effect it will have on all farmers, large and small but most gravely on the small to medium farmers."

[Text]

THE GOVERNMENT endorses the objective of diversifying the structure of production in the country in such a way as to create a broadly-based capacity to produce competitively and to respond to the challenge of change in the market-place, Senator Anthony Jacelon told the Senate on Monday.

He was launching the debate on the 1984 Budget in the Senate, in his capacity as Minister in the Ministry of Finance.

Endorsing such an objective, Senator Jacelon said the starting point in reducing the dependence on oil must be to exploit those resources in abundant supply.

"The commercialisation of our reserves of natural gas is a key element in any such strategy," he declared.

The Minister said this was consistent with the Government's past policies. Every opportunity would be taken to pursue this course where commercially viable.

MARKETING

Similarly, said Senator Jacelon, the Government had clearly stated its intention to turn agricultural resources towards the production of livestock and food crops, and to de-emphasise export crops "in which we have lost international competitiveness."

The public sector investment programme, he explained, included the provision of funds for expanding and improving the infrastructure of access roads, water control facilities, marketing, credit, etc.,

needed to stimulate agricultural production.

In respect of light manufacturing, he said Government was reviewing the incentives provided under Section 49A of the Customs Ordinance and elsewhere.

Senator Jacelon recalled that the 1983 Budget speech included a clear statement of the Government's policy with regard to the development of tourism and the export of services in general on proposals adopted with respect to the other strategies.

The Minister specifically pointed to the second strategy which dealt with the issue of achieving a sustainable fiscal and balance of payments position.

Senator Jacelon saw the 1984 Budget as "a bridge between the boom years and the measured drive for structural reform in the economy."

If the economy was allowed to fall into imbalance because of unrestrained growth of consumption at a time of falling real income, it would become well nigh impossible to address the fundamental issue of structural reform in the years ahead, he said.

"It is in this sense that the short-term

policy objectives and the specific measures in the 1984 Budget are an integral part of and, indeed, an essential pre-condition for pursuing the objectives of economic policy in the medium-term as endorsed by the National Economic Planning Commission," he said.

Earlier in his contribution, Senator Jacelon dealt extensively with the recommendations contained in the report of the Demas Task Force, covering the various sectors, including unemployment and reforming the Public Service and other areas of the public sector.

REFORMS

He said it was the view of the Demas Task Force that there was urgent need for meaningful reforms in the Public Service and in other branches of the public sector.

This should involve a managerial approach which clearly identified objectives and evaluated on a regular basis the extent to which these objectives were achieved.

With specific regard to the Public Service, he said it was recommended that the responsibilities of all personnel be clearly defined on the basis of precise and detailed job descriptions.

It was also felt that there should be greater delegation of authority

including an increase in the disciplinary power of Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Departments.

In the case of the public utilities and State enterprises, it was recommended that the Government should concentrate on the formulation of broad policy guidelines. An in-depth review and analysis of the management structures of the utilities was also proposed, bearing in mind the basic objective of achieving financial self-sufficiency in the shortest possible time.

Similarly, the managerial and commercial capability of the State enterprises must be strengthened and their dependence on financial support from the Treasury reduced.

The critical importance of in-house training programmes in all segments of the public sector was also emphasised, he told the Senate.

Senator Jacelon said that the Budget provided for expenditure under 38 heads in a total sum of just over \$9.2 billion. But he pointed out that this amount did not include the sum of \$159.8 million which was a direct charge on the Consolidated Fund in accordance with the Constitution, and as such, was excluded from the Appropriation Bill.

TOBAGO LEADERS MAINTAIN FOCUS ON BUDGET INEQUITIES

Attack by MP Ogiste

Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 19 Jan 84 p 3

[Text] Tobago must get its equal share in the distribution of the wealth of Trinidad and Tobago, said Opposition parliamentarian James Ogiste, Member for Tobago East, as he pointed out over a period of 20 years Tobago received less than two percent of "what has been placed in this nation to develop this nation."

Speaking at the 1984 Budget debate, Mr Ogiste pleaded the cause of Tobago noting that there seemed to be a "consistent, willful disregard for the people of Tobago" by Trinidad, characterised in the Budget by the increased air and sea fares to the sister isle.

"For too long Tobagonians have been left to walk the back roads," said Mr Ogiste, "for too long Tobagonians have been left to take the handouts from what is left over from Trinidad...whatever direction is imposed upon Tobagonians, whatever direction they take in subsequent years, it is an imperative decision based on the actions of the Trinidad Government and those who are in power."

No Other Choice

"They have no other choice. No serious attempt has been made to develop Tobago. All they have been doing is talk, talk, talk. No serious attempt has been made to really bridge the gap between Trinidad and Tobago."

Mr Ogiste told Parliament that there was not even a recreational ground in Tobago; a ministadium which was supported to be built was never really started. There was no place for the House of Assembly to sit, he said, and they had to use the Court House when it was not in use. "Charity begins at home and ends abroad," he said.

According to Mr Ogiste, the people of Tobago have been harshly treated in the Budget "and they are expecting at least that the Minister of Finance would roll back that air fare and boat fare because they feel it is an unjust move against them. It is a deprivation of the existing economic base that they have."

There is always a traffic coming to Trinidad, he said, because everything is in Trinidad.

The boat represents food, he said: it is transportation, communication because sometimes the telephones do not work. The airline is communication too, he said, when trying to get in contact with someone without a telephone.

"They (the government) are not looking at the essential services in terms of moving back and forth," he said; they are looking at it in terms of one function, but there are multiple functions to the people of Tobago."

Trinidadians do not have to travel to Tobago, he said. Mail, steel, cement, windows, doors, come from Trinidad.

"Already the individuals are experiencing at least 30 to 50 percent cost over the materials in Trinidad, and when you add the gas, the increased boat cost, increased transportation cost, building materials go up, what you are telling the Tobagonians is to build at 200 percent above the cost in Trinidad."

On the tourist trade from Trinidad to Tobago, Mr Ogiste said that the people have expressed their disgust at the hike and are saying plainly that they cannot go to Tobago.

Quoting figures on the expenditure of Trinidad and Tobago from the Review of Fiscal Measures in the 1982 Budget, Mr Ogiste showed that from 1972 to 1982 the actual expenditure was \$10,336.2 million of which Tobago got \$56 million.

"Where is the equity here?" he asked, noting that at the time there was an improper structure of government in Tobago, but today there is the THA which could "utilise the funds in a proper manner so that the residents of Tobago could benefit from the national wealth and make a contribution."

Mr Ogiste referred to the World Bank Report which said that the present economy in Trinidad and Tobago is designed for consumption and not production.

"If this country is to become more productive, it has to look at Tobago for an example. It would make millions out of hundreds and billions out of thousands."

Complaints of Investors

Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 24 Jan 84p 12

[Text] Concerned investors of Tobago said yesterday that the 1984 Budget spelled economic doom for the sister isle. They are calling on Government to review the fiscal measures announced relating to Tobago.

The group, headed by the President Vincent Taylor of the Tobago Small Business Association, came to Trinidad yesterday to speak with the media. Other members of the contingent: Peter and Gloria Schoen (restaurateurs), David Antoine (P.R.O. of the T.S.B.A.) Mr Selwyn Salandy (trucker) and Mr Leroy Russel (entertainer).

It is their unanimous feeling that Government meted out unequal treatment to Tobago in the 1984 Budget. They are apprehensive about the island's future.

Mr Taylor told the Press: "Public views expressed so far in Trinidad have not really reflected the Budget's effects on Tobago. We feel that it will have devastating effects on our economy, and it may even result in such a collapse that people may begin to migrate from Tobago again as they did in the hard times of the 1950s if it is not reviewed and amended."

"Tobago is heavily dependent on tourism, with private sector investments and agriculture to a degree to support it. Any harsh measures in the 1984 Budget would affect these areas negatively. But let me make it clear that this complaint is not politically motivated. We are merely business people seriously concerned with the gloomy prospects we see ahead of us."

Mr Taylor's sentiments were echoed last week when a number of Tobago associations and other business organisations met at the Fairfield Complex to discuss the effect of the Budget.

The consensus yesterday was that tourism particularly--would suffer greatly because of the hike in air and boat fares. The small businessman importing goods from Trinidad, too, would be hard hit since freight rates have also been increased.

Mr Taylor deplored the Trinidadians' "we don't bound to go to Tobago this year" attitude as he put it--stating that the Tobagonian MUST come to Trinidad since the sister isle's economic life was virtually dependent on Trinidad.

