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THE MAURICE BISHOP MURDER TRIAL

Selwyn Strachan, one of the accused in the Maurice Bishop murder trial, told Chief Justice Dennis Byron and the jury on September 22nd that, in the aftermath of the October 1983 "invasion", it was not possible for a "voluntary statement" to be taken from any Grenadian.

Together with 17 other accused, Strachan faces eleven counts of murder relative to the deaths, on 19th October 1983, of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop, members of his Cabinet and others.

"Any statement taken from any Grenadian at that time cannot be voluntary", he said, "even if that person was not tortured, even if they didn't get a scratch. Those statements were taken by foreign troops occupying the country and everyone was under duress."

Strachan said , in the case of all the statements taken from the accused, including the one taken from him, these were extracted under torture.

"All of us were tortured", he said, "I was not present with the others but, because of my experience, I am prepared to make a definitive statement"

Before the trial started, Strachan said, two of these statements, those of accused Colville McBarnette and Calistus Bernard, were published in a United States newspaper, "The Long Island Newsday".

Clippings were sent home by Grenadians, thus prejudicing the minds of potential jurors against the accused, he said, and this further indicates the role of the United states.

"This shows clearly that the United States is not only running our country", he said, "but is running the trial"

Strachan referred to the recently passed Grenada legislation providing for alternate jurors, and said this is "more clear evidence of the American fingerprint".

Alternate jurors are a feature of the United States Courts, Strachan said, but are not provided for anywhere within the British legal system.

The Grenada Legislature passed the Alternate Jurors Act, he said, following American advice and over the objections of the then Chief Justice, Sir Archibald Nedd and the then Attorney General, Carlysle Payne.

When Strachan continued his statement on September 23rd, completing his sixth day presenting his defence, he accused the Prosecution of failing to perform its proper role.

"There have been many attempts by the Prosecution to be unfair", he said. "Their role is to lay all the facts before the Court and allow the jury to come to a conclusion. They should not see themselves as adversaries trying to win a case, but this has been the opposite in this case."

Strachan said he is "deeply appalled" by the way the Prosecution has failed to call certain witnesses. And, in this connection, he referred to Prosecution witness, Errol George whose evidence, Strachan said, contradicts the evidence of other Prosecution witnesses.

With reference to Trinidad barrister Mr Karl Hudson-Phillips Q C, Leader of the Prosecution, Strachan accused him of fabricating evidence and said "retribution must catch up with him". The evidence brought forward by Mr Hudson-Phillips is insufficient to convict anyone, Strachan said, but Hudson-Phillips hopes it will be accepted.

"In typical Trinidadian con-man style", Strachan said, "he is trying to fool Grenadians."

SEE **TRIAL** PAGE 2

IN THIS ISSUE

	Page
The Maurice Bishop Murder Trial....	1
Raeburn Gets His "Specs".....	3
U.S. Reporter Excluded From Trial.	5
Act 1/1985 Motion Adjourned Indefinately.....	6
The Ramsay Contempt Case.....	6
Blaize Seeks Alternate Financing.....	8
Jones: U.S. Resolution Not About Sanctions.....	8
Caribbean Action Committee Visits.....	9
NNP Holds "Patch-Up" Meeting.....	10
Drug Avoidance Committee Launched.....	11
News Shorts.....	11

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COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY MARIA MOORS CABOT AWARD 1984

TRIAL FROM PAGE 1

Strachan told the jury that, although statements made by the accused from the Dock are unsworn, they must be given proper attention and, he said, the fact that persons give sworn evidence does not mean they are telling the truth.

"When people come into Court and kiss the Bible", he said, "people can be fooled. Some people go into the witness box, swear on the Bible and then tell the most blatant lies"

On the following day, September 24th, Strachan, who was one of Maurice Bishop's Cabinet Ministers told the jury they are called upon to make the most important decision in their lives.

"You have been called upon to decide the fate of 18 Grenadians accused of this deed", he said "whether we will live or die"

Strachan started his unsworn defence statement from the dock on Friday September 17th, and, on this, his last day, totalled 25 hours and 24 minutes on his feet, falling short by just 21 minutes of the record of the longest speaker from the dock before him, former Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard.

During this last day, Strachan continued to attack the testimony of Prosecution witnesses and told the jury they must take into consideration the unsworn statements made by the accused from the dock.

"The Prosecution has failed to prove their case", he said, "and the burden has been transferred to the 12 Grenadians who sit on the jury"

Following Strachan, three accused remained to make their defence, Cecil Prime, Raeburn Nelson and Phyllis Coard, wife of Bernard Coard, former Deputy Prime Minister, and she began her unsworn defence statement on September 25th.

Wearing a dress with large red flowers against a white background and with a matching headband, Mrs Coard, the only woman among the accused, told the Court she is not being adequately fed at Richmond Hill Prison and has lost weight.

Her breakfast and lunch was being sent in to her by friends, she said. She contended that, although she is entitled to have her dinner supplied by the Prison, she gets nothing to eat in the evenings.

"I think you are aware of the erratic and irrational character of the Commissioner of Prisons", she told Chief Justice Dennis Byron.

Mrs Coard said a deliberate effort is bring made to subject her to malnourishment so that she will be unable to make a proper defence of herself. Because of this, she said, she had had to shorten the statement she wants to make to the Court because, while she was not ill, she did not have the strength to stand for long periods.

There was a great closeness between her family and the families of Maurice Bishop and Unison Whiteman, she said.

"Their children used to spend days at our home with our children', Mrs Coard said, "and they called us 'Uncle Bernard" and 'Aunty Phyl' while our children called him 'Uncle Maurice'"

And Phyllis Coard charged the United States with cruelty against these children of Bishop and Whiteman.

"The greatest cruelty inflicted by the United States", she said, "is to spread the lie that we, the parents of their close friends, are responsible for the death of their parents".

If she is denied a free and fair trial in which she would call witnesses to reveal the truth, she said, those witnesses will still testify to Grenadians.

