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COMMENTARY

Tomorrow is polling day in our Local Government elections. ^{Roughly} just over ^{800,000} ^{persons} ^{people} will be entitled to cast their votes in ~~more~~ than ~~200~~ electoral divisions to return members to our ~~local~~ thirteen Local Government authorities all over the island. There are 480 candidates.

Most observers think that less than half the people who are entitled to vote will go to the polls tomorrow. The campaigns of the two parties have not aroused the heat and excitement which was such a strong feature of the General Election of a few months ago. One news comentator expects a poll of 300,000 or less. The voters, he says, are tired of all these constant polls and counting of heads. Many voters in the Corporate Area, he goes on, do not even know the names of the candidates in their voting divisions. I think he is right.

Apart from the active political workers for the two parties, and the handful of independent candidates, people do not seem to be very interested in the elections. They seem to feel that they have settled the important issue in the recent general election. They feel that voting in this Local Government election is not really very important. I personally think the people who feel and think in this way are dead wrong.

Local Government is, I feel strongly, the cornerstone of our system of popular Government by the will of the people. It is at the Local Government level that the day-to-day business of politics touches our lives directly and immediately.

When we elect our M.H.R. to the House of Representatives our division is generally a very small part of a very large constituency, especially if we live in the country areas. The village or community making up our division may have only a few hundred people in a

constituency of many thousands. ~~And~~ And, unless our candidate is a very exceptional person, we in our small division may not see him again until the next General Election comes around. This has happened often enough. And where it has happened the voter has not even had a passing say in the running of the affairs of the island.

The constituency of the Local Government representative, on the other hand, is very much smaller. He represents few people; he gets elected on a smaller number of votes, so that every single vote can make more difference to him or her at the local level than at the National level. This forces the local candidate, if he hopes to win, to pay ~~more~~ attention to the needs and demands of the smallest number of people in his division. Also, his record on local affairs: whether he tries to get things done for his voters, what he gets done, and how, will stand out very clearly for us to see. It will not take us long to find out whether we have elected a good man or not.

Our Local Government authorities are responsible for services that affect our daily lives directly such as; Public Health and Sanitation, Poor Relief, Water Supplies, our minor roads, markets and our fire service. It is not hard to judge whether the man or woman you have voted is serving you well by looking at the conditions of these services in your area.

It is therefore important for all of us to treat these elections seriously.

COMMENTARY

I was off the island last week so I missed the impressive Convocation ceremony at the University College of the West Indies. I was sorry about this, and particularly sorry not to have heard the speeches which I understand were of a very high and thoughtful quality. But I was on another West Indian island and at the time the Convocation was taking place here I was visiting another West Indian university. The island where I was is Puerto Rico, and the University I visited on our Convocation day was the University of Puerto Rico. What I saw there impressed me so much that I have been talking about it to my friends ever since I got back.

Now, Puerto Rico is an island of roughly 3,600 square miles. This means it is more than a thousand square miles smaller than Jamaica. It has a population of roughly two and a quarter million people. This means that there are almost three quarters of a million more Puerto Ricans than there are Jamaicans. We have more land than they have and a smaller population than they have. And one high Puerto Rican official I spoke to envied us because we have minerals like bauxite whereas they have no minerals at all.

But back to the two universities (should like to tell you more about the other things I saw there another time).

Now, our university, as you know, caters for the ten islands of the Federation as well as for British Guiana and British Honduras. This means that we have a total population of well over three million people from whom to draw our students for the University College. In short, if we put all the people of the Federation and the two mainland territories together then we come out having at least a million more people than there are in our sister island of Puerto Rico.

As you know, our university which caters for over three million people, has roughly 890 students studying there at this moment. At the University of Puerto Rico, on the other hand, there are roughly 25,000 students. Now this, by any yardstick you want to apply, is a fantastic difference. It shocked me when I discovered it. It led me to ask many questions. But the most important question in my mind was: Why should there be this fantastic difference in the number of students they have and the number we have at our university?