Fewer People

"Fewer people are coming to Tobago already. The weekend influx from Trinidad has lessened considerably. If BWIA says that it has dropped by 30 percent, I am sure that it is more than that. That spells failure for our entertainment industry, the reef operators, taxi drivers, restaurateurs, hoteliers--everyone who makes a living from tourism Government should set it back at the original fare," he said.

"Increased freight rates also mean that goods being imported from Trinidad would rise in price and cost the Tobago importer more out of his pocket. Flour, already price controlled, but now costs \$7.37 a bag to be imported into the sister isle," he said.

Mr Taylor and his group also stated that additional taxes levied on all basic amenities would play havoc with Tobago's economy because "if the cost of living is up by 50 percent in Trinidad, you can be sure it would be 75 percent in Tobago. Things are already, 25-30 percent higher than in Trinidad."

Land tax in particular, he said, would be a massive problem, since most of the land belonged to the elderly, who could ill afford to pay high taxes out of their pensions. The situation would also prove discouraging to those involved in agriculture.

One member of the Tobago group, Mrs Gloria Jones-Schoen, who owns a wine bistro in Scarborough, said that private investors were being hard put to operate and faced closing their businesses or going bankrupt.

"We cannot even pack up and leave even if we want to since foreign exchange is now so sharply curtailed. Right now things in Tobago have reached emergency proportions. I personally feel ostracised. It is a psychological effect which I am sure is taking toll on other Tobagonians, too."

Members of the group stated their cause in a letter to the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance George Chambers, and also sections of the House of Representatives. They are calling on Mr Chambers to set up a special commission to study Tobago's problems.

Organized Protest

Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 25 Jan 84 p 16

[Text] Organised opposition to the increased Trinidad-Tobago air and sea-fares as announced in the 1984 Budget is taking shape.

Mr Wallins E.B. Lewis, Coordinator of the Trinidad and Tobago Festival Committee, announced that a meeting would be held in Scarborough, Tobago, on Saturday.

He explained: "The committee is inviting all interest groups such as taxi-drivers, hoteliers, guest house owners and operators, farmers and also the man-in-the street to this meeting."

CSO: 3298/459

ISSUE OF TOBAGO HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY SPENDING SPARKS REACTIONS

Report on Staffing

Port-of-Spain EXPRESS in English 17 Jan 84 p 4

[Text] A government study has revealed that the Tobago House of Assembly's agencies are severely understaffed and inefficiently organised to carry out their functions.

The study, carried out early last year by the Organisation and Management Division, said, "investigations revealed that the present organisational structure arrangements appear unsatisfactory especially in respect of the Personnel and Registry functions." It went on to recommend the creation of 138 new posts, the abolition of 28 others and the transfer of eight members of staff.

It also called for the reintroduction of an ambulance service to Charlotteville and for the construction of a garage and restroom at the Charlotteville Health Centre, to facilitate this ambulance driver.

The study went on to reveal that there is no repair and maintenance facility for vehicles belonging to the Assembly, and recommended that such a facility be established. [as published]

Though the study recommended that 101 of the new posts be established by July 1983 (at a cost for the year of close to \$2 million) delays in the implementation of the report meant that none of these have yet come into being.

According to Assemblyman Hochoy Charles, the report was sent to the Chairman of the THA in July by the Prime Minister and it was being assessed till November last year, so no action was taken.

The report revealed that the Works Division of the THA was particularly hampered in its functioning by the staffing inadequacy and inappropriate structural arrangements.

"The Works Division is now responsible for all the functions previously performed by the former Tobago Division of the Ministry of Local Government."

"In addition, the acceleration of the development thrust in Tobago, especially in the area of infrastructure development, has brought with it the attendant administrative problems at all levels...."

Review of Jacelon Charges

Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 24 Jan 84 p 8

[Editorial: "Questions for THA"]

[Text] We think the Tobago House of Assembly owes the country an explanation about what it did with \$53 million of unspent funds from the years 1981 and 1982. The mystery arises directly from the revelations made by Sen. Anthony Jacelon, Minister in the Ministry of Finance with responsibility for Tobago Affairs, during his contribution to the Budget Debate in the House last Thursday.

Sen. Jacelon, defending himself and his Government against charges made by members of the Tobago House of Assembly, disclosed that in those two years the THA had been given more money than it could spend. In fact, the THA had failed to return to the Central Government \$35 million and \$18 million respectively, representing unspent money for 1981 and 1982.

Exchequer

Sen. Jacelon further pointed out that failure to return this money was a violation of exchequer and audit regulations which, in fact, had been drafted by him and Mr Philip Rochford in the sixties, under instructions from THA Chairman A.N.R. Robinson who was then Minister of Finance.

The Minister's revelations must come as a million-dollar surprise to all those who have been disturbed by the unsettled and contentious relationship existing between the THA and the Central Government ever since this novel experiment in local government came into being.

The burden of complaints emanating from the THA is not that the Assembly had been given more money than it could spend but that for too long Tobago had been receiving nothing but "crumbs from the master's table."

The situation became so difficult, in fact, that Prime Minister George Chambers decided to intervene, meeting personally with the THA Chairman in an attempt to work out the problems.

Last month, however, Mr Robinson shocked the country when he declared a financial crisis in Tobago since the THA had no funds remaining to pay its daily-rated workers.

Eventually the Ministry of Finance had to release an additional \$8.3 million to bail the THA out of the absurd situation it had created by adding 189 workers to its labour force without the necessary authority and beyond the capacity of its annual budget.

But if the THA ran out of money in 1983, then it is only logical to ask the Assembly to give an account of the \$53 million left over from the two previous years. According to Mr Jacelon, the money has not been returned as required by law. And, if it had been subsequently spent, then apparently no proper accounting has been made.

Differences

Surely something must be seriously wrong here. We are sure that every taxpayer in the country would want Mr Robinson and the THA to clear up this mystery as soon as possible.

It is true that the House of Assembly Act provides for the setting up of a Fund and that serious differences of opinion still exist as to the nature and purpose of this Fund and who should take the initiative in establishing it. But the nonfulfillment of this provision cannot be any reason for the apparent "disappearance" of \$53 million in leftover money.

The THA Chairman, who has been weeping and wailing about brutality at the hands of the Central Government, must understand the importance of this matter.

Robinson's Initial Response

Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 25 Jan 84 p 1

[Text] Chairman of the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) Mr A.N.R. Robinson, will make a statement in the THA tomorrow on charges levelled against the Assembly by Central Government.

Senator Anthony Jacelon, Minister in the Ministry of Finance, accused the THA during the 1984 Budget debate of failing to return to Central Government a total of \$53 million in unspent money for 1981 and 1982.

Recently Senator Jacelon also accused the THA of hiring labour without authority.

Contacted for comment on the Minister's statement, Mr Robinson said from Tobago yesterday:

"I welcome the interest shown by the TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in its editorial of today and yesterday in the matters and I propose to make a statement in the Assembly, on Thursday.

"The Assembly has always invited investigations of all these matters which are in dispute between the Assembly and Central Government.

"It is my contention that the Government wants to be prosecutor, judge, jury and executioner all at the same time, and it is only independent and impartial investigations will expose the extent of the studied malice with which Government deals with the Assembly.

Robinson on Probe

Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 27 Jan 84 p 1

[Text] Mr A.N.R. Robinson, chairman of the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) said yesterday he will resign this post if an independent commission of inquiry finds allegations made by Central Government against the Assembly factual.

He made this "public commitment" in a lengthy statement at yesterday's sitting of the THA in which he verbally blasted the Minister in the Ministry of Finance, Senator Anthony Jacelon, for his attitude towards the Assembly.

Mr Robinson's speech was made following Mr Jacelon's charge during the 1984 Budget debate that the Assembly did not return some \$53 million in unspent balances in 1981 and 1982.

Mr Jacelon also accused the Assembly of employing persons without authority.

Mr Robinson told the Assembly yesterday:

"On behalf of this Assembly, I categorically deny each and every one of these charges made by the Minister as false, malicious, irresponsible and utterly outrageous.

"I go further and say that anyone in Minister Jacelon's position and with his knowledge who makes such charges against this Assembly is unfit to hold high public office in this or any civilised society.

"In support of my contention on behalf of this Assembly, I now publicly propose appointment of an independent commission of persons of competence, integrity and international status to review and report expeditiously on the relations between The Assembly and the Central Government since the inauguration of the Assembly on December 4, 1980.

