



Printed by the Advocate Co., Ltd., Broad St., Bridgetown.

Sunday, January 21, 1951

STAGNATION

BARBADOS is a tiny island, a really tiny island, among thousands of other islands, some tiny, some large in the Atlantic Ocean.

Its population is infinitesimal compared to Jamaica which only has 1,237,063. Yet Barbados with an estimated population of 202,689 cannot on the grounds of its small size and because of the relative small number of people who live here, afford to be churlish to those who offer them benefits nor to spurn chances for economic development.

The British taxpayer by means of the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund, the Barbados taxpayer by means of the Barbados Government and the Canadian Government by the generous provision of skilled engineers have together expended brains and one and a half million dollars to produce at Seawall a runway as good as many and better than most.

The speed with which the Barbados Government took the decision to go ahead with the runway at Seawall is most commendable as Mr. Maurice McGregor Operations Manager of the Overseas Services of Trans-Canada Airlines stressed in an interview with this paper last week.

But, sad to relate, the Government of Barbados have not shown anything like speed in their handling of the bill to aid the hotel industry. Quite the reverse. Less than six months after Trans-Canada Airlines had inaugurated their service to Barbados from Montreal in the late autumn of 1950, representatives of that airline told the public of Barbados in a published statement in the Press that Trans-Canada had to refuse hundreds of passengers who wanted to spend the winter of 1949-1950 in Barbados. At the same period Mr. F. Maurice McGregor told the Public by means of the Advocate that Canadian investors were willing, nay eager, to build a new 100-room hotel in Barbados, provided that the Government of Barbados would introduce legislation which would guarantee them an initial period of freedom from taxes and the right to remove a fair share of their profits from the island.

Canadian investors have a right to expect taxation concessions because almost every other island in the Caribbean is employing "tax free holidays" to induce investors to build hotels in their island and thereby add to its value as a tourist resort. But the Government of Barbados having availed themselves of the generosity of the British taxpayer, the offerings of the Barbadian taxpayer and the skill and resources of Mr. Wilson (that most excellent Canadian engineer provided by a well-wishing Canadian Government) has not considered that the only logical sequence to the bringing of greater numbers of passengers to Barbados is the provision of accommodation for them when they are here.

Seawall airport has been modernised, in so far as the runway and certain other facilities are concerned, at comparatively little expenditure by the Government of Barbados.

Now the opportunity is still being offered of acquiring a new 100-room hotel at no cost whatever to the local taxpayer. There is only one question to be decided by the Barbados Government.

Will it or will it not give the go ahead signal for new hotels to be built here before the island loses many more thousands of Canadian dollars, at a time too when Canadian markets are being re-opened for normal trade?

How can Barbados contrive to maintain its reasonably high standard of living unless it uses every possibility of development that offers? Tourism is God's gift to Barbados. It costs us nothing except our consent to draw on its capital.

And if the present Government of Barbados continues to refuse its consent, the remedy is in our own hands. Let us turn them out of office at the next elections. We can do it with our votes, if we all vote.

REGISTRATION

WHEN adult suffrage was introduced last year, it at once became apparent that the means at present employed for the registration of voters would no longer be adequate to cope with the new influx of persons recently enfranchised. It thus became necessary to evolve some system by which voters could be registered in an efficient and expeditious manner.

The government of Barbados was fortunate in having the recent lessons to be learnt from the Trinidad elections before them and it was their task to attempt to avoid the short-comings which became apparent in the course of the elections in Trinidad.

On Tuesday last the House of Assembly dealt with a Bill of which notice had been given on December 12th and which had been read a first time on that date. The Objects and Reasons of the Bill state: "This Bill seeks to make provision for the registration of all persons entitled to vote at an election of a member of the General Assembly. For this purpose the parishes and City of Bridgetown will be divided into registration districts and lists of voters (which will subsequently become the register of voters) will be prepared for each registration district."

By dividing each electoral area into registration districts, the voters should be enabled to cast their votes without as great inconvenience as formerly. This newspaper has long advocated the setting up of a number of polling booths in each parish and at last a much needed reform will be carried out. It is proposed that each registration district should contain approximately 450 persons, and if each registration district is provided with a polling booth, voters should be able to cast their votes with a minimum of delay.

