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TROOPS TO GO HOME

Mr. Roy Haverkamp, Charge d'Affaires at the United States Embassy in Grenada, confirmed to NEWSLETTER on February 16th that the United States military presence in the island will come to an end on June 12th.

"We now have about 100 Military Policemen and some 150 support personnel on the island", he said, and, commencing April 12th, we will begin a phased withdrawal which will be completed on June 12th".

The U.S. Army came to Grenada in the early hours of October 25th 1983. Six days earlier, Grenada's Prime Minister Maurice Bishop, members of his Cabinet and an estimated more than 100 Grenadians had been murdered by the Peoples Revolutionary Army and a Revolutionary Military Council had placed the population under virtual house arrest.

A request by Governor General Sir Paul Scoon for outside assistance was relayed to President Reagan through Dominica's Prime Minister Eugenia Charles acting in her capacity as Chairperson of the Organisation of East Caribbean States (OECS) comprising Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Dominica, Antigua and St Kitts/Nevis.

The United States "Rescue Mission" code-named operation "Urgent Fury" involved, at its peak, over 6000 combat troops. By the fourth day, all resistance from Cuban and Grenadian forces had been overcome, the island was secured and, by December 15th, all combat troops had been evacuated, leaving only a force of Military Police.

Together with the Americans came personnel from Defence and Police forces of Jamaica, Barbados and countries of the OECS. These units
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FOUNDED 17TH AUGUST 1973

made up the "Caribbean Peacekeeping Force" (CPF), and Mr. Haverkamp said that force also is to be withdrawn.

At the present time, he said, the CPF is under the command of an Officer of the Jamaica Defence Force but, on June 12th, when CPF will have 50 men stationed in Grenada, the command will pass to Brigadier Rudyard Lewis, coordinator of the Regional Security Service (RSS).

RSS is a corps of specially trained policemen drawn from Jamaica, Barbados and the OECS countries, and Mr. Haverkamp said the CPF will be dissolved on September 20th and the Grenada Police Force, including the island's Special Services Unit of the RSS, will assume responsibility for Grenada's security.

"The withdrawal of our troops is in no way an indication of United States abandonment of Grenada and the Eastern Caribbean", Mr. Haverkamp said.

"It is a logical development in our security relationship and no one who seeks to overthrow a legally constituted Government can take comfort from the change in the United States' security relationship with Grenada".

The Charge d'Affaires said that, in September, United States Forces will take part in a joint exercise with the RSS. The location of that exercise has not yet been fixed, he said, but it will not be in Grenada.

CONCERN OVER TROOPS WITHDRAWAL

Two Grenadian newspapers have voiced the opinion of a section of the community which is opposed to the announced withdrawal of the United States military.

According to Mr. Roy Haverkamp, Charge d'affaires at the United States Embassy here, the remnant of the U.S. military presence, 100 Military Policemen and 150 support personnel, will leave Grenada in a phased withdrawal between April 12th and June 12th.

The independent "Grenadian Voice", in an editorial on February 16th, said the withdrawal is disturbing to most serious thinking Grenadians.

"We can countenance a phased withdrawal of American personnel from active peace-keeping or security duties, except as a back-up", the "Voice" says, "but they should establish a solid base here".

The newspaper admits the Police Force is being built up rapidly and is receiving a lot of training but, asks the "Voice", "since when has instant training meant instant qualification?"

Said the "Voice", many Grenadians feel the American decision to withdraw is based on the desire to leave while they are still welcome.

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"They needn't worry", the newspaper said, "despite the rumblings or rejected and discredited elements in the society and their cohorts abroad the vast majority of Grenadians do not feel 'occupied' and want a continuing American presence here many even want it permanently".

The "Voice" says the need to stay is even more fundamental. Things may appear calm and stable, the paper says, but "The ousted forces and system" are eager for an opportunity to turn the tables.

Also concerned over the withdrawal of the Americans is the "Grenada Guardian", organ of Sir Eric Gairy's Grenada United Labour Party (GULP).

"It is difficult to see the Americans voluntarily withdrawing from any country in which the Communists are interested", the newspaper says in an editorial on February 16th, "...and it is obvious that the New National Party Government must have brought a little pressure to bear for the Americans to act out of character".

A person must be a Communist or a lunatic, the "Guardian" says, if he cannot see that the Communists will not miss the slightest opportunity to take hold of Grenada again.

"Sir Eric has already vowed that he and his GULP will do all in their power to have Washington change its decision and have the Americans stay", the paper says.

"Guardian" implores Prime Minister Blaize to consider, not only the people's wishes, but also "the obvious economic advantages" a continued American presence offers.

TOIPPIN: DON'T BE AFRAID

Grenada's Commissioner of Police, Mr. Russell Toppin, has assured the people of the island that their security will be well taken care of after the United States and Caribbean Peacekeeping Forces leave later this year.

