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THE GRENADA NEWSLETTER

For The Week Ending October 29th 1977.

SALARIES REVISION REPORT SOON

The report of the Commission appointed to review the salaries of all Government monthly paid employees is expected to be submitted to Government shortly. In an exclusive interview in Grenada with NEWSLETTER on Tuesday (25th), this was disclosed by Mr Eldon Maturin, Alternate Chairman of the Commission and Tax Administration Advisor attached to the CARICOM Secretariat.

The matter of the revision of salaries of Government monthly paid employees dates back to November 1975. At that time, Mr George Hosten, Minister of Finance, promised the Civil Service Association (CSA), the Grenada Union of Teachers (GUT) and the Technical & Allied Workers Union (TAWU) (the three trade unions representing Government monthly paid workers), that he would deal with the revision of salaries "as soon as possible".

Commencing in January 1976, increasing pressure was put on Government to commence negotiations and, when Government failed to act, strike action was decided upon at a meeting of the unions on February 14th. Two days later, however, Government advised the unions that a negotiating team had been appointed and discussions began on February 25th.

The demand made by the unions was divided into three sections. For the salary range up to EC$4,884.00 per annum, an increase of 65% was asked. The salary range above EC$4,884.00 and under EC$8,628.00 should be increased by 50%, and the salary range above EC$8,628.00 by 40%, these increases to be effective from January 1st 1974.

Counter Offer

Government counter offered with increases spread over three years commencing January 1st 1975. For the lowest catagory specified by the unions, 12½% was offered for the first year, 12½% for the second and 15% for the third. In the middle income group, the offer was 10%, 10% and 15%, while the top income bracket was offered 7½%, 7½% and 10%.

The unions rejected Government's offer and, after several meetings,

Government proposed that the whole matter of salaries revision should be referred to a Salaries Commission. There were further discussions and the unions finally agreed to the appointment of the Commission when Government agreed to pay an interim salary increase. This increase was at the rate of 25% for the lowest salary earners, 15% for the middle bracket and 10% for the top bracket. It was agreed that these interim increases would take effect from January 1st 1975, and the findings of the Salaries Commission would be implemented from January 1st 1977.

The salaries of Government monthly paid employees first reflected the interim increases at the end of April 1976, and it was reported that these increases amounted to over EC$200,000.00 per month. Back pay due over the 15 months from January 1975 to March 1976 was paid in two installments. The first, covering the period January to December 1975, was paid in June 1976 and is reported to have amounted to about EC$2 million. The balance was paid four months later.

On October 26th 1976, CSA, GUT and TAWU wrote the Minister of Finance, Mr George Hosten, expressing concern over the delay in the commencement of sittings of the Salaries Revision Commission which had been set up by Government. This Commission was headed by Mr John Tyndall of the CARICOM Secretariat, the other members being Senator James Manswell, Executive Secretary of the Trinidad & Tobago Public Services Association, and Mr Edwy Talma, former Deputy Prime Minister of Barbados. In their letter to Mr Hosten, the unions demanded that the Commission commence sittings no later than November 12th 1976.

Unwise

However, the Commission did not begin its sittings until 11th December 1976 and, at that time, Mr Eldon Maturin, the Alternate Chairman of the Commission, said it would be unwise to promise the Commission's Report in time for implementation on April 1st 1977. With the volume of work which had to be done, Mr Maturin thought July 1st 1977 was a more realistic date. The 'volume of work' referred to by the Alternate Chairman was , under the terms of reference of the Commission, the submission of recommendations for the revision of salaries of

Government monthly paid employees and recommendations for the restructuring of the Civil Service.

Speaking to NEWSLETTER on Tuesday (25th), Mr Maturin said the Commission's Report is "more or less complete". "What I am doing at the moment", he said, "is straightening out some figures in the hope that, when my collesgues arrive, we can all agree and then hand in the Report."

With reference to the restructuring of the Civil Service, the Alternate Chairman said no attempt had been made to undertake a complete restructuring. "What we have done", he said, "is to recommend the removal of anomalies and the modernisation of the Civil Service."

Mr Maturin, who is now a guest at the Holiday Inn, said this is his last visit to Grenada in connection with the Salaries Revision Commission. "The finishing touches are now being put to the Report", he said, "and it will definitely be handed in to Government before I leave."

NEWSLETTER checked with Mr Maturin today (28th) and learned that Senator James Manswell is expected to arrive in Grenada tomorrow. Mr Maturin said the third member of the Commission, Mr Talma, is expected at a later date, but he did not know exactly when.

(849 words)

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GO-SLOW NEARS END (?)