'Erratic Conduct'

"This proposed commission will make recommendations for the proper functioning of the Assembly and the efficient and democratic administration of the island.

"Having regard to the history of previous Commissions, I on your behalf, propose that the membership be agreed by the Prime Minister and the Chairman of the Assembly with assistance, if necessary, from the Commonwealth Secretariat.

"This proposal would be acceptable to any civilised government in similar circumstances to those in which we find ourselves. I go further and make the public commitment that in the event of the Minister's allegation proving to be true and correct, I shall forthwith resign my office as Chairman of the House of Assembly."

Mr Robinson who accused Minister Jacelon of being "erratic" in his conduct towards the Assembly, said that far from being delinquent in their duties, the Assembly was functioning under well nigh impossible conditions and he elaborated:

"I myself, as Chairman, do not even have an office. I use my own private dwelling for this purpose and for a long period have used my own professional staff.

"Members of the House who are secretaries work full time as secretaries in charge of the portfolios without one cent remuneration."

Charging that the Tobago House of Assembly Fund could not have any real existence until it was provided for in the accounting system of the Assembly, Mr Robinson said proposals for the operation of the Fund as required by the THA Act, were never agreed to nor implemented.

No action had been taken by the Minister to enable the Assembly to control and manage its finances as agreed to at a meeting with the Prime Minister on July 26, 1983, which was attended by six government ministers.

"The horrendous truth is that the Minister of Finance still manages and controls the finances of the Assembly."

Mr Robinson said that far from approaching the issue of Tobago in the twin island economy with any care, consideration or sensitivity (at least pending the comment of the Demas Task Force) the Minister of Finance has virtually wrecked Tobago's economy, including its tourism, agriculture and the small business sector, by selectively harsh and arbitrary increases in passenger fares and freight rates between the islands.

"That is on top of other budgetary impositions raising costs in Tobago to over 25 percent above the level in Trinidad and creating growing unemployment."

Also accusing Government of hypocrisy, Mr Robinson said this was even more manifest when government spokesmen talked of the imperative need to develop sectors other than oil and to diversify the national economy.

"Apparently, diversification of the national economy means destruction of the Tobago economy, and development of the non-oil sector means destruction of agriculture and the tourist industry.

The THA Chairman said if members of the THA did not speak to Minister Jacelon as the Senator claimed that was a problem created and controlled by him. He explained other ministers paid courtesy calls on him (Mr Robinson) as Chairman of the THA.

Only Wednesday, the Ombudsman visited Tobago and held fruitful discussions with the THA, Mr Robinson, who related that Minister Jacelon reluctantly shook his hand at a meeting in Port-of-Spain last year, added:

"This Minister visits Tobago every Wednesday and has never accorded me the courtesy of a visit. He goes about the country behind our backs inviting complaints against the Assembly.

"He makes fantastic charges against us without bothering to hear our point of view. He has no regard for the truth or principles of natural justice. He wants to speak for us and not permit us to speak even for ourselves."

Chairman Robinson said he thought that the recent tragic events not too far off in the Caribbean would have driven home the lesson that sovereignty and independence were empty slogans if they were not related to the progress, well being and happiness of the people of the region.

"I would have thought that the bitter experience of 1983 would have led to more reflection and deeper examination of the foundation and purpose of public office in this nation. This does not appear to be so."

Further GUARDIAN Comment

Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 28 Jan 84 p 8

[Editorial: "Question Remains"]

[Text] If Mr A.N.R. Robinson, Chairman of the Tobago House of Assembly, wants to put himself and the THA on trial, we would like him to know that decision would be his and his alone.

This is certainly not what we intended when we asked the THA to explain the whereabouts of \$53 million in unspent funds from the years 1981 and 1982. For the benefit of taxpayers and in the interest of good housekeeping, we had asked a simple and straightforward question and we expected a simple and straightforward answer.

Instead Mr Robinson chose to reply with a seven-page statement to the House of Assembly on Thursday which served only to obfuscate the issue. At the end of it, taxpayers of the country are no more enlightened as to what the THA has done with the \$53 million in leftover money.

Complaints

Instead of attempting to clear up this multi-million dollar mystery, Mr Robinson devoted himself largely to a tedious repetition of the complaints and grievances which he has made the stuff of an ongoing controversy between the THA and Central Government.

He accused Sen. Jacelon of making "false, malicious, irresponsible and utterly outrageous" charges against the Assembly and publicly proposed the appointment of an independent commission to review relations between the THA and the Government.

The Chairman went further and vowed to resign his office if the Minister's allegations proved to be true and correct.

Mr Robinson's reaction is difficult to understand. In one breath he says Mr Jacelon's "charges" against the Assembly are false and, in the other, he wants to put himself and the THA on trial by calling for an independent commission.

In any case, we fail to see what the appointment of such an inquiry has to do with simply explaining what the Assembly has done with unspent funds. Unless the Chairman is saying that he has no account to give to taxpayers and, in fact, will do so only when an independent commission is appointed.

As a senior minister under the late Dr Eric Williams, we would think that Mr Robinson would have developed a distinct distaste for commissions of inquiry which, apart from their ineffectiveness, have come to be regarded as smart stratagems for evading and shelving issues.

We trust Mr Robinson would understand clearly that we are making no charges against him or members of the Tobago House of Assembly. All we are asking of the THA is to provide taxpayers with some accounting for \$53 million in unspent funds which, according to the Minister, have not been returned to the Central Government as required by law. We think it is our duty to demand this accounting.

And it is not enough for Mr Robinson to say "I categorically deny the charges" and then proceed to accuse the Minister of irresponsibility and the government of treating the THA badly.

Importance

The fact is that specific sums of money have been given the THA in 1981 and 1982 and, according to Sen. Jacelon, the THA failed to account for the spending of \$53 million.

If the Minister is lying, will the Chairman not clarify the matter with facts and figures? Did the THA spend all of its allocations for these two years and, if so, on what? Were there any unspent sums remaining and, if so, where are they?

As a former Minister of Finance, we do not think Mr Robinson could fail to grasp the importance of this simple request and the need to remove whatever doubts may arise in the minds of members of the public. Under his expert guidance, this should present no difficulties.

The question remains, Mr Robinson.

CSO: 3298/460

GOVERNMENT PLANS MONTHLY PRESS BRIEFINGS BY MINISTRIES

Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 25 Jan 84 p 16

[Text] From next month Government Ministers will be holding monthly Press briefings, Minister of Information, Senator Muriel Green told the Senate on Monday. In her contribution to the Budget debate, the Information Minister also told the Upper House that from April there would be new and varied government television programmes aimed at nation-building and stimulating national consciousness.

"Our people must learn to love Trinidad and Tobago," she said.

She told the Senate that the Ministry of Education and Culture had established a committee to look into the information system and the committee included representatives from the Information Ministry.

Among other things, a survey was conducted to check audience response to television and radio programming and the Government recognised that the quality of broadcasting in the country needed to be improved.

In further efforts to improve the Information Ministry, the Ministry reviewed its operations early last year and intensified its role by the recruitment of additional staff," said Senator Green.

According to the Information Minister, the task of communicating with people was becoming increasingly difficult.

She said it was necessary to let the public know what the Government achieved and what it planned through its various agencies.

"Many call this propaganda but I submit that there is nothing wrong with this," she said.

Free Speech

On a question by Opposition Senator Lincoln Myers on whether State-owned Trinidad and Tobago television (TTT) was subjected to Government interference in its programming, Senator Green replied not as far as she knew.

"It cannot honestly be said that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago infringes on free speech and the right to dissent," the Minister told the Senate.

She pointed out that anyone in the country could exercise his or her rights and the high literacy rate of the population was shown in the exercising of these rights.

According to Senator Green, the role of the media is even more crucial today to buttress the population from materialism and rampant consumerism and to bring people face to face with the realities of adjustment.

CSO: 3298/460

ANALYSIS OF POOR TURNOUT AT BUDGET PROTEST DEMONSTRATION

Port-of-Spain SUNDAY GUARDIAN in English 22 Jan 84 p 16

[Article by Michael Baptiste]

[Text] Several reasons have been advanced for the response to the Budget Day demonstration outside Parliament on January 11.

According to reports, some 27 trade unions, meeting at the Rienzi Complex the weekend before, called out their members to take part in what was expected to be a "massive" demonstration in the vicinity of the Parliament building.

One could understand the expected "massive" turnout, seeing that some 27 trade unions were represented at the Rienzi meeting and gave support to the move. If all the unions had responded, or rather if their members had responded, the police might have had a much tougher time keeping order, as there would have been thousands of people on the road with placards.

