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NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Friday April 1st at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: The little flare-up in the Lobby of the House of Representatives on Tuesday afternoon when the Minister of Communications and Works, Mr. Coombs, and Sir Alexander Bustamante, the Leader of the Opposition, got very close to a fight with fists and furniture, was not the sort of conduct to make the voters of Jamaica proud of their Parliament and their representatives. It was the sort of thing we would expect to see in a rumshop brawl or a street corner argument, but/certainly not the sort of thing we would expect or want to see in the House where our elected representatives look after the affairs of the country.

Now, I feel strongly about this because parliament is the cornerstone of our democratic society. Through parliament is established the rule of law instead of the rule of powerful sectional interests. And where you have a strong, healthy and respected parliament, there you have a strong and healthy democracy in which the rights and freedom of the individual citizen are respected and protected. But where you have a weak parliament or a parliament which the citizens do not respect, there the rule of law is weak and pressures can be used to serve sectional interests; and this, in turn, leads to a weakening of democracy itself. So, if any member, from any section of the House, behaves in such a way as to make us lose our respect for parliament or for those who represent us in parliament, that Member is not helping our growing democracy.

Then there is another thing: the members of our House of Representatives expect us, the ordinary citizens, to show respect

to them and to parliament. They get very upset and angry if radio or the press report what goes on in the House in a way that does not seem respectful. I think they are right to be jealous of the good reputation of the House: it is our most important public authority.

But you cannot command respect like you can command ^{obedience} ~~a glass~~ ~~of water~~ from someone working for you. You earn respect by the way you conduct yourself in public. This, I think, some of our law-makers still have to learn. We, the public, will respect them according to how they respect themselves. And for the good of the country it is important that they should conduct themselves in such a manner that we can give them the highest degree of respect possible.

But there is one thing I should like to make quite clear. I am not saying that argument and debate should not be strong and vigorous in the House. Indeed, I should like to see much more vigour and much more toughness from the Opposition. I should like to see them trying to make things as difficult and uncomfortable for the Government as possible. The business of a good opposition is to oppose and to make things as difficult as possible. This is both good for the Government and good for the country. I think, for instance, that the Opposition was right to insist that the agricultural vote be questioned searchingly during the Finance Committee discussion. But all this can be done without any brawling and violence. Of course, tempers will flare up at times; but heated words are one thing and brawls another. The dignity of parliament demands unity from its members... Goodnight.

Tomorrow I will talk about the Telephone Co. & the price of ~~vegetables~~ ^{vegetables} ~~some food~~

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Saturday April 2nd at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: I have just been looking at the 1959 Annual Report of the Jamaica Telephone Company. This shows that there were 33,505 telephones in use in Jamaica last year. It also shows that the Company employed 896 men and women regularly and about 214 casual labourers.

The statement by the Chairman makes, for the Company's shareholders, very cheerful reading. Thirty years ago the Company's Ordinary Capital stood at £27,000; today it is over £2 million, and more capital is being raised this year. Thirty years ago the value of the Company was £82,000, today it is nearly £4 million; there were only 2,000 telephones in service then as against the present 33,505.

In 1959 the Company made a net profit of £231,054 and the shareholders will get a total of 9% interest on their investment - the same as they got ~~xxxxxxx~~ in 1958. So, from the investor's point of view the Telephone Company is a good thing. But how does it stand from the point of view of the ordinary citizen?

Well, it gives direct employment to over 1,000 people every year; it pays income tax and so contributes to the revenue of the country and it gives us a much needed service without which a large number of us cannot do if we are to conduct our businesses effectively and well.

But let us face it, few public services in Jamaica have been as bitterly criticised as the Telephone Company, this was especially the case about a year ago. Many telephone users then made the charge that they were being asked to pay high prices for a poor

quality service and there was a strong campaign against the introduction of the metered service.

Now there is one thing I can tell you definitely: telephone charges in Jamaica are not higher than telephone charges in England or the United States. But the services in these two countries are more efficient, and so subscribers do not mind paying for the services they get. I think the Jamaica Telephone Company has come to realise that the real objection is not so much against the costs as against the casual and slipshod treatment so many subscribers have to put up with. Some of their Operator, especially in the country Exchanges, though Kingston itself is not blameless, are sometimes almost impossible. Many of these young women seem to think the subscriber is there for their convenience. Until the Telephone Company teaches them that courtesy does pay, it will continue to enjoy a not wholly deserved unpopularity. *that it does not wholly deserve.*

And now a brief word about high fruit and vegetable prices. I agree completely with Mr. Allan Isaacs when/^{he}said last week that it was fantastic for a Kingston housewife to have to pay as much as a shilling for a pound of yam. It is unreasonable for the housewife to have to pay two shillings for a dozen oranges or one and six pence for a dozen bananas. These are not imported things. We grow them right here in Jamaica. I think that if the housewives agree among themselves to refuse to pay these high prices, costs are bound to come down. So there it is, ladies, it is within your power to bring down prices by all of you firmly refusing to pay unreasonable prices. Believe me, prices will come down if you act firmly and together. The remedy is in your hands....Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Monday April 4th at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking.

Good evening: I am sure most of you must have been as surprised as I was by this morning's news over this station that Mr. Wills O. Isaacs, the Minister of Trade and Industry, had been expelled from the P.N.P.'s East Central Kingston Constituency organisation. You will remember the news report said that the East Central Kingston Constituency Committee met yesterday and voted to remove Mr. Isaacs. Now the report also said the vote was unanimous, but this was not strictly true. Nineteen members of the Committee voted for the removal of Mr. Isaacs but three members of the Committee, Miss Vicky Grant, Mr. Marcus Hamilton and Mr. Ralph Brown made it clear that they were taking no part in the business. Mr. Hamilton was chosen to act as chairman ~~xxxx~~

~~Now, what is behind all this? And what does it mean?~~
of the party organisation in place of Mr. Wills Isaacs until such time as the National Executive Committee of the party has decided ~~xx~~ what should be done on this affair. And, of course, the National Executive of the P.N.P. is meeting tonight so it looks as though the matter will be thoroughly discussed at tonight's meeting. If it is discussed tonight there will be one important absentee from the meeting and that will be Mr. Isaacs himself: he is at present in St. Josephs hospital undergoing an operation, which I am glad to say is not serious. Of course, the party Executive may decide not to deal with the matter until Mr. Isaacs is able to be present to answer for himself. Knowing Mr. Manley's scrupulousness about such things, I rather think the discussion will be postponed until Mr. Isaacs can be present.

Now, what is behind all this? And what does it mean?

Mr. Isaacs was elected to ~~be~~ the Chairman of the P.N.P.'s East Central Kingston Constituency Committee at the annual conference last year. Since then relations between Mr. Isaacs and the rest of the members of the Committee have not been too happy. Mr. Isaacs is a strong and wilful type of man who likes to have things done his way. The P.N.P., in spite of whatever faults it might have, is based on the principle of free democratic discussion and collective decision. And as the party matures its members will more and more want to think for themselves instead of having some leader doing all the thinking for them. This, I think, is a very healthy sign. Out of this has stemmed many of the internal differences between Mr. Isaacs and his Committee. For instance, it is known that the Committee selected Mr. Marcus Hamilton to stand in the recent local elections against the strong opposition of Mr. Isaacs. Indeed, the candidate Mr. Isaacs wanted was defeated by 43 votes to three.

This of course means that Mr. Isaacs is not as powerful within his party Constituency organisation as many people have been led to believe. It also means that party leaders cannot ride roughshod over the rank-and-file members of the constituency organisations. But it certainly does not mean that Mr. Isaacs is out of the P.N.P. or even out of his office as chairman of the constituency committee. He was elected chairman by an annual conference and only an annual conference or an emergency conference can remove him. So, in terms of party rules the committee has acted wrongly, but in doing so it has made a very strong demonstration in favour of democracy within the party; and that is all to the good.....Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on

Monday April 5th at 6.15p.m

Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: Apart from dealing with the racial killings in South Africa I have, up to now, devoted most of my commentaries to dealing with Jamaican or West Indian affairs. This is natural; we are all naturally more interested in what is going on here at home or in the Federation. But I think we should take a look at the greater world from time to time because what happens out there in the greater world can have a very strong bearing on the lives of all of us. Just as no man can live only for himself, so can no corner of the world cut itself off from what goes on in the rest of the world.

