

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Saturday Oct. 1st at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: Does Khrushchev really want to kill the United Nations? And why does he want to abolish the post of Secretary General of the United Nations and have it replaced by a three-man commission? I told you last night that Khrushchev's idea for the three-man commission is that one of the men should come from the Communist World, one from the Western World and one from the group of neutralist nations. I also told you that in such a three-man commission any one of the three will have the power of vetoing any action and so stop anything from being done about any problem. I told you that if such a commission had existed during the Congo crisis the Russians would have vetoed all action and nothing would have been done and civil war and bloodshed would now have gripped the Congo.

But, you will say, how do you, Abrahams, know the Russians would have vetoed any action in the Congo? Because it would have suited them. They want communism to spread all over the world, and they know that communism spreads best where there is trouble and confusion and crisis. Lumumba was making a mess of the Congo but they thought Lumumba was their man, and the worse the mess got the more he would turn to them to help him out of the mess. Their experts would stream into the country giving advice, they would give aid and before the Congolese knew it the communists would be in control. In fact things were going exactly this way when the U.N. forces stepped in and brought some sort of order out of the chaos. And as order was restored the influence of the communists faded till in the end their ambassadors and experts had to pack up and leave.

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And this defeat for communism came about because the the decisive action taken by the U.N. forces in the Congo under Hammarskjold's directions. So the communists have no reason to love Hammarskjold. He has upset one of their plans. And this was not the first time something like this had happened. Something similar had happened in Korea in 1950. If, in 1950, the United Nations could have been prevented from taking any action all of Korea would have fallen under communist control. But then United Nations had a Secretary General called Trygve Lie who took his job quite as seriously as does Mr. Hammarskjold, and when the communists invaded Korea from the north Trygve Lie ordered a United Nations force to go in and defend Korea. And in the end, after one of the bitterest ^{civil} wars in which Korean killed fellow Korean the communists were prevented from taking over the whole country - though they did capture the northern half of it which is today a communist state.

But there again it was a Secretary General of the United Nations who had the power to act who stopped them from capturing a whole country. So, if you look at it from their point of view the fly in the soup is the Secretary General of the United Nations who has the power to act and can therefore spoil their plans. If on the other hand there were no Secretary General with powers to act all Korea might have been under communist control today and the Congo might be drifting in the same direction. So Mr. Khrushchev is not just being petty and mean-minded when he attacks the Secretary General of the United Nations. There is a communist pattern to it all. But there is a another pattern, and something completely new that has come out of this session of the U.N. That is the voice of Africa in world affairs. I will talk about this tomorrow afternoon, so till then, goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Monday October 3 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: On Friday of last week the Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr. Wills Isaacs, announced a government Order putting certain restrictions on the buying of motor cars by hire purchase. This Order came into effect the following day, Saturday October the first.

As a result of this order it is going to be a lot more difficult for anybody just to go out and buy a car. If you or I want to go and buy a new car today we will have to have at least one-third of the price of the car. In other words, if you want to buy one of the popular medium sized cars selling at £695, you will have to put down £231. 13. 4. and you will have to pay the balance of £463. 6. 8. within two years. This means that you will have to pay somewhere in the region of about £20 a month on the balance - and that is without adding the interest. When interest is added the sum of about £20 will work out to a little more.

Now the effect of all this is that it is going to make it a lot harder for people to buy cars than it has been in the past. And this is precisely what the Government wants to happen. I think that there are three factors behind this move.

First, I think the government is concerned by the whole Hire Purchase situation in Jamaica today. You know how easy it has become for us to get almost anything on credit. You put down a small deposit and you can get yourself a frig, a washing machine, a new bedroom or living room suite or anything else you want. And when the salesman tells it to you, it all looks so easy, so tempting. And under temptation and what looks like easy terms we are all of us inclined

to lose our heads a little and to spend really more than we can afford. But up to this point all is fine. We are keeping up with the Joneses, and sometimes we are ^{or} doing a little better than the Joneses. But the trouble starts when we have to make the repayments either at the end of the week or at the end of the month. The two pounds on the frig and the four pounds on the furniture and the three pounds on the washing machine and the fifteen pounds on the car - all these suddenly hit us at one time. And often there is very little left in the pay packet when we have met these instalments. Often we cannot afford the little luxuries like taking the wife out or buying something nice for the children. Life becomes a kind of desperate scramble to keep up with our weekly or monthly instalments. What had seemed so easy now turns into something of a nightmare. And sometimes there is real tragedy. Someone might find it utterly impossible to keep up with payments and do something dishonest like fiddling with the firm's money to make up the few pounds needed. And this sort of thing usually ends up in the court and with a good name destroyed and grief and misery for a once happy family.

Next is the fact that we are spending very much more foreign currency on imported goods than we are earning from our exports. We are in debt as a trading nation and this is not a healthy situation. And finally, ~~there~~ we are importing cars almost recklessly right now. They are coming in at the rate of about a thousand a month. This sort of thing has to be curbed some time or there will be chaos.

We must ease up on this business of living on credit; and starting with motor cars is as good a point as any I know. Goodnight.

NEW COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Tuesday October 4 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: Last Saturday's newspapers were so full of dramatic news that many of you may have missed a small item which I think ~~is~~ is very serious. We had the verdict in the Red Hills murder trial, we had the story of a man charged with ^{the murder of} his common-law wife, we had the news of the credit squeeze on the hire-purchase of motor cars, and we had the international show of big names from the United Nations as well as the birth of Nigeria as a free and independent nation. With all this it is very likely that many of us skipped the small but important item of local news that is in my mind.

But before I go on to that let me clear up one small matter. I told you about the new restrictions on hire purchase of cars last night. I told you that as from last Saturday anybody wanting to buy a car will have to put down one-third of the price of the car and pay the rest of the balance within two years. What I did not tell you last night was the position for those who are buying trucks. Anybody buying a truck will have to put down a quarter of the price of the truck, and he will have to pay the balance within two and a half years. This is a little better than the position for those who buy cars. I think the reason for this difference is that the person who buys a truck does so in order to carry on a business and so earn a living. No one ever buys a truck simply to be the proud owner of it whereas we often buy cars simply as a luxury item which we do not really need.

And now to my small and important item of news.

In Saturday's Gleaner there was a story from Montego Bay which

told of the death of five very young babies. The story tells of how seven young babies were admitted into the Montego Bay hospital over the past three months. All these babies suffered from Tetanus. Of the seven five died.

When Dr. V. Ferdinand Levy, the Medical Officer of Health, told the Public Health Committee of the St. James Parish Council about it, he described the situation as 'alarming and deplorable'. I agree with Dr. Levy all the way. These were deplorable and unnecessary deaths which could have been prevented by a little care and cleanness.

I am sure most of you know that Tetanus is just another name for Lockjaw, and the bacillus or germ which brings on Lockjaw lives and breeds in dirt. It loves and thrives in dust ^{and} dirt and rotting manure. It hates cleanness because cleanness destroys it and drives it away. Tetanus or Lockjaw can only attack a person through some cut or scratch on the skin. It gets into your blood through some opening in the skin and then attacks your blood and you suffer horribly before it finally destroys you.

This is what happened with these little babies. They were delivered by 'Nanas', people who are untrained, who have taken no lessons in midwifery and who therefore do not know a thing about how to fight off germs and be clean. And so five babies died, and many more will go on dying until we stop this 'nana' business. If you mothers in the country areas want your babies to live, please call in the district nurse. She has been trained in how to be clean and with her your baby will have a chance to live. The Nana has not been trained and so, without meaning to do it, she might kill your baby.

Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Wednesday October 5 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: Since I spoke to you about the restrictions on the hire-purchase of cars on Monday, a number of listeners have suggested that I take a close look into the second-hand car business where the hire-purchase system has also been very much in operation.

One or two people whose information I have found very trustworthy in the past have gone as far as to suggest that there is some sort of racket carried on by some people who deal in second-hand cars.

Let me tell you one story which I have heard from more than one source. If this story is true then I do not know what else we can call it but a racket. This is the story:

A person sells a car to a used car dealer. The car is in fairly good running condition. Someone else comes along and decides to buy the car. Nine times out of ten the buyer cannot pay cash for the car. The used car dealer then recommends the buyer to a Discount House who lends him the money to buy the car. The Discount House will of course collect the money with interest over a period of time. The car is used as security. At this stage the used car dealer has made his sale and got his money and the buyer has got what seems to him to be a car in fairly good condition. Now he can drive off and all he has to worry about is the monthly payments to the Discount House.