This did not happen and, taking into account the anxiety with which the Budget was awaited, one wonders why the small turn-out.

There may be many reasons but one that occurs to this writer is the growing attitude on the part of workers where trade union leaders are concerned. Could it be that workers are losing confidence in their union leadership and are no longer prepared to follow blindly wherever others wish to lead them? There is more than a grain of truth in this suggestion, I believe.

Workers are not the fools a lot of people, including union leaders, take them for. They are well aware that in the event of strikes, walkouts, retrenchment, dismissals, they are the one who, like Kitchener, will cry "ah feeling it."

Workers too have been observing the lifestyles of some of these representatives of the so-called working class, the trips abroad to conferences and seminar. (One fellow Michael Als, no doubt seeing himself in the role of a UN peace missionary, was stupid enough to imagine he could settle the dispute between Bishop and Coard, and learnt to his embarrassment that a row between Marxists in a row to the death, and not a Saturday morning demonstration outside some factory office).

The Oilfields' Workers Trade Union in San Fernando reportedly has a secretariat as big as, if not bigger than, the one at Whitehall. What does it all mean? It means in essence that some unions today are being run like large-scale conglomerates, the very conglomerates which union leaders regularly criticise and condemn in such vociferous language.

Workers are reading the signs clearly these days. They recognise that job security is the main issue in 1984 and the way to achieving this is not necessarily by means of robber talks, sickouts and withdrawal of enthusiasm, but by giving a fair day's work for a fair day's pay.

They understand too that unions (some with budgets bigger than the budgets of some Caricom states) have not done as much for their members as their resources would certainly permit.

We have come a long way from the early period of trade unionism where the leaders had such a tough time convincing workers that trade unionism was a good thing.

The tide could be turning in 1984. It is now up to the workers to convince their union leaders that trade unionism could still be a good thing, if only the leaders would rise up to the realities of 1984.

CSO: 3298/460

CHAMBERS WANTS ELECTIONS AT PNM CONVENTION SCRATCHED

Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 27 Jan 84 p 1

[Article by John Babb]

[Text] There will be no election of officers next month when the People's National Movement (PNM) holds its 1983 annual convention at the Chaguaranas Convention Centre.

This is so because the party's Political Leader, Prime Minister George Chambers, has expressed his dissatisfaction with the list of candidates, and has asked that the issue of elections be removed from the agenda of the convention, scheduled for February 10, 11 and 12.

As a result, the present officers will continue to hold office for a year longer than usual, because elections for these posts will now be held at the next annual convention, due in September.

At Wednesday night's special General Council meeting of the party, Mr Chambers not only expressed his displeasure at the list of candidates, but also charged that some people with talent in the party were either deliberately suppressed, or kept on the periphery.

"I believe that the time has come for the party to show a new face and a new image to the population," he told members of the General Council at their meeting at Balisier House, party headquarters.

The meeting was called specially to discuss convention documents and the proposed agenda. One of the items on the agenda was the election of officers--from the position of chairman down the line with the exception of the General Secretary, who is appointed.

Almost at the end of the meeting which was chaired by party chairman, Mr Francis Prevatt, Prime Minister Chambers got up and made his statement.

He told party members: "Members of the General Council, ever since I became Political Leader of the PNM I have been myself concerned about the persons holding office in the party.

"There has been one election since then in which I have not interfered.

"I have looked at the list of candidates up for election, and I am not happy with the list.

"I believe that the time has come for the party to show a new face and a new image to the population.

"I am satisfied that the party has tremendous talent in it, some of which had been deliberately suppressed and if not deliberately suppressed, deliberately kept on the periphery.

"Accordingly, I want to propose to the General Council that the whole question of the elections be removed from the agenda for the convention in February, and be placed on the agenda for the convention due in September," he added.

In the interim, the Political Leader indicated that he will make proposals to the General Council for any vacancies that may arise. "And I expect vacancies to arise," he declared.

Turning Point

Party sources revealed that among the list of candidates were the names of Works Minister, Mr Hugh Francis for chairman, to replace Mr Prevatt. His name was also down for the post of vice chairman. Another nominee for the post of vice-chairman was Mr Sham Mohammed, now a backbencher in Parliament, Mr Ronnie Williams, now acting party treasurer in the absence of an ill Mr Mervyn de Souza, was expected to fill that post.

One resignation expected is that of Mr Basil Pitt, current vice-chairman and now a diplomat as High Commissioner to Barbados and the Associated States.

Despite the criticisms of the Political Leader, a party source said yesterday that the democratic process in the party was such that any changes made would be within the provisions of the party's Constitution.

Other PNM sources said this move by Mr Chambers was significant and may well mark the turning point in the political outlook of the PNM. Mr Chambers' proposals to remove the election of officers from next month's convention was unanimously supported.

CSO: 3298/460

TAPIA HOUSE COMMITTED TO FORMING NEW NATIONAL PARTY

Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 28 Jan 84 p 3

[Text] Tapia House is committed to the formation of a new national party that will take the necessary steps to weld the fragments together and that will have the moral courage and the political will to govern for the whole nation and to secure our national interest for many generations to come.

Mr Beau Tewarie, Chairman of the party, emphasised this point at a Press conference yesterday morning, called to discuss the implications of the 1984 Budget.

Mr Tewarie, who had several Tapia officials at the Press briefing, described the Budget as a speech--not a budget.

"More bluntly, we believe that it is a political campaign speech. Indeed this Budget exercise might well be the opening gambit in a campaign for a snap election.

"It is clear from the Budget speech that the Government believes that economic conditions in our country are going to deteriorate rapidly. They just may decide to take the country by surprise and announce an election date," he said.

Mr Tewarie continued:

"The Government reveals itself through this 1984 Budget to be somewhat like the African killer bees. We know that they are there and they are dangerous and they can sting; but we never really know when they are going to sting and whom. We believe that this time, without the slightest provocation, they have stung too many of our people at a most inappropriate time."

Our Own Sting

"The time has come for our people to prepare a sting of our own for a government that has squandered our oil fortune and taken us right back to square one."

Calling for the building of genuine national institutions, he said one of them must be a national party that can knit the various fragments of our country together."

ISCOTT SAID TO BE BESET BY MANAGEMENT, OTHER DIFFICULTIES

Plant Explosion

Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 18 Jan 84 p 1

[Article by Mikey Mahabir]

[Text] San Fernando: An explosion took place at the Point Lisas operations of the Iron and Steel Company Limited (ISCOTT) shortly after 10 a.m. yesterday. At least nine employees were injured.

The explosion took place at the No 2 furnace in the melt case area and according to a company spokesman there is going to be a drop in production. He could not state to what extent production would be affected.

The official could not at the time give estimated cost of damage but one of the injured person said it would be very costly. Up to late yesterday, investigators were in the area making an on-the-spot evaluation of the damage.

Water leak

The injured were given first aid and sent to the San Fernando General Hospital. Some of the injured suffered lacerations and bruises. One man is suffering from a chest injury.

Some of the names given were Joseph Morean, Prem Nandlal, Rosie Grant, a woman, Henry Batson and Adrian Painter.

A statement issued by ISCOTT said that from their investigations it appeared that the explosion was caused by a water leak in one of the panels leading to the furnace and the roof of the furnace. The shaft and slag door were damaged.

A spokesman for ISCOTT said it would take about five days to effect the necessary repairs and by that time operations should be back on stream.

ISCOTT, already being unable to collect millions of dollars from customers for materials supplied over a certain period, according to reports, was the talking point in the South yesterday.

It is understood that the company employs about 1,200 workers, but this could not be confirmed.

Meanwhile it was explained that the No 1 furnace continued normally.

Questioned about supplies of materials to local as well as foreign customers the official could not say definitely what the position would be. All he was prepared to say at the moment was that there was going to be a drop in production.

One of the injured at the hospital said that it was mere luck that he was still alive.

He said: "All I know is I found myself in hospital."

Another said: "I really don't know what happened. I only heard an explosion and immediately fell to the ground."

Another employee who works in another department and who went to visit his injured friends said he heard the explosion from his workplace but could not state how it all happened.

Blame on 'Mismanagement'

Port-of-Spain EXPRESS in English 19 Jan 84 pp 1, 48

[Article by Niala Rambachan]

[Text] Mismanagement of the meltcast shop at the Iron and Steel Company (ISCOTT) was responsible for the explosion which injured nine people on Tuesday.