I do not think there is any simple answer to this question, or if there is, I could not find it. But there are part answers.

For one thing the Puerto Rican university is very much older than ours, at least fifty years and more, but until twenty years ago or so its student body was as restricted as ours. Another part reason is that their university is modelled on American lines while ours is modelled on British lines. For a third thing, and I think this is very important, their whole approach to education seem to be different from ours. They do not regard higher education as being only for the benefit of the better off sections of their people. They do not only believe that higher education should be open to all, they make it possible for it to be so. They do this by having compulsory education that is genuinely free up to university level, and having extremely low fees at the university itself. And you do not have to live at the university to be able to get a university education. It was exciting to me to see thousands of young men and women who came from obviously poor homes on the campus of the University of Puerto Rico. I hope the day comes soon when I can see this at our own university.

COMMENTARY

I am sure most, if not all of you, will remember the big public debate that took place here in Jamaica when the Government, just before the General Elections, banned the importing of goods from South Africa. You will remember that many people saw this as an electioneering stunt while others welcomed it as an important moral gesture on the part of this country. I myself was among those who welcomed the ban, partly because I was born in South Africa and know intimately the horrible meaning of Apartheid, but also because I had become a Jamaican by choice and this act made me very proud to call myself a Jamaican.

Today, I think all Jamaican, of whatever political party and opinion can be justly proud of the impact this small island's stand has had on the rest of the world. It proves once again that the small countries of the world can be more than just passive spectators in the political power games of the big powers. The small countries can, when they act correctly on moral issue, let loose a wave of popular response which the big powers cannot ignore. This Jamaica has done on the South African issue. This all Jamaica can be proud of.

After Jamaica, organisations in West Africa took up the boycott of South Africa. Then it spread to East and Central Africa. Then to Europe where a formal ^{boycott} /of South African products was ^{meeting} launched at a Monster public in London last Sunday. Britain's Labour Leader, Hugh Gaitskell, pledge the full support of his party in the boycott campaign declaring "The boycott is our passionate protest against a repulsive doctrine".

But I think that we should also remember Mr. Macmillan, the British Prime Minister's forthright statement in South Africa

itself that the British Government did not agree with South Africa's racial policies. As head of the British Government Mr. Macmillan could not speak as freely as could Mr. Gaitskell. And he did say he did not approve of the boycott. But the rulers of South Africa did not miss the point and meaning of his forthright rejection of their racial policies.

And all this new wave of rejection of racialism in South Africa was set in motion right in Jamaica.

I wish I could have been as proud of Jamaica over the refugee issue. As you know, this is still part of the International Refugee year and last December Mr. Philip Sherlock ~~xxx~~ introduced a motion in Legco inviting our Government, as a gesture to show that we care about what happens to the millions and millions of homeless people in the world, to admit "between one and six families" into Jamaica. This, said Mr. Sherlock, would show the rest of the world that we in Jamaica cared about the misery of others; it would also show our appreciation for the help we have received from the outside world. And we have received some help, especially in times of trouble. But the Government, ~~in the person of Mr. Rudolph Burke,~~ rejected this. And so we failed in making a moral gesture that would have cost us very little and affirmed our common sense of a common humanity.

No.4.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Thursday March 3rd at 6.15p.m.
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: I think ~~our~~ Local Government elections went off much better than most observers expected. As far as I know there ^{were} ~~was~~ only ^{six or so} ~~one~~ cases of attempted false voting, and ^{there were} ~~that was~~ in the Corporate Area. There were one or two clashes - again in the Corporate Area - but throughout the island the vast majority of the voters turned out in a quiet, orderly and law-abiding manner which should give us all great satisfaction. The ugly beast of violence has been kept in check; and that is a good thing for our society and for the health of our democratic institutions.