Mr. Toppin said he has seen, in the local and regional press, a concern expressed over security when these forces leave, and he thinks this concern is both unjustified and out of keeping with reality.

"The time has come", he said, "when Grenadians must begin to have confidence in themselves and in the security forces which Grenada has built up over the past year".

Mr. Toppin's statement comes against the background of a recent official statement that the remnant of the United States Military will leave Grenada in a phased withdrawal between April 12th and June 12th. The Caribbean Peacekeeping Force is also to be withdrawn and, after September 20th, security in Grenada will be the responsibility of the Police Force.

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Two Grenada newspapers have voiced the concern of a section of the community that, with the withdrawal of the visiting forces, security of the island may be at risk.

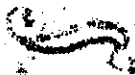
According to the Commissioner, the Police Force is well trained and able to take over the responsibility of security. There will be, he says, some 550 members of the Force by the middle of this year and about 100 of them will have had para-military training and will be part of the Regional Security Service (RSS) of the countries of the Organisation of East Caribbean States and of Barbados.

"Grenada will be joining the RSS", he said, "and once we have become a member, we will be entitled to have the assistance of the other member countries".

Mr. Toppin said, with the strength, training and leadership which the Grenada Police Force has, if there is a situation which it cannot handle, that situation must be something "quite extraordinary" and, in that event, there is the RSS with a strength of some 800 men which can be called upon to assist.

"Grenadians need to be assured that when the Americans and Caribbean Peace-keeping Forces leave, things will not become chaotic", he said, "and I give the firm assurance that we are well equipped and able to safeguard their security".

There need be no fear, he said, that, with the departure of the visiting forces, any untoward thing is likely to happen.



BUSH TO VISIT

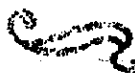
A spokesman for the United States Information Service here told NEWSLETTER on February 20th that United States Vice-President George Bush will visit Grenada on March 14th.

The spokesman said a release from the White House announced Mr. Bush will come to the island en route to Brazil where, on March 15th, he will head the U.S. delegation to the inauguration of President Tancredo Neves.

Other members of the U.S. delegation visiting Grenada will be U.S. Ambassador to Brazil Diego Asencio and Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, Langhorne A. Motley.

The spokesman said the U.S. Embassy here will be in touch with Prime Minister Herbert Blaize to arrange details of Mr. Bush's visit and a further announcement will be made.

Mr. Bush and his delegation will visit Honduras on March 15th on the way back from Brazil.



CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW COMMISSION APPOINTED

Satisfying an election pledge of Prime Minister Herbert Blaize's New National Party, on February 14th, Governor General Sir Paul Scoon swore in a Constitutional Review Commission which is headed by Vincentian born Sir Fred Phillips who was Governor of St. Kitts/Nevis between 1966 and 1968.

On the Commission also is Grenadian born Mr. Barry Renwick, retired Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of the Organisation of East Caribbean States (OECS) and now Legal Draftsman to the OECS.

Mr. Michael Andrews, a Grenadian Barrister now practising in the island is also on the Commission together with Mr. Ralph Carnage, Professor of Law at the Cave Hill campus, Barbados, of the University of the West Indies.

The fifth member is Mr. Brynmor Pollard, a senior Counsel of the Guyana Bar, former Chief Parliamentary Court Counsel to the Guyana Government and now Legal Consultant to the Caribbean Community Secretariat.

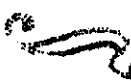
Secretary to the Commission is Grenada born Mr. Bernard Gibbs who once held the post of Assistant Administrator in both St. Vincent and Grenada.

A sixth person, Professor Randy McIntosh, now resident in North America, will hold the post of "Associate Member" of the Commission. Professor McIntosh, a native of Grenada's sister island of Carriacou, has been appointed to promote the special constitutional needs of Carriacou.

Sir Fred told NEWSLETTER in an interview that members of the Commission will "more or less" be resident in Grenada over the next 6 months. An inaugural meeting was held on February 14th and, in addition to written evidence to be received, there will be further meetings to take oral evidence.

"We hope to have a package of recommendations ready by September", he said, "and then it will be up to the Legal Draftsman".

Three important directives in the Commission's terms of reference, Sir Fred said, are that recommendations should make proposals to ensure that the Prime Minister does not serve more than 2 five-year terms, that there are provisions for recall by the electorate of elected representatives and that there is public participation in Government business.


DEADLINE FOR MEMORANDA

March 18th has been fixed as the deadline for the submission of written memoranda to the Grenada Constitution Review Commission (GCRC).

This was disclosed in an interview with NEWSLETTER on February 15th by Mr. Bernard Gibbs, GCRC Secretary, and he said a notice to this effect will be published shortly.

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"We are also issuing a notice with reference to the holding of public hearings", he said, "and persons submitting written memoranda may use these hearings to expand on their memoranda".