But within a few weeks - in some cases a few months - things start to go wrong. There are faults in the engine; the gearbox is all wrong; the radiator or gas tank leaks. The poor new owner finds

that his car spends more time in the garage being repaired than it spends on the road. The owner now finds that he has to find money for repair bills as well as the money to pay his monthly instalments to the discount house. A number of buyers of used cars in this condition have become so disgusted that they have told the Discount House to take in the car for the balance they owed. And at this point the Discount House has discovered that what the dealer had recommended as a car in fairly good condition, was in fact not fit to be on the roads.

I was told of at least one owner who was so disgusted with the car he had bought that he went to the person who had sold it to the second-hand dealer. He complained bitterly to the original owner for selling a car in that condition to the dealer and pointed out that he, the second owner, was now suffering for it. This man got a severe shock when the first owner told him that the car had in fact been in a good running condition. The first owner then pointed out that certain parts had been removed and had been replaced by older and more used parts. ~~This~~ The car of this particular man had a leaking gas tank. But the first owner could prove that that was not the same tank with which he sold the car. Somewhere along the line the good tank had been replaced by a leaking tank. People are saying that too much of this sort of thing is going on and that it adds up to a racket in the used car business. I don't myself believe that every used car dealer goes in for this sort of thing. But I do think buyers of used cars would be well advised to check really carefully before they spend their hard-earned money on a second-hand car. They could so easily be buying just a heap of junk. Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Thursday Oct. 6 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: Because so much else has been happening all over the world, there has been very little news of the British Labour Party's Annual Conference which is now taking place in the English seaside town of Scarborough. And yet this is one of the most important conferences taking place at this present time.

I suppose most of you who have read anything about the British Labour Party Conference in your papers, will see it largely as a struggle between two men: Hugh Gaitskell who is the present leader of the British Labour Party, and Harold Wilson who is trying to replace Gaitskell as the leader of the party. Certainly that is the picture which Tuesday's Star will have given you. And Wednesday's Gleaner will have confirmed this picture with its report of leaders 'sharpening their knives for the power struggles ahead'.

Of course it is true that there is a struggle for power going on in the British Labour Party. There are always struggles for power and position in democratic political parties. We know of such struggles right here in our own political parties. But I think that what is going on at the British Labour Party Conference this week is very much more than just a struggle for power between Gaitskell and Wilson. I think that behind the Gaitskell-Wilson struggle is a very important crisis of principle for the British Labour Party.

I think most of you know that the British Labour Party believes in socialism. And here I think I had better just stop and briefly tell you what socialism is. Too many people have mistaken notions of what socialism means. First of all, socialism is a political and economic system based on the public ownership and operation of all

the key industries in a society. It aims at greater production and a more equal distribution of a country's wealth among its citizens. Socialism does not mean the taking over of every little farm and every little business or every little farmer's piece of land. Then there is another thing: many people talk as though socialism is the same thing as communism. It is not. Socialists believe in using the peaceful methods of elections to win political power whereas communists will use any methods, including violence and revolution to win power. So much for the meaning of socialism. The British Labour Party is such a party and at the end of the last war it was elected to power and brought in what is today known as the 'Welfare State'. There was free education for all and free health services for all. Big industries like the mines and the railways were nationalised. They did a great deal of good for the mass of the British people. But after a time they were turned out of office by the electors and the Conservatives who took office carried on many of the good things they had done and in some cases did them better. One thing about the socialists is that ^{a majority of them} they have always been against military alliances, especially with America. ^{This majority is} They are in favour of disarmament and they are against the atomic bomb. They want Britain ^{to} ~~the~~ cut her connections with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and to adopt a neutralist position in the Cold War. On these matters ^{the} Gaitskell's ^{groups} policy is much the same as that of Macmillan and so you have this desperately bitter fight inside the party. My own personal opinion is that at this moment in time the British Labour Party has lost its sense of direction and does not quite know where it is or where it wants to go. And this is a very serious situation for Britain in this modern world. Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Friday Oct. 7 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: Today the three most troubled and most unhappy countries on the great African Continent are the Congo which recently gained its independence from Belgium and immediately plunged into violence and disorder; next is Algeria where a bitter and bloody war has been raging for six years now; and then there is South Africa where the violence and the bloodshed has, for the moment stopped, though the threat of it is ever present. I have told you a great deal about the Congo in recent weeks. It is a very long time since I have commented on Algeria and on South Africa. Compared with Algeria and South Africa, the troubles in the Congo are not so bad. It will take time to solve all the problems of the Congo. But the ugly beast of violence has been chained, Mr. Lumumba has had his wings clipped, the United Nations is doing a fine job and there is hope for the Congo. There is hope that a peaceful, orderly and democratic form of government will grow in the Congo without too much strain and suffering. At the moment the same cannot be said for Algeria. The dogs of war have their teeth sunk into the soul of that unhappy country and it looks as though an awful lot more blood will flow before there will be peace and freedom in Algeria. But something very important has happened in recent weeks which has brought Algeria to the forefront of the news and which I see as a faint but important glimmer of hope. I will deal with this glimmer of hope for Algeria later. Now I want to deal with the most hopeless and the most depressing of the three African trouble spots, South Africa.

The results of the South African Referendum are by now known to all of you. As you know, on Wednesday the South African voters went

to the polls to cast their votes on one single issue. And that single issue was whether South Africa should become a republic or whether it should retain its present status as a Dominion within the British Commonwealth. And the vote has gone the way I expected it. Any student of South African affairs would have told you that the vote would have been in favour of a republic. Now in a few months' time we in Jamaica are going to cast our votes in much the same way as the South Africans have just done. We too will be answering one single question and ours will also be called a Referendum. But there the difference will end. With us every person who is of sound mind and who ~~has reached the voting age and has been registered,~~ has reached the voting age and has been registered, will have the right to vote. Nobody will ask what his or her race or colour is. In South Africa ~~only~~ only 3 million people had the right to vote although there is a population of 15 millions. Those 3 millions could vote because they are white; the remaining 12 millions could not vote because they are black or brown. So this was a white referendum since the black men have no say in the affairs of their country.

So now we have the loneliest new republic in all the world; and it is a republic in trouble. Since the Sharpeville killings of last March most of the world has followed Jamaica's lead and boycotted South Africa. Foreign investors have withdrawn their money and she has lost hundreds of millions of pounds. She is isolated politically and there is doubt and fear among her rulers. But they will hold on. And for the vast majority of her people there is only oppression and misery. ³ ~~Hope~~ hope the rest of the Commonwealth will give a clear 'no' when this new racist republic applies for membership.... Tomorrow I will tell you about the glimmer of hope in the Algeria problem. So till then, goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Saturday Oct. 8 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: In order for you to make sense of my glimmer of hope for the Algerian problem I must tell you a little of how the French govern their colonies. Under the British system a colony was just a colony. The citizens of any British colony were British subjects and part of the Empire and Commonwealth. No British colony has ever elected any representative from a British colony to sit in the British House of Common.