As this copy is being prepared for press (am 28th), the signs are that the industrial action taken by the Commercial & Industrial Workers Union (CIWU) against the firm of Jonas Browne & Hubbard Ltd may soon be called off.

This industrial action took the form of a go-slow and it has been in effect since October 21st and affected all departments of the Company including two supermarkets, shipping agency, hardware and lumber departments and dress shop. After negotiations became deadlocked, CIWU took this action to support its claim for a cost of living allowance.

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This dispute appeared to be about to be resolved late last week when both the Labour Commissioner, Mr Robert Robinson, and the Company's negotiating team gained the impression that the union had accepted an offer put forward by the Company at a meeting held under the chairmanship of Mr Robinson.

This offer was that salary grades up to EC$250.00 per month should have a cost of living allowance of 15%, those between EC$251.00 and EC$350.00 would have an allowance of 10%, and those above EC$350.00, 7½%. These allowances would be paid with effect from 1st October 1976.

According to both the Labour Commissioner and Mr Fred Toppin, Managing Director of Jonas Browne & Hubbard Ltd, this offer was accepted by CIWU's negotiating team and the only matter in dispute was the date at which a further 2½% would be added to the allowance in the three salary grades. The Company was willing to pay this additional percentage from November 1st 1977 while the union wanted it introduced from October 1st 1977.

In an interview on Monday (24th), Mr Eric Pierre, President of CIWU, told NEWSLETTER that his negotiating tean had never accepted this offer from the Company and he had informed both the Company and the Labour Commissioner of this. Mr Pierre said the Company's offer for the lowest and the highest salary grades was acceptable, but in the middle grade, where the Company had offered 10%, the union insisted on 12½%. Further, the union was not prepared to accept the additional 2½% from 1st November; it remained firm on its stand that the additional percentage should be paid from October 1st.

The go-slow continued throughout this week and, as a result of the efforts of the Labour Commissioner, the following compromise was agreed to yesterday (27th) by both CIWU and the Company. Effective October 1st 1976, salary grades up to EC$250.00 a month will receive a cost of living allowance of 15%, and the allowance for salary grades from EC$251.00 to EC$350.00 will be at the rate of 12½%. A new salary grade of EC$351.00 to EC$600.00 has been added, and the allowance for this grade will

be at 7½%, while those over EC$600.00 will receive an allowance at the rate of 5%. An additional increase of 2½% will be paid to all grades with effect from November 1st 1977.

The dispute has not yet come to an end, however, because three employees were dismissed since the go-slow began and CIWU demands that they be reinstated before the industrial action is called off. Mr Eric Pierre, President of CIWU, told NEWSLETTER yesterday (27th) that the union's stand is that the workers must be reinstated first and then justification for the dismissals can be discussed.

Contacted today (28th), Mr Fred Toppin, Managing Director of the Company, said he was meeting with his Directors today and that the Company's position will be conveyed to the Labour Commissioner.

(589 words)

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SENATOR KNIGHT DENIES CHARGES

In an interview on Trinidad & Tobago Television (TTT), seen in Grenada on Tuesday (25th), Senator Derek Knight, Minister without Portfolio in the Grenada Government, denied that officers of the Grenada Defence Force have been sent to Chile for training. "This is absolutely untrue", he said.

Senator Knight was replying to charges made by Mr Maurice Bishop, Leader of the Opposition in the Grenada House of Representatives, in an interview on TTT, and Senator Knight said that, contrary to what Mr Bishop has said, there is no widespread concern in Grenada over the Grenada Government's connection with the Chile Government. Senator Knight said that Chile was merely one of several countries with which Grenada is arranging aid and the arrangements with Chile happened to be the first to be finalised.

Reference was made to a shipment of "unspecified cargo" which arrived in Grenada on a Chilean Army plane on October 2nd. Senator Knight said that if the Grenada Government wished to import anything it didn't have to hide to do so, and he hinted that what had been received was a shipment of life-jackets from Chile for Grenadian fishermen.

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Senator Knight was also asked about the charge that the Grenada Government is harbouring a criminal wanted by the United States Government. The Senator said he knew the person to whom reference was being made, but he said he had seen no court authority to prove that this person is wanted in the USA. Senator Knight said also that this matter is being handled at diplomatic level.

In this interview on TTT, Senator Knight was also asked about reports of violations of human rights in Grenada. Senator Knight said there were no violations of human rights in Grenada and he said the records of the Grenada Courts prove this. The Senator said that people made allegations about violations of human rights but, when it came to providing proof, they were unable to do so. In this connection he referred to the recent Election Petition brought by a member of one of the Opposition Parties against a member of the political party to which Senator Knight belongs. The Senator said that the charge of bribery had been made initially but that no evidence had been brought to prove this and the Election Petition had failed.