High-level sources at the multi-million dollar steel plant and in the government confirmed yesterday that the explosion was linked with the poor maintenance of the shop which has been a source of concern for some time.

The EXPRESS has also been informed that government is deeply concerned over the evidence of mismanagement in some departments in ISCOTT and is actively looking into the possibility of bringing in a foreign firm to share the management of the enterprise.

According to an official source at the plant, attempts to eradicate the mismanagement in the meltcast shop were made at the end of last year, at the time when Patrick Herron, Vice President of Primary Products and Jerome Wallace, Vice President of Maintenance, were dismissed from their posts.

But, "ISCOTT is a mess," one highly-placed government source remarked yesterday, indicating that government is dissatisfied with the current running of the steel mill.

In an internal communication addressed to his corporate staff two weeks, ago, Executive Vice President, Sam Martin, admitted that the low production levels of ISCOTT had been largely due to the mismanagement of the meltcast shop.

"...Our overall performance in the production of steel has been less than laudable," he wrote in Corporate Update No 54. "We have so far been unable to produce more than approximately 40 percent of our capacity. The major constraint has been the performance of the meltcast shop..."

"Without elaborating on the details of the meltcast problems," he continued, "suffice it to say that by any international standard the performance of the meltcast operations has been very poor. Similarly, the maintenance of that plant has been seriously wanting."

"It was the consensus of the corporation that some radical measures had to be taken to attempt to arrest the situation."

According to EXPRESS sources at the plant, furnace No 2 has had a history of problems. Repeated attempts to solve the problems over the past two years have resulted in failure. On Monday this week, there was a leaking water line in the cooling panel leading to the furnace.

By Tuesday the maintenance department had issued the advice that the line had been repaired, but when attempts were made to put the meltshop into operation, the furnace blew up.

Up to late yesterday evening, no official information about the causes of the explosion or the cost of repairs was available from the company. Representatives of the Factory Inspectorate of the Ministry of Labour and the Insurance Assessors were on the scene on Tuesday and yesterday.

Early company statements estimated that repairs would take about five days, but employees at the meltshop dismissed that as a highly conservative estimate.

Four employees, including Prem Nandlal, Superintendent of the meltshop, were awarded at the San Fernando General Hospital following the explosion. Nandlal suffered a blow to his leg and had a piece of steel lodged in it. Another suffered a fractured wrist, while a third had a blow to his chest which raised the suspicion of internal injuries.

The fourth employee was warded for burns.

Minister of Labour, Errol Mahabir, visited the hospitalised men yesterday morning and reported to the EXPRESS that they were all resting comfortably. Mahabir said that he had conveyed to the injured men the concern of the Prime Minister and the members of the Cabinet.

Three hundred tons of Direct Reduced Iron had to be dumped and the Direct Reducing Plant had to remain closed yesterday since the meltcast shop was unavailable to process the product of that aspect of the plant.

Call for Blast Probe

Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 19 Jan 84 p 1

[Text] A call for an immediate independent inquiry into last Tuesday's explosion at the Iron and Steel Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited (ISCOTT) at Point Lisas has been made by Opposition Leader Basdeo Panday.

He expressed sympathy with the nine workers who were injured in the blast.

Investigations into the accident as well as to determine extent of damage to plant and equipment was still proceeding up to yesterday. A government factory inspector visited the scene on Tuesday evening.

It is expected that repairs will take about five days.

Ministers of Labour, Social Security and Co-operatives, Mr Errol Mahabir, visited the injured workers at the San Fernando General Hospital yesterday morning and conveyed to them the sympathy of Prime Minister George Chambers and members of Cabinet.

Opposition for Audit

Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 27 Jan 84 p 16

[Text] The opposition has charged that poor economic policy and planning and not inefficient management was contributing to the failure of ISCOTT.

In a statement issued by the Office of the Leader of the Opposition, Government has been accused of putting together a "carefully managed public relations campaign" in a bid to shift the issue away from one of inept and short-sighted economic policy and planning.

The release states: "The Inter-Ministerial Committee has finally found out what the National Alliance, the Press and other sectors of the society have been telling the Government for a long time. They have done this after expenditure of approximately one billion dollars and recurrent losses of half a billion dollars.

"Inefficient management and especially the safety of workers are of paramount importance and we have called for an inquiry into the recent explosion at ISCOTT. These must not be made scapegoats for the poor economic policy and planning involved in the establishment of the plant. This remains as the central national issue. We have been extremely worried by claims of management originating sabotage at the plant. As long as Government refused to hold an inquiry and clear the air on management, they open themselves to accusation of complicity to suit their political objectives. Actions that may eventually result in loss of life."

The release has also predicted that within the six-month deadline given to the committee charged with getting a partner for ISCOTT, no partner would be found.

Call for Probe

It was explained that original problems of high subsidies to make the products competitive combined with declining world markets, extreme protection and growing non-U.S. production made the project questionable. These problems made ISCOTT a bad investment for any partner "unless the taxpayers of Trinidad and Tobago are to suffer a capital loss and give ISCOTT away for a song."

The Opposition claims that the Government "orchestrated a leakage of partial information to mis-inform and mis-direct the public" since ISCOTT products would not be allowed concessionary markets under the CBI.

The Opposition maintains that a "loss of \$1.5 billion" is too large for the company to be either closed or sold for a song "without proper public parliamentary debate and information. The Opposition is calling on Government to undertake a total audit.

"This should be carried out by a public commission, not a hand-picked 'secret' audit as has happened in the past," according to the statement.

CSO: 3298/461

MAHABIR ADDRESSES ISSUE OF CARICOM TRADE COMPETITION

Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 27 Jan 84 p 1

[Text] Trinidad and Tobago can no longer turn a blind eye to the breaches of rules of origin which its Caricom partners have introduced, and which have severely hurt the efforts of local manufacturers striving to succeed in the Caricom market.

This statement was made by Mr Errol Mahabir, Minister of Labour, Social Security and Co-operatives, yesterday when he addressed members of the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers Association during a luncheon. It took place out of Hotel Normandie.

Describing the situation as "luxury," Mr Mahabir warned that it was a philosophy which this country will no longer be able to afford. Mr Mahabir said that Trinidad and Tobago could not ignore the fact that its wages and other cost structures did not now enable the country to compete effectively against products from Far Eastern countries, let alone Caricom and extraregional markets.

"Our control over production costs will therefore be an important determinant as to whether, as a nation, we will be able to make a successful export thrust."

Mr Mahabir asked the gathering to take all possible steps to prevent the "foreign exchange bottleneck" from slowing the growth and development of the economy. Stating that the problem was not yet at a very critical stage, he continued that a situation of monumental proportions could result if the current trend persisted.

Another relevant problem area, the Minister pointed out, was the "protectionism" standards used by larger countries where export was concerned. For example he said that local rum products had been adversely affected by discriminatory tariffs from our other countries, and more recently, steel had become threatened by protectionism as well.

Such economic downturn and other financial crises of the times, he said, were usually blamed on the Government at whom charges of mismanagement, rather than conservation and investment of resources, had been levelled. But the blame also lay in other areas.

PROBLEM OF RAMPANT CRIME GIVEN POLICE, MEDIA ATTENTION

Assessment of Situation

Port-of-Spain EXPRESS in English 18 Jan 84 p 8

[Editorial: "Crackdown on Rampant Crime"]

[Text]

THE POLICE seizure of six revolvers and seven 16-gauge shotguns at Piarco airport, plus the confiscation of some \$2 million worth of cocaine, is both a credit to the alertness of our Customs officers and police service and an alarming comment on the grave dangers the society faces from the criminally minded.

Everyone agrees that crime has got to frightening proportions in Trinidad and Tobago today. And we do not refer to the statistics which may show a decline in serious crimes but the cold fact that hundreds of thousands of citizens now live in cooped-up burglar-proofed houses and apartments, are seriously fearful of venturing out after dark (hence the almost "ghost town" atmosphere of Port of Spain late at nights) and generally feel terrorised by the audacity with which criminals seem to operate nowadays.

We know in fact of entire districts, or communities, that are virtually held to ransom by the depredations of a handful of thugs whose modus operandi knows no respect for persons or age group. Older people in fact are more often than not made virtual prisoners in their own homes by fear, and by harsh experience.

Nor does the steady growth of the police service, and the creation of various anti-crime squads, seem to have a serious impact on reducing this capacity for terror. Occasionally, as at Piarco this week, the police do make breakthroughs and they are to be commended for this. But, as is the case in so many countries the world over today, the perennial problem of escalating crime seems insoluble.