The French colonies, on the other hand were, and to some extent still are looked on by the French as parts of France. They are known as overseas departments of France or France overseas. The people in the French colonies can and have elected representatives from their own territories to sit in the French parliament as well as in the French Upper House. To give you an example: if Jamaica were a French colony we might have a situation in which both Mr. Manley and Sir Alexander Bustamante and amny of their followers were elected to the British House of Commons. They would then share in the making of laws for Britain as well as for Jamaica. Jamaicans may be raised to the peerage and become members of the House of Lords. We may have a Jamaican as Speaker of the House of Commons, or a Minister of government and in the case of Mr. Manley he might have become Prime Minister of Great Britain and her overseas departments. In such a situation the whole idea of independence might be looked at rather differently by many people who are now strongly for independence. Well, that is the situation in the French colonies. In Northern Algeria, for instance, there are four departments who send 30 members to the French parliament: she also sent 14 senators to the Upper

House in Paris; and she sent 18 counsellors to the Assembly of the French Union. In other words the French tried very hard to integrate their colonies into the national life of France. In the French West Indies colonies like Martinique and Guadeloupe this worked very well. The the people there had lost their contact with their African past, had intermarried and had become French. But the Algerians were different. They had their own language, they had their own religion and they had their own customs - all of which were very different from those of France. And they were not prepared to give these up and become Frenchmen. To make matters worse the French settlers in Algeria rather looked on the native Algerians in the same way that the white South Africans look on the blacks. And so racial problems were added to the cultural problems. The French government, for its part, could not understand why the Algerians did not jump at the chance of being Frenchmen, and so the situation drifted to bitterness, to the formation of the Algerian National Liberation Front, and to war. For six years this war has gone on. Two weeks ago in Paris 25 French young man and women were arrested and put on trial. They belonged to an organisation which had smuggled money and arms out of France to the Algerians. None of them denied the charge. Instead, they said they wanted the Algerians to know that not all Frenchmen were their enemies, and to know that there were Frenchmen and women who supported their demand for independence. And a few days later 121 of France's most gifted writers and artists, actors and actresses signed an appeal calling on French soldiers not to fight against the Algerians but to lay down their arms instead. This is the hopeful sign in the Algerian situation. And I am glad that it has come from Frenchmen and women. Goodnight.

NEW COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Monday Oct. 10th at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: As you listen to me this evening my body will be far away from Jamaica. In fact, I shall be a few thousand feet up in the air and I shall be approaching Piarco Airport, Port-of-Spain Trinidad. Merrick Needham, the Programmes ^{Director} ~~Manager~~ ^{of} this station, and I will be down in Trinidad for a few days. And our ^{actual} ~~business~~ is concerned with trying to improve the ~~radio~~ ^{radio} service we give you, the listener. You know, this is one of those scientific miracles that we all tend to take for granted: here I am speaking to you and at the same time I am nearly a thousand miles away sitting up in an airplane. And for the next four days you will be listening to me at the same time and while you are listening to me it will be 7.15 in the evening where I am and I will be doing other things. Fantastic, isn't it? It is when you come to think of it.

But let us get on to the business in hand. It was on Saturday before last - Saturday October the first - that I had Mr. Wills Isaacs, the Minister of Trade and Industry, as my guest on R.J.R's 9.15p.m programme, 'Forum on Federation'. Those of you who listened that evening were the first to hear Mr. Isaac's little bombshell about him not wanting British Guianan in the Federation because its present leaders were, as he put it, 'marxist dominated'. That interview I had with Mr. Isaacs has caused a stir~~red~~ throughout the West Indies. The Gleaner has picked it up and given it front-page treatment. Leandro has done a couple of cartoons on it. Other West Indies newspapers have carried it; and Mr. Manley has made a statement saying the Jamaica government disassociates itself entirely from any attack on the government in British Guiana. So you can see that that

on newspapers and interview on Forum on Federation has had quite an impact/on readers and listeners and politicians throughout the West Indies. And naturally, since news and commenting on the news is my business, I am very pleased to have been the first to get out this stormy piece of news.

And almost as though Mr. Wills Isaacs' comments were a signal, Dr. Cheddi Jagan and British Guiana have jumped into the news. Reports from B.G. tell of a meeting between Dr. Jagan and a number of leading East Indian businessmen. At this meeting, I understand, Dr. Jagan urged these businessmen to continue to support his party, especially at the forthcoming general election. The report goes on to say that the businessmen then asked Dr. Jagan for certain guarantees before they would give him their pledge of support. They wanted Jagan to give them certain assurances about freedom and about the economic direction the country would take. They also asked to be represented in the Legislative Council and on the executive of Jagan's People's Progressive Party after independence. But, the report says, Jagan was not prepared to give them the assurances they asked for and so the businessmen left without pledging him their support. And a few days later these businessmen started a new party with the declared aim of fighting Jagan and communism.

But Forbes Burnham's People's National Congress does not welcome the new party. The leaders of the people's National Congress feel that the new party will confuse the issue, split the opposition to Jagan and so ensure that he wins the forthcoming elections. From all this you will see that things are really beginning to stir again in British Guiana. We can expect this new stirring to get hotter in the months ahead, leading to the elections. Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Tuesday Oct. 11 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: The Jamaica Tax and Ratepayers' Association has decided to send a five-man deputation to the Roads and Works Committee of the Kingston and St. Andrew Corporation. The deputation will wait on the Committee on Thursday of next week. The deputation will tell the committee about the poor conditions in which the residents of the eastern parts of the Corporate area have to live. They will draw particular attention to the Hampstead Park area.

The Association says that in this area home-owners have gone to a great deal of trouble and expense to put up decent houses and to make their gardens and surroundings attractive. But, they say, the roads about their nice houses are an eyesore. There are potholes. There are no sidewalks or pavements and the children of the area are in constant danger of being run over by cars or trucks because they have to walk in the roads. The Jamaica Tax and Ratepayers' Association wants the Corporation to do something about this. They want pavements so that children can go about their business without risking death at every step. I think that this particular problem of pavements is not confined to the Eastern Corporate area alone. I think there are too many places in the Corporate area where people on foot must walk ~~an~~ on the roads. And this, I think, is largely to blame for the number of accidents in which motor cars or trucks knock down people and maim or kill them. So for my part I hope the deputation will not confine their complaints only to the eastern area. There should be pavements everywhere in the Corporate area. Now I know this cannot be done overnight; but I am sure it can be done in stages.

I think the Roads and Works Department could draw up a three~~0~~years or even a five-year plan to bring pavements to all the roads in the Corporate Area, beginning with the most congested and the most neglected areas. This is a very serious matter: for our children it is often a matter of life and death.

I think we all of us owe the Jamaica Tax and Ratepayers' Association a debt of gratitude for bringing this serious matter to the attention of the authorities. Indeed, I ~~think~~ think that the Tax and Ratepayers Association is the most public spirited of all our citizens organisations. Over a number of years now it has worked quietly and persistently to improve civic amenities for all citizens and to educate the community. Many of you may remember its Federation Enlightenment Campaign in 1957. It was then called the Kingston and St. Andrew Taxpayers' and Ratepayers' Association but it was the same organisation with the same group of dedicated people. You will remember that between April and October of 1957 it held forty-two public meetings in every Parish of the island and it brought information and enlightenment to roughly 7,000 people. And all this was done without a penny from our public authorities. The cost of this campaign came to over £800. To cover this £95.10. 0. Shell and Esso donated 45 gallons of gas, Alumina Jamaica supplied transport to five meetings, a very few public spirited citizens helped, but the balance came out of the pockets of the members of the Association, and they are none of them wealthy people. This, I think, is ~~what~~ real good citizenship. I hope all of us will learn from it; and I, for one, salute the Jamaica Tax and Ratepayers' Association for showing us the meaning of citizenship. Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Wednesday Oct. 12 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: When I was a little boy my brother, my sister, my cousin and I used to play a game called 'Suppose'. I remember once my cousin said to my sister: "Suppose you are the Queen of Sheba". My sister rushed out of our little room and came back a few minutes later dressed as we thought the Queen of Sheba might have dressed - with a sheet around her showing a lot of leg. She ordered us about like a queen and warned us that her pet tiger would chew up anyone who did not obey. When my turn came my brother said "Suppose you are on the moon". I immediately fell down on the ground and began to try to eat up the earth. You see, in those days I thought the moon was made of cheese and since I was nearly always hungry as a child the moon meant food to me.

Well now, in this spirit, let us suppose that a stranger from another world came to you and said: "I understand this is Jamaica and I understand that you are a Jamaican. Just what do you mean by that? What is a Jamaican? What makes a Jamaican a Jamaican?" What makes a Jamaican different from any other kind of person on earth?"

I wonder how you would answer that question. I wonder how many of us will be able to answer it fully. Sure, all of us will be able to say that a Jamaican is someone who was born here and who grew up here. And some of us might even agree that people who were not born here but who have come here to live and make this their home are also Jamaicans. And many of us will speak of our love for this Jamaican earth; for its hills which turn purple in the setting sun, and for its plains and valleys. And some will point with pride at the

way in which people from different racial backgrounds have learnt to live and work together in harmony and peace. Yet others will point with pride at our political development. All of this is true. These are some of the important things that go into the making of a Jamaican.