The 5-man commission, headed by Sir Fred Phillips, was sworn in on February 14th and public hearings will take place at Parliament Building, St. George's and at a location to be announced in Grenada's sister island of Carriacou. However, Mr. Gibbs says if the Commission finds there is a need to arrange hearings at other locations in the state, this will be done.

The Commission's terms of reference are to inquire into the Constitution which came into force when the island became independent in 1974, and recommendations are to be submitted for making "amendments, reforms and changes" for "promoting the peace, order and good government of Grenada".

Several specific areas are directed by the terms of reference to the attention of the Commissioners, and these include the ensuring that nobody serves as Prime Minister for more than 10 consecutive years.

In their recommendations, the Commissioners are also to ensure that persons elected to Parliament are, in the face of "persistent malrepresentation" or other sufficient cause, subject to recall by the people in the constituencies they represent.

The Commissioners are mandated to make recommendations also for changes in the Constitution in another area.

Grenada has been without local Government since 1968 when the then Gairy Government abolished the St. George's City Council and the District Boards. The manifesto of the New National Party of Prime Minister Herbert Blaize states that local Government is to be "entrenched" and this move is reflected in GCRC's terms of reference.

The Commission's recommendations, the terms say, should cover changes in the Constitution which will encourage wider participation of Grenadians in the democratic processes of Government "both at parliamentary and local Government level".

The recommendations are also to ensure that the people of Carriacou and Petit Martinique, Grenada's sister islands, have a special position in administration of their own affairs.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS

Minister of Local Government Dr. Francis Alexis, on February 20th completed a national round of public meetings to discuss the proposed re-introduction of local Government in Grenada.

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Grenadians first had a measure of Local Government 99 years ago when "Parochial Boards" were set up in each of the country's seven parishes.

The system developed into "District Boards" and the capital City, St. George's, was made a municipality in 1961, but Local Government came to an end in 1969.

Addressing the Annual Conference of Local Government bodies, Mr. Herbert Preudhomme, then Minister for Local Government in the United Labour Party (GULP) Government of Eric Gairy, announced his Government had decided to dissolve all Local Government bodies.

This move climaxed growing conflict between Central and Local Government. Central Government was in the hands of GULP while Local Government was dominated by the Grenada National Party (GNP) of Herbert Blaize which, 2 years previously had been defeated in a General Election, and the dissolution was seen as politically motivated.

While in power, GNP had commissioned from the United Nations a study of Local Government in the country and, in this connection, a complete survey had been done by an expert, Sir Harold Banwell.

Mr. Preudhomme told the Conference that his Government had received the Banwell report and, to facilitate its recommendations, after the dissolution of the Local Government bodies, an Interim Commissioner would be appointed.

"It is hoped", he said, "that the Interim Commissioner will be able, in the shortest possible time, with the draftsmen, to reestablish the system of Local Government which serves the best purposes of this community ..."

Mr. Preudhomme assured the Conference that GULP was "committed to the support and maintenance of Local Government", but the promised reforms did not materialise and the country has been without Local Government since then.

In its manifesto for the recent General Elections, the New National Party promised reintroduction of Local Government and, commencing January 18th and ending February 20th Minister Alexis held meetings throughout the country to discuss his Ministry's "position paper".

That paper proposes a system based on "village councils", each representing some 500 to 700 people. There would be about 75 such councils, each having 7 elected members. Additionally, each council would have 2 Central Government nominees and two ex-officio members, probably the school principal or district nurse.

It is proposed that village councils be responsible for general welfare of the village including village road maintenance, primary health, village sanitation and water supply.

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The village councils in a district will elect representatives to the "District Council" in addition to these two, that council will comprise 10 elected members, 3 Central Government nominees and two ex-officio members, they being the District Medical Officer and the Road Officer.

District Councils will have responsibility for district road maintenance, health centres and school buildings. In these councils, it is proposed to have a paid executive to administer grants from the Central Government.

In an interview on February 20th Minister Alexis stressed that the "position paper" is intended merely as a basis for discussion and he is gratified by the public's response to it.

"We have been overwhelmed by the response of Grenadians at these public meetings", he said, "and the quality of the points made will be of great value in drawing up our final proposal".

That final proposal, he said, will be ready by the middle of March and then there will be another round of discussion.

"The draft will be made available for public comment", he said, "what we have in mind is a 'national workshop' of people from all over the country, and the feasibility of this proposal is being examined".

SOUTH KOREAN AMBASSADOR VISITS

South Korean Ambassador Sun Sup Chang completed an official visit to Grenada on February 15th.

Mr. Chang, who is resident in Barbados, arrived here on February 14th and had discussions with Governor General Sir Paul Scoon, Prime Minister Herbert Blaize and Foreign Minister Ben Jones.

"We explored the possibility of further economic assistance", Ambassador Chang said in an interview with NEWSLETTER on February 15th, "and it is likely that we will be able to help, among other ways, in the field of the supply of sports equipment".