Another pleasing feature of the elections is that although we did not have ^a record poll, voting was not as low as most observers expected it to be. This was true particularly of the country ~~area~~ areas. Our voters, it seems, are more aware of the importance of local government elections than most commentators thought they were. It is now up to us to see that we get from our newly elected local authorities the kind of services we are entitled to and have a right to expect.

Now let me touch on a burning issue that is very serious for the future of this island. Yesterday morning, up in the hills of West Rural St. Andrew, I watched a sheet of flame light up and spread across the side of a hill. Soon, about half an acre of hillside land was under fire, burning fiercely. A small cultivator was clearing his land for planting. And this, to him, was the quickest and cheapest way of doing it. I don't suppose he saw anything wrong in clearing his land this way. And in any case he is one of many small cultivators who clear their land in this way.

The trouble is that when the next heavy rains come all the good topsoil is going to be washed away from that half acre of burnt land. What will remain will be marl and rock. And there will be no cut down bush, no rotting leaves to hold the water and feed the earth so that it can feed us again. So you see, by firing the land we lose the bush and leaf mould which should feed the land; we lose the good soil which should feed our folk; and we lose the water without which neither man nor beast nor plant can live. And this is something that is happening all over this island. Too many men clear their land by firing it. And during the rainy seasons vast quantities of good earth that we cannot afford to lose is washed down to the sea.

To try and cope with this very serious problem the Minister of Agriculture has set up a Watershed Protection Provisional Commission under the chairmanship of Mr. Harold Bahusac. At the first meeting of the Commission a few days ago the Minister pledged his Ministry's full support to the Commission. He said the Commission may find itself having to make unpopular decisions from time to time.

I hope the Commission does make unpopular decisions, because some of the things we need to do most right now are going to be unpopular. As an example, I believe there is a regulation in existence forbidding the clearing of land by firing. But we all ignore it so it is not worth the paper on which it is written. I would like to see the Commission bring that regulation up to date and enforce it. I would like to see the J.A.S. educate its members against clearing the land by fire. It has not done half enough on this problem.

As well as giving us our daily bread, the land is ours as a trust for future generations. We have no right to abuse it as so many of us have been going. If we do we will have a poor future.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Friday March 4th at 6.15p.m.
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: In a speech at the opening of a new hostel at the Bethlehem Training College last Saturday, the Minister of Education spoke on an important aspect of our educational problem. Mr. Glasspole was talking about ~~the~~ the growth of our school population over the next seven years and the problem of finding trained teachers to educate this growing school population.

Between this year and 1967, the Minister said, our Teacher Training Colleges should produce 1,994 trained teachers. This would bring our total number of teachers up to 6,181 by 1967. But it is expected that by 1967 there would be 333,000 children at school and 6,952 teachers would be needed to deal adequately with them; so there is likely to be a shortage of 771 teachers.

Such a shortage would be serious enough. But, the Minister told his audience, the expected 333,000 school children was based on a calculation made in 1957 that the birth rate in 1967 would be 48,000. However, in 1959 the ~~birth~~ birth rate was 62,000. This upset all calculations and could easily mean that the teacher shortage could be much greater. The Minister expressed his Government's determination ^{to} ensure that there is education for all and said they would hasten the teacher training programme to try and cope with the problem.

Now I agree with the Minister, and I am sure most of you do, when he says that the education of our children is possibly the greatest investment we can make for the future of this country and its people. Then why is it that not more young people take on teaching as a career? Why do some of the brightest and most gifted

young men and women go into trade and industry rather than into teaching?

I think there are a number of reasons, but three that stand out more sharply than the others.

First, I think the bright young man or woman can earn more money ~~ix~~ working in a business firm than teaching in a classroom. And all the high minded talk about making a contribution to the future of your country counts for very little when you see people of less ability and less intelligence earning more money than you do, in some cases twice as much as you do. Like these people, you have to pay for your house, your food and light and water.

The second reason follows directly from the first. All too often our approach is purely mercenary. We judge a man or woman not by what he or she is: the work they and how they conduct themselves; what they give to the social good. We judge them instead by what they have: how fat the bank roll is and how big and flashy the car. And this becomes the standard for our young people.