She said the United States is witholding documents which she and her co-defendants need to establish their innocence but, if those documents are not given up by Washington, they will still be tendered in the highest Court, the Court of History.

Cecil Prime began his unsworn statement from the dock on the afternoon on September 26th when Phyllis Coard completed her address.

On the following day, September 27..th, he told the Court that, on 19th October 1983, when Fort Rupert was taken over by hundreds of demonstrators, another of the accused, former Major Christopher Stroude of the Peoples Revolutionary Army (PRA), ordered all soldiers to be disarmed in order to avoid a confrontation with armed civilians.

Prime, himself a former PRA officer, said he was at Fort Rupert when he saw the crowd jump over the entrance gate. Soldiers were disarmed by the demonstrators, he said, the Guard Room was overrun and, in addition to the weapons they took from the soldiers, the demonstrators took the machine gun and rocket launcher which were at that point.

Stroude was with him and other soldiers trying, unsuccessfully, to get the people to leave the fort, he said, and the situation was tense as armed civilians could be seen in the crowd.

"Major Stroude, the most senior officer present, decided to take full responsibility", Prime said, "and he ordered the soldiers to put away their guns in order to save a confrontation"

Prime said it was difficult to decide what to do as the situation took the PRA by surprise.

"We were prepared for an invasion", he said, "not a civiliandemonstration"

Referring to the United States "invasion" of Grenada in October 1983, Prime said the U S was very surprised at the high quality of the PRA.

"The Yankees know what kind of Army we had", he said, "They expected to take the country in 6 hours, but it took them 8 days with helicopter gunships, bombers, heavy artillery and 20,000 troops"

When Prime continued his statement on Monday 29th September, after the weekend, he expressed the opinion as a "professional soldier" that, the soldiers who went to Fort Rupert on 19th October 1983 did not intend to kill anyone.

He was in the Operations Room at Fort Rupert

SEE **TRIAL** PAGE 3

TRIAL FROM PAGE 2

with Maurice Bishop when that room was hit by a projectile which smashed a 45 centimeter hole in the wall, he said. According to Prime, that projectile tore off the buttocks of a woman in the room and went out of the wall on the other side without exploding.

"There are two types of projectile". Prime said, "the defensive type and the offensive type, and what hit that room was the defensive type".

If the soldiers had wanted to kill, he said, they would have used an "offensive projectile" which would have exploded, killing everyone in the room. Prime said it was obvious that what had been used was a "defensive projectile" which would just pierce the wall and not explode.

Following Prime, the last of the accused, Raeburn Nelson, made his defence statement and, during his address, members of the jury and persons in the public gallery were seen to be crying.

This took place as Nelson told the Court that a small group in the prison had "kept ourselves together".

RAEBURN GETS HIS 'SPECS'

Raeburn Nelson, one of the accused in the Maurice Bishop Murder Trial, is now wearing spectacles for the first time in his life.

One day during the week ending Saturday 4th October, Nelson told the Court he was not seeing properly and expressed the hope that a "Good Samaritan" would come to his assistance.

"Two months ago I had my eyes tested", he said, "and I have been told that my spectacles are ready and waiting for me, but I just dont have the money to pay for them"

The matter, quite irrelevant to the trial, nevertheless, went into the official Court record and, no doubt, was forgotten by nearly everybody.

But, a "Good Samaritan" remembered.

On the following Monday, October 6th Nelson appeared in the dock wearing a brand new pair of spectacles.

"I dont know who paid for them and sent them to me", he told the Court, "but I am very grateful"

Recounting the episode, Raeburn told Chief Justice Byron that, one afternoon after Court had adjourned and he was being locked in his cell, he was surprised when a Prison Officer handed him the spectacles.

The Officer told him that, when the spectacles had been delivered at the jail, the bearer had been unable to give any information as to who his benefactor is.

His family, his mother and his fiancee are as much in the dark, Raeburn said, and they have no idea who could have paid for the spectacles and sent them to him.

"I wish, through Your Lordship, to publicly express thanks to that individual or persons for responding to that worthy and noble cause"

"And I should say, Your Lordship,", he concluded "it has assisted in relaxing my eyes, and, indeed, Your Lordship looks rather new this morning" **(210)**

He wanted to make it clear, he said, that he has always been an active member of the Berean Church and did not turn to the Bible because he found himself in trouble and in jail.

"I cannot quote law to you", he told Mr Byron, "but I can quote scripture to support my case"

Raeburn said the Book of Isaiah relates the story of a captive people. This part of the Bible is an inspiration to him, he said, and he started to tell of something a woman had told him one day as he was coming into the Court-room.

But he never completed the telling because, at that point, he broke down. With tears streaming down his face, his voice choked off and he remained with downcast head for about three minutes before he could continue.

When he was able to go on, Raeburn said he would "skip out" what the woman had said to him but, by that time, his red eyes and sniffling nose were matched by some members of the jury and by persons in the public gallery.

When Nelson continued his address on September 30th, he may have contradicted defence statements made by two other accused.

Former General of the Peoples Revolutionary Army (PRA), Hudson Austin, said that, on 19th October 1983, the day on which Prime Minister Bishop and others were killed, he went to Fort Frederick. His stay there had been for only a moment, he said, merely to speak to the sergeant on duty, and then he went home.

Raeburn, who was a PRA Second Lieutenant, says he was on duty at Fort Frederick on that day and saw Austin arrive. He did not, however, say that the General stayed for only a moment but inferred that the General had remained at the Fort.

He saw Austin arrive, Raeburn said, dressed in ceremonial green pants, brown shirt and a green cap and, some 20 minutes after Austin's arrival, he saw Bernard Coard arrive.

Coard said, in his statement that, when he got to Fort Frederick, he was taken into a tunnel, from which location, sometime later, he heard gunfire which he learned had come from Fort Rupert on the other side of St Georges harbour.