But I do not think this is all. I think there is something of the spirit, something intangible which it is very hard to put into words, and if you were to tell the stranger about it, you would do so by indirection. You would take him into a rumshop and let him listen to Jamaica-man talk over his drink. You would give him salt fish and ackee or rice and peas with corn pork and green bananas. You will let him catch the flavour of the way in which Jamaicans speak and think by taking him on a ^{Verandah} ~~veranda~~ where they are telling Anacy stories or singing Jamaican mentoes. You will show him how Jamaicans relax and pass their time and the kind of food they eat and how they entertain their friends. And these little things will make the stranger from another world understand what makes a Jamaican a Jamaican. For it is these little things, these Jamaican customs, which sets the Jamaican apart from all other people on earth and makes him distinctive and different. And yet the odd thing is that so many Jamaicans seem ashamed of these things. In what big restaurant or hotel do you find real Jamaican food? The Victoria Pier restaurant tries and on a Saturday morning you get very close to the real Jamaican flavour and music. But even they are rather conservative. And as for the big hotels, Jamaican ways and Jamaican food just do not exist for them. I think it is time we showed the stranger just what makes a Jamaican a Jamaican. In doing so we will show ourselves the kind of people we are. And that is very important. Goodnight.

NEW COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Thursday Oct.13 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: So the price of our rum has gone up. As from Monday, October the 3rd wholesal rum prices have gone up by between 5/- and 6/- a case. The price of some brands will be sold to us at a shilling a quart more: other brands will cost us more than that. I know at least one retailer who has put two shillings more on the price of quart bottle of rum. This will of course mean that you and I and every John Citizen is going to have to pay more for his drink whether he takes a single shot at a bar or whether he carries it home. I do not think there is a man in Jamaica - other than those who either profit from the increase or those who feel we should not drink - who will be happy about this increase. Certainly I am not. And I will have to be convinced with facts and figures that our rum companies have been losing money to such an extent as to justify the increase.

You will remember that it was way back in March of this year that the big rum deal took place which merged our three main rum companies. By that deal Wray and Nephew, Captain Morgan and Edwin Charley were merged into one new £5 million company known as the Consolidated International Corporation.

I told you about this merger in my commentary of Monday, March 21st. I told you that as a result of this merger we now had a virtual rum monopoly in Jamaica inspite of the fact that ^{the} three companies will continue to operate as separate companies, each offering its own brands of rum in competition with the others. And I told you that whether you were buying your bottle of Appleton or your bottle of Morgan or your bottle of Charleys, you would basically be buying

from the same firm, in spite of the different names. Now let me recall the words with which I ended that commentary of mine on Monday, March 21st - just over six months ago. I said:

"And for all of us, the ~~xxxx~~ John Citizens, who like our slug of rum at the end of the day, the key question is: what is this going to do to prices? Will the man coming off the job, or the man coming out of the bush still be able to stop at his rumshop, put down his sixpence, toss down his drink of white and then continue on his way home? In other words, is the price of rum going to go up, or will it remain the same? This, for the ordinary citizen, is the most important question. The head of Seagrams, Mr. Bronfman, has said that this merger is a very good thing for Jamaica. I think we will only be able to agree with him when we are sure that our favourite drink is not going to cost us a penny more..."

Those were the exact words I used just over six months ago. And now we know the answer about price. The cost of our rum has gone up, and because we now have a virtual rum monopoly there is nothing we can do about it - except to stop drinking rum. We certainly cannot say we will not buy from this company because there is another which will give us a better price. That is the trouble with monopolies. The consumer must either like them or lump them.

It is for this reason that I personally feel that where you have a monopoly you should also have a pattern of government regulations controlling the prices such monopolies charge the consumer. If this does not happen the consumer will always be the victim. Goodnight.

you at the time that I thought this was wonderful news because it would make it possible for the poorer people in our community to build and own their own homes. I also told you that under this scheme it would be possible for a man to put up a house of two-bedrooms with a dining-room, kitchen and bathroom for about £900. A man building such a house would have to put down about £90 and pay between £5 and £7 a month.

Now this would only be possible if there is no waste in labour and material, if the building is carefully planned and if interest rates are reasonable.

Obviously, people like the promoters of the Mona and Harbour View Housing Schemes would not be interested in building such low-cost houses. And people like the promoters of Trafalgar Park would be even less interested. The margin of profit would be too slight and it would suit these people very much better to invest their money in something else.

But Building Societies are different. They came into being in the first place for the specific purpose of helping people to build houses. And they came into being in the first place essentially to help the poorer sections of the community by offer them more attractive terms, and easier terms. But now the Building Societies are saying that the Development Finance Corporation is limiting the rate of interest they can charge to $7\frac{1}{2}\%$ as ~~an~~ approved lenders whose money will be guaranteed. And this, they say, is unacceptable. They want to charge a higher interest. And so they advise their members ~~not~~ ~~NEVER~~ to deal with the Finance Corporation. And so not so many houses will be beuilt because the main idea is bigger and better profits. Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Friday Oct 14 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: You will remember that I told you on Monday that I was off on a brief trip to Trinidad and that the commentaries you have been hearing since Monday have been pre-recorded ^{a week in advance.} Well, some time this evening, all being well, I will be back home, and my voice and my body will once more be in the same ^{Cumby} place at the same time.

Now for a word about Building Societies. Some time last week the Council of the Building Societies Association of Jamaica met at St. Ann's Bay to discuss problems facing the building societies. Among the matters they discussed was the question of using money advanced to them by the Development Finance Corporation for the purpose of making mortgage loans.

Some of you may remember that I told you about the Mortgage Insurance Law on two occasions. I first told you about it on April 16th after Mr. Arnett had tabled the Mortgage Insurance Bill in the House of Representatives. I told you then that this Bill gave the Development Finance Corporation the power to issue insurance policies on mortgages to buy or build houses. I also told you at the time that the Minister will have the right to refuse to issue a policy to a lender who charged interest rates which were higher than those specified under the scheme. I again discussed the Mortgage Insurance Bill on April 29th, after it had been debated in the House of Representatives. During the course of that debate, I told you, Dr. Logan, the Minister of Housing and Social Welfare, had said that because of the acute housing shortage the government was prepared to give a 100% guarantee to any lender who lends out his money for the purpose of building houses costing between £700 and £1,500. I told

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Saturday Oct. 15 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: We have lately had a number of gloomy warnings about the state of Jamaica's economic and financial health. Some people have seen a recession just around the corner; and others, often for political reasons, have prophesied gloom and disaster. One well-known political figure has told me in all seriousness that he expected a collapse in the Jamaican economy within the next six months. And another person, someone who is quite well informed and who has no political ambitions as far as I know, has told me equally seriously that he did not think we could last another year without being hit by a bad recession. Now this sort of talk gets around and tends to undermine confidence. People get jumpy and say what is the point of saving if trouble is coming, and so you have a spending spree with no thought for tomorrow and in this way we can make trouble for the country.

But what is the economic and financial state of the country at the moment? What does it look like to people who are interested in investing money? Do they see us as being on the brink of disaster?

To answer these questions let me tell you about the views of one of the most influential financial organisations in the United States. A friend of mine sent me the September 'International Notes' put out by the Chemical Bank New York Trust Company. This is a cold, factual and businesslike report on Jamaica's economy. It shows how we earn our living, what we export and how our industrialisation programme has grown. It also discusses our trading deficit and says, and now I am quoting the report: "It should be noted that this is quite a normal situation for a developing trading economy, and that the rising

imports are both caused by and paid for by the inflow of foreign capital and loans noted previously. In all, Jamaica's external accounts currently appear to be in sound condition." These are the words of the report, not my words. The report then goes on to discuss our internal situation: let me quote from it again. It says:

