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GRENADA

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THE GRENADA NEWSLETTER

For The Week Ending 21st February 1976.

COCOA PRODUCERS DEMAND MEETING.

In a letter handed, on February 16th, to Sir Dennis Henry, Chairman of the Government appointed Cocoa Industry Board, a group of Cocoa Producers "....demand that a meeting be held on Thursday 18th March 1976 at 9.00 am .....", and these Cocoa Producers state this demand is made "in accordance with the provisions of the Cocoa Industry Ordinance number 30 of 1964 and its subsequent amendments ....."

In their letter to Sir Dennis, these producers have set out the Agenda they wish to discuss at the meeting they have demanded, and this includes Reports and Balance Sheets of the Cocoa Industry Board for 1973 and 1974. The Agenda also includes loans from Commercial and Development Banks.

Prominent on the Agenda is a Motion pointing out that the Grenada Cocoa Association "has been, in effect, under Government of Grenada control from 1969", and that "Cocoa Growers have been denied participation in the affairs of the Association from the date of Government control."

The Motion also states that "....net prices received by growers from the Grenada Cocoa Industry Board have been the lowest received by Cocoa Growers in the English Speaking Caribbean." Comparative figures are given for Grenada, Trinidad and St.Lucia together with Grenada's annual exports of cocoa from 1969 to 1974, and the Motion claims that, on these figures, Grenada's Cocoa Growers lost EC$6 million compared with Trinidad's Cocoa Growers and EC$7 million compared with St.Lucia's Cocoa Growers.

"Whereas this General Meeting condemns, deplores and abhors the wantc disregard and utter contempt of Cocoa Growers by the Government nominated Board and the Government of Grenada", the Motion says, "and whereas Cocoa Producers have no confidence in any Board in which the Elected Members are not in control, be it resolved that this General Meeting calls upon Government to have the Cocoa Industry Ordinance in operation whereby the Elected Mumbers must be in control."

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Sir Dennis Henry, Chairman of the Government appointed Cocoa Board, in a telephone interview with the Grenada "Torchlight" newspaper, is reported as saying he has "nothing to hide", and that he is willing and ready at all times to give the fullest information possible concerning the operations of the Board. Sir Dennis said that, as one of the biggest producers in the Cocoa Industry, and a believer in cooperatives, he looked forward to the day when the Industry will, once more, be run by producers who are elected rather then nominated.

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STRIKE ACTION AVERTED.

A joint General Meeting of the Civil Service Association (CSA), the Grenada Union of Teachers (GUT) and the Technical & Allied Workers Union (TAWU), held at the Civil Service Centre on Saturday February 15th, decided that the three Unions, each of which represents a catagory of Government employee, would go on strike against the Government of Grenada if Government failed "to commence and continue negotiation" with the three Unions by Wednesday February 18th.

This action stems from an approach made last year to the Minister of Finance, Mr George Hosten, for a salaries revision, and from the Minister's promise im November last, to deal with this matter "as soon as possible". In a letter dated January 21st, Mr Hosten was given until February 5th to respond, and, no reply having been received from him, the three Unions scheduled the joint General Meeting for February 14th to consider what action should be taken.

This General Meeting, which was attended by some 500 members of the three Unions, decided by an overwhelming majority to take strike action commencing Monday February 23rd if Government failed to meet the deadline of February 18th for commencement of negotiations.

Early this week, however, CSA, TAWU and GUT received letters (dated 16th February) from the Minister of Finance advising that a negotiating team has been appointed and proposing that negotiations start on Wednesday February 25th. In the light of this development, the Executives of the three Unions met in joint session and, in a letter dated February 18th, advised the Minister of their acceptance of his proposal and their decision to revoke the strike decision.

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The letter to the Minister said, however, that the Executives of the Unions wished to convey to the Minister that members of the Unions "have only reluctantly decided this after much persuasion ....., because the membership is aware of, and therefore concerned with, the subtle manner in which they have again been defied."

The letter said also, "....the 'boiling' still continues and it is therefore their great hope that Government will stand by its undertaking and a speedy, justifiable and amicable agreement on conditions be the outcome."