Nelson does not say that Coard was taken into a

SEE TRIAL PAGE 4

TRIAL FROM PAGE 3

tunnel. When Coard arrived, he says, Coard went up to the top level of Fort Frederick.

As for his own part in the events at Fort Rupert, Nelson says that, on orders from Lieutenant Colonel Ewart Layne (one of the 18 accused in this trial), he commanded an armoured car which he took to Fort Rupert, driving some distance behind two other armoured cars also bound for the same destination.

The first two cars, Nelson said, had been ordered to recapture the Fort but his instructions were to deploy his men around the Fort.

Most of the shooting was over when he went up to the Fort to find out what had happened, he said, and, while returning to his men, he had heard a burst of automatic rifle fire.

Later, an hysterical soldier told him Bishop and others had been killed.

"I doubted him", Nelson said, "but I could see something in his face"

Speaking slowly and softly, with many pauses, Nelson said he had gone back to Fort Rupert and had seen the bodies of Bishop and two others on the parade square wrapped in blankets.

"I was stunned", he said, "I could say nothing. I just had to turn my back on such a sight"

Continuing his address on October 1st, Raeburn attacked the Prosecution's evidence against him.

Of the 31 Prosecution witnesses, he said, only 6 had referred to him and, of these, one had been the policeman who had arrested him and the evidence of another was merely that the witness had known Raeburn for 5 years.

Nelson called the evidence of Prime Minister Bishop's former bodyguard, Cletus St Paul, "circumstantial, vague and uncorroborated." St Paul said he had seen Nelson leave Fort Frederick in an armoured truck after certain Army officers had spoken to Nelson.

St Paul had not heard what these officers had told him, Nelson said, and so cannot testify that he (Nelson) had been given orders to kill anyone.

In his evidence, Fire Chief Sheridon Williams said when he had asked Nelson, "What about Noel ?", referring to Vincent Noel, one of the murder victims who was then lying on the ground wounded, Nelson had given him a "dont bother" sign.

Nelson says he does not remember this but points out that, at that time, Noel was being attended to by a qualified nurse, Merlin Rullow.

"In those circumstances", Nelson said, "it was in order for me to tell Inspector Williams not to bother"

Nurse Merlyn Rullow was then giving Noel water from a "coke" bottle and her evidence is that, when she was through, Nelson asked her for the bottle which was then half full.

It was Nelson's argument that there is nothing criminal in asking for the bottle and Rullow had not testified that he, Nelson, used the bottle offensively against Noel.

Nelson referred to the evidence of Prosecution witness Beverley Ann Charles who told the Court she had seen Nelson stop accused Calistus Bernard when Bernard had put the muzzle of his rifle against Noel's temple.

"Rather than killing people at Fort Rupert that day as I am accused", Nelson said, "I was saving a life".

With the close of Raeburn Nelson's address on October 2nd, all the accused had completed their defence statements which began on July 16th when the first of the accused, Andy Mitchell, began his statement from the dock.

The trial then entered a new phase, placing Chief Justice Byron in the position where he had to rule on an unusual point of law.

Mr Byron told the accused, they then had the right to address the jury but accused Ewart Layne asked what the procedure would be if the accused decided not to exercise that right.

The accused contended that, if they did not address the jury, then there was nothing to which the Prosecution must reply, but Mr Hudson-Phillips did not agree.

The Prosecution has the right, at all times, to reply, he told the court, but a question hung on the word "reply".

"What has been labelled 'unsworn defence statements from the Dock' were, in fact, addresses to the jury', the Prosecution Leader said, "and the Prosecution has a right of reply to these."

This brought heated shouts of protest as several of the accused jumped to their feet, and accused Selwyn Strachan charged that Mr Hudson-Phillips was in contempt of Court.

The Judge reserved his ruling until Monday October 6th and, on that day, there was a brief sitting before the Chief Justice adjourned again until Wednesday October 8th.

But, when the Court sat on the 8th, the Chief Justice announced that the purpose for which the Court had been adjourned from Monday 6th until Wednesday 8th had not been achieved.

That purpose had been for the 18 accused to attend the contempt case then being heard against Jamaican barrister Mr Ian Ramsay, and in which they were likely to be called as witnesses, but, the Chief Justice said there was no certainty as to when the accused would be required.

"Additionally", Mr Byron said, "The Court of Appeal sits on Monday (October 13th), and in deference to that Court, I now adjourn until next Tuesday (14th)

On October 14th, before he gave his ruling as to whether the Prosecution would be allowed to

SEE **TRIAL** PAGE 5

TRIAL FROM PAGE 4

"reply" if the accused did not exercise their right to address the jury, the Chief Justice heard arguments from two of the accused.

Selwyn Strachan said it was unfair for the Prosecution to seek to reply to something which had never been said. What the accused had done, he said, was to make unsworn statements from the dock and there was no right of reply to that.

In seeking to address the jury, Leon Cornwall said, the Prosecution was trying to "patch up a case of fabrications"

If the accused exercised their right to address the jury, it was possible that that exercise would take the trial into next year, he said, and he was concerned about the jurors who had been empanneled since April 18th and sequestered away from their families since April 29th.

Prosecution Leader, Mr Hudson-Phillips, told the Court the Prosecution wanted to reply because of a number of personal statements and remarks the accused had made about members of the Prosecution team and about Prosecution witnesses.

There had also been allegations of conspiracy by the Prosecution, he said, and that too had to be addressed.

Delivering his ruling, the Chief Justice said he had formed the opinion that the right of reply should be exercised.

"I would have had to consider whether I should have solicited the assistance of (Prosecution) Counsel in this regard if Counsel had not exercised their rights", he said. "All I would like to say is that Counsel for the Prosecution are expected to deal with issues relevant to these proceedings"

Mr Byron said the accused would have the opportunity on the following day to address the jury if they wished to.

Before adjourning the Chief Justice took a number of points from the accused, including a request that they be supplied with a transcript of the evidence given by Prosecution witnesses.