The Ambassador had discussions also with Senator Charles McIntyre, President of the Grenada Chamber of Industry & Commerce, with a view to organising a visit to Grenada of South Korean businessmen interested in joint venture enterprises.

Ambassador Chang, who took up his post about a year ago, is accredited to Barbados and all the countries of the Organisation of East Caribbean States. He was accompanied on this visit by Mr. Myung Hwan Yu, Counselor in the South Korean Embassy in Barbados.

THE BISHOP MURDER CASE

The murder case against former Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard and others will not be heard at the current Assizes. An informed source close to the Grenada Supreme Court told NEWSLETTER on March 1st it will be postponed to a date to be fixed.

Mr. Coard, and 18 others, including his Jamaican wife Phyllis, Hudson Austin, General of the Peoples Revolutionary Army of the New Jewel Movement, several of his officers and other members of the Peoples Revolutionary Government (PRG) are charged with killing PRG Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and 9 other persons on October 19th 1983.

They are charged also with causing the death of one other person who, wounded on October 19th, 1983, died 23 days later.

A preliminary inquiry, heard before Chief Magistrate Lyle St. Paul, took evidence relative to a charge, on one count, against 20 persons accused of killing Bishop and 7 others. When the inquiry closed on August 3rd last year Mr. St. Paul found there was insufficient evidence against one person, Ian St. Bernard, and he was discharged on that count.

Subsequently, the names of 3 other persons were added to the list of murder victims, and the charge against the 19 accused was broken down into 11 separate counts.

At the preliminary inquiry, the 20 were defended by a team of 7 Jamaican Barristers led by Mr. Howard Hamilton Q.C., and efforts have been made to secure the services of that team to defend the remaining 19 accused at the trial in the Supreme Court.

The 19 have declared themselves financially unable to hire Defence Counsel and, acting under provisions of Grenada's laws, the Supreme Court has been negotiating with the Jamaican Barristers and with some Grenadian Barristers in an effort to assign and pay for their services to defend the accused.

To March 1st, however, these efforts have been unsuccessful and Mr. Coard and the others accused with him were not yet represented by Counsel.

The source close to the Supreme Court told NEWSLETTER on March 1st that, except for the formalities, the current Assizes had been completed and, before the actual closure, the case of the 19 would be postponed to "a date to be fixed".

The fixing of that date, the source said, may be affected by the outcome of a case to be heard by the Appeal Court which starts its sitting on March 25.

That case brought by Guyanese Barrister Clarence Hughes on behalf of the 19, challenges the validity of the Grenada Supreme Court which is a creation of the PRG. Chief Justice Archibald Nedd heard that case last October and Mr. Hughes appealed when the decision had gone against him.

APPEAL COURT SITS THIS MONTH

Miss Celia Clyne, Registrar of the Grenada Supreme Court, told NEWSLETTER on February 25th that the Appeal Court will sit in Grenada on March 25th.

Miss Clyne said the sitting was scheduled originally for February 25th but she received cabled instructions from the President of the Appeal Court, Mr. Justice J.O.F. Haynes, that it was to be postponed for a month.

Sources close to the Legal Department told NEWSLETTER that two important cases are likely to be heard when the Court sits later this month.

The first is the case brought by Guyanese Barrister Clarence Hughes on behalf of 19 persons accused of murdering the late Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and others on 19th October 1983.

Arguing before Chief Justice Archibald Nedd last October, Mr. Hughes said the Grenada Constitution, which had been suspended by the Peoples Revolutionary Government (PRG) after the revolution of 1979, had again become the "basic norm" in Grenada. Under that norm, he said, the Supreme Court of the Organisation of East Caribbean States is the principal Court of Grenada, and that made the Grenada Supreme Court, established by the PRG, illegal.

Delivering his judgement on November 14th, Mr. Nedd did not accept Mr. Hughes' arguments and declared the Grenada Supreme Court valid and legal. Mr. Hughes has appealed against this judgement.

The other case likely to be heard by the Appeal Court is the charge of Contempt of Court against Grenadian Barrister Derek Knight, Q.C.

On February 4th, Mr. Knight was convicted of "Criminal Contempt in the Face of the Court" arising from an incident which took place in the Chambers of Mr. Justice James Patterson on January 30th.

Mr. Knight is alleged to have told Mr. Patterson that, "It does not seem to make any sense coming before you to argue", to which Mr. Patterson is said to have replied, "I consider you rude and insulting and I will not have you before me until you apologise".

In his defence, Mr. Knight said he had made a remark in an aside to his Associate Counsel, but Mr. Patterson did not accept this and sentenced him to 6 weeks "ordinary imprisonment" in addition to paying a fine of EC\$5,000.00 and costs of EC\$1,000.

Mr. Knight has appealed.

The other two Judges of the Appeal Court are Justice Dr. Nicholas Liverpool and Justice Sir Neville Peterkin.