"Internally, the economy's development efforts have been reflected in a rising gross national product (up by 300% since 1950) and a sharply rising per capita income. Nevertheless, price rises reportedly have been moderate and the government's financial position has not been strained." Jamaica's budget is divided into two parts: a current budget and capital budget. The current budget usually closes with a surplus (these ranged from £74,000 in 1953/54 to £2,672,000 in 1957/58) while the capital budget is always covered by borrowings. The latter is the instrument through which the economy's £78.8 million 1957/68 Ten Year Plan is being implemented. It is interesting to note that despite the authorities' natural interest in industrial development, agriculture is not being neglected in the Plan. In fact, no less than 26% of the planned expenditures have been allocated to agriculture. This is quite an intelligent decision and argues well for the government's grasp of the island's basic economic structure." There I end the quote from the International Notes of the Chemical Bank New York Trust Company. According to them we are doing alright, brother. The next time anybody tells you Jamaica is going to the dogs you just tell them that neither the big shots of London nor of New York agrees with them. They say our economy is sound and solid. Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Monday Oct. 17 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: As most of you know by now, I spent the best part of last week down in Trinidad, and with me was Merrick Needham, R.J.R.'s Programmes Director. As a result of our week down in the South Caribbean we hope that round about the middle of November you and all the other listeners in the West Indies will have an exciting and completely new listening experience. We planned the setting up of a news service which will be broadcast at the same time from four radio stations. The stations are: R.J.R. in Jamaica, Barbados Redifussion in Barbados, Radio Trinidad in Trinidad, and the British Guiana Broadcasting Service in British Guiana. It will be a ten minute news bulletin which will be heard at the same time throughout the West Indies. This means that all the people in the West Indies will be able to hear the same news at the same time from faraway British Guiana, through to Trinidad, Barbados, the Windwards and Leewards and so right up to Jamaica. To me this is an exciting new adventure in radio. It is a great combined operation which will bring all the people of the region closer together as nothing else can. I think the Redifusion Group of Companies in the West Indies is undertaking a real pioneering job, and I am very proud to be associated with this great undertaking.

But you will hear a lot more about this in the weeks ahead so I won't tell you any more now. What I should like to do is to tell you a little about the impressions I got on the journey down to Trinidad.

It is five years ago since I last made the journey down to the South Caribbean and I was eager to see what changes I would find. I knew I would not be able to do what I did five years ago. At that

time I got off the plane at each of the British islands and spent one or two or three days getting to know something of the people and of the conditions under which they lived. Five years ago I spent three days in lovely little Antigua and fell in love with the friendliness of its people and I was impressed with the magnificent job they were going in agricultural. Mr. V.C. Bird's government had then just got going with its land programme (and I still think that we in Jamaica can learn a great deal from Antigua's agricultural methods). This time I had only twenty minutes there. The airport had not changed. It was still the same tiny little place with the same curio shop and the same barrack-like rest-room where you can get your first drink of Mountgay, the wonderful Barbados rum. And the people were just as warmhearted as I remembered them. I checked with a taxi-man and he told me I would be amazed by the housing developments that had taken place; and agriculture was even better than five years ago. And then we were off again, floating through the blue sky, with the blue sea far below us, and a very black-skinned and very beautiful young ~~miss~~ stewardess serving us drinks and dinner. We stopped briefly in the French island of Martinique where French ~~men~~ policemen with guns watched us suspiciously until we took off again. Then, late in the evening, we hit Barbados and here I had my first surprise. They have a delightful new airport building. I think it is the most beautiful in the Caribbean. It is light and spacious and a real joy to look at. The rest room is very comfortable and of course their rum and their service is as wonderful as the new setting which was not there five years ago. Tomorrow I will tell of my greatest surprise of all: the revolution in Trinidad. So till then, Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Tuesday Oct. 18 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: The difference between Trinidad today and Trinidad as I knew it five years ago, was striking. It hit me the moment I got off the plane at Piarco airport. I felt it in the atmosphere of the place and in the bearing of the people. The immigration people were brisk and sure of themselves. They were firmly polite and courteous in the way people are when they are sure of themselves and of the fact that they are running their own country and are proud of it. Five years earlier when I had passed through the same airport they had been indifferent and casual, not caring what impression they made on the stranger, not proud of themselves or their country or their job. Today all this has changed. I found a refreshing sureness among all the Trinidadians I met: customs officials, taximen, newspaper sellers, hotel workers, clerks in shops, from the highest to the lowest. They all seemed to know where they were going. And they all knew that their country was no longer the same land it had been five years ago.

Five years ago Mr. Albert Gomes headed the government of Trinidad. It was a strange sort of government. There were no real political parties. You had a bunch of individual politicians with no programme of action and they only got together for election purposes. You had fierce rivalries between the different communities: the Indians fighting on a communal basis, the Negroes as a sort of disunited community, and the other smaller groups trying to play off the two communities against each other. And of course, Trinidadian politics were not particularly clean. Indeed, the politics of Trinidad

was regarded as something of a joke by the rest of the West Indies. And in the main the people of Trinidad were disgusted and ashamed of their politics and their politicians. There was no sense of direction and no-one knew where they were going. Political developments in Barbados and Jamaica were so far ahead of Trinidad that it looked as though Trinidad would never catch up with these two islands. That was only five years ago and I was there to see this situation for myself. But I was also there to see something else.

Eric Williams had then just left his job on the Caribbean Commission. When I was there he had held either the first one or the first two of his now famous meetings at Woodford Square. The People's National Movement had not yet been formed. But people had already started to talk about this new approach to politics that he offered them. He was creating a new consciousness, a new awareness in his people. Because he knew that thought must always come before action, he was creating new ways of thinking in his people. That was the situation when I left Trinidad five years ago.

Last week I saw the results of this new thinking. It had led to new action; it had led to a radical change in the political life of Trinidad and its people. I think the average Trinidadian is, today, more politically aware and more politically conscious than any other West Indian ^{in the Caribbean} including us here in Jamaica. They have caught up with us in political development: their constitutional set-up is basically the same as ours. But ^{that} is not all. In some things they have left us behind. I think they have left us behind in two important respects. One, they are the first West Indian islands to have a West Indian Governor: and two, in terms of political consciousness they have left us and Barbados and all the other islands except Puerto Rico far behind. Tomorrow I will tell you just how this came about: so till then, goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Wednesday Oct. 19 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: Last night I told you how Trinidad had, in five years, not only caught up with us in constitutional development but also how it has left us behind in two respects. I told you that the two things in which it had left us behind was the fact that it was the first West Indian territory with a West Indian Governor, and also the fact that the people of Trinidad had now a more highly developed and a much more sophisticated sense of political consciousness than is to be found almost anywhere else in the West Indies except Puerto Rico. And I promised to try and tell you this evening just how this came about.

It all began with the Woodford Square meetings. What happened and still happens at these meetings has now become part of Trinidad's political history. For years to come people will talk and write about the University of Woodford Square where Dr. Eric Williams started ^{on} his road to power. I think it is almost impossible to give you a true feeling of what takes place at Woodford Square: you have to see it for yourself. Eric Williams prepares a lecture and delivers it in the same way as any university professor would. There is none of the showmanship of politicians. He does not shout; he does not try to arouse the passions of his listeners. He offers them reason and fact and a philosophy. He offers them education in politics and in life. In the main there are no slogans: there is explanation and there is clarification. I witnessed one of the early Woodford Square meetings in 1955 and it was a revelation to me. The vast crowd was quiet and orderly, raking in the facts and the figures and the closely reasoned lecture. I had never seen anything like it anywhere. It was something

completely new in political platform speaking. And so the seeds of basic political education, of political understanding and of political sophistication were sown. And when his People's National Movement was formed the emphasis was again on education. And when the P.N.M. became the government of the country the education process did not slacken off. They kept on with it. The result was that almost every piece of action taken by the Williams government was clearly understood by the vast majority of the people.

Then there was something else. To Eric Williams it was important that the people of the country should feel themselves part of the day-to-day business of their parliament. The way he dealt with this was very interesting. On every day that parliament sits everything that happens is recorded and every evening, for one hour, the debates and arguments that took place in the House are broadcast over Trinidad's two radio stations. Nothing is cut out. If necessary, the same debate will run for two or three evenings. In this way the people hear every detail of what took place in their parliament. This sort of thing makes sure that parliament and what happens in parliament become a part of the daily lives of the people. They know their leaders intimately and politics and parliament is not far removed from them. In addition to this Dr. Eric Williams holds weekly press conferences where any questions may be asked and both questions and answers are broadcast in full for all the people to hear. It is no wonder that the Trinidadians are more politically conscious than we are today. Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Thursday Oct. 20 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: Before I go on to tell you about some of the problems of Federation as I have seen them in Trinidad, let me tell you about a few Trinidadian impressions which stick in my mind. One thing which made a very strong impression on my mind was the fact that I did not see a single left-hand drive car throughout my stay in Port-of-Spain. Indeed, I think I saw only three American cars and they were right-hand drive and medium in size. I saw none of the huge monstrosities which are such a common sight on our roads. When I checked on this I discovered that about two years after the end of the Second World War the government of Trinidad had introduced a regulation stopping the importing of left-hand drive cars. In this respect I think the Trinidadian authorities have been very much more sensible and thoughtful of the traffic problem than have been our authorities. This is one case where I should like to see us take a leaf out of Trinidad's book.