The exploding of atom or hydrogen bombs may seem very far from us here in Jamaica. But are we likely to escape the effects indefinitely? And if there is another war in the world, have we any reason to think that the horrors of that war would not touch us? I don't think so; I think that sooner or later we must become involved in what goes on in the ^{rest of} ~~the~~ world, and so it is important for us to try and keep in touch with it.

Now, one of the most important things that is going on at this moment is the great debate between Russia on the one hand and the United States, Britain and France on the other hand about disarmament and the banning of atomic weapons. This debate has been going on for years, and while it has been going on both the Russians and the Western Powers have been making their armies better and better and producing what they call 'more sophisticated' weapons of destruction. It was only towards the end of last week that the French exploded their second atom bomb because they too

want to become a member of what is known as The Atomic Club. Until the French exploded their two bombs only Russia, the United States and Britain were members of this Club whose terrible weapons could wipe all living things off the face of this earth in a matter of hours.

Now we have the situation in which both sides say they want to disarm and ban all atomic weapons. But they cannot agree on how this should be done. For a long time their disagreement has centred around the question of inspection. The West, led by the United States, ~~felt~~ wanted a carefully drawn-up agreement which would allow United Nations inspection teams to go into any country to make sure that ^{it is} ~~they were~~ not secretly making atomic weapons. The Russians, on the other hand, wanted an agreement to stop all atomic tests first and only after that to talk about inspection and control. The West felt that any agreement which did not guarantee inspection and control would not be worth the paper it was written on. But to prove her good faith the United States voluntarily stopped her bomb testing programme. Still the Russians would not agree to inspection and control.

Last week Mr. McNamara saw President Eisenhower and between them they worked out a new plan which they hoped would break the deadlock between East and West. The new plan proposes that Russia and the West sign a treaty to permanently ban all big atomic tests. It further proposes that East and West make a gentleman's agreement not to make any secret underground tests until they have worked out an acceptable system of control and inspection. The first Russian reactions to this proposal were not as hostile as to the earlier one and something might yet come of it. But, you might ask yourself, why are they afraid of inspection if they really mean to disarm.....Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on

~~Wednesday~~ Tuesday April 6th at 6.15p.m

Peter Abrahams speaking.

Good evening: I am very glad that the British Guiana Constitutional Conference has worked out much as I predicted it would in my commentary of March 23rd. In August of next year B.G.'s new constitution will come into effect. Under it she will enjoy full internal self-government with an elected/~~Upper~~ Lower House and a Nominated Upper House much as our own. The B.G. delegation asked for control of the police and internal security as soon as the new constitution comes into effect. The Secretary of State for the Colonies refused this, but promised to transfer responsibility for these two matters to the elected representatives six months later, if all went well.

A very interesting feature of the agreement has to do with the Federation. The B.G. delegation had asked for independence rather than self-government. The British Government had accepted the principle of independence for B.G. provided that two years after the General Election under the new constitution or after the West Indies Federation had gained its independence, whichever came first, both Houses passed a resolution asking for independence. ~~Exxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ This, I think, means that the British Government has pinned its hopes on B.G. joining the Federation. It also means, I think, that the West Indies Federation will be an independent nation within the Commonwealth before 1963 - if we do not wreck it in the meantime. That is the only reasonable explanation for the British Government's reply when the Guianese delegates asked for immediate independence.

Now Dr. Cheddi Jagan has made quite a song and dance about the Colonial Office 'wielding the big stick' and about ~~Kxxxxx~~

Forbes Burnham having betrayed the independence movement. I think Jagan was just playing at popular politics. Jagan is a shrewd politician and he had the voters at home in mind. He has a General Election to fight next year and he knows that Burnham is going to be his main opponent, so it is a good idea to start discrediting Burnham right now.

Of course it would have been wonderful to go home with all his demands met, but I don't think Jagan expected to get any more than he got. And I think he is, privately, quite pleased with the gains made at the London conference. And so, B.G. is well set on the road to self-government and ultimate independence, either inside the Federation - which is her best bet - or on her own.

Another very important piece of news - from Central Africa on Saturday this time - was the report that Dr. Hastings Banda had been released from detention to discuss the constitution of Nyasaland with Mr. McLeod, the Colonial Secretary. Dr. Banda, some of you may remember, is the leader of the Nyasaland African National Congress who was detained in March 1959 when there were widespread demonstrations by the Africans against the Central African Federation with its South Africa-like colour bar policies. This I think means that Britain has decided that she cannot go on supporting the white-dominated Central African Federation against the wishes of the Africans. It means that Nyasaland, which is predominantly African will either leave the Federation, or else that the British Government will exert pressure on the white rulers of the Federation to give the Africans a greater share in the running of the area. I know that Dr. Banda and his followers want to take Nyasaland out of the Federation. This is the most likely thing to happen. It is part of that wind of change about which Mr. Mcmillan spoke when he was in South Africa.....Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Thursday April 7th at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Hals Tuesday a week

Good evening: You will remember that ^{on Tuesday March 29th} I discussed with you the ending of the old Farm Development Scheme. As you know, although the old Scheme came to an end on the last day of March, farmers were given until the end of September to complete the projects they still had in hand; so that the new Farm Development Scheme will only start on October first of this year. It is about some of the main features of this new Scheme that I want to talk this evening.

I don't know all the details of the new Scheme because they have not yet all been worked out. But after a long talk with Mr. Alla Isaacs, the Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, I have a pretty clear picture of the basic thinking behind the new Farm Development Scheme.

Now, when I talked about the old Scheme I said it was unlikely that farmers would get the same kind of assistance under the new Scheme that they got under the old. Well, they will still get some assistance in the form of subsidies; but these will be for certain basic developments only. If a farmer wants to build a water tank, or do soil conservation work, or build a road on his land, or put up a farm building, he will still be able to apply for assistance. Of course, he will have to satisfy his Extension Service Officers that he is really carry on these basic developments.

As you know, under the old Scheme ~~moneyxxxx~~ assistance was given in a sort of general way without any specific tasks. You might have a farmer saying that he needed £300 to grow citrus. If he filled in his forms properly and his land looked as though it could produce citrus he generally got what he asked for. Nobody found out if the man knew how to grow citrus in such a way as to get the best yield

possible. The result of this was that we often had expensive schemes which gave very poor results. Well, under the new Scheme all this will be changed. Assistance will be tied to specific projects. The farmer who wants to borrow £300 to grow citrus will have to know how to grow citrus. If he does not know then a condition of his getting the loan might well be that he should be taught how to grow citrus. This will make sure that both the farmer and the country get the best returns possible for the money invested. This will be the basic pattern right through the new Farm Development Scheme; and the most important projects on which Government will concentrate will be sugar, bananas, citrus, coffee and cocoa, cattle, milk, pigs, poultry, fish and garden vegetables.

Another important thing under the new Scheme is that the Extension Service Officers will no longer deal with the money side of the Scheme. The book work they had to do, the keeping of accounts and all the other little things, took so much of their time that they had little time left to go out into the field with the farmers. Under the new Scheme the Loan Board will take care of the book work and they will be free for the important job of helping the farmer grow his crops.

And the thing that cheered me up very much was when Allan Isaacs said he knew that some Extension Service Officers were not doing their jobs as well as they could. He said that under the new Scheme the Ministry will set up a training unit to see that these officers are properly trained for the job. He said there would be fellowships and scholarships for training abroad so that ~~the~~ new Scheme will have the best techniques in the battle for agricultural prosperity in Jamaica. To me the new Scheme sounds exciting and challenging.....Tomorrow I want to talk about civil servants going 'home' to England. Till then, goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Friday April 8th at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams

Good evening: What I am going to say this evening is not going to make me at all popular with a large number of people, so I wish I did not have to say it. But I think it is important enough for me to risk the unpopularity that comes to anyone who attacks the privileges a relatively few people enjoy at the expense of the vast majority of their countrymen. I am talking of the strange case in which we see and hear of senior Jamaican civil servants going on what is known as 'home leave' to England at the expense of the Jamaican taxpayer. Now this business of going 'home' would be bad enough if the civil servant went alone, but he does not he takes his wife and whatever the number of children he might have - and we, the poor taxpayers, pay their first-class passage coming and going.

Now this system began in the old Colonial days when our civil service was a Colonial Civil Service and only men from Britain held administrative high/positions in the civil service. To these Colonial Civil Servants, whose employers were the Colonial Office ~~xxx~~ in London and not the taxpayer in Jamaica, this island was just a tour of duty. They had no roots here; this was not home to them. And so, after serving a certain period, they got 'home leave'. And they got First-class passages home because England was genuinely home to them, and when their leave was up they got first-class passages back to their place of duty.