The Bill provides severe penalties for any registering officer who omits the name of any person entitled to vote. Clause 9 provides: "Every assistant registering officer who, without reasonable excuse, omits any name from the preliminary list or enters in the preliminary list any person not entitled to be registered or fails to collect a claim, shall be liable on conviction before a Court Summary Jurisdiction to a fine of \$500 or to imprisonment for 6 months and shall forfeit any claim to fees under this Act."

Many such accusations were made after the Trinidad elections and by imposing severe penalties the government of Barbados is endeavouring to ensure that there will be no basis for similar charges here. One might have expected that the exercise of great care in the compilation of the lists would have been implied in the appointment of an assistant registering officer, but the Bill specifically enacts, "The assistant registering officers shall exercise the utmost care in preparing the preliminary list of voters for his district and shall take care to ensure that the list when completed contains the names, addresses and occupations of all persons whose claims have been collected or received and that it does not contain the name of any person not entitled to be registered as a voter of that district."

The procedure will be for assistant registering officers, who will be appointed by the Governor, to visit each house in the district and to leave a form of claim, for each person residing therein and qualified to vote. Subsequently the assistant registering officers will collect such forms or they may be sent to him. When the lists are published in the Official Gazette and posted up at various points in the district, any person not on the lists may make a claim or may object to the names of any person or persons whose names may appear on the lists, but a penalty is provided for any person who knowing his objection to be false makes an objection.

The Bill should serve the purpose for which it was intended but it can only do so if the co-operation of the public is forthcoming. There are bound to be mistakes whenever a new system is introduced but these mistakes can be reduced to a minimum if the members of the public help the registering officers and their assistants in their novel and difficult tasks.

YEAR BOOK

MANY people believe wrongly that you can never get statistical information about the Caribbean as an area in the form of a reference book. In fact the "Year Book of the West Indies and Countries of the Caribbean" is way ahead of people who complain about paucity of information.

For many years it has given detailed information about the West Indies. Last year it widened the scope and the Latin American republics on the mainland of Central and South America bordering on the Caribbean Sea have been included. There are Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and the Panama Canal Zone and Venezuela.

In addition to detailed information about all the islands and mainland territories of the Caribbean the Year Book contains an excellent coloured map showing the distances between places and important air, sea and rail routes.

Chapters on trade with Britain, Canada and the United States give information that is topical and essential to an understanding of trade tendencies and trade movements in the area.

An excellent chapter on communications gives a complete list of steamships and airlines serving the large area and details of tele-communication facilities.

Useful articles on sugar industry commissions, sugar quota discussions, aspects of agriculture, electric light and power supplies and the University College of the West Indies illustrate the diversity of subjects covered by the 22nd Year Book published by Thomas Skinner and Co., of London and Canada.

There is no other reference book of this kind in the Caribbean and it is becoming with every year of publication an indispensable item for more and more people engaged in commercial and professional activities in the Caribbean.



Sitting On The Fence

"Children are conservative. They like a bit of sternness when it is called for."—Miss Ethel Sturdwick, former head mistress of St. Paul's Girls' School.

TEACHER, kind teacher, oh, please don't be kind. Your kindness distresses the juvenile mind. Your hands that won't smack us, your weak little smile. Are arousing in all of us all that is vile.

Teacher, kind teacher, when lessons begin. Try to believe in original sin; try to believe we are not what we seem. Cherish from paradise, filled with ice cream.

Sweet little Geraldine, smiling at you. Is thinking of something outrageous to do; Margaret, Jennifer, Shirley, and Jean. Are depraved, anti-social malicious and mean.

Nice little Timothy, well behaved John. Are planning a hold-up when teacher has gone; Rich little Robert is put on the spot. Hun away teacher before you get shot.

Oh, teacher, kind teacher, our innocent eyes. They mask a deep hatred for one we despise. We mimic your accent, we call you a fool. We laugh at your kindness when we're out of school.

Teacher, kind teacher, so meek and so mild. In me you behold a detestable child. Before I am ruined, oh, teacher, be kind. Teacher, kind teacher, please smack my behind.

Fuel Diary AS workshop is heated by electric fire I read with apprehension Minister of Fuel's advice to burn fires two minutes less in coal between now and April. How am I to read papers, concentrate, if I am to remember to switch off fire every 18 minutes?