Senator Knight said there is not always a full appreciation of what is meant by 'human rights', and he felt that this term included the provision of shelter, clothing and hospital facilities.

In an exclusive interviewed with Mr Maurice Bishop today (27th), the Leader of the Opposition expressed surprise to NEWSLETTER that Senator Knight had denied that officers of the Grenada Defence Force have been sent to Chile for training. "Even the Commander of the Defence Force has not denied this", he said, "and if Senator Knight does not know this fact, then he must be the only person who is ignorant of it."

On the subject of cargo received by the Chilean Army plane, Mr Bishop said photographs had been taken of the shipment and the cases had been clearly marked 'Medical Supplies'. Checks with the Medical Authorities disclosed that no supplies had been received, said Mr Bishop, and he thought it strange that, while

nobody in authority could say what was in the boxes, Senator Knight was implying that it was life-jackets.

The Leader of the Opposition said the person being "harboured by the Grenada Government" is Eugene Zeek who now goes under the name of John Clancy. "Zeek is wanted by the FBI under a charge of Fraud by Wire", said Mr Bishop, "and Senator Knight has seen the 'wanted notice' which the FBI put out on March 5th 1974. Senator Knight also knows that Attorney General Desmond Christian lost his job because he wished to take action against Zeek, and it would be interesting to know how Senator Knight would explain away the unconstitutional interference of his Government with the duties of Grenada's highest ranking Law Officer."

Concerning the violations of human rights in Grenada, Mr Bishop said these had been too well documented by the Duffus Commissioners and otherwise to need further comment. He described Senator Knight's reference to the Election Petition as "a red herring." "After all", said Mr Bishop, "there was nothing in the pleadings of the Election Petition which had anything to do with human rights."

Reverting to the matter of Grenada's connections with Chile, Mr Bishop said it was significant that Senator Knight had not denied that the Grenada Government is forging links with the Chilean Government of General Pinochet. "In the face of the world-wide condemnation of the oppressively criminal nature of the Pinochet Government", said the Leader of the Opposition, "what concerns right thinking people is that the close, concrete and military links of the Gairy Government with the Pinochet regime must hold sinister consequences for Grenada and the Caribbean."

(807 words)

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EXCHANGE CONTROL - ALLOWANCES INCREASED

According to a notice dated October 17th and appearing in the Government Gazette of October 21st, allowances made for currency for travel and for gifts have been increased with immediate effect.

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For business travel, the allowance,which used to be EC$4,000.00 per person per year,has been increased to EC$7,000.00 or the foreign exchange equivalent. The allowance for vacation travel is up from EC$1,500.00 to EC$3,000.00 or the foreign exchange equivalent per person per year, and the allowance for gifts has been doubled from EC$250.00 to EC$500.00 or the foreign exchange equivalent per person per year.

(105 words)

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GRENADA REPRESENTED AT CEC MEETING

The Grenada Employers Federation (GEF) was represented by its President, Mrs Angela Smith, at the 12th Interim Meeting of the Caribbean Employers Confederation (CEC) which took place in Barbados from 19th to 21st October.

Presenting a Report to the meeting on behalf of her organisation, Mrs Smith gave details of the industrial dispute between the Grenada Shipping Agents and the Seamen & Waterfront Workers Union over the award of a cost of living allowance.

Mrs Smith also advised the meeting that there is now draft legislation for the establishment of a Port Authority in Grenada. The GEF expressed the view that a Port Authority will have an effect on industrial relationships on the docks, but she said the details of the legislation will have to be published before the extent of the effect can be known.

In an exclusive interview with NEWSLETTER today (27th), Mrs Smith said she had also reported to CEC that, in Grenada, there was an increase in activity in the industrial field.

Referring to discussions at the CEC meeting, Mrs Smith said members had deplored the lack of some Governments' interest in consulting employer organisations and trade unions when considering labour legislation. She said the opinion was expressed that this action runs contrary to the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) philosophy of tripartism which the CEC supports.

"The Grenada Government has now accepted in principle that

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Grenada should become a member of ILO", said Mrs Smith, "and we look forward to this as it will ensure support for tripartism in Grenada."

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DEATH PENALTY SEMINAR

Grenada will be represented at a Caribbean Seminar on the Abolition of the Death Penalty, which seminar will be held in Trinidad on 7th and 8th November.