A ten-man team has been appointed by TAWU,CSA and GUT for the negotiations and these are Mr Curtis Stewart, President TAWU, Mr Robert Robinson, President CSA, Mr Persival Louison, President GUT, Mr Raymond Noel, Project Manager Central Water Commission, Mr Vernon Buxo, Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Mr Christopher Williams, Principal of Waltham Junior Secondary School Mr Sebastian Arnold, Principal of St.David's Roman Catholic School, Mr Michael Regis, Accountant, Cable & Wireless (W I) Ltd, and Mr E M A Welsh, Executive Secretary CSA. It has been announced that an economist will accompany the team.

The negotiating team appointed to represent Government is Mr George Hosten, Minister of Finance, Mr Franklin Dolland, Minister of Labour, Hon. A O Forsythe, Minister of State in the Ministry of Communication & Works, Mr Curtis Strachan, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Labour, Mr Lauriston Wilson Jr., Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, Mrs Elma Thorne, Chief Personnel Officer and a representative from the Legal Department.

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SUBSCRIBERS TO BOYCOTT PHONE COMPANY.

At a well attended meeting of the Grenada Consumers Association held on February 15th, it was decided that, in the face of what the Associations calls, "the hostile attitude of the Grenada Telephone Company", private telephone subscribers will withhold payment of phone rents until the Company is willing to resume negotiations with the Association relative to increased phone rents introduced last December 1st.

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This development came about as a result of a letter written by the Phone Company to the Association, advising the Association that there would be no purpose in holding a meeting with them. The Company referred the Association to Government and said it would entertain no more correspondence on the subject.

In an exclusive interview with NEWSLETTER, Mr Danny Williams, Chairman of the Committee appointed by the Association to deal with the increased phone rents, disclosed that the Association has the signatures of more than 50% of the private phone subscribers in Grenada. Mr Williams said these subscribers have undertaken to discontinue paying their phone rents until the Company cooperates with the Association.

According to Mr Williams, the cooperation the Association wants is that the Company should revert to the old phone rents immediately and should supply the Association with a breakdown of revenue and expenditure for the year 1975.

"some subscribers have already stopped paying rents", said Mr Williams, "and all subscribers are now being told to withhold payment to the Company with immediate effect."

Efforts to reach Mr Ivor O'Brien, Manager of the Company, for comment, were unsuccessful. The Grenada Telephone Company is a joint effort of the Government of Grenada and Continental Telephones Ltd.

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PHONE COMPANY CONSIDERS RETRENCHMENT.

A source close to the Grenada Telephone Company confirmed today (21st) that talks have been held with the Technical & Allied Workers Union (TAWU), the bargaining Body for workers at the Company, with a view to retrenchment of workers.

The source said the contemplated retrenchment was as a result of the unsatisfactory economic state of the Company, but, it was stated, nothing has yet been decided and there are to be further discussions with TAWU.

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CWC WORKERS PAID

The sit-down strike of Government workers at the Central Water Commission ended on February 13th when these workers received salaries and wages for January.

The strike was called on February 11th when the workers (who are represented by the Technical & Allied Workers Union) took this industrial action in protest against Government's failure to pay wages and salaries for January. It is reported that over 150 workers were involved.

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HIGH COMMISSIONER PRESENTS CREDENTIALS.

On Thursday February 5th, Dr Barakat Ahmad, Indian High Commissioner, presented his credentials to Governor General Sir Leo deGale.
Dr Ahmad is also accredited to Barbados and Trinidad & Tobago.

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CRUISE LINER CALLS.

Cruise liner calls at Grenada for the weeks ending January 31st, February 7th and February 14th were as follows :-

Date		Ship	Passengers	
January	25th	Stella Oceanis	162	
		Neptune	97	
	27th	Cunard Adventurer	469	
		Jason	78	Week Ending
	28th	Amerikanis	568	January 31st
	29th	Brittanis	1051	
		Delphi	579	3,811
	31st	Statendam	807	
February	3rd	Cunard Adventurer	571	
		Jason	222	
	4th	Istra	390	Week Ending
		Amerikanis	542	February 7th
	6th	Italia	390	
		Sun Viking	730	2,845
February	8th	Neptune	109	
	10th	Cunard Adventurer	553	
		Jason	120	
	11th	Amerikanis	579	Week Ending
	12th	Brittanis	871	February 14th.
		Europa	416	
		Delphi	634	
	14th	Doric	667	3,949

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BANANA SHIPMENTS

On February 18th, the S S "Geestland" loaded 14,260 boxes of bananas weighing 429,043 lbs and valued at EC$34,323.00 . Thirty boxes of fruit were rejected.

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