Also inform life partner, Plucky Little Woman, that she must do same with electric fire in living room, at the same time remembering further advice of Fuel Minister to put kettle on before she lights gas and turn gas out before she takes kettle off. Otherwise, according to expert, she may cause load shedding which will put electro-magnetic cross out of action 100 miles away and drop ton of steel on heads of innocent workmen.

P.L.W. asks why should she be responsible for dropping steel on workmen and not me? Also hasn't she enough on her mind with 10d. meat ration without worrying about people 100 miles away? Ask her to remember workmen's P.L.W. immediately turns off fire and forgoes mid-morning cup of tea.

Switch on fire in workroom, put clock on desk and, as usual, start morning's work reading cricket news. Have just given up hope of England winning third Test when notice fire has been on 21 minutes. Switch off in panic shiver, put on fur underjacket and mittens.

So absorbed in cricket gossip, Compton's knee, Devine's influenza, Close's groin and Wright's fibrositis, that forget to switch on till paper drops from numb fingers. Rise stiffly, switch on, forgetting that paper dropped near fire. Soon have blazing newspaper to deal with.

P.L.W. calls from stairs she can't exist any longer without heat or tea whatever happens to workmen under eaves. Did I say put kettle on before or after lighting gas? And what's the point, anyway? Shut back for heaven's sake use your loaf. If you light gas before filling kettle, which takes average 10 seconds, you are wasting .00001 therm of gas and dropping steel on workmen's heads all over country. Therefore light gas after putting on kettle.

Notice own fire has been on 25 minutes. Switch off and turn from cricket to Times personal column. Read:—"Good news for middle-aged couple seeking warm, comfortable quarters, Surrey-Hants border; central heating; 4½ gns. each."

P.L.W. calls up does she turn gas out before she takes kettle off or take kettle off before she turns gas out? And what's the point of it, anyway?

Call back there are warm, comfortable quarters for middle-aged couple on Surrey-Hants border. What about it? P.L.W. shouts upstairs she knows she looks awful with no hot water to wash in and frozen to marrow in cold living room, but this is no time to make dirty cracks about middle age. And as clock downstairs has stopped will I let her know when to switch her fire on, off?

Yell back she can switch on what she likes, when she likes, put kettle on before or after turning on gas, ruin country, bring down Government, kill, maim, injure half workmen in country for all I care.

By NATHANIEL GUBBINS gas out? And what's the point of it, anyway? Call back there are warm, comfortable quarters for middle-aged couple on Surrey-Hants border. What about it? P.L.W. shouts upstairs she knows she looks awful with no hot water to wash in and frozen to marrow in cold living room, but this is no time to make dirty cracks about middle age. And as clock downstairs has stopped will I let her know when to switch her fire on, off?

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Switch on both bars of fire, turn clock's face to wall, read old clipping "The new House of Commons is equipped with perfect heating, lighting..." and begin typing with frozen fingers.

Scoons o' Stone The majority of Scottish people are not much concerned about the theft of the Stone of Scone" (pronounced scoon).—Consensus of Scottish opinion.

"Scottish cakes and scoons, once famous here and across the Atlantic, are not as good as they were."—American visitor.

IN Aberdeen or Motherwell Or any other Scottish town We're nae see much concerned about The thievin' o' the stone o' Scone

The few that biether o' the past The few that greet, they greet alone In lowland city, highland farm They greet for a' the scoons o' stone.

NOTE to the English: To greet is to weep. To biether is to make a fuss for an I believe. NOTE to the Scots: If to greet does not mean to weep, and if alone is pronounced alone, as scoon is pronounced scoon, then "they greet alone" might appear to mean saying hello to a fanatic. For any confusion I apologise.

NOTE to the clergy: As, despite their advice to others, some of the Atlantic, are not as good as they were."—American visitor.

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Of Course!! QUALITY KEEPS IT ON THE GO!! GODDARD'S GOLD BRAID RUM. To hold up a bill intended to encourage the building of hotels in Barbados on the pretext that racial discrimination is practised in Barbadian hotels to-day and would be practised in hotels which were given tax-free concessions is patently an action against the people's interests. To delay building hotels which are urgently needed now to accommodate Canadians who want to spend thousands of dollars in Barbados and thereby raise the living standards of everybody proportionately by so doing is to obstruct the people's interests. To know that "colour prejudice" against the people's interests. That is why I have told you the truth about Barbadian hotels.