This seminar is sponsored by the Caribbean Human Rights and Legal Aid Company in conjunction with Amnesty International and the National Committee for the Abolition of the Death Penalty, and delegates will meet at Pax Guest House at Mount St.Benedict in Trinidad. This seminar will report to a Global Conference on the same subject to be held in Stockholm on December 10th and 11th 1977.

Delegates representing Grenada at the seminar in Trinidad will be Messrs Lloyd Noel and Alister Hughes.

(108 words)

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MARGARET BLUNDELL DIES

According to a release from the University Centre of the University of the West Indies (UWI) in St.Georges, Miss Margaret Spencer Blundell BA (Oxon) MA (Cantab), former Extra Mural Tutor of the UWI for Grenada, died suddenly in the United Kingdom. It is reported that the death took place on October 5th and the body was cremated on October 15th.

Miss Blundell was UWI Resident Tutor in Grenada from 1960 to 1970 and the UWI release says it was through her "instrumentality that T A Marryshow's home, 'The Rosary', was purchased by the University of the West Indies to be maintained as a memorial to this great statesman, and the headquarters of the UWI in Grenada."

Miss Blundell was active in the field of the Fine and Creative Arts, and one of her 'discoveries' was Mr Fitzroy Harrack who, through her efforts, obtained financial support to study at the Jamaica School of Art. Mr Harrack is now a tutor at that institution.

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HENDON POLICEMAN VISITS

A policeman from the Hendon Police Training School in England is now in Grenada on a travel bursary given by the Commission for Racial Equality. This policeman is Inspector Geoff Budworth and the travel bursary is one given to people who deal with immigrants and who could benefit by having a personal understanding of the Westindian way of life.

Inspector Budworth, who commands a section of the Hendon Training School, spent 17 days in Trinidad and arrived in Grenada on Monday (24th). He leaves for St.Vincent on Tuesday (1st).

(88 words)

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LATE NEWS !!!!

There has been no solution today to the dispute between the Commercial & Industrial Workers Union (CIWU) and Messrs Jonas Browne & Hubbard Ltd over the reinstatement of workers dismissed during the go-slow.

Interviewed by telephone this morning, Mr Fred Toppin, Managing Director of the Company, said there had been no agreement on the question of reinstatement of workers. "The Company's position is that this is a separate issue", he said, "and the main issue must be settled first."

Mr Toppin said that, if the Company were to enter into discussion with the union now on the question of reinstatement of workers and while the go-slow is still in effect, the Company would be negotiating under duress. The Managing Director said the Company's position had been set out in a letter to the union today (28th), and a copy of that letter has been sent to the Labour Commissioner.

At a General Meeting of the Seamen & Waterfront Workers Union (SWWU), the position taken by Jonas Browne & Hubbard Ltd was condemned, and a letter calling for the immediate reinstatement of the dismissed workers has been sent to the Company. A spokesman for SWWU told NEWSLETTER that the Executive of SWWU will meet this afternoon to discuss the matter further.

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Mr Eric Pierre, President of CIWU, told NEWSLETTER this afternoon that two more workers were dismissed by the Company today. "This makes a total of five dismissed workers since the go-slow began", he said, "four from the Food Fair Supermarket and one from the Motor Department, and my union is firm that, unless these workers are reinstated, the industrial action against the Company will continue."

(266 words)

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ANTI-CHILE SIGNS

In the suburbs and outskirts of St.Georges a great number of anti-Chile signs appeared this morning (28th) painted up on walls and on the surface of streets.

It would appear that these signs were painted up during last night and some of them, seen by NEWSLETTER, read "Break With Chile", "Gremada Yes! Chile No !", "Chileans Get out !" and "Butchers from Chile Get Out Now !"

During this morning, a team of plain clothes policemen was employed painting out these signs. Photographing these signs and the painting out operation, NEWSLETTER was subject to abuse and threats from these policemen; there was no violence.

(102 words)

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CRUISE LINER CALLS

During the week ending October 22nd, only one cruise liner called at Grenada. This was the "Cunard Countess" which berthed on Tuesday 18th with 681 passengers.

(26 words)

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BANANA SHIPMENTS

The S S "Geestar" sailed on October 25th with 20,332 boxes of bananas weighing 601,137 lbs. The price paid by Geest Industries to the Grenada Banana CoOperative Society (GBCS) is not yet available but the price paid to growers by GBCS was 15 EC¢ per pound. This was on the weight of bananas received at the boxing plants but this figure is not yet available.

The weight shipped by "Geesttide" on October 18 was 623,803 lbs,

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and the weight at the boxing plants was 643,623 lbs, making a difference of 19,820 lbs between the boxing plant weight and the shipped weight.

Alister Hughes
28th October 1977