The other thing that impressed me was the condition of Trinidad streets and street lighting. The streets were wide, clean, paved and well lit at nights. Pedestrians did not have to walk in the streets; and at nights cars did not have to have their lights on bright in order to see whether there was anything in the road. These are small things, but they are important. They made driving so much easier and so much less of a risk. And children could walk on the pavements in safety and without fear of being knocked down by cars or trucks.

And now let me tell you about my trip to Chaguaramas.

A friend had offered to take us ~~to~~ on a trip to what the

Trinidadians simply call 'the islands'. These are a group of four or five very tiny islands off the west coast of Trinidad and they can be reached in about an hour by car and motorboat. Very many Trinidadians have built weekend cottages on the islands. They are keen boatmen and numbers of them spend their weekends on the islands and boating and fishing. But in order to reach their boats to go to the islands they have to go through the United States base at Chaguaramas. So, in order to get to the islands, we had to go through Chaguaramas. My first impression was one of mild shock. Suddenly, in a British territory, we came to a stop at a military guard post. A soldier, not in British uniform, inspected us closely, looked at my friend's pass and then waved us on. I had watched my friend closely while all this went on. His face had become a blank mask. There was a subtle air of tension and alertness about him. This was his country, this was the land in which he was born, but he could only go through a part of this land by permission of a foreign soldier. The young soldier was off-hand, almost casually contemptuous. I had the feeling that this was a kind of defensive aggressiveness on the part of the young soldier. He knew he was an unwanted intruder and so he was a little more aggressive than he might otherwise have been.

When the soldier waved us on we drove off and behaved as though this was a normal state of affairs, as though nothing had happened - and indeed nothing had happened, except in our minds. My own mind was profoundly disturbed as I looked at the beautiful sweep of Chaguaramas. Time's up so I will tell you more about this tomorrow. Till then, goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Friday Oct. 21 at 6,15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: The American base at Chaguaramas is a vast sweep of rolling land stretching across 11,741 acres. 5,300 acres of this is made up of hill country, much as our own St. Andrew foothills. This means that the total area of Chaguaramas is roughly a quarter of the total area of Kingston and Port Royal combined. And that, as you know, is quite a large chunk of land. More than half of this land is level and ~~quite~~ rich, rolling gently down to the sea. The setting is very beautiful. You see Port-of-Spain across the bay to the left. To the right and misty in the distance, you see the mountains of Venezuela. And near at hand, immediately in front of you, the islands rise lush and green out of a very calm sea. This is one of the most beautiful sights I have seen in a lifetime of travelling.

On the base itself beautiful wide roads are laid out and the Americans have done a fine job of ~~keeping~~ the hundreds of acres in well cared for grass. It is estimated that the Americans have spent somewhere in the region of \$116 million West Indian dollars to get the base into its present condition. That is quite a big sum of money in any man's currency. And when you have invested so much money in an undertaking you are naturally reluctant to give it up just because somebody asks for it.

Also, the Americans are in Chaguaramas by right of treaty. In 1940, when Britain stood alone in the war against Germany and Italy, when she did not have the arms with which to fight her enemies or the means to defend her colonies, the United States gave her fifty old

destroyers in exchange for the right to have bases in the West Indies, among other places, for a period of 99 years. This was a legal and binding agreement. We may say that it was a hard bargain. We may say that the Americans took advantage of Britain's desperate position. But none of this alters the fact that it was a binding agreement freely entered into by Britain, and that the Americans are there as a matter of legal right. I think it is very important to get this point quite clear: the Americans are in Chaguaramas by legal right. Under their agreement with Britain they have the legal right to stay in Chaguaramas until the 99 year lease is up. I think on this question of their legal right there can be no argument.

But the world has changed radically since 1940. Today Trinidad, in common with a host of colonies all over the world, is self-governing. She has control of her own affairs. And naturally, a foreign base in one's own country, especially if one has had no say in the setting up of the base, can be a great irritation. And Dr. Williams' call for the return of Chaguaramas to Trinidad, is part of this irritation and part of this nationalist spirit of wanting to be full master in your own land. I find it human and I find it perfectly understandable and I have a great sympathy with it although I do not think Dr. Williams has always gone about it the right way. But there is this basic human problem shown by the incident I told you of last night. And the question is: Will it, in the long run, suit the best interests of the United States to hold on in a place where they are not wanted? Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Saturday Oct. 22 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: To sum up this series of comments ~~from~~ on the South Caribbean, I should like to give you my impressions of the question of the leadership of the Federation. It seems to me that this is one of the most important questions Jamaica has to face if she is going to stay in the Federation. If she is not going to stay in the Federation then the whole question falls away.

If Jamaica does stay in the Federation I should like to see her supply the Federation with its leadership. I think she can; I think she has the men, and I think her men have the degree of political balance and maturity to put the Federation firmly on its feet.

One of the important differences between Jamaica and Trinidad which I felt when I was down there, was that we in Jamaica seemed more in touch and more aware of the trend of events in the outside world. I am not simply thinking of things simply happening. They get more or less the same news we get from the outside world. I am thinking more of subtle and invisible influences, of the flow of ideas from the outside world. It seemed to me that we are in closer touch with the mood and feeling of the outside world here in Jamaica than are the people in Trinidad. This, I think, can be a very important counterbalancing force to a narrowness of outlook which may lead many of us to think that the West Indies is the centre of the world. For instance, if Mr. Manley had to handle the Chaguaramas issue I don't think he would have put up the backs of the Americans to the extent that Dr. Williams did. He would probably have argued just as vigorously and he might even have achieved quicker results without putting up the

backs of the Americans. It is with this sort of thing in mind that I feel Jamaica can make a major contribution to the Federation by supplying it with its top leadership. And at the civil service level we have men of the calibre of Egerton Richardson and Arthur Brown and a number of others who are exceptional. Indeed when I saw some of our experts holding ~~there~~ between-conference little discussions at the Queen's Park Hotel, I was proud of the quality of the people we had sent down. And I was not the only one. On more than one occasion someone from the smaller islands has told me how impressed they were by our people. Among the radio and newspaper people it was common knowledge that the Jamaicans had the most masterful grasp of the subjects they dealt with.

But, as one small islander said to me, they seemed unwilling to act decisively. And at crucial points Trinidad just stepped forward and supplied the leadership when it came to action. And because this was the only clear and positive leadership, the small islands followed Trinidad's lead. This has led to the charge that the small islands are ganging-up with Trinidad against us. But what do we expect them to do: wait until Jamaica has made up its mind whether it is going in or coming out? To expect this is, from their point of view, unreasonable. It seems to me important that we must make up our minds quickly whether we are going to stay in or get out. And if we are going to stay in then we must act decisively to give leadership. If we don't Trinidad will. She has a ~~will~~ plan and she has the will. Unless we have the will and a plan we will lose the leadership of the West Indies. Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY
For transmission on
Monday Oct 24 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: Today is United Nations Day. Here in Jamaica we are making quite fuss about it. There are meetings up and down the country celebrating this day. Later on this evening the Governor, Sir Kenneth Blackburne will make a speech which will be broadcast. And the same sort of thing is going on almost everywhere in the world this evening. People are getting together, making speeches and generally celebrating the fifteenth birthday of the United Nations.