BLAIZE: CROCKETT A "SUPER HYPOCRITE"

Prime Minister Herbert Blaize on February 12th branded United States Congressman of Michigan, Mr. George Crockett, a "super hypocrite", and said the Congressman is totally out of touch with the Grenada situation.

Mr. Blaize was responding in an interview with NEWSLETTER to a recent statement by Mr. Crockett (who visited Grenada in January) that, although Mr. Blaize's party won the Elections by a landslide, the memory of former Prime Minister Maurice Bishop lingers on.

"You get the message by looking at the Graffiti or signs on the buildings", Mr. Crockett said, "and one sign you saw over and over and over again is, 'Maurice lives on'".

Mr. Blaize says Congressman Crockett chose to ignore the fact that an election campaign was waged here recently, and the signs he saw are not a reflection of today but were part of that campaign.

"He seems to have completely forgotten that we had an Election just a couple of months before", the Prime Minister said, "and Elections cause people to write all sorts of things on buildings".

The people who did most of the writing before the General Elections of December 3rd, Mr. Blaize said, had the least chance of winning, and he pointed out that the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement had attracted very few votes.

The Prime Minister rejected also Mr. Crockett's charge that United States officials are involved in Grenadian politics with Mr. Blaize's sanction.

"Mr. Crockett's observations in this connection must be branded as arising from the same lack of perception with which he has interpreted the left-over election signs he saw in Grenada", Mr. Blaize said.

The Prime Minister said when Mr. Crockett visited his office in January together with other United States Congressmen, he had been very supportive of the Government and what was taking place in Grenada. Against the background of his recent statements, Mr. Blaize said, Mr. Crockett's attitude in January now appears to be "super hypocritical".

OAS FELLOWSHIPS TO GRENADIANS

The Organisation of American States (OAS) granted fellowships to Grenadians during 1984 at a cost of US\$197,000.

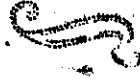
This information was released on February 20th by the OAS Department of Fellowships and Training through the OAS Grenada office.

This cost covered 28 fellowships totalling 210 months of training at institutions in the United States, Venezuela, Jamaica and South Korea.

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A feature of the 1984 Fellowships and Training Programme was the Caribbean Scholars Programme (CASP) funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and administered by OAS. Of the 28 fellowships granted, 50% were funded by CASP.

The 1984 fellowships cover 20 areas of study including Agricultural Economics, Nutrition, Broadcasting, Electrical Engineering, Project Management, Nursing Education and the Computer as a Management Tool.



BRIZAN ADDRESSES POLICE

Ninety Policemen, Prison Guards and Coast Guardsmen graduated on February 14th in a ceremony at Point Saline Training Camp which is under the direction of United States Army personnel.

This was the final graduation in Phase 2 of a 3 phase training scheme which aims to have a 540-man strong police force in Grenada by the middle of this year. The graduates have now moved to the Police Training School at Fort George, Police Headquarters.

Phase 3 started on February 25th and will concentrate on 100 specially chosen men who will be trained as a para-military Special Services Unit.

Addressing the graduates, Minister of Agriculture, Mr. George Brizan, said there can be no progress without stability and stability has more than one dimension.

"There is the political dimension, there is the economic dimension", he said, "and there is the military or para-military dimension".

His Government, he said, is committed, in the political dimension, to the promotion of democracy, and the reestablishment of Parliament, with its open debates, is a symbol of that democracy.

In the economic dimension, he said, Grenadians' expectations are high and they are impatient to see those expectations satisfied. The Government, he said, will have to use the scarce resources of the island, together with outside assistance to develop the country and try to satisfy the people's expectations.

"In that scale of things", he said, "the provision of employment and job opportunities remains the number one priority and the number one commitment of Government".

The Minister told the graduates that their part must be played in the military dimension of stability in Grenada. They must realise, he said, that Grenada belongs to all Grenadians and the graduates have a responsibility to all Grenadians to perform their jobs to the best of their ability.

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"The fundamental right is the right to life", Mr. Brizan said, "therefore we must be preoccupied with preserving, protecting and enshrining that right to life".


The right to life of a thousand people cannot be logically respected when the right to life of one man is disrespected, he said, because "What is a thousand but a thousand ones".



FBI TRAINS POLICE

Five Grenadian policemen leave for Puerto Rico on March 3rd for a 4-week course in Criminal Investigation under the sponsorship of the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation.

A release from the United States Information Service in Grenada says the course is designed to instruct participants in modern investigation techniques.



TOPPIN: CELLS ARE NOT A HOTEL

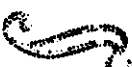
Police cells, traditionally, are not the type of place where you will expect to find barristers and "senior citizens" of the country.

Commissioner of Police Russell Toppin expressed this view in an interview with NEWSLETTER on February 22nd as he responded to a charge made recently by Grenadian Barrister Derek Knight, Q.C. relative to the cells at Police Headquarters at Fort George.