And finally, the teacher has ceased to be the respected leader of his community that he once was. We looked up to him once because we knew he was an important person because of the important job he did. Today we give that respect to the petty politician more often and we suffer for it by having a shortage of teachers.

We need to pay our teachers better. We need to remember that there are things more important than money and flashy cars. And we need to rediscover the respect we once had for the honourable vocation of teaching. Perhaps we won't have a teacher shortage if we did these things.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Saturday March 5th at 6.15p.m.

Good evening: I cannot help but find myself siding with Mr. Ewart King in the public debate now taking place on the banning of dog racing in Jamaica. As you know, the Government, through the Ministry of Trade and Industry, first led the promoters to believe that they would be permitted to introduce greyhound racing into the island. As soon as this news broke a section of our church leaders raised their voices in protest. Dog racing, they said in effect, would be bad for Jamaica. It would corrupt our morals and turn us into a nation going to the dogs. There were letters in the press warning of all the evils that would come to us if dog racing were permitted. The Government apparently believed this because it went back on itself and banned dog racing.

Now, the Government is entitled to do what it thinks best for the good of the community. We elected it to perform precisely this function. The church leaders are entitled to exert such pressure as they feel necessary to influence Government's decisions on moral issues. They are, when all is said and done, the moral leaders of our people. I think we would all agree to these two propositions. This means that the State, in the form of the elected leaders of our Government, and the Church, in the form of its ordained Ministers, make just about the most powerful combination in our country. And I am sure most men would think twice before opposing such a combination of legal and moral power.

But powerful or not, both the Church and the State have been known to be wrong at times. After all, both the Church and the State are run by men who have all the fallibility of their earthly humanity. And as Mr. King has so rightly pointed out churchmen

have at times dressed up their own human prejudices as divine authority.

For this reason I would find the social argument against dog racing much more forceful than the spiritual one. Let me make it quite clear that I myself have very little time at all for gambling, whether it be gambling on horses, on the football pools or on dog racing. And I find it really difficult to make any distinction between these three types of gambling. They are all forms of gambling. If our churchmen had expressed their opposition to gambling as a whole, if they had called for a ban on football pools, horse-racing, the games of chance at Coney Island as well as on dog racing, their position would have seemed very much more reasonable to me. [As it is, I and many other people, ask, why dog racing alone? What special evil is there in dog racing that is not found in other forms of gambling? What is the subtle distinction between dog racing and the other forms of gambling? And how have we missed it?]

Then there is another important point to this matter. In a free society such as ours it is the general rule to keep legal restrictions and prohibitions down to an absolutely essential minimum. The good society is one in which men and women conduct themselves in a proper and decent way, in which they control their passions and impulses because it is the right thing to do. Not because there is some law regulating every detail of what they choose to do or not to do. We are trying to create a good society. Therefore we must have freedom to choose for ourselves. The good society of England has had dog racing for years, and the English have certainly not gone to the dogs!

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Monday March 7th at 6.15p.m.

Peto Perabara speaking

Good evening: Most of you will have heard over your radios, or read in your papers, last Friday the news of the birth control pill which will be sold for a penny. This pill which was developed by a firm of British drug houses is expected to come on to the market in about fifteen months' time. As I understand it, all a woman will have to do if she does not want to have child is to take one pill a day for a few days in the month. This will prevent her from becoming ^{pregnant} until she and her husband are ready and willing to have a child or children. In other words, with the help of this pill a couple will be able to plan when to have their children and how many children to have. Having or not having children will, in fact, cease to be a thing of chance or accident and become something which a couple can control. And, of course, it will be up to the couple to decide for themselves whether they want to use the pill or not; the freedom of choice will be theirs.

Now why is this news of the development of the pill so important?