Except for Raeburn Nelson, none of the accused have been present in Court to hear this evidence. Chanting and clapping in a disruptive fashion on each occasion when witnesses took the stand, they have had to be taken from the Court-room before the trial could proceed.

But, when the Court sat on October 15th, Mr Byron ruled that it is neither required in law or by convention that the accused be supplied with the transcripts before the end of the trial.

He said that, because of their conduct, the accused had been taken out of the Court when the witnesses were testifying but, when they were brought back into Court they had been given, and had refused, the opportunity to have the evidence read to them.

In his ruling, the Chief Justice said the accused had made it clear in their statements from the dock that they have a detailed understanding of the Prosecution's evidence.

Bernard Coard, Selwyn Strachan, Leon Cornwall and Ewart Layne all protested against the ruling. They denied having anything more than newspaper reports of the evidence, and Coard asked the Chief Justice if he could live with his conscience after making that ruling.

Giving the accused time to consider whether or not they would address the jury, Mr Byron adjourned the Court until Monday October 20th. **(3671)**

U.S. REPORTER EXCLUDED FROM TRIAL

A reporter from the United States of America, covering the Maurice Bishop Murder Trial, has had her pass to the Court-room press-box revoked and was asked to leave the Court-room.

The incident took place on September 26th when Ms. Doris Kitson, said to be attached to radio station WBAI in New York, was called out of the Court-room and spoken to by Mr Jerry Romain, Head of the Government Information Service.

Shortly after, Ms. Kitson came back into the Court-room, gathered her note books and stormed out.

NEWSLETTER asked Mr Romain why Ms. Kitson's pass had been revoked.

"We have had to withdraw her pass for several reasons", he said, "the chief one being her refusal to be guided by the regulations governing the Court"

Mr Romain said Ms. Kitson refused to stop communicating with the accused in the dock and, on one occasion, had been heard holding a conversation with the accused in Spanish.

Additionally, he said, the security forces had had to confiscate a camera from Ms Kitson, equipment which is not allowed in the Court-room.

"Before action was taken against her", Mr Romain said," Ms. Kitson was warned on several occasions about her behaviour but continued to flout the regulations of the Court."

Ms. Kitson, who has made several visits to Grenada over the past few months to cover the Trial, left the island on the same day.

ACT 1/1985 MOTION POSTPONED INDEFINITELY

On September 24th, Mr Justice James Patterson fixed "for mention", on September 29th, a Motion filed by the Defence in the Maurice Bishop Murder Trial. and, on that date, adjourned the matter without fixing a date for hearing.

The Motion challenges the legality of Act 1/1985 which, passed by the New National Government of Prime Minister Herbert Blaize, validates all Peoples Revolutionary Government laws, including one creating the Grenada Supreme Court

According to the Defence, because the Speaker of the House of Representatives did not issue a "Certificate" as required by the Constitution, Act 1/1985 is illegal.

After asking for and receiving permission to make certain amendments to the Motion, Defence Counsel Mr Ian Ramsay asked Mr Patterson that the Motion come before him again on 3rd October "for mention", that is, with the possibility of fixing a date for hearing.

But Prosecution Leader, Mr Karl Hudson-Phillips Q C, said a copy of a letter written to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and relative to the matter had been received. That letter, he said, is dated 16th September 1986 and it was written by a British barrister on behalf of the accused.

Mr Hudson-Phillips said the letter was written in view of the fact it has been established that the Speaker of the House of Representatives did not issue a Certificate with reference to Act 1/1985.

The letter, Mr Hudson-Phillips said, sought special leave for a re-hearing of a Petition the Defence had tried, unsuccessfully, to have the matter heard by the Privy Council in July 1985.

Queried by Mr Patterson, Mr Ramsay said he knew of the request to the Privy Council and that was why he had asked that the matter come up "for mention" on October 3rd as he hoped to have more information by then.

Mr Patterson agreed with Mr Hudson-Phillips' submission that the Privy Council had been asked to hear the same matter as was before his Court and he adjourned the matter for a day to be fixed convenient to the Court.

THE RAMSAY CONTEMPT CASE

There was a sharp verbal exchange in the High Court, on September 24th, between Mr Justice James Patterson and Mr Ian Ramsay, prominent Jamaican barrister who has been associated with the Maurice Bishop Murder Trial.

Mr Ramsay is before the Court on a charge of Contempt of Court brought by the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), Mrs Velma Hylton.

The charge, filed on May 14th, arises out of allegations that Mr Ramsay referred to The Maurice Bishop Murder Trial as a "supposed trial", a "so called trial" and a "travesty of justice".

It is alleged also that, in a letter to the Jamaica "Gleaner" newspaper, Mr Ramsay referred to the Grenada Supreme Court as a "kangaroo court".

The history of the case is that it first came before Mr Patterson on May 22nd when it was set down for hearing on 22nd July for the convenience of Mr Ramsay's Counsel, Mr Clarence Hughes, who was not in Grenada then.

But when Mr Hughes appeared on 22nd July, he said he had not understood the case would be argued on that day and Mr Patterson then fixed September 16th for the hearing.

A new date of September 24th was fixed when Mr Patterson was not in the State on the 16th, but, when Mr Ramsay appeared on the 24th, he pointed out that the date had been fixed unilaterally and his Counsel, who are all resident outside Grenada, had been unable to attend.

Mr Ramsay said no "attributable fault" could be attached to him, the first convenient dates for his Counsel were the second week in December or the first week in January and he asked for an adjournment in keeping with this.

"Today's date was fixed unilaterally", he said, "and it has been totally inconvenient for my Counsel.

Ruling on the matter, Mr Patterson recounted the adjournments which had already been made and said Mr Ramsay's application for a further adjournment was unreasonable. The Judge said he would rise for 15 minutes only and would return at the end of that time to begin the hearing.

But Mr Ramsay was immediately on his feet angrily protesting this decision as unreasonable in the face of the fact that the fixing of the date had not been done in consultation with him. And he remained on his feet protesting in the face of two or three requests from the Judge that he take his seat.