Mr. Knight was arrested in January on a charge of Contempt of Court and spent some hours in one of the cells. After his release, he described the cell as "filthy" with what appeared to be dried excreta on the floor and with a stench of urine.

"The cells are not a hotel", Mr. Toppin said, "and you have mentally deranged and all other kinds of people who will use the cell for all kinds of purposes when they are put in it. It is our job to keep the cells as sanitary as we can and it would have been an unusual occurrence for him(Knight) to find excreta on the floor".

If that was so, he said, some previous occupant may have done this and Mr. Knight was put into the cell before there had been time to clean it.



GCNA: BANK MUST BE GRENADIAN

The Nutmeg Board of the Grenada Cooperative Nutmeg Association (GCNA) has called on the Government of Prime Minister Herbert Blaize to consult with the agricultural community in the making of policies and guidelines for the effective control, by Grenadians, of the Government-owned Grenada Bank of Commerce.

This demand is in a resolution passed by the Board on February 26th and appears to have been prompted by a report circulating that the Grenada Bank of Commerce is to be sold to interests in Trinidad.

"Whereas GCNA is aware that there are sufficient Grenadian institutions and Grenadians willing to purchase the Grenada Bank of Commerce, thus making it a truly Grenadian institution controlled by the people", the resolution says, "be it resolved that GCNA calls on Government to make a declaration that the Grenada Bank of Commerce will not be sold to outside financial institutions or people".

Mr. Morris Mathlyn, Manager of the Bank, told NEWSLETTER he does not know of any plan to sell the Bank to anyone.

"All I can say is what we have been told by the Prime Minister", he said, "Mr. Blaize said that, if Government decides the Bank must be put up for sale, that sale will be to Grenadians".

At the same time, the Nutmeg Board passed another resolution relative to the other Government-owned Bank, the National Commercial Bank.

This resolution says that Bank holds substantial sums of money deposited by farmers, but the Bank's Board of Directors has no representative from the agricultural community.

The resolution calls on Government to immediately appoint to the Bank's Board of Directors, one Director "from the joint nomination of GCNA, the Cocoa Association and the Banana Cooperative Society ..."

A spokesman for GCNA said today discussions have been held with the other two agricultural bodies and firm support has been assured for both resolutions passed by the Nutmeg Board.

Both Banks were purchased by the Peoples Revolutionary Government of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop.

The National Commercial Bank, formerly the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, was purchased in 1980 and the Grenada Bank of Commerce, formerly the Royal Bank of Canada, in 1987. Neither purchase price was disclosed.

CALIFORNIA BOARD REVERSES BAN ON MED. SCHOOL

Dr. Geoffrey Bourne, Vice Chancellor of the St. Georges University School of Medicine in Grenada, denied to NEWSLETTER on February 28th that degrees issued by his institution are not acceptable in California.

An item in the December issue of "News Notes" published by the University of the West Indies, says the St. Georges School of Medicine is one of 6 Caribbean Medical Schools whose degrees have been declared invalid by the California State Board of Medical Assurance.

According to "News Notes", the Board charged these Schools with "falsifying credentials and other documents relating to the training and qualifications of students, illegally recruiting students, failing to register clinical training programmes in hospitals or failing to register students enrolled in training".

Dr. Bourne said the declaration by the State Board against St. Georges School of Medicine was made and was in effect for a few weeks, but now has been completely reversed.

"We took legal action against them", he said, "and they have completely withdrawn the declaration against the school".

The other 5 schools mentioned in "News Notes" are the American University of the Caribbean in Montserrat, Ross University School of Medicine in Dominica, St. Lucia Health Sciences University in St. Lucia, CIFA's University School of Medicine in Santo Domingo and the Universidad Technologica de Santiago School of Medicine, also in the Dominican Republic.

The St. George's University School of Medicine was established in Grenada in 1977 with an enrollment of 197, and now has a student body of some 1000 to 1200.

The main campus is in Grenada but the school also has a campus in St. Vincent and, after the massacre and military intervention in October 1983, and the consequent disruption of life in Grenada, a third campus was started in Barbados.

Dr. Bourne told NEWSLETTER, however, that the Barbados campus will be closed in May at the end of the present semester.

At the present time, there are some 200 students each at the Barbados and St. Vincent campuses, 300 plus are in Grenada and the remainder are at teaching hospitals in the United States and United Kingdom.



MBPM SAYS MITCHELL LIED

The Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement (MBPM) has challenged a statement made by Dr. Keith Mitchell, Minister of Public Utilities, concerning ownership of the National Transport Service (NTS) put into operation during the regime of the Peoples Revolutionary Government (PRG).

In an interview in January, Dr. Mitchell said it had been discovered that Government did not own NTS which has a fleet of thirty-eight 26-seater busses. That private company, Dr. Mitchell said, had only two shareholders, Hudson Austin, General of the Peoples Revolutionary Army and Gardena Louison, believed to be the sister of George and Einstein Louison, PRG members.