I think it is important because the problem of the world's rapidly growing population is a serious one. To show you just how serious it is I will give you a few simple facts. During every second that I am talking to you three children are being born in the world; that is 180 children born every minute. From the time I started talking to you to the time I finish, roughly 720 children will have been born in the world. In short, every twenty-four hours over 259,000 children are born all over the world. ~~And~~ the vast majority of them are born in Asia, in Africa, in Latin America and in islands nestling in tropical seas such as our own Jamaica.

And as you know, it is in Asia, Africa and the islands of the

seas as well as in Latin America that we find the greatest economic, social and educational poverty. Today two out of every three human beings in this great wide world of ours do not get enough to eat. And it is mainly to them, the hungry two-thirds of the world's population that over a quarter of a million children are born every twenty-four hours. I don't have to tell you the kind of lives those children are likely to lead unless the world does something about it.

We here in Jamaica, in the West Indies, are a part of this great world-wide problem. As a small example of this, some of you may remember what I said last Friday on our teacher shortage problem where our Government is trying to do everything it can to create educational opportunities for all. But even there the growth of our school age population is much faster than our ability to produce teachers.

Now please don't imagine that I am saying that the answer to all our problems or the answer to all the world's problems are to be found in birth control or family planning. I don't think that is all the answer. I think there are other answers like a much fairer sharing of the good things of our world, like better planning and making better use of what we do have. What I do say is that being able to control the world's population by being able to control our own individual families and keeping them to the size we want, will be a most important contribution to all of us living a fuller and better life. That is why I think the news of this pill is so important.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For Transmission on
Tuesday March 8th at 6.15p.m.
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: The future of the West Indies Federation depends, I feel, to a large extent on what we here in Jamaica decide and do about Federation. But that is only one way of looking at it. Someone else could say with equal truth that the future of the Federation very largely depends on the reaction of Trinidad and the other islands to Jamaica's proposals as to the type of Constitution the Federation should have.

In a Ministry Paper ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ which was published in full in the daily press Mr. Manley has set out Jamaica's position and proposals and said that if these were accepted Jamaica would, for her part accept in full all the obligations of her membership in the Federation. Mr. Manley's key proposals are, first, that there must be equality of representation and, second, that Jamaica must have complete control over her own ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ economic affairs. She is not prepared to transfer to the federal centre the delicately balanced economic programme she has created with so much hard effort. There are other proposals but these two are, I think, the crucial ones.

Now some of you may know this and some of you may not, but last September Dr. Eric Williams, the Premier of Trinidad published his own government's proposals in an official document call The Economics of Nationhood ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ in which he argued strongly for a central Federal Government to direct and co-ordinate the economic affairs of all the units. As you can see, this view is the complete opposite of the Jamaican view. And Mr. Manley has made it clear that Jamaica would leave the Federation rather than submit the direction of our economic affairs to the Federal Government.

It is therefore clear that when next our Federal leaders meet

the great point of conflict is going to be between the views of Jamaica, as expressed by Mr. Manley and the views of Trinidad, as expressed by Dr. Eric Williams. If Mr. Manley's views win the day and the Federal Constitution is amended accordingly then the crisis will be over. But if the views of Dr. Williams gain the day then a completely new situation will be created.

Jamaica may then leave the Federation. This, in turn, may mean the collapse of the entire Federation. And then what? The British Government has said that it cannot say in advance what the other members of the Commonwealth would feel about admitting Jamaica by itself as an independent member of the Commonwealth. It has further said that if Jamaica left the Federation it would be a severe disappointment to ^{all} those who had hoped that through Federation the West Indies would take its place as an independent nation and member of the Commonwealth. The British Government has also said that in considering whether Jamaica should be admitted to Commonwealth membership by herself the other members might wonder whether smaller units within the Federation will not then want to follow Jamaica's example and apply for membership singly.