When he did sit down it was to get up again immediately saying "I will take my seat but I rise again to make an application"

Queried by Mr Patterson, Mr Ramsay said his application was for a reconsideration of the ruling that the hearing start in 15 minutes.

"We have been taken completely by surprise in this", he told Mr Patterson, "even if you had fixed it for tomorrow, it would have been more reasonable as that would have given me a chance to get somebody to represent me"

SEE CONTEMPT PAGE 7

CONTEMPT FROM PAGE 6

Reconsidering, Mr Patterson fixed the hearing for Monday October 6th, but, on October 2nd, a spokesman for Mr Ramsay told NEWSLETTER the Jamaican barrister would ask for a further adjournment.

The spokesman said Mr Ramsay would tell the Judge he is not ready to proceed. The date for hearing had been fixed unilaterally, the spokesman said, and Mr Ramsay's Counsel, who are all resident outside Grenada, could not be here for that date.

The spokesman said also that two prominent United States lawyers would be in the High Court on Monday October 6th when the case was called before Mr Patterson.

Former Attorney General in President Lindon Johnson's administration, Mr Ramsey Clarke, and Mr F Lee Bailey, who was Defence Counsel in the Patricia Hurst case, would attend the hearing as observers, the spokesman said.

"Of all the Counsel engaged", the spokesman said, "only Mr Elliot Mottley, Q.C of Barbados can manage to come, and Mr Dudley Thompson Q C of Jamaica, who was not originally engaged, is also coming"

The spokesman said the barristers engaged and unable to come are Mr Karl Rattray Q C, Vice President of The Jamaica Bar Association, Mr P J Patterson, Q C, Vice President of the Jamaica Peoples National Party, Mr Frank Phipps Q C and Dr Winston McCalla of the Jamaica Bar and Mr Clarence Hughes, Senior Counsel, of the Guyana Bar.

The spokesman for Mr Ramsay said there is a "convention" that contempt charges arising out of a case be postponed until the case has been heard. In this connection, the spokesman said, Mr Patterson would be asked to defer the contempt hearings until the Maurice Bishop Murder Trial has been closed.

Messrs Clarke and Bailey did attend as observers when the Court sat on October 6th, at which time Mr Ramsay was represented by Messrs Mottley and Thompson who explained the status of the Defence.

"We are not Counsel appearing in the Contempt case", Mr Thompson told Mr Patterson, "we are here to ask for a postponement of th case"

Mr Thompson told the Court that, in addition to the fact that it would be inconvenient for Mr Ramsay's Counsel to appear in the case on any date before next January, there is an overriding urgency for postponement.

The Contempt case, he said, arises out of the Maurice Bishop Murder Trial, and, the Contempt case should not be heard before the close of the trial as matters arising in the Contempt case could prejudice the outcome of the Trial.

Supporting Mr Thompson, Mr Mottley said if Mr Ramsay's alleged contempt has done harm to the hearing of the Trial, then, that harm will be emphasised if the Contempt case is heard before the Trial has been concluded.

DPP Mrs Hylton opposed the application for postponement. The charge against Mr Ramsay, she said, does not affect only the Maurice Bishop Murder Trial.

"The Court should not yield to the application for postponement", she said, "because not just one case is affected but the bringing into disrepute of the entire administration of justice"

On the following day, October 7th, Judge Patterson refused application for a postponement of the hearing.

Delivering his ruling, Mr Patterson accepted the argument of Director of Public Prosecutions, Mrs Velma Hylton, that the charges against Mr Ramsay affect more than the Maurice Bishop Murder Trial.

"The wider interests of justice will not be served by an indeterminate postponement", Mr Patterson said, "And these interests do not refer only to the defendant but also to the State. The hearing will proceed"

Objecting to this, Ramsay charged that his constitutional rights had been violated by the Judge's ruling.

Under the Constitution, he said, he is entitled to have Counsel of his choice, and Mr Patterson's ruling deprived him of opportunity to have his Counsel present. This forces him to defend himself, Mr Ramsay said, and puts him in the position highlighted by the saying that, "A lawyer who defends himself has a fool for a client".

Mr Ramsay said Judge Patterson could find time to hear the Contempt case but, nevertheless, the Judge had informed him recently that a Motion which he (Ramsay) has before Mr Patterson's Court could not be heard until after December 18th. That Motion, Mr Ramsay said, challenges Act 1/1985 on which base rests the legality of Grenada's entire judicial system.

"In the hierachy of importance", Mr Ramsay said, "I fail to see how a Motion with reference to Act 1/1985 falls into a secondary position"

He reminded Mr Patterson that Counsel engaged to defend him had been ready to start the case on September 16th. Judge Patterson's absence from the island on that date had prevented a start and, without reference to him or his Counsel, a new, inconvenient date had been fixed.

"The Court ought to take some responsibility for the fact that, for the Court's convenience, the case did not start on the 16th", he said, "thereby leading to the present situation"

Continuing his arguments on the following day, October 8th, Mr Ramsay emphasised the point that he and his Counsel had been ready to start on September 16th but Judge Patterson had been out of the island.

"We are not back in the old days when the judge, because he had an eight course lunch to attend, puts the case off to a new date", he said, "and the accused must be there, without question, for the new date"

SEE **CONTEMPT** PAGE 8

CONTEMPT FROM PAGE 7

DPP Mrs Velma Hylton, traced the history of the case through its adjournment since it was filed on 14th May last, and argued that there is no basis for Ramsay's claim that he had been denied the right to Counsel of his choice.

"Your Lordship has done more than you are required to do to ensure that the defendant has had the opportunity to engage Counsel", she told the Judge.

In quoting new legal authorities to support his arguments, Mr Ramsay said that Mr Patterson, having heard these authorities, would now be justified in overruling his first decision not to grant the adjournment.

"Or if you do not want to be put in that position", he suggested to Mr Patterson, "you could pass the matter to another Court for decision"

When the Court sat on October 9th, Mr Patterson said he would not grant the postponement and this led to a heated exchange with Mr Ramsay.