We are especially concerned, of course, at the illegal importation of guns into the country. We would be naive if we were to

believe that the seizure of a handful of revolvers and shotguns at Piarco was enough to put a halt to this dangerous practice. In fact, we suspect — as the police themselves suspect — that gun-running assumes wider proportions than the occasional discovery and seizure of these illegal weapons portend.

For all the good work done by the protective services, the number of armed robberies now being committed suggest that guns are in fact far more readily available than we can comfortably live with. There seems in fact to be a ready and active trade in these weapons, and a fairly lucrative trade at that.

That said, our concern is no less when it comes to the illegal importation of dangerous drugs like cocaine into this country. Again we would appear to be naive if we did not acknowledge that this particular drug has become not

only fashionable among some of the more well-to-do sections of our community (it is an expensive drug) but has also filtered down to the street level. Once that happens, of course, we can also expect the incidence of drug-related crimes to increase by leaps and bounds.

People hooked on such drugs and who cannot afford the "fix", easily turn to crime, and even violent crime, in order to have the wherewithal to keep on purchasing the stuff. What is then unleashed here is a vicious cycle of addiction and criminal activity and we are afraid that we are already seriously caught up in this.

What is also amazing is the ease with which such

illicit drugs can be had in this country today. And what is puzzling is how difficult it can be for the police to crack down on what amounts to nothing less than open trade in the streets. Puzzling, because the police service has certainly continued to grow in size and efficiency from year to year and so, it appears, has the audacity of criminals trading in drugs, guns or otherwise.

We will admit that few and far apart are the countries in the world today that, given a bit of affluence, have not had this same pattern of growth in criminal activity. In our own oil boom era, the flood of petro dollars also contributed to certain attitudes about access to money. People who never

had it before, suddenly found it was not that difficult to get. And whether at the level of hush-hush business deals, governmental corruption or street crime, an ethos has undoubtedly been cultivated in which money is seldom regarded any longer as something to be worked for. Hence the rapid decline in the work ethic and its replacement by the debilitating attitude of something-for-nothing, which is the real basis of the criminal mind.

Our communities must, however, rise to the challenge. To bow down or cower before the advance of thuggery is to surrender without a fight. It is, ultimately, the national community that is threatened. It is the national community that must respond.

Police Reorganization

Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 21 Jan 84 p 1

[Text]

THE FLYING SQUAD based at Police Training College, St. James Barracks, has been disbanded.

A senior police officer confirmed that Commissioner of Police Randolph Burroughs held a meeting with top officers a few days ago and agreement was made to restructure the section to deal with crimes, especially in the high crime areas.

Mr. Burroughs could not be contacted yesterday evening.

The officer said that as a result of this decision the operational base from where the Flying Squad operated was now being occupied by the Crime Intelligence Unit (CIU).

This new unit which is staffed with new faces will be engaged in

surveillance duties, crime records including statistics and constant contact to advise patrols of likely perpetrators in the high crime areas.

Included in the new staff are members of Interpol, Modus Operandi, Wanted Persons Encyclopedia along with Service Support Unit to deal with crime prevention patrols.

The officer said that as a result of the new move the Narcotics and Robbery Squads have been revitalised with supervision conducted by the Assistant Commissioner (Crime) Wilbert Williams at his Police Headquarters office and members of the Flying Squad being posted to various stations.

CSO: 3298/462

BRIEFS

FOREIGN SERVICE RESHUFFLE--Four of Trinidad and Tobago's senior diplomats have been transferred to new posts. Mr Wilfred Sheik Naimool, at present Trinidad and Tobago's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Geneva and Specialised Agencies in Europe has been appointed Ambassador to Brazil. Mr Lyle Williams, High Commissioner to Nigeria, will replace Mr Naimool as Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva. Mr Nathan Hazel, at present serving as High Commissioner to India, will succeed High Commissioner Williams in Nigeria, and Ambassador Harrison Major, Ambassador to Brazil, will succeed Mr Hazel as High Commissioner to India. The appointees are expected to assume their new duties shortly. [Text] [Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 25 Jan 84 p 1]

CARONI RIVER DREDGING--Work has started on the dredging of the Caroni River--the major source of flooding in Central Trinidad. Works Minister Hugh Francis said yesterday the job was being undertaken by Seereeram Brothers at a contract price of \$22 million. In an interview yesterday, the Minister said the work involves dredging, widening and straightening the river between the Princess Margaret Highway and the Gulf of Paria. He added: "As we all know that river has been the main reason why areas in Central Trinidad are being flooded each year. With this development it is hoped that the floodings will be considerably lessened. Improvement works involve improving access in the section between the Princess Margaret Highway and the Gulf of Paria as well as improving the flow in associated distributaries such as the San Juan River, Martin Canal, Mullin's Canal, William's Street Drain, Don Miguel Drain. When completed, flooding will be significantly reduced also in Bamboo Settlements I and II; Don Miguel, El Socorro, Aranguez and other agricultural areas. We also know that farmers in those areas receive a terrible beating annually because of the damage done to food crops and livestock because of the flooding." [Excerpt] [Port-of-Spain TRINIDAD GUARDIAN in English 25 Jan 84 p 1]

BUILDING INDUSTRY STANDSTILL--With the reimposition of import duty on hardware materials comes a possible virtual standstill in the building industry. Public relations Officer of the Hardware Dealers Corporate Society, Ashton Sant said that up to yesterday, the Society was planning a mass meeting of its membership to discuss the Prime Minister's "hard hitting" budgetary move on dealers. Some executive members of the Society will this week make attempts to identify the number of hardware items which will qualify for the additional duty. "We have no doubt that the prices of hardware and building materials are going to soar," Sant said, adding that this was destined to cripple the building industry within the coming months. He said that the hardware industry was also dealt an even harder blow with the introduction of the new quota system. [Excerpt] [Port-of-Spain EXPRESS in English 17 Jan 84 p 3]

CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ ON BCV REPORT, OTHER ISSUES

Caracas EL UNIVERSAL in Spanish 24 Dec 83 p 2-1

[Text] The embarrassment and shame of this 5-year period will not continue in Venezuela.

The BCV [Central Bank of Venezuela] report reflects the sorry end of an administration that was misdirected and led the country into a severe depression.

There will not be confrontations between the BCV and basic economic authorities.

Jaime Lusinchi will name whoever he thinks he should name.

The new government and Democratic Action will not allow "the embarrassing and shameful adversary relationship between the president of the Central Bank and the basic economic authorities to continue," Carlos Andres Perez observed yesterday.

Coming from New York, the ex-president of the republic returned to Caracas the night before last.

Yesterday morning he was working in his office and handed his secretaries some Christmas presents. Then he made pronouncements about the national economic scene with regard to the report by the president of the Central Bank of Venezuela.

The contents of the report did not surprise him, inasmuch as it reflects "the sorry end of an administration that became totally misdirected and led the country into a severe depression."

In January, the senator for life will make a statement on TV about the state in which the Social Christian Party [COPEI] left the national economy.

He spent the last 2 weeks in Buenos Aires, where he attended the inauguration of President Raul Alfonsin; in Bogota he talked with Belisario Betancur.

In the U.S. he participated in preparatory talks of the Quito conference, which will deal with the problem of the Latin American countries' external debt.

A Sorry End

Perez observed initially that he was in no position to make statements about issues like that of the report by the president of the Central Bank, because he is returning from abroad.

"I have seen but not read the aforesaid document. I am of course not surprised at its assertions because that is the sorry end of an administration that was totally misdirected and led the country into a severe depression."

The Democratic Action leader lamented being right about what he had been saying since 1979.

In 1979, during a FEDECAMARAS [Venezuelan Federation of Associations of Chambers of Commerce and Industry] meeting, Perez said that if Venezuela pursued the course outlined by the Social Christian government during the first 6 months, it would be heading for economic disaster, towards the devaluation of the bolivar and the destruction of the process of economic development.

"Unfortunately, everything I said was confirmed, despite the AD's efforts and my own personal efforts in seeking to have the direction in which the country was heading corrected.

"This BCV report, which I have scarcely glanced through, does nothing but corroborate the statements we made some time ago to the effect that the mistakes which were being made so stubbornly should be corrected."

"Had there been a different kind of management of the public administration, would economic growth have been achieved during the constitutional period?"

"Unquestionably, and when you examine all the economic indicators corresponding to these 5 years, you realize that the country was driven to the brink of disaster, and I don't know what spirit they might have been guided by."