But the civil servants who worked at 'home' in England among their own people and in their own country, were a different kettle of fish ~~altogether~~ altogether. They did not get 'home leave' which gave them and their families a free first-class trip to Jamaica or

Trinidad or anywhere else. They were stuck at 'home' unless they put their hands into their own pockets and paid for their own trips. The result was, and still is, that when these English 'home' civil servants get their leave they travel by third-class to the English seaside like millions of their fellow countrymen who are not civil servants; this happens among even the very senior of them. They did not, and still do not, have any privileges which are denied to the other citizens of England who are not civil servants. This is part of what makes British democracy at home such a by-word throughout the world.

Logically then, when the Colonial system here gave way to self-government ~~the Colonial Office~~ and Colonial Civil Servants who worked for the Colonial Office were replaced by native civil servants who worked for the taxpayers of Jamaica, this 'home leave' business should have come to an end. After all, they are now 'home' civil servants in exactly the same way as is the British 'home' civil servants. And just as the British taxpayer sees no reason why he should pay for the holiday passage of his 'home' civil servant so I see no reason why the Jamaican taxpayer should pay for holiday passage of his home civil servant. What we have at present is no more and no less than a hang-over of the old Colonial days when the senior civil servants from abroad were really the imperial masters rather than our public servants. The difference is that they had some justification for their free passages for 'home leave'. Our public servants have no justification at all.

Trinidad and British Guiana have already abolished this outdated piec of public extravagance. It is high time we stopped it here.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on

Saturday April 9th at 6.15p.m

Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: What, I am sure many of you must be asking, has happened to the Oil Refinery about which there was so much talk last year. Are we still going to have an Oil Refinery in Jamaica? And if we are, when is it likely to come? And why is there all this silence about it?

Well, as you know, it was early in March of last year that Mr. Manley announced that the Government of Jamaica had entered into an agreement with the Esso Standard Oil Company for the building of a Refinery in Jamaica. This refinery was to process 26,000 ^{per} ~~gallon~~ barrels of crude oil ~~every~~ day. In his announcement Mr. Manley stressed four points: first, that the refinery would not be a monopoly; second, that the prices charged for products from the refinery will not be higher than the prices of the gas we now import; thirdly, that the retail prices of our fuels would not be raised; and, fourthly, the country would not lose the money it got on duty from imported gas because it will charge an excise tax which will be equal to the imported duty which will disappear when we refine our own oil.

I am sure many people thought it would be only a matter of months after Mr. Manley's announcement before we saw an oil refinery on our sky-line. But the setting up of an oil refinery is not as simple as that: it is not as simple as putting up a n even large-sized factory building. It is one of the most expensive and complicated pieces of machinery in the world, and many of the parts must be especially built, and this takes time. Then again, because it is such a complicated piece of machinery it will take

a year or more to put up the machinery on the site. So you will see that the setting up of a refinery is a long drawn out process which often takes two years or more before the refinery actually starts operating.

So the answer to my first question is that we are definitely going to have the refinery; but when?

The Esso Standard Oil people, who will build the refinery, have not yet chosen the site on which they will build but I think they now have a very a very definite site in mind though they are not going to tell anybody where that is until they have bought the land. You can understand why I am sure. I think it will take them from about 6 to nine months to finalise the land deal and all their other contracts, and then they will begin on the construction work. From my investigations I know that they hope to begin the construction work towards the end of this year. On the construction work they will use about 800 workers; and as I said earlier the construction work will take a year or more. So, if we set ourselves an outside estimate, a reasonably accurate guess would be that the refinery would go into production some time in 1963.

When it is in operation the refinery will employ about 180 men. Most of these will get special training and the majority of them will look after the maintainance of the refinery. I know that the Company hopes that all these maintainance men will eventually be Jamaicans. Now, I know it looks as though the refinery will employ a small labour force, but I think we are going to be surprised in a few years' time by the new skills we are going to learn in very many fields through having a refinery in Jamaica.....Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Monday April 11 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: It looks as though things are beginning to move fast in South Africa. As you have heard on your radios and read in your papers, an attempt was made on the life of the South African Prime Minister on Saturday morning, shortly after the opening of a Trade and Agricultural Fair in Johannesburg to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of South Africa. A slightly built, 45-year-old man walked up to within a few yards of the platform where the South African Prime Minister, Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd sat. Suddenly, the man whipped out his pistol and fired three shots. Before anyone could make a move Verwoerd lay bleeding on the platform. One Bullet had entered his ear; the second one had gone through his cheek and lodged in the roof of his mouth. And then the shocked and maddened crowd turned on the little man and beat him up terribly and merciless before the police arrested him. It all happened very quickly, very suddenly - much more quickly than it takes for me to tell it. And yet it is possibly the most important/^{single} thing that has happened so far in the terrible South African developments.

Now the thing that makes this so important is the fact that the man who tried to kill the South African Prime Minister is himself a white man; and he is not a young man. A young man might have made the attempt in a fit of youthful passion and political idealism. But David Pratt is 45 years old and until last Saturday he was a very successful and very respected farmer in the northern Transvaal. A man like that does not take such drastic action as trying to kill the Prime Minister of his country lightly. I am sure he must have had long and painful thoughts about it; I am sure he must have been swayed this way and that way by doubts and fears before he finally

made up his mind to go through with it. And I am absolutely certain that David Pratt knew that his own life would be finished once he fired those shots, whether he killed the Prime Minister or not. All he could look forward to was either death or a life-time in prison. David Pratt, then, had decided to throw away his own life when he decided to kill the Prime Minister of South Africa. It is comparatively easy for a man to risk his life in war or in a fight when feelings are running high; the murderer always hopes that his crime will not be discovered; but to calmly and quietly decide to do something that you know will destroy you, is by far the most ^{and lonely} terrible/decision that any man has to make. Why then, did this successful man who had nothing to gain and everything to lose, make this hard decision and carry it through?

I think it is because when you go right down to the bottom of things people are people first and only black or white or brown or yellow afterwards. We know this to be true here in Jamaica, because Jamaica has lived out this racial problem and proved that people are people first. And there are a number of white South Africans who also believe this. Like us here in Jamaica they believe that what is happening in South Africa is an evil thing. And one of them, David Pratt, has deliberately thrown away everything he had and risked death to show that he hates the racial regime of South Africa as much as the black men who ~~were~~ are fighting against it. And there are many other whites who are in jail right now because they too hate Apartheid. This is something we should remember.

For the rest, I think we are still witnessing only the beginnings of the South African crisis. There is a lot more still to come..... Tomorrow I want to touch on aspects of Mr. Arnett's Revenue section of the Budget. So, till then.....Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Tuesday April 12 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: I think very few people like the month of April: I certainly don't. Of course, there are the tax collectors who seem to enjoy being busy taking money from us in the form of taxes on property, for having our cars on the road, and for such odd and painful items as not having paid all our income tax for the year. So, all in all, I find April a very miserable month, as I think most tax payers do. And now Mr. Arnett has told us that we are going to pay a penny more for our bottle of Red Stripe and Two pence more for my favourite packet of 20 cigarettes. If you prefer an imported beer to Red Stripe then your bottle or can is going to cost you three pence more. And the people who like such fancy drinks as whisky, brand and gin are going to have to pay two shillings more for each quart. For myself, I am going to stick to rum for which, thank heaven, we are still going to pay the same old prices.

Now, Mr. Arnett said that these new increases were not aimed mainly at getting money for government so much as trying to control some of our spending on imported goods. This seems to me reasonable. The situation on imported good is quite serious. Every year we are spending more on imported luxury items than the year before, with the result that in terms of external trade our national books are not balancing at all. A happy situation would be if what we imported from abroad could be paid for by what we exported; and an even happier situation in terms of our national accounts would be if there was something left over after we have paid for our imports from the money earn from our exports. But this is not the case. For last year we had an adverse balance of more than £16

million in our external trade. And so something must be done to trade and adjust this; and Mr. Arnett has decided that a tax on imported luxury items is the best way of adjusting this.