Here in Jamaica the celebrations will be relatively free and cheerful and hopeful. But there are countries in the world where the celebrations will be quiet and in private. There are camps in which there are many homeless and old and sick people. Most of these homeless and almost hopeless people will not celebrate United Nations Day in the way we do. Their celebration will not, strictly speaking, be any kind of celebration. Instead, they will pray. And I am not thinking in terms of dressing up and going to church and kneeling down and then praying. A young refugee woman may tonight be rocking her child to sleep in some camp for refugees. Very likely there will be no radio to give her the feeling of sharing in this day's celebration. Very likely the child might find it difficult to go to sleep because it has not had enough to eat. Mother and child would be alone and cut off from the world's celebration. And then she will remember what day this is, and silently, without any words, she will offer up a prayer for the life and growth of the United Nations because she is deeply concerned for the life and growth of her child. And the same sort of thing will be going on among many different people all over the world:

and I am thinking of the ordinary people, the common people, the small people; the people whose greatest interest in life is to live in peace and to earn their daily bread and to walk without fear with their loved ones beside them. In countries where there is racial and colour persecution they will remember that the United Nations is against all racialism and they will pray for it: in countries where there is political oppression they will remember that the United Nations stands for political freedom and they will pray for it: in countries where there is religious persecution they will remember that the United Nations is for religious freedom and they will pray for it. And so a vast, silent and world-wide prayer from the little people of the world - from black and brown and white and yellow - will be the really important part of our celebration of United Nations Day.

And this is so because deep down in our hearts we know the United Nations is something very special and very unique in the long history of mankind. It is the most serious attempt ever made by mankind to put an end to war, to put an end to inequality, to put an end to hunger and to put an end to fear. It has taken mankind more than 2,000 years to reach this far. And deep down in the dark corners of our minds we know that this is the greatest moral step forward that has taken place between men and between nations in all our history. And so, throughout the world today little men and little women are praying that we should not fail in this greatest moral venture we call the United Nations which is fifteen years old today. Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Tuesday Oct 25 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: Tomorrow we are celebrating a very important event in the history of our parliament and of our democracy. This is the opening of the new Legislative Building which is known as Gordon House. Gordon House is named after George William Gordon; and George William Gordon, as I am sure most of you know, has gone down in our history as the leader of ^{what is known as} the Morant Bay Rebellion which took place exactly 95 years ago this month. You will also remember that as the result of that so-called rebellion George William Gordon and eighteen others, including Paul Bogle, the leader of the peasants of Stony Gut in St. Thomas, were hanged outside the Morant Bay Court House. On top of this some 439 men were executed after only the most casual trial - if we can call such legalised slaughter trial. More than 600 other people, including women, were severely flogged. Over a thousand peasant dwellings were burnt down. And the so-called rebellion was over. All this had taken place in the last part of the month of October, in the year 1865 - exactly 95 years ago.

But that was not all, early in November the Governor, Edward John Eyre, called the Assembly into session and invited the members of our parliament of that day to abolish parliamentary government. The members did just that, and Jamaica which had gone a long way on the road to self-government, became a crown colony once more.

The reason why Jamaica's members of parliament voted to abolish parliamentary government 95 years ago was because they were afraid of the Jamaican people.

Up to that time our parliament had been a planters' parliament.

The vast majority of the people were not represented in it. But things had begun to change. First, a handful of brown men had got into parliament; and some of these brown men had raised their voices for a wider franchise which would give the black majority of the country a fair share in the running of the country. And the leading figure among these new men who wanted a wider Jamaican democracy was George William Gordon.

Gordon himself was a very pale brown man whose father was a Scotman and whose mother was a Negro slave. Gordon had taught himself and raised himself by his own efforts until he became a very successful Kingston businessman. He could, if he wanted to, have kept his seat in parliament and go on making money and lived out his life in comfort. He was happily married, he was wealthy, he was respected. He had everything he wanted personally.

But that was not enough for George Williams Gordon. He had a strong conscience about his fellowmen and he had a clear vision of the kind of land he wanted Jamaica to be. Nearly a hundred years ago he wanted his beloved Jamaica to be the kind of land which we are now making it. A land free of race and colour prejudices; a land in which every man and woman has an equal voice; a land in which we judge each other by our ability and by our contribution. For these ideals he laid down his life, and in doing so George William Gordon showed us the way we must go. He was a great Jamaican patriot and it is fitting that our new parliament should bear his name. Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Wednesday Oct 26 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: I hope all of you listened to the debate between Vice-President Richard Nixon and Senator John Kennedy which was broadcast over this station on Sunday morning. I think those of you who did will agree with me that it was quite an experience. It certainly gave me a very much clearer and sharper picture of the basic issues in the American Presidential election which these two relatively young men are fighting. And it also helped me to understand a little better the points which are important and the problems which matter to the American people.

As a rule when we think of America and Americans our minds automatically see a picture of wealth. We see America and all Americans as being rich and comfortable and driving around in big cars. So I was particularly interested in the argument about 17 million Americans going to bed hungry each evening. It suddenly made the Americans more human for me. To know that there are hungry Americans, to know that there are Americans who face the same problems of shortage of water, of no electricity, of unemployment, of schooling - all this corrects the rather false impressions most of us have of America and Americans.

The other thing which struck me forcefully about this debate was the very real difference between the two candidates on the United States position in the world today. Mr. Kennedy felt that the United States has not, during the period of President Eisenhower's Administration, played the positive role in world affairs it could and should have. He felt that the United States could have given the world a greater lead in the struggle for freedom, in the struggle for economic

development among the poorer nations of the world, and in the fight to win men's minds in the world war between communism and democracy. He also felt that the Russians were ahead of the United States in the quality of the rockets they have shot into space. Those of you listened will remember his very striking statement that he looked up at the moon and saw the Russian flag on it. Communism, he said, was an aggressive philosophy which could only be defeated by an equally aggressive democratic philosophy, and he felt the United States had not been sufficiently aggressive on behalf of democracy. By implication he promised that if he were elected next month he would be an aggressive President further the cause of freedom and democracy everywhere in the world.

Vice-President Nixon replied by listing the amount of aid the United States had given the world during the present Administration. He showed how the dictators of Latin American had disappeared, and he flatly disagreed with Mr. Kennedy on the question of the influence of the United States in the world today. He pointed to the reception given Mr. Eisenhower when he spoke at the United Nations recently and contrasted it with the response given to Mr. Khrushchev when he ~~knocked~~ took of his shoe and banged it on the conference table. Then he went on to criticise Mr. Kennedy. He said Mr. Kennedy was undermining confidence in the United States by his statements that the United States was coming off second best in the contest with Russia. I frankly did not like this aspect of Mr. Nixon's attack on Mr. Kennedy. But apart from that I thought it was a vigour^{ous} and interesting debate which gave us an interesting insight to the candidates. I now know my choice and I should be most interested to see if the American voters will agree with me on November 7th. Goodnight

NEWS COMMENTARY

For Transmission on
Thursday Oct. 27 at 6 p.m.
Peter Abrahams speaking.

Good evening: On Monday night of this week I was caught in one of the worst traffic jams I have ever experienced. As you know it was on Monday evening that we had one of the heaviest rain-falls of the rainy period. Monday was also United Nations Day, and I was on my way to speak at a meeting at Morant Bay on the subject of World Refugee Year. The meeting was for 8 o'clock, and I thought I could do the trip quite comfortably if I left my home at Red Hills a little before 6.

It took me about 20 minutes to get down and then my trouble started. The little bridge at the foot of Red Hills was flooded. A number of cars were stalled. I had to drive over a road that was at least a foot under water for a long stretch. I was lucky that my car did not stall; but more trouble was waiting for me the moment I entered Dunrobin Avenue. There was a long line of cars stretching for at least a mile in both directions and there was the most awful confusion.

Some people, about a third of the crowd of drivers, seemed to have got impatient with waiting in the line in an orderly fashion. They got into the middle of the road, trying to get in front of the drivers who were waiting patiently. A whole stream of them shot past us and then, of course, they began to block the traffic flowing into the other direction. The result was one momental jam with cars being unable to move either up or down. After about half an hour, we began to move, but only a few feet in every five minutes or so; and still there were people who thought it was smart to try and shoot ahead and then cut in. One little car of the new mini minor variety, with a group of reckless teenagers in it,

swung all the way to the other side of the road, forced the oncoming traffic to stop, dashed ahead, and then tried to force its way back into our lane, some 20 cars in front of where it had started. The driver it tried to squeeze in front of, naturally was more unwilling to give way to this form of lawless barbarism and the result was that there was another hold-up for almost half an hour.

An hour and 10 minutes after I entered Dunrobin Avenue, I crawled out of it. I was late for my appointment in Morant Bay, I was bad tempered and in a very anti-social frame of mind.