As on other occasions, the former president insisted that by 1979 Venezuela not only had a privileged position with regard to the world economic crisis, but that it improved its means and resources.

"If there were difficulties in carrying forward and terminating the programs of my administration, basic for strengthening the national economy, the doubling and tripling of oil prices came as an aid decisively sufficient for solving them. To finish all my projects--and the government itself recognizes this--60 billion bolivars were needed. An amount three or four times greater was spent, however, and nothing was solved.

"But now, at the end of the year, the Venezuelan people have firmly rejected the events of these past 5 years and have put their trust in President Jaime Lusinchi. What we Venezuelans must do is look toward the future and think that even within the severe crisis, we have enough human and natural resources for recovery."

Recovery, to his way of thinking, will come about starting in 1984.

The struggle between the BCV and the government will not go on.

"In your opinion, must Diaz Bruzual resign the presidency of the BCV?"

"I do not wish to get into any disputations, especially when I have not even had the chance to talk to President Lusinchí again. But I must say as AD has asserted, the party will give the greatest backing to the president and we will not allow a continuation of the dramatic, embarrassing and shameful confrontation prevailing among basic authorities for the financial and economic management of Venezuela."

"How can that problem be solved?"

"I have no desire to put forward an opinion, but I am sure that that is the intention, resolve and decision of both the president-elect as well as of the party leadership. There has to be absolute coherence in the economic management of Venezuela. We cannot continue the embarrassment and shame through which Venezuela has lived during these last years."

Lusinchí will name whoever he wants to name.

"What is your opinion regarding what may be the constituency of the cabinet under the new government?"

"I have no opinion to give on the subject. President Lusinchí will name whoever he believes he should name. This is not only the tradition within our party, but also the most advantageous and expeditious way for Venezuela. Now, this is not the place to name those who have or have not been chosen. The issue is to select those who best, according to President Lusinchí, may interpret and serve during the difficult times we will be living through in the next 5-year period. So that this is an issue which is ultimately in his hands."

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CSO: 3348/217

PETKOFF DISCUSSES LEFTIST PARTIES' IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

Caracas BOHEMIA in Spanish 16-22 Jan 84 pp 28-33

[Interview with MAS leader Teodoro Petkoff, by Jesus Seguias; date and place not specified]

[Text] In this interesting interview, the top-ranking leader of MAS [Movement Toward Socialism] describes himself as a man of the left, with Marxist training, and virtually breaks off from "Teodorism," disagreeing categorically and publicly with his former comrades in the movement. Thus, Teodoro Petkoff has joined MAS' majority group, something that will avoid the debacle that many had anticipated in its ranks.

[Question] Teodoro, are you a leftist?

[Answer] Of course I am a leftist. The problem is that there are at least two lefts. In other words, if we are talking about what is generally known as the Venezuelan left, there is what I would call a communist left, by which I mean not a moral category, but rather a concept the fundamental reference point of which is what we might term the sociopolitical bloc that revolves around the Soviet Union in one way or another and with differing international nuances. And there is a non-communist socialist left, of which MAS is a part.

AD Is Not on the Left

[Question] But the members of AD [Democratic Action] claim that they too are a part of that non-communist left...

[Answer] I read that definition which Manuel Penalver gave, wherein the main feature that they used to ascribe to Democratic Action the status of a leftist affiliation was certainly its control over the labor movement; which could lead us to the ridiculous conclusion that the German National Socialist (Nazi) Party was on the left because it had control of the working class. Hence, it is obvious that you cannot define that status merely with a feature such as that. But you can do it less so in the case of Democratic Action, because that is a party which has governed for many years in Venezuela. And it is evident that the exercise of power by that party cannot be described as that of a party of the left, from the standpoint that those social changes assumed to be implicit

in the leftist status have not resulted from the Democratic Action governments. Rather, on the contrary, Democratic Action, with that vast control that it has over much of the Venezuelan working class, when in the government, has acted in close collusion with the most powerful economic interests in the country. AD has not carried out just any capitalist development in the country, but rather a savage, monopolistic, capitalist development, which has seriously upset not only the economy, but also the souls of Venezuelans.

[Question] Then what does the left mean to you?

[Answer] To me, being on the left at this time in the world implies contesting a certain social system which favors or gives privileges to groups that have accumulated material profits in the society and powers of all kinds (political, cultural, etc.), to the detriment of the majority of people. But in addition, it contests the supposed alternative which, claiming to reject the former, has been constructed in part of the world, and which nevertheless is creating new kinds of alienation, new kinds of injustices and new kinds of inequalities; apart from the fact that, in some concrete aspects relating to education, health, etc., some accomplishments can be shown, a few of them even spectacular. To me, what currently constitutes the pith, the core of a position for social change is to take on that challenge, which is two-headed. And I believe that this is the most important challenge that we who aspire to a different social order at this end of the 20th century have.

MEP's Involution

[Question] Teodoro, the New Alternative and MEP [People's Electoral Movement], to name a few leftist groups, are making the same proposals that you have made. In other words, they too contest this system; they talk about a new model of society; and they oppose the system established in the USSR. Does this mean that they are part of that same left to which MAS belongs?

[Answer] Well, I have not failed to note (and I have always done so with great pleasure) that among some sectors of the left there has also been a consideration of this issue; and among some of them, theoretical and political progress has occurred that is aimed in this direction. In my book, "Process to the Left," I have not failed to point out how those who at first rose up in a manner that was not only polemical but also bitter and angry against the MAS' positions, years later began to follow in the footsteps that MAS had left. In the New Alternative, I would say there are sectors which (although I am not very familiar with that movement) are participating in a consideration that would lead to an attempt to surmount the limitations of the left. And MEP is an interesting case, because MEP was never part of what we might call the classic left. It was a dissident group from Democratic Action which later, strangely enough, evolved toward positions that are generally leftist, but did so following in the paths of leftist classicism and orthodoxy. And one cannot fail to note how that party has undergone a colossal involution during the course of that process.

[Question] Then you don't consider it wise for MAS to reach a unified agreement with those parties?

[Answer] Look, the problem of the left's unity has actually been serving as an excuse for not thinking. In other words, it is very easy to explain all of the left's problems by saying that it is not united, whereas what is involved is prompting a very deep reflection that will enable us to understand why we have not managed to progress beyond a certain ceiling that the left has had; a ceiling that cannot be broken by responding with the naive stupidity with which some do so, claiming that to combine the various fragments of the left would suffice for us to break through the ceiling. I shall even give you a recent example. All the different sectors of the left (classic and non-classic) were together in the 1979 municipal elections, and they did not bring about any progress. Hence, unity per se means nothing.

What the People Do Not Understand

[Question] Nevertheless, what the man in the street asks of the left is that it offer him a victorious ticket capable of breaking the backbone of the two major parties in Venezuela...

[Answer] I realize that it is difficult for common sense to accept the idea that, "well, if everyone is part of the same universe, why not act together?" Well, that common sense has been contradicted by events. Even the most recent Venezuelan electoral experience serves to demonstrate that unity per se has no magic power.

[Question] But the fact is that there was no unity of the left, Teodoro...

[Answer] One of the groups, the one formed around Rangel, described itself as such, and introduced itself as "unity." However, it did not merely introduce itself as "unity"; but, if we thought that unity per se had magic powers, the electorate could have said: "This is unity; everyone is here; we shall go ahead on this side." But it did not. If that did not occur, it is because, obviously, unity per se has no magic ability; or, in any event, the division of the left is not the factor whereby we can explain the problems that, at least, a force such as MAS is having in progressing.

The Anti-Communist Blackmail

[Question] And what are those problems which, in your view, the left has met with in progressing?

[Answer] I consider all the problems starting with MAS. All of my recent life, until now, has been devoted to trying to participate in devising a policy that would make it possible to break through that "ceiling," but not by addressing the situation in a simplistic manner. On the contrary, to me, since I have spent years saying it, we (I am referring to MAS) shall never be able to communicate successfully with the country, we shall never be able to consolidate our

expansion which, up until now, has been an accordion-type expansion, broadening during an election period and later becoming considerably narrower if, among other factors, including those of an organizational type and those associated with social involvement, we do not establish in a completely clear way the democratic, libertarian nature, independent of any world power center, of this movement to which we belong. In my view, unfortunately, this type of identity for the movement is not sufficiently clear in the country; and that dimness in the Venezuelans' perception of MAS allows us to easily become victims of anti-communist blackmail.