I am inclined to go along with him in his reasoning except on one point. If these increases are in fact aimed at primarily our import of luxury items, then why the penny more on our bottle of ~~the~~ local beer? I can see the reason in all Mr. Arnett's other items but I cannot see it in terms of our bottle of local beer. I hope someone in the Opposition will press him very hard on this question in the House Debate this week. Our bottle of local beer has become as important to the vast majority of our people as has our gill of rum, and just as rum has not been touched so I don't think beer should have been.

And now for a few general remarks about this year's Budget as a whole. It seems to me that this is basically a Budget of stock-taking and consolidating of the gains made over the past five years. The emphasis is still on development, as I expect it will be for a good few years to come; but it is a Budget of pause.

All we have to do is think back over the past five years to realise how fast and far the country has moved. There have been vast new undertakings in agriculture and industry. Enormous sums of money have been pumped into education and the building of schools, into roads and water works, into technical training and a host of other fields. The pace has been hard. And just as any builder has to ease off a bit, step back and take a good look to see how the building is going up, so the Government has to pause and take stock. And just as the builder may find a wall that is not quite plumb and adjust it, so does Government with the building of the national economy. This, I think, is what is happening in this year's Budget. *Tomorrow I will tell you about one tax increase*
~~Government has planned its 10 Year Development Plan in 3-year stages. This Budget is planned to consolidate the second 3-year stage. Tomorrow I'll tell you about a tax I would like to~~
I would welcome very much. Till Then, Goodnight

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Wednesday April 13 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: Last night I ended my commentary by promising to tell you about a tax move I would have liked to see introduced by Mr. Arnett. But before I go on to that I think I had better make my own position on taxes quite clear once more. When I told you about the property tax increase some time ago I told you that I do not like taxes. I still do not like taxes. I think they are a necessary evil we have to put up with in the interest of good and civilised government. So I like to see taxes as low, as fair and as reasonable as possible. From all this you will see that I do not want to see any new tax move introduced unless there was a desperately urgent reason for it.

Well, I think there is such a desperately urgent reason for the new tax move I would have liked to see introduced.

You all know that the situation on our roads is becoming really alarming. Hardly a day passes without there being some terrible accident on our roads. Often the helpless young or the almost helpless old are involved. How often have you read or heard of a child being knocked down and killed? How often have you heard of an old man or old woman suffering the same fate? How often have you heard of head-on collisions on our roads? How often have you heard of cars running into parked trucks at nights because the trucks had no parking lights on? There is a terrible slaughter going on on our roads today and I think the sooner we face it the better it will be for all of us.

Now I am not suggesting that any tax can cure this fearful problem. I think our traffic authorities must make a very much more sustained effort to stop these bad practices on the road. I think

they should do this all-the-year-round instead of having a campaign for a month or two. And I think all our road users should show a great deal more consideration for each other than they now do. This will go a long way to easing the problem; but I do not think it will solve it.

There are more cars in the island now than ever before; and a vast number of these cars are completely unsuitable for use on Jamaican roads. Now, the United States is a huge country with nearly 200 million people. It is thousands of times greater than Jamaica. If all the roads in the United States were to be put together they will cover a land area many times larger than Jamaica. And it is for roads like those that the big American cars are built. And even the Americans are finding these cars too much for their roads. For us on this small island these huge American cars helped to create have ~~created~~ a dangerously impossible situation.

Now what can we do about this? I think we can follow the example of Puerto Rico. A few years ago the roads of Puerto Rico were in an even worse state than ours. Then the Puerto Rican Government did something about it. They put a really stiff tax increase on big cars ^{in the form of import duty} that almost doubled the cost of any huge American car; so that if a car cost a thousand pounds the tax would almost come to another thousand. I saw the results of this when I was there in February and March of this year. There were very few of these huge cars on the roads. Instead one saw small cars everywhere. The rate of accidents had dropped. Traffic flowed more freely than it did in 1955 and 1956. I think that if we followed the Puerto Rican example it would help to ease the slaughter on our roads. I also think we should ban left hand drive cars from our roads.....Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

Radio transmission on
Thursday April 14 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: This is the third day that we have been without our daily Gleaners and, at present, it looks as though we are going to be without daily papers for many more days to come. Now this situation of being without our daily papers is bad enough. The Gleaner is a habit that is over a hundred years old. But just think what ~~like~~ it would have been like if this had happened two or three years ago, or even as short a time as a year ago. If we had had this strike then there would have been an almost complete news blackout. We would have been cut off completely from what went on in the outside world and we would also have been cut off from what went on in other parts of Jamaica. In those days even this radio station depended on the Gleaner for its news.

But today all this has changed. Sure we miss and need the Gleaner, and some of us miss it very badly. But the situation is not as desperate as it would have been even a year ago. Today there are two radio stations on the island and these run their own news services and they have made sure that the public was kept informed of what went on both at home and abroad. This, I think, is a fair measure of the changes that have taken place in Jamaica over the past few years. The Old Lady of Harbour Street is still very important and very dear to most of us, but she is definitely no longer the only source of news and information on which we have to depend. And I don't think that is such a bad thing at all. It is a sign that the country is growing, and growing fast. But when all that is said I shall still be glad when I can again open my copy of the Gleaner over my morning cup of coffee.

But now let us look at the strike which has deprived us of our

Gleaners. The reason for it is wages. Five months ago the unions presented a claim for wage increases to the Master Printers Association. The last minimum wage agreement for the Printing Industry was negotiated in 1957 and proclaimed in January of 1958. Under this agreement the very top grades of workers in the industry such as the colour separators, got a minimum wage of £11 a week. The unions want them to be paid £14 a week. The top machinists got £9.15.0; the unions now want them to get £13. 2. 6. Photo Lithographers got £8. 6.10; the unions want £12.10.0 for them. Male compositors now get £6.12.6; the unions want £11.12.6 for them. And so it goes right down the line.

Now, there is another problem too. The wage rates I have listed are the minimum rates. But sometimes a printery finds that it has a group of men whose work is way above the average. In such cases managements have from time to time given these men increases which made their wages higher than the agreed minimum. For example, the minimum wage may be £11 but a man's work may be so good that his employer has increased his pay to £14. Now the union is claiming a minimum wage of £14 for a man in this category. If the claim is conceded the other workers in this category will have their wages raised to £14. But what happens to the man who already gets £14? The unions say the voluntary increase he has received should be carried forward so that under the new agreement he should be entitled to £17. This the employers do not like, and this is one of the key points of dispute.

Well now, are the workers unreasonable in their wage demands? Most aspects of printing are highly skilled jobs, and compared with other highly skilled jobs, the printing worker is, I think, definitely underpaid.....Tomorrow I will tell you a Fable. Till then, goodnight

NEWS COMMENTARY
For transmission on
Friday April 15 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: As this is Good Friday I thought you might like to hear a little Fable about a man called Absolom G. Jones, a Jamaican who was proud of Jamaica but even prouder of himself. Absolom G. Jones was a good farmer and he knew it. His farm was the best in the whole Parish and he made everybody know it. Everywhere where ~~his line~~ the line of his land touched a public road or path he had a sign up which said: JONES' FARM. And his private road which led up to his home had a sign which said: JONES' DRIVE. His house was on the crest of a lovely rolling hill and he called the hill JONES' HEIGHTS; and the house in which he lived he called JONES' HAVEN. To him the word Jones was the most beautiful in the world and he began to think it might be a good idea if the whole country was to be called Jones. After all he was Jones and look at what he had done. He thought about this for many weeks and then he decided of what to do. He would start with the village first, and then work his way through the Parish and keep on until the whole country is renamed Jones. So, one Sunday evening he invited all the villagers to a meeting, and because they respected him everybody turned up. Then he stood up and said: "My friends, I have called you here this evening because I think it is an important matter for the future of this country that we should rename this village after me and call it JONES!" It took his listeners a minute to recover from the shock, and then the school hall rang with their laughter. The sight of people laughing at him stopped Mr. Jones' heart and he dropped down dead on the spot. And when he woke up again he was standing in front of St. Peter and looking at the Pearly Gates. And just as Jones opened his mouth St. Peter raised his finger and said: "don't

say it, Mr. Jones, or down you go to another place which is very hot. We don't change names up here for anybody. We love the old names/^{up}here."

