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GRENADA

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THE GRENADA NEWSLETTER

For The Week Ending November 29th

COURT DECISION DECEMBER 1ST

On Monday of this week (24th), Mr Desmond Christian, Grenada's Attorney General, argued Government's case in a Suit filed against Mr Harold Dennison, the one-man Commissioner appointed by Government to investigate the affairs of the Grenada Cooperative Nutmeg Association.

This Suit, which was filed by Mr F J Archibald, Chairman of the elected Nutmeg Board dissolved by Government on July 4th, is being heard in Chambers before Mr Justice Archibald Nedd. Appearing for Mr F J Archibald are barristers Lloyd Noel, Kenrick Radix and Maurice Bishop, and following conclusion of the Attorney General's presentation on Tuesday 25th, these lawyers addressed Mr Justice Nedd.

In his Suit, Mr Archibald is seeking, among other things, a declaration that Mr Dennison has demonstrated a real likelihood of bias by reason of his general conduct of the proceedings of the Commission of Inquiry and his vehement expressions of prejudicial allegations. Mr Archibald also seeks an injunction restraining Commissioner Dennison from proceeding with the Inquiry.

In the mean time, the hearings of the Commission of Inquiry, which were scheduled to be resumed on Tuesday 25th, have been postponed to Tuesday December 2nd. It seems unlikely, however, that these hearings will be resumed then.

It is understood that Mr Justice Nedd will hand down his decision in the bias Suit against Commissioner Dennison on Monday December 1st. This decision will be given in Chambers, following which, a Suit challenging the validity of the Order which dissolved the elected Nutmeg Board will be heard in open Court over the two days of Monday 1st and Tuesday 2nd December. Both the Attorney General and Senator Derek Knight are involved in this Suit, and since both of these gentlemen are also appearing at the hearings of the Commission of Inquiry, it is ~~is~~ expected that a further postponement from December 1st will be made.

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WATER WORKERS STRIKE.

Workers at the Central Water Commission walked off their jobs on Monday 24th in protest against the alleged failure of the Commission to commence negotiations on a new Wage Agreement.

These workers are represented by the Technical & Allied Workers Union (TAWU), and sources close to the Union said that proposals were submitted to the Commission in February last and a new Agreement should have come into effect on March 1st. "Instead", said TAWU sources, "all we have been getting from the Commission is empty promises."

Following the walk out on Monday, Mr Curtis Stewart, President of TAWU, held talks with officials of the Water Commission, and at 1.00pm on Tuesday 25th, the workers returned to their jobs. Mr Stewart continued his talks on Tuesday and Wednesday, but he informed NEWSLETTER today (27th) that these negotiations have broken down and the matter has been referred to the Labour Commissioner, Mr Robert Robinson, for conciliation.

The points to be decided centre principally on wages and sick and vacation leave. The Union is asking for a 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % wage increase over the next two years while the Commission has countered with an offer of 10% over the next three years.

Concerning leave, according to present arrangements, workers must work 200 days before they qualify for benefits. This, according to Mr Stewart, was the structure used when the 6 day week was in effect. Now that the 5 day week has been introduced, the Union is of the opinion that these arrangements should be restructured.

In these discussions, the Commission's negotiating team is headed by Mr Lawrence Fletcher who, in his capacity of Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Communications & Works, is ex officio Chairman of the Central Water Commission. A further meeting has been arranged for tomorrow (28th) when Mr Stewart and Mr Fletcher will meet with the Labour Commissioner in an effort to reach agreement.

Speaking to NEWSLETTER today (27th), Mr Stewart expressed the hope that it would not be necessary for his Union to take further industrial action.

OAS REPRESENTATIVE VIEWS RAIN DAMAGE.

Senor Julio Silva, a representative of the Organisation of American States (OAS), arrived in Grenada on Friday 21st to look over the damage caused to the island by the recent heavy rains.

Senor Silva, who is based in Santo Domingo, came to Grenada at the request of the Government and, after visiting the worst hit areas, held talks with the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Herbert Preudhomme, and other Ministers and officials.