[Question] Look, Teodoro, most Venezuelans certainly do not have the ability to distinguish among all those differences that you make in the types of lefts. We also know that, in the last elections, there was no real unity among the lefts, and that the unity represented by Jose Vicente Rangel was no more than an electoral trick to win votes; because neither MAS nor MIR [Movement of the Revolutionary Left] participated in that group. Therefore, I find it surprising that you should use that argument, especially when, during the election campaign, you wore yourself out repeating that MAS and MIR were the most significant forces of the Venezuelan left. So, the electorate has not yet been offered a serious unified ticket. The differences among the left are so slight (especially when you have just confirmed your status as a leftist and a socialist) that most people do not perceive the differences; and that is why they demand consistency and a strong option for power.

[Answer] Well, that is why I have said there are two lefts. First, I would like to remind you that, on one occasion, common sense did find a ticket on which all of the leftist groups, including us, were united. And that fact did not bring about any increase in the vote. In other words, it was clearly shown that unity per se cannot solve any problem. It is my view that, so that we might be able to open ourselves toward the country and become attuned to it, we must offer a plan capable of meeting deepseated aspirations, but deepseated aspirations that will never be identified with a proposition that is perceived as that of giving Venezuela dictatorships, or subordinating it to any power.

Why Are We on the Left?

[Question] Then if you know how harmful it is for Venezuelans to become associated with those totalitarian systems, why do you insist on continuing to identify yourself with the left? Why not take a courageous step that would remove you from that "other world," as you yourself have described it, and that would make it possible to evoke the people's confidence in the MAS plan?

[Answer] Because it is an objective fact; and it seems to me absolutely pointless to dispute whether or not we are on the left. That really seems to me to be a waste of time. The fact is that the general perception, the history and the background that we have put us on the left. The essential problem is to define, on the basis of a leftist position, an entire plan for the transformation of the society wherein the democratic component, the rejection of any type of totalitarianism, dictatorship, oppression, political monopoly

of a single party, regimentation of culture and the definitive rejection of the Soviet model are in themselves clearly evident to Venezuelans, who would say: "All right, these people are proposing a change to me, but they are not proposing to me that they alone will hold the power, that there will not be freedom of speech here, that here poets will have to write the verses as the government tells them; they are not proposing to me the super-state control of life; they are not proposing to me concentration camps or insane asylums for those who disagree with them; they are not proposing to me the inclusion of our country in the USSR's military or strategic plans." This policy must be marked by a position of accompanying the people in their struggles, of participating in them and of acting as a factor for popular protest that will organize all these sentiments and all this activity. In short, it is an entire behavior that will distinguish us from that other left.

MAS' Behavior

[Question] Teodoro, you have talked about behavior and political practice as elements for distinction among the Venezuelan left. What difference is there between the behavior of MAS, MEP, New Alternative and MIR, to give just a few examples?

[Answer] Look, when you ask me about "behavior," to what are you referring?

[Question] To what you have been referring...

[Answer] Well, I was referring to a theoretical and political behavior. The description that I gave to you, which I shall not repeat, is a behavior. That distinguishes us from the classic Marxist-Leninist stance.

[Question] That very description that you have made of democratic socialism is shared by MEP, New Alternative and even MIR itself.

[Answer] It would please me very much if that were so, because then the left could begin to be one.

I have said that when it becomes possible here in Venezuela to make widespread progress, and a break from that Marxist-Leninist classicism, then the country will discover a general left, with different nuances at the most, but one that will eventually represent a proposition for change without trauma. Would that it were so; but, for the present, as we are talking at this moment, and because I am a leader of MAS and do not consider myself a leader of the entire left, I do not have the pretension of thinking that I am the entire left, by any means. I repeat, in my view the proposition with which I am associated must, among other things, show a clear difference from the other left which, apart from the fact that there are in it some elements evolving toward positions similar to ours, something that I note with great pleasure and take into account for the future, is a group that represents for the country one of the burdens interfering with our progress.

My Marxist Training

[Question] Teodoro, do you still describe yourself as a Marxist?

[Answer] I am a person with a Marxist training, and for that very reason I can tell you that Marxism-Leninism, as such, is an invention of Stalin's, which has neither theoretical pertinence, political pertinence nor historical pertinence.

The fact that one claims to have a Marxist training is almost a part of contemporary culture. I think that anyone is well aware of it; in this modern world, like that character of Moliere's who used to speak in prose without knowing it, there are too many people who are Marxist in their very way of talking, without realizing it; because Marxism is a part of the structure of thinking in contemporary social science. Now, my own Marxist training has led me to discover that Marxism, contrary to what has been claimed for years and years, does not give a response to all human and divine problems. On the contrary, it has too many inadequacies; in the work of Karl Marx himself there are immense gaps, first because there is no response to anthropological problems, because it lacks a theory on the state, and because much of the Marxist economic theory does not give a response to the problems of the contemporary economy.

Frustrated and Embittered

[Question] One very clear fact is inferred from the recent elections: that no element of the Venezuelan left went beyond the traditional ceiling of that sector. This electoral process became a kind of "primary" of the left, in which each leftist voted this time for his preferred ticket; but the country as a whole continued to be absent from that plan. How do you feel personally about those results?

[Answer] Frustrated, baffled and embittered, if you want me to tell you the truth sincerely and completely, very embittered; mainly because one has spent his entire life struggling. Now, these results are frustrating, not because they represent a setback in comparison with our position in the previous processes. These results, in comparison with us ourselves, simply represent a stagnation. No, they are frustrating because, unlike all the rest of the groups in the other left, which are satisfied with their results because they did not aspire to anything more, nor did the country ever ascribe any other chances to them, we did aspire to far more and, as all the polls have shown, for many months the country harbored the hope of being able to vote for us. So, the frustration stems from the fact of knowing that, for months, we were reaching the heights and, finally, during the last 2 weeks of the campaign, this opportunity was curtailed.

Victims of the Polls?

[Question] Don't you think that you were victims of a manipulation by the pollsters?

[Answer] Of course I have read that same rumor going around, which would be very funny if one did not know that it was dictated by the most obsessive rancor. Based on that story, we would have to agree that all the poll-taking companies made a deal to give the figures that finally resulted for all the parties, and also made a deal to invent MAS' figures. It is obvious that this did not occur, and it is also obvious that the very reliability of the social sciences would not allow anyone to imagine such stupidity. No, MAS underwent a considerable expansion in its policy.

[Question] And how could we prove that?

[Answer] Through the magnitude of its functions, the people's sentiments, and the nation's expectations; and, strangely enough, it was proven by the fact that, a month after the elections, MAS is virtually the main topic of national political commentaries. Review the press and the magazines, and you will find that there is no political force, not even the phenomenon of COPEI [Social Christian Party], as a defeated party, that occupies more space than MAS. So this means that something has happened, and that is what frustrates and embitters us, and for which we are seeking an explanation.

The Defeat

[Question] To what essential factors do you attribute that defeat?

[Answer] That is what we are investigating; but I could cite some things that seem obvious to me, constituting a first explanation of the matter: very shallow social roots, very serious organizational shortcomings, a policy that has shown serious signs of inconsistency, publicly displayed, and serious problems that still remain unresolved. You might also find some major flaws in our very election campaign. All this combined must prompt us to a very serious and thorough consideration, which we are fortunately making, with a reflective, calm spirit.

Unity

[Question] Will MAS continue alone in the political arena, or will it from now on establish a unified policy with other sectors which are leftist elements and which agree with you?

[Answer] Look, in my view MAS must decide very clearly what it is, and propose itself as an element for convergence with other sectors of national life which, at present, have not decided where they stand, so as to progress toward social change.

'Teodorism'

[Question] Carlos Raul Hernandez and Alexis Ortiz have made a series of comments on the nature of MAS. Do you agree with those statements?

[Answer] Look, in MAS there are many heads and many opinions. One can agree with and differ from views expressed by any comrade.

[Question] They request that MAS no longer describe itself as a party of the left, as a Marxist party, and that it not even regard itself as involved in the area of socialism. We would like to know your opinion on this topic.

[Answer] First, I want to explain to you that MAS does not describe itself as a Marxist party. Furthermore, I should tell you that I have just said what I think in an unusually long interview; so I suppose that the readers will have sufficient good judgment to know what I think.

[Question] We understand that these individuals that I have mentioned to you are part of the movement that you head within MAS and that we know as "Teodorismo."

[Answer] No, no, no; I am not at present a member of any movement within MAS; which does not mean that I could not become a member, or have not been a member of a movement in the past. And, as I told you, one can agree or not agree with any comrade.

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