Now, this little fable came to me when I heard that the Kingston and St. Andrew Corporation Council had followed the advice of the Jamaica National Trust and decided not to change the name of the Parade to Constitution Square. For myself, I am absolutely certain that the KSAC and the Jamaica National Trust were dead right to resist the move to change the name of the Parade. The Parade has a real and special meaning for the citizens of the Corporate Area. It is something that has grown with time and it has become a tradition. And I do not see why we must forever be throwing away old names and old traditions for new names and no traditions. Most of these new names do not even have the touch of poetry about them that most of the old ones had. Does the name: Mountain View Avenue have the same beauty and rightness for you as Long Mountain Road? It does not for me. And what is now called Waltham Park Road was once Leaders Lane. And up in the hills where I live the beautiful Limes Kiln has now become Kirkland Heights. There seems to be a passion around these days for Heights and Havens and Views and Gardens. I think they are dull and dreadful and unworthy of the beauty of Jamaica. And please let us have a stop to this ridiculous business of new streets being named after minor officials who are swollen with their own sense of importance. Think of the old names like Wait-a-bit, Guava Ridge, Hardwar Gap, Mile Gully, Fern Gully, Harry Watch, Ginger Ridge and many others; and then think of Mona Heights and South Haven and Harbour View. To me there is no comparison. I am for the beautiful old names every time...Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Saturday April 16 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: On Thursday of this week the Minister of Finance, Mr. Arnett, tabled the Mortgage Insurance Bill in the House of Representatives. This Bill gives power to the Development Finance Corporation to issue insurance policies on mortgages to buy or build houses. Up to now, as some of you may know, the government has acted as guarantor for large middle-income housing schemes such as the one at Mona. But as soon as this Bill becomes law this arrangement by which government guarantees promoters of housing schemes will come to an end and be replaced by the mortgage insurance scheme.

Now, under mortgage insurance scheme the person who lends his money to the person who wants to build, can insure the sum he has lent out. This means that he has the certainty that he will get his money back. I say person, but really it is more likely to be a lending organisation because not anybody can just enter the scheme. The Minister must first give his approval and as a rule approval will only be given to recognised institutions such as building societies, life insurance companies, housing co-operative societies, trust companies, loan companies and housing finance companies whose main business is the lending of money on the security of real estate.

And before the loan money can be insured certain standards of building construction will have to be observed. To ensure that these standards are observed the Housing Department of Government will supply the Development finance Corporation with experts to decide on the standards and inspect the building during construction to make sure that the standards are observed.

Once this is done the policy can be issued ~~in~~ in the name of the mortgage lender who will pay an insurance premium of $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ of the amount of the loan. But though the lender pays this he will be able to charge it against the borrower. Another important point is that the Minister will have the right to ~~refuse~~ refuse to issue a policy to a lender whose interest rate is higher than that specified under the scheme. And mortgage loans will be insure only up to £5,000 on any one house.

But what will all this mean to the person wanting a house? First of all, as you know, under the present set-up you cannot begin to build a house unless you can put down a third of the cost. If the house will cost £3,000 you will have to own the land and be in a position to put down £1,000 before building can start. Having to find this big sum of money to put down has made it impossible for large numbers of people who wanted to do so to build their own homes. Under this new scheme you will only have to find between one-tenth and one-sixth of the price. In other words, if you wanted to put up a £3,000 house all you will have to do is find £300 (or a little less even) to be able to start building. This alone is a far-reaching departure from the old system. It will make it possible for very many people to go in for home-ownership.

Another advantage is that the old system under which you often had to renew your mortgage after five years will come to an end because the lender will now be able to insure his money.

I think this scheme will have a revolutionary effect on our housing problems. I hope government introduces something similar for lower-income housing too. The need there is desperate. Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on

Monday April 18 at 6.15p.m

Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: I hope you have all had a happy and restful long Easter weekend. I think we can all be proud of the fact that we have had relatively few accidents on our roads this Easter. But I also think that we can still be a little more thoughtful and courteous on our roads. Most accidents on the roads are the the result of thought^{lessness}~~fulness~~ and lack of consideration for others.

Now, this evening I want to talk a little about the relations between parliament, the press and the public because I am not sure we all have very clear ideas on this subject.

On Tuesday of last week a Gleaner photographer walked about the floor of the House of Representatives during a debate. This distracted the attention of the Members of the House and so the Speaker ordered the photographer to be removed from the floor of the House. The photographer moved from the floor of the Chamber and next appeared in the Visitors' Gallery. From there he took a picture of Mr. Donald Sangster blowing up a red balloon and then popping it. By this time the Speaker was thoroughly vexed with the behaviour of the photographer and ordered his camera and the picture seized. The photographer then tried to run away, holding on to his camera and the picture. But he was caught and brought back and the picture was confiscated.

Now, it is easy to dismiss this as just an amusing incident which took place in the House. But if we do look at it like that then we do not understand the importance of the House of Representatives in our national life. Our parliament is the most important body in our whole country. It is more important than the Cabinet, and more important than the Premier or the Governor. It is the highest

authority in the land which makes the final decisions on what will or will not be done for the public good. And because each one of its members has been chosen by us, the people of the country, parliament is our servant, reflecting our power and ^{our} authority in the running of our national affairs. And the government of the country is, in its truest sense, made up of both the party in power and the party in opposition; and together they reflect our power, our authority and our dignity. That is the relationship between parliament and the public. Now let us look at parliament and the press. The first point of difference is that while parliament represents us, the people, the press does not necessarily do so. We do not have any say in who will sit on the board of directors of any paper, we do not have any say in who will edit any paper. We cannot, by our votes, turn out one lot of directors and put in another, as we can do with our government. But, in all free societies the press has become the unofficial watchdog of the people, exposing evil and criticising wrong practices, and so becoming the guardian of our liberties. In Britain, where this tradition is very highly developed, the press is at its best. And there the press is as jealous of the dignity of parliament as is parliament itself. Here in Jamaica our press still tends to lack that respect for the dignity of parliament because right down at bottom it still lacks respect for the people who elected our parliament. No British press photographer would dream of behaving as our photographer behaved. Our man's attitude showed a clear contempt of parliament and therefore a clear contempt of us, the voters; and this is just not good enough in Jamaica today.... Tomorrow I want to talk about Russia's Khrushchev. Till then, goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Tuesday April 19 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: There is one man who holds the entire fate of the world in his hands today. He can plunge the world into the most destructive war of atoms which would probably wipe all civilisation from the face of the earth, and might even destroy all life or he can ensure that there is peace in the world. He controls the largest country in the world, with an area of nearly 9 million square miles, and with a population of 200 million people. Only China and India have greater populations. His country is the most advanced in scientific knowledge. It sent the first rocket out into space to circle around the earth, and it shot the first and only rocket to land on the moon. It also showed us the first pictures of what the dark side of the moon looks like. In terms of wealth, only the United States is richer than it is, and it is determined to catch-up with, and then surpass the United States. The country is, of course, Russia, or, to give it its full title, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and its leader, the most powerful single man in the world, is Nikita Krushchev who celebrated his 66th birthday on Easter Sunday. I think/^{a man} with such powers, a man who can affect our own lives here in Jamaica, is important enough for us to take a close look at him.

First let us look at his powers. He has more personal power than the President of the United States or the Prime Minister of Great Britain. Both the Prime Minister and the President depend for their power on the people. The British people elect the Prime Minister and the American people elect the President. They can always be deprived of their powers by an election and they always have to deal with an opposition which might one day become the government.

Mr. Krushchev has no such limitations on his power. There is no

opposition to him because no opposition party is allowed in the country. And if you were a Russian citizen who had to vote you were presented with one list of candidates only: you had no choice. The result is that you really have no say over who is to rule your country. There is only one party in the country and that does all the ruling. And at the head of that party is the man who has been the toughest and the smartest at getting rid of any rivals and enemies he might have. Because Krushchev had the toughness, the smartness and the ruthlessness he is today the most powerful man in the world.

And yet, up to five years ago the western ~~were~~ people had not heard of this man who now controls the destiny of the world. Where was he? What was he doing? He was born into miserably poor conditions and was a child labourer in Russia's coal mines. He could hardly read when he was in his early twenties and only went to a workers school in his middle twenties after the revolution. And then he became a servant of the Communist Party which demands of its members that they follow orders blindly. He obeyed so well that he became a trusted servant of Stalin and carried out some of Stalin's big 'liquidations' for him. He was so efficient that he was called the 'Hangman of the Ukraine' and the 'Butcher of Budapest'. But when Stalin died it was Krushchev who, when the moment was ripe, attacked Stalin's successors, denounced Stalin himself, and took power. Today he is all-powerful. He is not as remote as Stalin was, he's more friendly and cheerful, a laughing rolly-polly father of a big family. But underneath he is just as tough and ruthless as Stalin was. Tomorrow I'll tell you why I do not think Khrushchev wants war. Till then, goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on

Wednesday April 20 at 6.15p.m

Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: Last night I told you about Nikita Khrushchev and the absolute powers he has. These powers, I told you, made him the most powerful single individual ruling the most scientifically advanced country in the world. The little I told you about his rise to power - the manner in which he got rid of his rivals, Malenkov, Molotov, Kaganovich and the Red Army hero Marshal Zhukov - after the death of Stalin, must make it clear to all of us that if it suited him to do so, Khrushchev would plunge the whole world into an atomic war. But I do not think he will do so for a number of reasons.