And when I spoke to the two visiting British M.P.s, Mr. Fisher and Mr. Hannan, they made it clear that both political parties in Britain would think it a great tragedy if we left the Federation. One of them said part of our troubles are because we have not sent men of the calibre of Mr. Manley and Sir Alexander Bustamante to the Federal centre. I think there is a lot in this view.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Wednesday March 9th at 6.15p.m.
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: There are two items which are always in the news and to which I should like to draw your attention this evening. I think both of these are very serious matters and I think it is up to us, the ordinary citizens of Jamaica to do something about them. The law can help but basically these are problems involving our conduct as citizens trying to build a decent and ~~an~~ law-abiding society.

The first problem has to do with guns. Last week, and the week before that, and the week before that, most of you will have heard or read of someone firing off a gun at someone else. All we have to do is stop and think a little to realise how common the firing of guns has become. It is almost as though we are developing a state of gun-happiness. A young husband accidentally shoots his wife, mistaking her for a burglar; a group of young thieves are surprised and immediately they fire off a gun; two men quarrel and one draws a gun and shoots; and, of course, the young hooligans in our society seem to have no difficulty in getting hold of guns. I think this is a very bad state of affairs. I think what makes it worse is the fact that most of us seem to accept it as normal. It was a normal news item when a Minister of Government drew his gun on someone who was abusing him and chased the fellow down the street.

Now the people who own these guns, the people who are so quick to whip them out, will tell you they need these for self-protection. I think in some cases they do. A man having to take care of large sums of money for his employers is a natural target for thieves. People guarding places where valuables are kept could reasonably be armed. But in the hundreds and hundreds of other cases I think

it is utterly unnecessary and positively dangerous. We are not living in a jungle where it is every man for himself. We live under the rule of law, under a code of rules which we, as part of our society, have helped to fashion. The reckless popping off of guns undermines that code of rules and helps to break down that rule of law. Most of the young hooligans who go around holding up people with guns would not get licences to get those guns. In most cases they would not have guns with which to hold up innocent people if the innocent people did not have those guns for them to steal. In England, where the possession of a gun is a very rare thing indeed, you do not have this crazy spate of shootings. Guns invite violence. So please think about this.

The second problem has to do with our conduct on the roads. News about road accidents is so common that we do not seem to notice the news any more. We seem to take it for granted that almost every day on our roads someone is going to be damaged, maimed or killed. Yet ~~a little~~ just a little thought for our fellow citizens can often make all the difference between having an accident or not. If the person walking by the side of the road would give way to the car approaching on his side while another approaches from the opposite direction an accident would be avoided. I have seen someone step into the road forcing one car to swerve into another. I have seen cyclists do the same, and I have seen motorists who will not slow down but try to bull their way through. I have seen trucks come shooting around blind corners. We are all to blame: motorists, cyclists, people on foot and truck drivers. And yet a little thought, a little courtesy, a little good manners on all our parts would make a world of difference to our accident rates.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Thursday March 10th at 6.15p.m.
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: You will remember that a wildcat strike broke out ~~at~~ last Friday at the shirt factory known as Colonial Shirts of Jamaica. The reason for the strike was the laying off of one man by the management. About 250 workers were involved in the strike.

On Monday morning the workers reported back for work. 230 were taken on and 24 were told that they were not needed just now. But, the management told them, plans for expansion were in hand and by October of this year the factory should be in a position to give work to 500 workers. But this apparently did not satisfy the workers. An ugly atmosphere developed. The workers stayed on the premises of the factory but did no work. The management summoned the police but the workers defied and ridiculed the police. In the end an N.W.U. organiser led the workers off the plant, telling them that they were embarrassing the union.

On Tuesday the union sent a letter to the President of Colonial Shirts of Jamaica telling him that his firm must reinstate the 24 workers who had been dismissed by March 14th; March 14th was also set as the deadline for the factory management to fix a date to discuss bargaining rights with the union.

Now, just to get the background completely filled out, you should know that the factory came into existence five months ago. It enjoys the incentive concessions which the Government gives to attract foreign capital into Jamaica for the building and expansion of our industrialisation programme. You should further know that up to the present the factory does not recognise any union as representing the workers. That is the background.