"These busses", Dr. Mitchell said, "were bought in the company's name with Government funds at a cost of EC\$1.7 million. They were all registered and licenced in the name of Government but were turned over to the private NTS company and used to create revenue for that service."

A Press Release issued by MBPM says it is a lie that NTS was owned by two individuals and not by the State.

"NTS was formed under the Companies Ordinance of Grenada", the Release says, "and that law requires signatures of at least 2 people to bring the company into being. The PRG appointed its Board of Directors thereafter."

The Release says "Not a single cent" has ever been paid to any individual as a shareholder of the Company and both Austin and Louison "assigned their single share back to the Government of Grenada".

NTS went into operation in March 1982 and the National Transport Service Ltd. Company was registered 10 months later in January 1983.

It was a private limited liability company with an authorised capital of EC\$5 million divided into 50,000 shares of EC\$100. The Company was limited to having 50 shareholders (exclusive of employees who might have shares) and those shareholders could be individuals or corporations.

The assignment of shares and permission for transfer of shares was in the hands of a 7-member Board of Directors, 4 of whom were to be appointed by the Minister responsible for Public Utilities. The other 3 came one each as appointees of the Trade Union Council, the National Youth Organisation and the National Women's Organisation.

In documents at the Registry of the Supreme Court, only Mr. Austin and Ms. Louison are shown as shareholders and they each had 5 shares.

BRIZAN PAINTS GLOOMY PICTURE

Mr. George Brizan, Minister of Agriculture in the Grenada Government, has outlined the very unfavourable position of the island's agricultural industry.

Mr. Brizan was, at the time, February 13th, addressing a workshop for heads of divisions in his Ministry.

"The Nutmeg industry, which involves some 7000 producers and some 475 workers", he said, "has had its fair share of problems".

The 1980s, he said, witnessed the demise of this industry with the average price now obtained on the world market being the lowest in 11 years. The net trading income of the Grenada Cooperative Nutmeg Association has declined from EC\$4 million in 1978 to a loss of over half a million in 1984.

Plans are underway to establish a nutmeg oil distillation plant in Grenada, he said. Feasibility studies have been encouraging and this prospect offers some hope for the Nutmeg industry.

The Minister said the Cocoa industry has some 6,000 producers and, between 1979 and 1984, earnings fell from EC\$27 million to EC\$16 million.

"In order to keep surplus payments and cocoa producers morale up", he said, "the Cocoa Board dipped into its reserves which, as a result, have fallen from EC\$12.2 million in 1980 to EC\$3 million in 1983.

Mr. Brizan said nearly half the cocoa plantations are infected with disease and a large percentage of the trees "suffer from old age".

The Banana industry supports 1400 farmers and 3500 other workers, the Minister said, but production has fallen by 44% between 1979 and 1984.

"Yields are low", he said, "averaging 4.5 tons per acre, low as a result of disease, neglect and poor field supervision".

In this industry also, he said, there has had to be a dip into reserves to bolster payments to and support morale of producers, and the Grenada Banana Cooperative Society's reserves have fallen from EC\$2.5 million in 1977 to EC\$106,000 in 1983.

The Minister said the falling value of the pound sterling (in which currency Grenada receives payment for bananas) has had a "paralyzing effect" on the Banana industry.

"In 1980, one pound sterling worth of bananas would have an EC value of EC\$6.15, he said, "while in 1984, a similar pound sterling worth realised only EC\$3.13.

Mr. Brizan said Government's goal is to resuscitate the dying Coconut industry where there has been a decline of over 76% in the 1970s. This decline

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he said, resulted from disease, praedial larceny and the age of the plantations.

The sole manufacturer in Grenada of edible oil operates at only 15%, he said, and, to achieve this, Copra (dried coconut) must be imported.

"In all this gloomy picture", the Minister said, "exotic fruits have performed well".

Despite the fact that, between 1982 and 1983, the weight of export fruit declined from 28.5 to 25.3 million pounds, he said, earnings increased from EC\$3.8 million to EC\$11.8 million.

Mr. Brizan said that, in the face of the problems facing the agricultural industry, Government's strategy is one of rehabilitation and diversification and, to this end, a loan of US\$5 million has been obtained from the World Bank.

Assistance has also been had from the United States Agency for International Development, the British Development Division and the Caribbean Agricultural and Extension Programme.

"We have to ensure", he said, "that the level of our efficiency and the level of our administrative organisation is such that all of the material and financial assistance we receive is put to optimum use".

Failing this, he said, the Ministry will perform a disservice to the farming community and will be an embarrassment to those who have given assistance.

BRIZAN: TOO MUCH SUGAR

Minister of Agriculture George Brizan said on February 18th that, in attempting to resuscitate the sugar industry in Grenada, Government has to "balance it off against the adverse health effects of an over-consumption of sugar".