In the second world war the Russians paid a very heavy price for victory. They lost more men in that war than did all the Western forces combined; the total of their dead ran into millions. And rather than leave anything to the invading German army, they ~~severely~~ destroyed their own factories and machines and burned their own food when they had to retreat. They left only a scorched earth for the invaders to take. But when the invaders were thrown out they themselves returned to a scorched earth and no machines. When the war ended they faced hunger, disease and the destruction of most of their industry. The Russian people have not forgotten this and Khrushchev, who was himself in that war, knows it. The people of Russian genuinely do want peace; so Khrushchev is not likely to make war unless there is a very clear and urgent reason for it.

Another reason why he will not make war is because he has, up to now, got most of what he wants without making a war. Khrushchev is a communist and it is part of the communist doctrine that capitalism and communism cannot live side by side; that the one must, sooner

or later, defeat the other. He has, since the war, seen communism spread over Eastern Europe and take half of Germany. And in the East China with more than a quarter of all the people on earth, is now a communist state. And in the rest of the world, in the Middle East, in Africa, in Latin America, wherever there is poverty and misery, the communists are at work winning friends and influencing people. Just the other week Khrushchev's deputy, Mikoyan, was quite near us, over in Cuba doing a trade and aid deal with Fidel Castro. So, if they can win the world to communism without war they will do it by what they call the method of the 'cold war'.

Finally, Khrushchev does not want war because of the nature of war itself. It is very unlikely that there will be anybody to celebrate victory after a war fought with long-range atom and hydrogen carrying rockets. And then there is Khrushchev himself. He is not a man whose mind is twisted like Hitler's was and Stalin's became and I think he genuinely wants prosperity for his own people; and to create prosperity he needs peace.

But the creed which Khrushchev follows is an aggressive and militant one, dedicated to conquering the world and to robbing all men of their freedom of choice. And the danger for the rest of the world is that in a society like the one which Khrushchev rules, he may be replaced by a man with a twisted mind like Hitler's who would not hesitate to let loose the horrors of war on the world.

Any man who has the cunning, the skill and the ruthlessness can rise to the top under communism. That is why I personally prefer democracy, with all its clumsiness. It limits the power of even the highest individual and it allows us to have minds of our own and to choose for ourselves. And we can change our government without murder, brainwashing or war under democracy.....Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Thursday April 21 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: I wonder if you have noticed how grim and serious and high-minded the news nearly always is. It tells us of death and violence, of revolutions and treasons, of floods and fires, of racial oppression and the quarrels of the big powers. If there really are little green men up in Mars and they can tune-in to ~~our~~ news bulletins from our world, I am sure they will get the impression that ours is a very grim and dangerous and terrible world. They will think of us as creatures who are always fighting - either with our mouths or with guns: they will think of us as one group of countries fighting against another; one ~~race~~ racial bloc fighting against another racial bloc; and they will think of all of us as scrambling madly either to build up private wealth or national wealth.

A grim pictures, isn't it? And yet, going by our news that is the way it looks. And I, along with other comentators, have helped to paint this picture. It is a true picture, of course; but you know that it is not all the picture. There is the other side to it. There is the laughter of children, there is the beauty of sunrise and the loveliness of our hills. There are the quiet talks among friends across racial and colour barriers. There is the wonderful way in which neighbours help each other in times of trouble. When a man robs another man it is news; but when a man helps another man it is not news. And so we hear only about the robbing, not about the helping; we hear a lot about the ugly things and very little about the beautiful things. I think this is something those who produce our news should pay some attention to.

So let me comment on a bit of happy news you are not likely to hear because it is not grim world shattering news. I witnessed two

weddings, the first one on Tuesday and the second one ~~yesteb~~day. You might have had a report of Tuesday's wedding if there had been ~~ne~~ a Gleaner strike because that wedding took place in one of the most prominent families in the island. There certainly would have been no report of Wednesday's wedding because that was a small affair among humble people in one hillside Jamaican village. And yet when it came to the heart of the matter both weddings affirmed the same simple truth that ours is not as grim a world as the news often makes out.

In the first wedding ~~two~~ very young people were starting out with love and faith and hope on an exciting new adventure. And I was there with hundreds of others to celebrate with them and to wish them well. (And it was such a happy occasion that I overdid it a bit). The second wedding was between two old people who had lived together for more years than the age of the young man in the first wedding. And because they had found living together good and successful and because of the changes in their world and in their own circumstances they were making legal an old connection and declafing their togetherness to all the world. And their friends shared the occasion with them.

Now what has this to do with bad news? Well, in spite of all the gloomy news people all over the world are laughing and loving, getting married and bringing forth children, sharing good times with friends and enjoying beautiful things. And this, I think, should make the news headlines too.....Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY
For transmission on
Friday April 22 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: This is the time when those of us who leave the licensing of our cars and the paying of our property tax to the last moment generally start the rush to our tax offices. And since most of us put off the evil day for as long as we can there are going to be long lines of people and hours of waiting. I suppose we, the taxpayers are to blame for this. If we were disciplined and orderly people, if we were a breed of very obedient men, we would not wait until the month of grace is nearly up before rushing to pay our taxes. But if this is a fault on our part, then I, for one, think it is not a fault we should be ashamed of. We do not like taxes and it is natural and human for us to put off the paying of taxes for as long as we can. And I am suspicious of all societies in which the citizens are so disciplined, so orderly and so obedient as to be led like a flock of sheep. It is in such societies - where the citizens must do whatever is most convenient for the civil servants - that dictatorships are easily established. So I find this late rush to the tax office ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ completely natural and normal in a free society.

But I have often noticed that the young men and women behind the counter do not see it in the same light. To them, we, the late taxpayers, are a bunch of irresponsible fools or worse who are trying to spoil the peaceful order of their days. And many of them have made it quite clear that they are not going to have their quiet, slow and orderly ways upset, no matter how long we have to wait. I have seen a line of more than fifty people waiting while a young man took time to light his cigarette, have a chat with

the fellow next to him, take a little walk across the room to say something to somebody else, and then come back and spend a little more time getting really comfortable on his seat before finally dealing with the person at the head of the line.

I have heard one of these young men cuss out a taxpayer who dared to ask him to move a little faster. This poor taxpayer was then kept waiting while a number of people who came after him were attended to. I can go on like this: but you know all these things. You have experienced some of them for yourselves.

Well now, this is just not good enough. The taxpayer is not there for the convenience of the civil servant behind the counter. It is the other way round. The civil servant is there for our convenience. Our money pays him. He is a public servant, our servant. It does not matter whether we are well dressed citizens or truck drivers in soiled clothes, we are all entitled to courteous and efficient service. And I think it is time for us to get the service we pay for.

But we must not put all the blame on the young man or woman behind the counter. I think heads of departments must take a share. I think they should plan for the rush period and see that there are more people at the counters and more counters to handle the work. If this were done I am sure the long lines and long waits will be greatly reduced. They certainly are not necessary. What is necessary is a little thought and consideration for the public by public servants behind counters.....Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Saturday April 23 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: I am sure all of you know the old saying that cleanliness is next to Godliness. Well, if we were to judge the city of Kingston in that light we are likely to think that it is one of the most Godless cities because it can be, and very often is, a very dirty city. If you are a visitor or someone from the suburbs or the country areas and you only see the main streets of downtown Kingston, and if you travel along Slipse Road, the Half Way Tree Road or Constant Spring Road, you are not likely to see the dirt. The city will look lovely and the streets comparatively clean.