The clash began when Mr Patterson refused to hear further submissions from Mr Ramsay.

"What do you mean you don't want to hear me further ?", Mr Ramsay demanded angrilly. "There are a number of points I have not dealt with yet"

"The case will continue", Mr Patterson retorted. "I dont wish to hear you further. The application for an adjournment is refused."

Mr Ramsay continued to protest, demanding an adjournment until the following afternoon so he could file an appeal against Mr Patterson's ruling. And he called upon the Judge to disqualify himself on the grounds of bias.

This Mr Patterson refused to do, calling on Mr Ramsay to take his seat. The lawyer sat but stood again immediately saying he had a further application to make, whereupon Mr Patterson adjourned the sitting.

Returning to the courtroom in 10 minutes, he accepted a suggestion from Prosecution Leader, Mr Karl Hudson-Phillips Q C, and adjourned until the following morning.

When Mr Patterson sat on Friday October 10th, Mr Ramsay advised the Court that he had filed an appeal against the Judges's refusal to grant a postponement and he argued that, since the appeal was on a constitutional ground, it should be heard before the contempt charge.

Prosecution Leader, Mr Hudson-Phillips, told Mr Patterson the Court of Appeal would meet after the weekend, on Monday 13th, when it could deal with Mr Ramsay's appeal and, against this background, Judge Patterson adjourned the sitting until the afternoon of the 13th.

When Mr Patterson sat again at that time, he gave a severe warning to members of the public who, he said, had made approaches to him on behalf of one of the parties to Mr Ramsay's Motion.

"Perhaps those who did it are not aware of the seriousness of it", he said. "If any member of the public contemplates such approaches again, and they are within reach of this jurisdiction, they will be visited with condigned (severe and well-deserved) punishment."

In a short sitting, the Court heard that the Court of Appeal would not deal with Mr Ramsay's appeal until Friday 17th October, and Judge Patterson fixed the hearing of the Contempt case for that day.

On that day, however, the Appeal Court Judgement was not yet ready and Mr Patterson adjourned hearing of the Contempt case until Monday October 27th. **(2059)**

BLAIZE SEEKS ALTERNATE FINANCING

Prime Minister Herbert Blaize is looking for alternate sources of financing to "bridge the gap" and keep the Grenada economy on a sound footing.

Mr Blaize disclosed this on October 10th in his weekly broadcast and said he had taken advantage of the recent International Monetary Fund and World Bank Meeting in Washington to seek those alternate sources.

"I do not want the countries already offering aid to feel Grenada is depending on them alone", he said.

The Prime Minister singled out national debt repayments and low commodity prices as two of the main common problems affecting Grenada and other developing countries.

In his 1986 Budget, Mr Blaize introduced fiscal reforms which appear to be one of the problems

SEE FINANCING PAGE 9

JONES: U.N. RESOLUTION NOT ABOUT SANCTIONS

Minister of External Affairs, Mr Ben Jones, has denied the correctness of critical press reports that, in the United Nations General assembly on Saturday 20th October, Grenada abstained from voting on a Resolution calling for sanctions against South Africa.

A Government Information Service (GIS) press release of Monday 22nd October says :-

"The Minister of External Affairs, Honourable Ben Jones, said today the Resolution on which Grenada abstained from voting in the United Nations General Assembly on Saturday had nothing to do with sanctions against South Africa"

A similar denial from Grenada's Ambassador to the United Nations, Dr Lamuel Stanislaus, was published by GIS on the same day.

"Dr Lamuel Stanislaus ....said yesterday the

SEE SANCTIONS PAGE 9

FINANCING FRO PAGE 8

faced by the New National Party Government

In addition to Personal and Company Income Tax, Export Duty, Stamp Duty, the International Airport Levy, Excise Tax, Hotel Occupancy Tax, Consumption Duty, Package Tax, Radio and TV Licenses and nine other taxes were all abolished.

"Under the new structure", the Prime Minister said in his Budget speech last February "only the Common External Tariff the Foreign Exchange Tax (at a sharply reduced rate), and the Motor Vehicles Purchase Tax are retained."

Mr Blaize said then that four new taxes would be introduced. There were the Value Added Tax which imposed a 20% consumption duty on all goods and services, a 2% Land Value Tax, a Company Levy of 10% of gross profit and a Petrol Tax of 50 cents per imperial gallon.

The Land Value Tax has not yet been introduced and, following protests and recommendations from the Business Community, the Company Levy has been replaced by the Business Levy Act which defines more clearly the term "gross profit"

The Petrol Tax is in operation as is the Value Added Tax (VAT), which has had several amendments, and which allows for certain "zero-rated" basic items on which no tax is paid. But VAT is causing Government concern.

Last April, it was disclosed in the House of Representatives that VAT is expected to result in an EC$10 million dollar loss to Government this year before the effect of the fiscal changes "balances out".

Informed sources told NEWSLETTER the problem is one of collection and Mr Fred Toppin, Managing Director of one of the island's largest firms, has expressed the opinion that administering the tax will be difficult.

"To monitor stock and sales", he said, "Government will need a staff equal to all the Commercial Houses in Grenada"

The House of Representatives, earlier this year, authorised the Minister of Finance to borrow up to EC$7 million from the Commercial Banks to meet current "house-keeping" requirements. **(487)**

SANCTIONS FROM PAGE 8

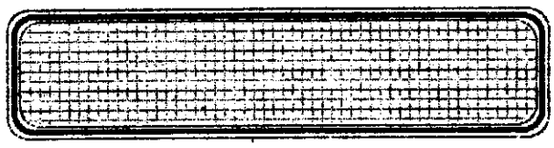
Resolution on which his country abstained from voting on Saturday had nothing to do with sanctions against South Africa", the release says. "He said the resolution dealt with the question of Namibia and singled out a 'friendly country by name' for condemnation, and implied the use of force to ensure the independence of Namibia"

However, under the caption, "Special Session Asks Sanctions Against South Africa", the "United Nations Week In Review", for the period September 20th to 26th, says the General Assembly of September 20th "overwhelmingly urged the Security Council to impose mandatory sanctions against South Africa for its occupation of Southwest Africa, also known as Namibia".