Also in connection with the rain damage, another visitor to Grenada over the last week-end was Mr David Carter of the United Nations Disaster Relief Organisation. Other officials expected here shortly are experts from the United Nations Development Programme and from the Economic Commission for Latin America.

Preliminary estimates made by a team of officers from the Ministry of Communications and Works and the Ministry of Agriculture place the rain damage at approximately EC\$10 million. Some half of this is said to be in the area of roads and bridges while the remainder is allocated to the loss of agricultural crops, fertilizer, landslides and erosion.

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PHONE RATES UP

The Grenada Telephone Company Ltd has announced that, with effect from December 1st, the rates for private telephones will be increased from \$18.00 to \$22.50 per month. Installation charges have also been increased from \$30.00 to \$55.00. No increase has been announced for the rates of business phones which remain at \$50.00 for a single phone and \$70.00 for a PBX.

According to a notice appearing in the local press, these increases have become necessary in order "to maintain the high level of service we provide, to meet the increased cost of maintenance, material and the increased cost of wages and salaries contained in our recently concluded Agreement with the Technical & Allied Workers Union which takes effect from 15th July 1975."

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Telephone rates have been increased every year for the last three years, the last rise being on May 1st 1974. From February 1975, consumers were called upon to pay an additional 10% on the basic charges for overseas calls, but this was not a charge instituted by the Company. This charge was provided for by the Telecommunications Act passed by Parliament.

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PIERRE DENIES REPORT

In an exclusive interview with NEWSLETTER today (27th), Senator Eric Pierre, President of the Commercial & Industrial Workers Union, branded as "false" a report appearing in the local press that striking workers at the Gouyave Nutmeg Processing Plant are trying to secure reemployment.

These workers, who are reported to be over 100, have been on strike since September 18th in protest against the dismissal of two of their colleagues, and Senator Pierre said that, not only is the strike still in effect, but further developments may be expected within the next day or two.

In the mean time, the supporting go-slow at the Nutmeg Association Head Office is still in effect and this has delayed the annual pay-out of the nutmeg "bonus" to producers. This pay-out has been made, usually, by the end of November, but sources close to the Association state that it is now unlikely that it can be made before mid-December.

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TRADE UNIONIST GETS AWARD.

Senator Eric Pierre, President of the Commercial & Industrial Workers Union and Secretary of the Seamen & Waterfront Workers Union, was one of two Caribbean Tradeunionists honoured by the Trinidad & Tobago Union of Commercial & Industrial Workers (UCIW) during that Union's 25th Anniversary Celebrations held recently in Trinidad

Together with Mr Frank Walcott, General Secretary of the Barbados Workers Union, Mr Pierre was presented with a silver medal in appreciation of his services to and cooperation with the UCIW. At the same time, similar awards were made to tradeunionists in North America.

These awards were made at a special ceremony, and the presentations
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were made on behalf of UCIW by Mr Justice Brathwaite, President of the Industrial Court of Trinidad & Tobago.

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PRIME MINISTER IN SURINAM

Prime Minister Eric Gairy flew out of Grenada on November 19th to attend the Independence Celebrations in Surinam scheduled to commence on November 21st and to be climaxed by the raising of that country's new flag on November 26th.

As a part of these Celebrations, a Trade Fair is being staged at which, it is reported, there will be a Grenada booth displaying the arts and crafts of the island. It is also reported that Friday November 28th has been designated "Grenada Night", and on that occasion, Prime Minister Gairy will host a cocktail party.

Mr Gairy was accompanied to Surinam for the Celebrations by his personal assistant, Mr Henry Bullen.

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BANANA SHIPMENTS.

On Tuesday 25th November, the S S "Geestcrest" loaded 18,958 boxes of bananas weighing 555,285 lbs and valued at EC\$48,587.00. There were 52 boxes of rejected fruit.

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CRUISE LINER CALLS.

The S S "Cunard Adventurer" called at Grenada on November 18th with 584 passengers. The only other cruise liner calling during the week ending November 22nd was the "Amerikanis" on November 19th with 471 passengers.

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