But if you live in the areas behind this pretty face of the city, if you are a real Kingstonian living in areas like Cockburn Pen or Trench Town or Allman Town, then you will know all about the dirt because it will be all around you. The citizens of these areas sometimes have to leave their bins full of rubbish out for days before anybody from the city's Public Cleansing Department come to cart it away. Sometimes dogs or pigs or goats tip over the bins of rubbish and scatter the dirt all over the street. Flies breed by the millions. And where you have dirt and flies you can be sure that ^{disease} ~~disease~~ is not very far ^{away}. And it is always the little children who are the victims, and you often see them with sores on their bodies and on their faces, and you often see their little bodies wasting away because they are so full of worms. And this, to me, is a crime against a large number of the future citizens of our society.

Now why does this situation exist? We have a Public Cleansing Department with a staff of 600 men and a large fleet of ~~garbage~~

trucks to get rid of our garbage. Roughly £250,000 of the taxpayer's money is spent a year to keep the city clean.

And still the city is not clean. It is not clean because politics has crept into what should be a non-political job. The Superintendent of the Corporation's Public Cleansing Department, Mr. George Minott has for long been at loggerheads with the Corporation's Councillors. Towards the end of last year the Council decided to get rid of Mr. Minott and ordered him to go on retirement leave. Mr. Minott was not at the retiring age and refused to be retired before his time. He said the Council would have to prove that he is not efficient before they could get rid of him. Mr. Minott also said the Councillors had made it impossible for him to exercise real control over the men under him. He listed cases where he had sacked men for being inefficient and then had to give them back their jobs because Councillors insisted. Certainly, this sort of thing does not make for discipline inside any organisation. And once there is no discipline in an organisation such as this then it is the citizen who suffers. And so the streets are dirty and there are millions of flies and the children of the city are riddled with worms.

The Corporation's Councillors, from whatever party, cease to be only party men once they are elected. They become representatives of all the people. And they are there to serve the public good for all. Until they clean up this dirt mess I, for one, will feel that they are failing in their duty to the people of the city....Goodnight

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on

Monday April 25 at 6.15p.m

Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: The latest news is that we will have our daily Gleaners back tomorrow morning and I am sure most of you look forward to it as much as I do. Now, if this strike had gone on until Thursday of this week we might have had a strike in all our big printeries on the island. Now that the Gleaner strike is over, I understand there will be an enquiry into the wages position in the entire printing trade. ^{in any case} So, you can look forward to your Gleaner at breakfast tomorrow.

Now this evening I want to talk a little about the Ras Tafari movement. As you know, it would be wrong and improper for me to ~~comment~~ comment on the case of the Rev. Claudius Henry and some of his followers because the case is now pending in court. What I can ~~discuss~~ discuss is the position and the beliefs of the Ras Tafarians. The first thing I want to make clear is that under a real democracy any man is entitled to hold any beliefs he may choose. The free society does not say to a man: "You must only believe this," or "you must only believe that". A man's beliefs are his own business. It does not matter how unpopular his beliefs may be, nobody in a really free society, neither the law nor the public at large, has any right to interfere with him. That is why a communist in Britain can freely criticise the government of Britain and promote propaganda for communism. Of course, the same communist would not last very long if he were in Russia and dared to freely criticise the government of Russia.

So the Ras Tafarians living in a free society are entitled to their beliefs. They ~~are~~ have the right to grow their beards as long as they like and spread their ideas as far and wide as they

can. I think our law officers were wrong when they shaved off the beards of Ras Tafarians who were held in custody. And I think we all ought to be very careful about our general prejudice against bearded men. A man is free to grow a beard if he wants to. And not all bearded men are Ras Tafarians.. ~~But~~, in any case, it would be a poor kind of society which discriminated against men simply because they wore beards.

~~Now, if the Ras Tafarians disapprove of conditions in this country or of the government of this country, he has the same right to do something about it that every other citizen has. He can express his disapproval by holding public meetings; he can write letters to the press; he can start his own political party and put up his own candidates at election time. And if the majority of the voters of the country support what he stands for then we will have a government run by Ras Tafarians. Those are his rights. They are no more and no less than the rights of all other citizens. Like all other citizens he, the Ras Tafarians, must abide by the decision of the majority arrived at by free elections. And like all other citizens he is subject to the laws made by our freely elected legislators. Neither the Ras Tafarians nor the rest of us have any God-given right to break the laws of the land. There is no need for terror and violence because our country is not a dictatorship..... Tomorrow I will comment on the Rasta back-to-Africa move.....Goodnight.~~

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NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on

Tuesday April 26 at 6.15p.m

Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: I wonder how many of you have asked yourselves what makes a Ras Tafari a Ras Tafari. I know many people dismiss them as mad men with beards many of whom smoke ganja. Few people ask themselves why. I think we should face the fact squarely that one of the most important reasons for the Ras Tafari movement is the great social and economic inequality that still exist within our society. There are large numbers of people in this country who still live in miserable poverty and for whom there are very few opportunities to make a decent living. And many of these people see no way of lifting themselves out of this hopeless situation. And it seems to these people that nobody cares about them and about what happens to them. These people have a desperate need to have hope; and like all people everywhere these people want to have a sense of dignity and a sense of belonging. And as it seems to them that nobody in Jamaica cares about their physical and spiritual needs they have turned their hearts and minds to Africa. In Africa, they feel, they will find the things they have not found in Jamaica. There will be land for each of them; there will be food; there will be security and dignity. And so Africa and going to Africa becomes the great dream - the way of escaping from their present misery.

Now, how real is this dream? For the vast majority of the Ras Tafarians this is a painfully real dream which we should try to understand with sympathy. But a few unscrupulous people have, and will continue to exploit this dream, and they will stir up trouble.

But can this dream be realised? To answer that we must take a close look at what going to Africa means. First, for a Rastafarian or anybody else to go to Africa needs money. To go by sea would

cost each person not less than £150 and probably a lot more. To go by air will be more than double that. But even if you have the money you cannot just book passage and go. You must first get permission from the authorities of the country where you are going to land and live there, and this is no easy matter. They will want to be sure that you are able to take care of yourself. Usually they will not let you in unless you have some skill or some trade. This applies to Africans born in Africa who go from one country in Africa to another. It applies even more to people from overseas, whatever their colour. And usually the immigration authorities will want you to leave enough money with them to ship you back to Jamaica if you cannot fit in. So, before you can even think of going to Africa you must have at least £500 and even that is no guarantee that they will let you in. Anybody who tells you anything else is lying. I know Africa. I was born there, and I have lived in most parts of it.

But let us say you do get there. There are 200 million people in Africa who live mainly in tribes. They speak more than 200 different languages. Unless you belong to the tribe where you live and can speak the language they speak you are going to find yourself an outsider even though you are as black as they are. And you are going to be much more lonely and much more isolated than ever you were in Jamaica. Only in the cities does everybody speak English. And believe me, there is no milk and honey waiting for anybody. I sympathise with the Ras Tafarians but I know their problems cannot be solved by the African dream. They must be solved here, in Jamaica. Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Wednesday April 27 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: You will remember that Friday of last week - April 22nd - was the date Trinidad's Premier, Dr. Eric Williams, had chosen as the date on which the West Indies should declare its independence. It was also the date Dr. Williams had chosen to stage a monster demonstration march on Chaguaramas. Well, the date has now passed: the West Indies Federation has not declared its independence, and no march ~~took place~~ on Chaguaramas took place.

Instead what took place is what I consider one of the most dismal and depressing demonstrations that ever took place in the West Indies, and something which I personally condemn as strongly as possible.

At his meeting at the University of Woodford Square Dr. Williams made his speech and then lit a bonfire. Into the fire he flung the Trinidad Constitution and declared: "I consign it to the flames; to hell with it." Then he flung the Federal Constitution into the flames with the same words; then the 1941 agreement leasing the British bases to the United States; then the Moody Report on the Capital Site; then the Trinidad Telephone Ordinance; then copies of the Trinidad Guardian and copies of statements made by the Trinidad Opposition about racial problems in both Trinidad and British Guiana. All these documents he flung into the fire with the words: "I consign it to the flames; to hell with it".

Now, on the face it this was just a dramatic demonstration showing Dr. Williams' disapproval and rejection of these documents and what they represent. It is an exciting and colourful sort of thing to do: it is the sort of thing that will catch the newspaper headlines and cause people to talk. But beneath ~~xxx~~ the exciting

demonstration is something disturbing; something I feel we ought to think about carefully and soberly.

In what are now known as the dark ages of the history of our world, men and women were burned at the stake for not conforming with the popular will. People who were different or who did not agree with established authority were regarded as witches and fire was used to destroy them. And then the dark ages passed and men won a larger degree of freedom to hold unpopular views and to express them.