The Minister said this as he addressed a workshop of Heads of Division of his Ministry.

"We cannot see this thing in its narrow perspective", he said, "there are obvious problems and it is my opinion that we in Grenada consume too much sugar".

This over-consumption, Mr. Brizan said, has a paralysing effect on the health of the population and many, aged 40 to 50, are struck with diabetes.

If a check is made on Grenada's hospitals, he said, the incidence of diabetes, particularly among women, will be found to be amazingly high.

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"Women", he said, "tend to want all kinds of things sweet, sweet, sweet".

The Minister said that, in Grenada, when one asks for a glass of juice one gets "sling" (sugar in its sticky, liquid form before crystalization. In Grenada, he said, milk is served half milk and half "sweetness".

The over-consumption of sugar, he said, is uneconomical in that, when people fall sick with diabetes, money has to be found to treat them and, in addition, it affects the output of a large section of the female population.

There is need for development of the sugar industry, Mr. Brizan said, but there is also need for an educational programme to teach the population to contain consumption of sugar within reasonable limits.

STATE FARMS LOST MONEY

The State Farms Corporation, set up by the Peoples Revolutionary Government to operate estates owned by the Government, has not been operating satisfactorily and appears to be a "bottomless well" into which money can be thrown.

This was disclosed on February 18th by Minister of Agriculture George Brizan as he addressed a workshop of Heads of Divisions in his Ministry, and he said that between 1981 and 1983, the Corporation lost EC\$3.4 million.

"I don't have the figures for 1984", he said, "but indications are that the situation may be even worse".

Most of the Government-owned farms came into State ownership by forced acquisition by both the Government of Sir Eric Gairy and Maurice Bishop's Peoples Revolutionary Government. Many of them have not been paid for and have claims outstanding against them by their owners.

"In 1983", Mr. Brizan said, "there were 34 state farms with a total acreage of 7,156. Thirteen of these farms, totalling 1,600 acres have no claim pending, 12 have claims pending and they total 2,559 acres".

Of the 12 which have not been paid for, 6 owners want their land back and 6 want to be paid. During 1984, he said, 9 farms totalling 2,997 acres were given back to their owners and 25 farms totalling 4,159 acres remain under management of the Grenada Farms Corporation.

Mr. Brizan said the Corporation received a loan of US\$2.7 million from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and, up to the present time, about EC\$1 million has been spent from that loan.

The Minister said it is proposed not to take any more of this loan, to cancel the outstanding amount and present the CDB with a plan for creating model farms on these estates.

"Once we have presented this plan to CDB", he said, "we should request the release of the 23 estates that have been used as collateral for the loan and, whatever funds have been drawn down on loan so far, we will then agree with CDB on a rescheduling repayment plan".

This, Mr. Brizan said, will ensure maximum production on the estates and will reduce Government's present cost of maintaining them.

HELICOPTERS CHANGED

An aircraft of a type said to be the largest in the world landed at Point Saline International Airport on February 14th.

It was a C5A Galaxy of the United States Military Airlift Command and it brought helicopters to replace those now used by the United States Military here.

Those in use are 4 Black Hawks UH60 and two smaller helicopters, the OH58 type and, accompanied by their crews, they are being taken back to the States for service.

The C5A Galaxy is a 4-engined jet with nose loading facilities. It has 20 wheels in its undercarriage.

NEW RED CROSS H.Q.

Sir Paul Scoon, Governor General of Grenada on February 15th officially opened the new Headquarters of the Grenada Red Cross Society.

Located in St. George's, near Government House, these Headquarters are the premises of the long defunct "Grand Hotel".

The main building is no more than a shell without a roof. It was acquired by the Peoples Revolutionary Government with a view to erecting a Cultural Centre but that project did not materialize. The property was donated to the Red Cross by the Interim Government and one small section has been renovated.

Addressing a small but representative gathering, Mr. Godwin Brathwaite, President of the Society, said Grenada had been helped greatly by the British Red Cross Society after the disaster of hurricane "Janet" in 1955.

Grenadians became interested in the work of the Society and a branch of the British Red Cross Society was formed in 1960.

"The wind of change of the 1970s caused many dedicated workers in the Society to leave the island in search of calmer circumstances", he said, "and by

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1980, that wind had attained hurricane force and the Society existed in name only."

Mr. Brathwaite said 1981 marked a turning point when the branch of the British Red Cross Society died formally and, through legislation, the Grenada Red Cross Society was born.

The President expressed his thanks to Government for donation of the property, to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and to the St. Georges University School of Medicine for generous donations.

An official of the Society told NEWSLETTER, USAID had given the Society US\$5,000. The School of Medicine donated EC\$10,000 and will give EC\$5,000 annually for 5 years. The Grenada business community has consented to give EC\$12,000 he said.



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