I have told you this story in some detail because it emphasised again something about which I have complained in these commentaries and something about which a large number of people have also complained: and that is the extreme bad manners and extreme lack of consideration which seems to be such a common feature among a large number of Jamaican motorists.

I think the flow of traffic through Dunrobin Avenue would have held us up for not more than half an hour if we had all behaved as decent, thoughtful and responsible motorists. But instead of decency, we saw the greatest display of selfishness. Instead of social responsibility we witnessed the rule of the jungle. There were no policemen in sight and so these anti-social types once again got away with their jungle behaviour. It is these anti-social people who are responsible for the large number of the accidents on our roads. I think it is time that our authorities dealt firmly and harshly with these jungle drivers on our roads. Good night.

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NEWS COMMENTARY
For transmission on
Friday Oct. 28 at 6:15 p.m.
Peter Abrahms speaking.

Good evening: On Wednesday of last week, October 19th, Sir Alexander Bustamante published an article in the Daily Gleaner under the heading "This Menace to our Future". I think that this was one of the finest, one of the clearest and one of the noblest statements I have ever heard or read coming from Busta. It was stirring, it was impressive, and it commanded my respect. I am sure most of you remember that article of Busta's.

In it, on behalf of himself and his party, he stated two principles which have guided his political career. The first principle was that capital and labour should learn to work together: that employers should respect and be fair to their workers; and that workers should learn, in spite of any bad past experiences, that it is not in their best interests to try and destroy Capital. The second principle was that people of all races must learn to live together, to work together, and to respect each other. To Busta these two principles are fundamental and vital to Jamaica's future. Busta expressed these principles because he said he was deeply shocked and grieved by a speech made by Mrs. Amy Garvey, widow of the late Marcus Garvey, during the celebration of Nigeria's Independence on October first. The words Mrs. Garvey spoke and which had compelled Sir Alexander's reply were, and now I quote "European nation are going down, and twilight is coming on them. They are looking to the blackman for mercy". And later on in the speech Mrs. Garvey went on to say and I again I quote "As blackman and woman you must stand up and claim your country, dedicate your lives to Jamaica, acquire the economic stability the 90% of the

population should have in relation to the 30,000 Chinese here". Those were the words of Mrs. Garvey, spoken on October first during the celebrations of Nigeria's Independence; and those were the words Sir Alexander Bustamante felt so strongly about that he wrote the article expressing the two principles which have guided his political career.

As a result of Busta's article, two members of his Jamaica Labour Party resigned. It later turned out that they were comparatively new members. And Busta returned the subscription of one of them with 100% interest. And then on Wednesday of this week the Council on the Afro-West Indian Affairs published a reply to Busta in the Gleaner under the heading "Blackmen must gather inspiration". In their reply they said in effect that a blackman is not yet a first class citizen in Jamaica. They said that a sinister shade prejudice still exists in Jamaica. And then they set out the aims and objects with which they hoped to change this state of ~~of~~ affairs. Among their objects are : social reform, reform of our educational system, a change in the economic structure of Jamaica, and the eradication of race and colour discrimination by law. Tomorrow evening I will tell you what I think of this whole question, so till then good night.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Saturday October 29 at 6:15 p.m.
Peter Abrahams speaking.

Good evening: Last night I told you the background to the argument on race and colour which led Busta to state his two principles. This evening I want to give you my own reactions and feelings on the whole question.

First there is the question of Pride. In so far as Mrs. Garvey wants to encourage pride, self respect and the sense of industry in the black Jamaicans, I am with her. I think it is good for a country and its people that they should have pride in their land and pride in what they are. I see nothing wrong in Negroes encouraging other Negroes to be better and to point with pride at the achievements of Negroes. The question is: Have the Negroes in Jamaica reason for pride? My answer is "yes". Draw up a list of all the judges in Jamaica name them for yourselves. You will find that the vast majority of Jamaican judges are black. I think this is cause for pride. Do the same with your lawyers. Again you will find the majority are black. Do the same with your doctors and the result will be the same. Go into your churches and you will find that the vast majority of the religious and spiritual leaders, from the Lord Bishop down are black. Look at your civil servants, here again the majority of them are black.

I think the moment we draw up such a list, will we realise how false is the charge that the blackman in Jamaica is a second class citizen. Look at our parliament? Look into any department of Jamaica life and you will find black Jamaican citizens occupying positions of honour and distinction. This I feel is cause for pride. And talking about Parliament, those of you who are interested in Cuba might like

to know that although there is a large Negro community there, there is not a single Negro in Castro's Cabinet .

Now let us look at poverty. The majority of Jamaicans are poor. The majority of people in any country in the world are poor. The majority of the poor in England are Englishmen; the majority of the poor in France are Frenchmen. It is like that throughout the world. In China the majority of the poor are Chinese. Do we then say there people are poor because of their colour?

Poverty is a very problem both in Jamaica and in many other parts of the world. And wherever you find poverty you find it most among the largest number of the people. Poverty is always found among the majority in any community, whatever their race or colour. To suggest that the majority of black people in Jamaica are poor because they are black seems to me dead wrong. They are poor because our country is poor and also because of the inequality of ability that exist among men; then too, there are the faults in our social system, and the fact that there are more people than there are opportunities for advancement. And because the black folk are in the majority, more of them are poor.

Jamaica must deal with the problem of poverty; Jamaica is dealing with the problem of poverty. You know better than I how Jamaica has changed over the past 20 years. There is more work; there is more opportunity. A first-class education is now within the reach of the poorest child who has ability. There is progress all right, but we must keep it and enlarge it.

And finally, the real power in Jamaica today is in the hands of the majority of its people: the ordinary voters. And I think the way they have used that power has been a lesson to the world. In spite of shade prejudices and all her faults, I find Jamaica the freest country in the world for the negro and that is why I agree with Busta's two

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Monday Oct 31 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: On Friday of last week our press and radio reported on a difference between our Ministry of Agriculture and our Ministry of Trade and Industry on the question of imported potatoes. ~~And~~ this of course was reported mainly as a clash of personalities as a clash between Mr. Wills Isaacs and Mr. Keble Munn, with Mr. Manley stepping in and taking part. To me the story behind the clash of personalities is very much more important than the personality business.

The story itself is very simple. An importer, Mr. Dudley Hosang, had got a permit from the Trade Board to import 2,500 bags of Irish potatoes. But the permit specified that the potatoes should not be brought into the country until November 1st - that is until tomorrow. However, the ship carrying the potatoes arrived in Kingston Harbour early on Wednesday morning and dock workers completed the unloading of the potatoes on Thursday evening. Now the great thing about this 2,500 bags of Irish potatoes is that although they have had to come all the way from Canada to Jamaica, and although the importer has had to pay transport and other costs, these potatoes can be sold for less than our own home-grown potatoes. While we have to pay a sixpence for a pound of potatoes grown in Jamaica, we can get a pound of potatoes from Canada for five pence.

The local potato growers and distributors, on the other hand, do not want the potatoes from Canada to come in yet. They say they still have stocks of locally grown potatoes on their hands and if the potatoes from Canada came in they may not be able to sell what is left

of the home grown crop. And so they have made representations to the Ministry of Agriculture to keep out the Canadian potatoes. The Ministry took the matter to the Cabinet and you had the big row.

Now what are we, the consumers, to think of this whole affair? I should imagine that the argument of the Ministry of Agriculture would be something along these lines: It is the duty of our Ministry of Agriculture to protect and encourage our local agricultural undertakings. If we don't protect and encourage our local agriculture it may get into even more serious difficulties than it now faces. Our farmers are entitled to a decent and fair return for their efforts.

But surely, there is something seriously wrong with our agriculture if home-grown potatoes cannot compete with potatoes grown thousands of miles away. Every pound of the potatoes from Canada has had to be grown, reaped and then transported to a ship and loaded; then it had to be carried the thousands of miles here, unloaded, transported to the importer; and then the importer has had to distribute it to the retailer. And after all the charges for all this it can still sell for a penny less than our home-grown potatoes. It seems to me that there is something seriously wrong here. If the Canadian potatoes can sell for 5d then ours should be able to do so too. While I agree with a measure of protection for our agriculture, I think the consumer is entitled to a measure of protection too. Mr. Allen Issacs has himself protested against the high prices charged for some of our local foodstuffs. Keeping out cheaper Canadian potatoes is not going to help to bring down prices....Goodnight.