But in the 1930s Adolph Hitler rose to power in Germany and one of the earliest things he did was to make a giant bonfire and to burn all the books that the Nazis disapproved of. And some of man's finest thoughts and dreams went up in flames.

Now, there were copies of these books and papers all over the world so the Nazi book burning robbed the world of nothing. But it did demonstrate something. It demonstrated a monumental intolerance of all views that were unpopular to the Nazis; it demonstrated that there was no room in Germany for those whose views opposed the Nazi government. And it was after the book burnings that the persecution of the Jews and all the other horrors began. All this came back to me when I heard of Dr. Williams' burning of documents, and it depressed me.

I should like to think that Dr. Williams did this casually and without thinking of the kind of association it would suggest in people's minds. But in any case, it was a sad and miserable demonstration by a very important West Indian and I hope we never see anything like it again.....Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Thursday April 28 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: When I read and heard that more than 300 acres of sugar cane was completely burnt out in ~~Vere~~ the plains of Vere recently, some lines of verse which I had learnt in childhood and which I had not recalled in all my adult years suddenly came back to me. I had learnt them so long ago that I cannot even remember the name of the poet who wrote them. But they so completely fit the firing of our canefields that I am going to give them to you as I remember them: they go like this:

I saw with open eyes singing birds sweet
Sold in the shops for people to eat
Sold in the shops of Stupidity Street.

I saw in vision the worm in the wheat
And in the shops - nothing for people to eat
Nothing for sale in Stupidity Street.

Now, on the face of it these lines of verse have nothing to do with the firing of canefields. They tell of the stupidity of farmers who kill birds and sell them, and then find that because there are no birds to keep down the worms, the worms eat all their plants just as the young shoots come up. But there is this connection: just as there is no food for the farmer after the worms have done their damage so there will be no daily bread for the man who depended for his living on all or some of the more than 300 acres of cane that went up in flames the other day. Just ask yourselves how many men will not earn a penny during this crop season because ~~300~~ more than 300 acres from which they would have earned something is now blackened and scorched earth. And think of the hardships this will impose on their families in the weeks and months to come.

We do not yet know who is responsible for this dreadful damaged

One thing we can all be certain of is that this was no accident; it was carefully planned and carried out with deliberate malice. Some people say the Ras Tafarians were involved; others say it was cane cutters who hoped to get the larger amounts of money paid for cutting burnt cane; and yet others say that the communists are at work. For myself, I just do not know.

The Sugar Manufacturers' Association has made a flat statement saying that cutters are not paid higher rates for handling burnt cane. They are paid the same rates, whether the cane is burnt or not. The management of Monymusk Estate also said that they had no reason to think that any of their work force was involved in the burning of the canefields; so that would seem to let out the cutters.

Now, if the communists had set their minds to such a campaign of arson, believe me they would not hesitate to do it. And the recent behaviour of some members of the Ras Tafarian cult - the threats they've made, their hording of arms and dangerous weapons - certain make them suspect. But it is up to the police to hunt out the guilty parties so that they can be punished by the law. Whatever the reasons they may put forward for what they have done, their crime is a mean and contemptible one because it will bring hunger and misery on women and children.

You will find people who will say this sort of thing is done as a protest for better conditions. But do you create better conditions by destroying men's livelihoods?/I don't think so. I don't think those who fired the canefields care anything for the good of this country and its people.

Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Friday April 29 at 6.15 p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: You will remember it was about 14 days ago, on April 16th, that I told you about the Mortgage Insurance Bill under which the Development Finance Corporation would issue insurance policies on mortgages to buy or build houses. You will remember that I told you that under this scheme you would only have to find one-tenth or even a little less of the cost of your house in order to start building. (As you know, under the present set-up you cannot start building unless you can put down one third of the cost. You will also remember that I expressed the hope that government would introduce something similar for lower income housing.

Well, the Mortgage Insurance Bill was debated in the House of Representatives on Wednesday of this week, and out of that debate has come what is to me the most important piece of clarification.

The Ministry Paper No.13 which explained the Bill when it was first tabled a little over a fortnight ago carried a clause, Clause(c) on page 3 which said: "For the present policies will be issued for newly built houses only in the price range between £1,500 and £6,000". It was this clause which made me say I hoped something would be done about lower income housing because even £1,500 is too high a cost for some of our people.

Now it would seem that although this lower limit of £1,500 still obtains under the insurance scheme, there is provision for lower income housing. In the course of his speech on Wednesday, Dr. Glendon Logan, the Minister of Housing and Social Welfare, said that because of the acute housing shortage government will give a 100% guarantee on houses costing between £700 and £1,500. If I am right and this means anything, it means that people in the lower income group do in fact come under a variation of the scheme. And this, to me and I am sure to very many of you, is wonderful news.

It means that a man who wants to lend his money to build houses costing £700 or £800 or £900 can now do so knowing his money will be protected by Government guarantee. As you know, you cannot really build a satisfactory house for less than £700 so I am in favour of that as the lower limit. But what can you get for £7⁰⁰ or

£800? I understand that those people in government who are concerned with housing are now investigating the possibility of importing prefabricated material that will be as reliable as steel and concrete blocks without costing as much. Such material has been successfully used in Britain, North America and in some European countries, as well as Central America. With such material it would be possible to put up a house of two bedrooms with a dining room, kitchen and bathroom for about 900 pounds. You will have to pay down £90, and your monthly payments will be between £5 and £7 a month. To me this sounds like really offering homes of their own to all our people.

What I do hope is that we will not see wholesale speculation in lower income housing, such as is now taking place in some of the middle income houses, where a person buys a house, rents it out at a high price and makes a handsome profit out of the housing needs of others. It is this sort of thing which pushes up the cost of living. I should like to see these houses sold only to people who will live in them. I should like to see government arm itself with the power to withdraw its guarantee from anyone who tries to make a profiteering racket out of lower income housing. But the great news is that lower income housing can be had Goodnight

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Saturday April 30 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: This radio station, and the sponsors of these commentaries and I have from time to time received requests from listeners for ~~particular~~ copies of particular commentaries. We have therefore decided to have stencilled copies made for sending to interested listeners. If you are one of those who would like to have copies of these commentaries will you please write to me at this station, sending me your address, and we will arrange for copies to be sent to you.

Now, this evening I think we ought to look at ^{one} ~~some~~ of the things taking place in the larger world.

In the last few days there have been serious riots in South Korea. These riots led to the resignation of Syngman Rhee, the President of the Republic of South Korea. The ^{immediate} cause of these riots, as some of you may remember, was the presidential elections five weeks ago when the party in power went in for bogus voting on a really large and shocking scale. Thousands of voting papers were falsely marked and falsely cast. And so arrogantly certain of themselves were the leaders of the government party that they did not even try hard to cover up their fraud. It was this contempt for them that really aroused the people's anger and started off the rioting.

But behind these dramatic events is a long story of discontent and misery for the mass of the people, and also a long story of how a man who was once his country's greatest patriot and who spent 35 years of his life fighting for his country's freedom became so corrupted by power that he was little less than a dictator by the

time the people forced him to resign earlier this week.

After the second world war and shortly after the communists took control of all mainland China, the communists of Korea, with the help of the Chinese communists, made a bid to take power in Korea as well. Syngman Rhee led the resistance against them and one of the most terrible civil wars was fought in which Korean tried to destroy Korean. The communists had the better army because they got their training and their weapons from the Chinese communists; and the Korean communists would certainly have conquered the whole country if the United States, and then the United Nations, did not step in and send an international army to fight on the side of the non-communist Koreans. When peace came the country was divided into North and South Korea: the North was ruled by the communists, and the people in the south elected Syngman Rhee's Liberal party to power. Now, South Korea depended for its survival on United States support and backing. This backing and support the United States gave Syngman Rhee's government. It continued to back Rhee's government even when it became clear that the mass of the people were dissatisfied with ~~xx~~ that government. And when a newspaperman asked President Eisenhower about it two days ~~xx~~ ago he admitted that the United States knew that Rhee had made 'mistakes' but explained that his government did not want to interfere in the internal affairs of that country. And yet South Korea came into being because the U.S. and the U.N. interfered. And now it looks as though the situation is ripe for the communists to exploit once [^]agin because the West did not interfere on the side of justice and democracy.

Goodnight.