The "Review" said the Resolution before the Assembly, in addition to calling for an urgent meeting of the Security Council to adopt "comprehensive mandatory sanctions" against South Africa, endorses armed struggle as a means to Namibian independence, recognises the Southwest African Peoples Organisation (SWAPO) as the sole representative of the Namibian people and calls for military assistance to frontline states.

According to the "Review", the United States objected to many points in the Resolution and, at the request of Malawi and Togo, who objected to the U.S. being singled out in the draft, references to the United States and its Southern African policies were deleted in procedural votes.

The Resolution was passed on a vote of 126 to 0 with 24 abstentions, and came at the end of a four-day Special Session called because of the lack of movement in gaining independence for Namibia, despite the plan set out by the Security Council in 1978 in resolution 435.



CARIBBEAN ACTION COMMITTEE VISITS

A former Head of the United States Embassy inGrenada, Ambassador Loren E Lawrence, visited Grenada in September as a member of a delegation from the Florida Association of Voluntary Agencies for Caribbean Action (FAVA/CA).

Leader of the delegation, Ms. Marjorie R Turnbull, FAVA/CA Project Manager, said at a press conference on September 26th that her organisation, founded in 1982, is one of the results of a decision of the Florida Government.

"Our Government recognised that Florida is essentially a Caribbean State", she said, "We are directly affected by what happens in the Caribbean and we must be good neighbours"

FAVA/CA is a non-governmental non-profit membership organisation formed to provide assistance to Florida's Caribbean neighbours, and at the press conference, Ambassador Lawrence said the visit to Grenada was in response to a request from the Grenada Government.

"We are here on a contract basis with the United States Agency ForInternational Development (USAID)", he said, "as a result of the Government seeking assistance on the question of young people"

Ms. Turnbull said the purpose of the visit was to talk to as many people as possible in an effort to identify youth problems and a report is to be submitted to USAID.

SEE COMMITTEE PAGE 10

NNP HOLDS "PATCH-UP" MEETING

The Executive of the New National Party of Prime Minister Herbert Blaize held a two day meeting on October 12th and 13th reported to be an attempt to patch up differences and improve the Party's image.

NNP is a merger of three political parties which got together to fight the 1984 General Elections. Those parties were led by Prime Minister Herbert Blaize, Minister of Labour Dr Francis Alexis and Minister of Agriculture Mr George Brizan.

Political observers predicted there would be confrontation between Messrs Brizan and Alexis as they vied for leadership of the Party when Mr Blaize, who is nearly 70 years old and not in the best of health, retires.

Evidence of that confrontation was seen last December when, at the NNP Annual Convention, both men were candidates for the post of Deputy Political Leader.

Mr Blaize, in his feature address to the Convention as Political Leader, in what was seen as an attempt to diffuse the situation, suggested a change of the Party's Constitution to allow for two Deputy Political Leaders, but this was not accepted.

In an atmosphere of some tension, Dr Alexis was elected to the post by a narrow margin and it was thought the gap between him and Mr Brizan had widened. More recent events, however, have indicated a surprisingdevelopment.

Public statements by both Dr Alexis and Mr Brizan indicate a growing alliance between the two men in a common front against the Prime Minister.

In what could be a reference to Mr Blaize only, Dr Alexis said no one person is going to be allowed to "mess up" Grenada.

"When decisions are going to be taken about the future of the country", he said, "it must be understood it is not a matter of one man getting up in the morning and deciding to smash up the place."

Mr Brizan has publicly stressed his closeness with Dr Alexis, which closeness, he says, has offended "some people"

"Who has grown too big for their boots", he says, "they better find some other place"

Informed sources say the Alexis/Brizan alliance showed up at the NNP Executive meeting when the Prime Minister asked for an explanation of Dr Alexis' public statement that he (Alexis) and Mr Brizan are going to "democratise" NNP.

It is reported also that Dr Alexis quizzed the Prime Minister on his own remarks that some members of Government are "only on the fringes of the Party".

The NNP Annual Convention will be held before the end of the year and the positions of both the Political Leader and Deputy Political Leader will be voted upon.

Sources close to Dr Alexis declined comment on a report that, at the Convention, he will challenge Mr Blaize for the NNP leadership. **(485)**

COMMITTEE FROM PAGE 9

Interviews had been had with Teachers, Church Leaders, the Chamber of Commerce and with Government, and some of the problems have started to emerge, she said. These include the lack of job opportunities, the need for vocational training, the inability of parents to talk to their children about sex and teenage pregnancy.

The St Vincent Government also made a similar request. The FAVA/CA delegation is responding to it and has found some differences between Grenada and St Vincent on the emphasis attached to various youth problems.

":We did not come down with magic to suddenly identify something no one knew about", Ms. Turnbull said. "Where we can be most useful is in putting into a Report what people are already saying."

The delegation did not come to Grenada to offer assistance, she said, but the Report to USAID will haverecommendations.

Other members of the delegation are Mr Charles P Carbone, Assistant Staff Director, Alcohol, Drug Abuse & Mental Health Programme Office of the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitation Services, and Mr Avery Carter, Community Organiser, Oakland California) Parents in Action. **(401)**

DRUG AVOIDANCE COMMITTEE LAUNCHED

A request from a Grenadian Rastafarian to Prime Minister Herbert Blaize resulted in formation, by Government, of a National Drug Avoidance Committee (NDAC).

This information was given on September 26th by Mr Ben Jones, Acting Prime Minister and Minister for Legal Affairs, as he addressed a workshop organised by the Legal & Policing Sub-Committee of NDAC.

"The point about the danger of the use of drugs was brought home recently when a member of the Rastafarian cult came to the Prime Minister", he said.

The Rasta told Mr Blaize it is a well known fact that the cult uses drugs remedially and for "kicks", Mr Jones said, and, the Rasta continued, while there have been problems with the law, the cult feels capable of "handling the stuff"

"But now", Mr Jones quoted the Rasta as saying, "the brethren are becoming involved in cocaine and they cannot handle it. It is causing them to lose their balance and, as Leader, I am asking the Government to take steps to help us to protect the brethren"

Following that appeal, Mr Jones said, Prime Minister Blaize considered the matter with the result that NDAC was established.

Under the Chairmanship of Minister for Education, Mr George McGuire, NDAC with a membership of 19 drawn from key organisations and individuals, has two sub-committees, Legal & Policing and Education.

At the Legal & Policing sub-committee workshop, papers were presented by Mr Jones, by Commissioner of Police Russel Toppin and by Dr Roger Radix Government's Director of Pyschiatric Services.

In his paper, Commissioner Toppin disclosed that, while the law makes provision for severe penalties for drug traficking, the Courts have not been administering them.

"There are far too many instances where the Police have caught people red-handed with drugs and brought them to Court", he said, "and the penalty is pretty mild"

Mr Toppin said the Police hope to acquire speed boats with which they can patrol the coastline and he believes this will stop much of the drug smuggling which now takes place.

NEWS SHORTS

EEC Grant for Roads

The European Economic Community (EEC) is to make a grant of EC$7.6 million for rehabilitation of approximately 10 miles of road connecting the east coast town of Grenville with the town of Sauteurs on the island's northernmost tip.

An Agreement in this connection was signed on October 14th by Prime Minister Herbert Blaize. Signing on behalf of the EEC was Mr Keith Shaw, EEC Delegate based in Trinidad.

Mitchell At LIAT Meetings

Minister of Civil Aviation, Dr Keith Mitchell, represented Grenada at the Annual General Meeting of LIAT (1974) Ltd held in Barbados on October 17th.

Prior to that meeting, Dr Mitchell attended a LIAT Board of Directors meeting in Barbados on October 16th, and a meeting in St :Lucia of Organisation of East Caribbean States (OECS) Ministers responsible for Civil Aviation.

Williams At Health Ministers Conference

Minister of Health, Mr Danny Williams, represented Grenada at the Eighth Commonwealth Health Ministers Conference in Nassau, The Bahamas, from 13th to 17th October 1986.

The Conference discussed the rising cost of health services, contributions of women to health, the effect of alcohol and tobacco on health, and technicalco-operation.

New Resident British Representative

Mr Graeme Roberts has replaced Mr John Kelly as Resident Representative in Grenada of the British High Commission which has its offices in Barbados.

Before coming to Grenada, Mr Roberts, who arrived in the State on September 20th, was Second Secretary in the Westindian & Atlantic Department of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office in London.

Alexis At Conference Of Small Countries

Dr Francis Alexis, Minister for Labour, represented Grenada at a Conference of "Small Countries" which took place from 23rd September to October 1st in Jersey, Channel Islands, the United Kingdom.

The Conference, which was open to countries of the British Commonwealth with populations of less than 250,000, was attended by delegates from 30 countries.

The Conference agenda included environmental pollution, financial security, drugs, apartheid and parliamentary scrutiny of public spending.

CIDA Makes EC$6 Million Grant For Cocoa

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is to make a grant of EC$6 million over the next five years to implement the "interim

SEE NEWS SHORTS PAGE 12

NEWS SHORTS FROM PAGE 11

phase" of the Cocoa Rehabilitation Project. CIDA is also to provide EC$600,000 for fertilizer imputs.

This was announced in Grenada on October 1st by Mr Peter Hoffman of the Canadian High Commission in Barbados.

Mr Hoffman said this aid is based on commitment of the Grenada Government to follow recommendations of a team of Canadian consultants appointed to study reorganisation of the Cocoa Industry.

Fish Catch Increases

Mr George Brizan, Minister for Agriculture & Fisheries, said at a World Food Day celebration on October 16th that, for the first six months of 1986, the amount of fish landed by Grenadian fishermen showed an increase of 213,000 lbs or 34.4%.

One factor creating this increase, the Minister said, is the increased number of boats purchased by fishermen through Government's loan scheme under which EC$643,000 has already been allocated to 118 fishermen.

According to Mr Brizan, two other factors are the increased number of "long lines" used in fishing and the guaranteed market offered by the Artisanal Fisheries Development Project.

School Of Medicine Survey Shows Success Rate

Graduates of St Georges University School of Medicine now hold licenses to practice medicine in 39 of the 50 United States of America.

According to an announcement from the School, 860 of the School's 1055 graduates between the years 1981 and 1984 responded to a questionnaire, and the resulting survey shows that 546 of the responding graduates were granted 928 licenses, many with standing in more than one State.

Other statistics disclosed by the survey are that graduates of the University hold faculty positions in 22 United States Medical Schools and approximately 25% have been or are presently holding positions as Chief Residents in 119 United States hospitals.

BA To Begin Flights to Grenada Next April

According to the Government Information Service, British Airways (BA) will begin flights to Grenada in April 1987.

BA will fly from London to Grenada via Antigua and Barbados on Saturdays, returning the same day to London.

In a related development, Minister of Civil Aviation, Dr Keith Mitchell has announced that permission has been given to a United States carrier, Skystar International, to operate twice weekly charter flights (Wednesdays and Fridays) between New York and Grenada.

Grenada Wins OECS Basketball Championship

Cabinet has asked Minister of Education, Mr George McGuire, to set up a committee to plan a suitable ceremony to honour the national basketball team which came out top in the recent Organisation of East Caribbean States (OECS) championship.

The national table tennis team, national netball team and Huggins netball team, all of which have been performing well at the international level, are to be honoured at the same time. **(868)**

Alister Hughes

Cynthia Hughes

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Alister & Cynthia Hughes, Journalists
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