Now, the reaction of the factory management to the strike

and the union's letter, according to news reports, was to contact its principals abroad telling them to hold up the materials the factory had ordered. A reasonable inference from this is that the factory representatives here have decided to wait and see what happens and may ~~be entertaining the possibility~~ even be thinking of pulling out. From their point of view ~~the~~ case would look something like this: all they have done so far has been to put money into the enterprise. It has been a steady five months of paying out. This they expected to do. What they probably did not expect was that during ~~this~~ ^{this} period of laying out money they should run into labour trouble as well. They might well be asking themselves: is it worthwhile to risk any more of our money?

The problem we, the people here, and the unions have to face is whether our industrialisation programme is so far advanced and so well established that we can afford to drive away even one factory by the irresponsible action of a section of our workers. And it certainly will not do us any good in the eyes of investors abroad if one reputable company were to say they pulled out because they found our labour unreasonable and irresponsible.

Of course our workers must be organised, and of course they are entitled to use their power of collective bargaining. There is no question about this. They are as entitled to want a decent living as any other section of the community. The question is whether our unionists always use their power as ^{re}asonably as they should. Would it benefit ~~any~~ any worker if this factory which could give work to 500 went out of business? And could not our union leaders have handled the question of bargaining rights without making it seem that they are holding a pistol to the factory management's head?

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Friday March 11th at 6.15p.m.

Good evening: The Government's legislative programme as outlined for this session of the House of Representatives is bold and ambitious. It is yet another part of the unfolding of that grand design - the Ten Year Development Plan - to change this island from an economically weak and backward area into a strong and healthy one. Over 5 million pounds will be spent on education. A Central Bank is going to be set up so that we can have a more direct control over the country's finances and a greater influence on other financial institutions. Our agricultural development institutions are going to be pulled together and modernised. Soil conservation is going to receive much more serious attention. These are only a few of a very large number of activities Government will undertake this session.

One of the most important of these activities was touched on by the Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr. Wills Isaacs, in his speech in the House on Wednesday. Mr. Isaacs, you will remember, told the House that our electricity will be converted ~~to~~ from the present 40 cycles to 50 cycles by the end of 1962. The three independent electricity services on the island - that of the Jamaica Public Service Company, that of the company in Mandeville and the Government-owned utility at Sav-la-Mar - will all be integrated as part of the Jamaica Public Service Company.

Now why does the Frequency have to be converted from 40 to 50 cycles, you might ask, especially as it is going to cost so much to do this. The reason is that industries cannot operate effectively on 40 cycles; So, if we are to have factories all over the island, as the Minister said we should have, then having 50 cycles is very important.

But the most important^{aspect}/of this electricity business from the point of view of the majority of the people of Jamaica was Mr Isaacs' statement that electricity will be made available to practically all the people of Jamaica. This is no less than a revolution of light.

Government, said Mr. Isaacs, had put it to the Public Service Company that every village in every corner of Jamaica that had 500 people or more, should have electricity. And to this the Public Service Company has agreed.

I wonder how many of us can, today, understand the vast importance of this apparently simple decision. Just think about it for a little.

At present more than half Jamaica lives in darkness that is more than just physical. There are large numbers of our people who cannot read and because they have no electricity they are and have been completely cut off from the outside world. Now this will come to an end. All a man or woman will have to do, even though they may not be able to read, will be just to switch on the radio and the news of the whole wide world will be right in their little home. They will be able to hear what their Government is or is not doing, and they will no longer be cut off from the broad stream of progress in this country.

For myself, I have not the slightest doubt that this is one of the most important and far-reaching decisions which will bring light to our minds as well as our homes.

NEWS COMMENTARY
For transmission on
Saturday March 12th at 6.15 p.m.
Peter Abrahams speaking.

Good evening: The University College is very much in the news this week and I must confess that the protest demonstration staged by the young ladies of Mary Seacole Hall made me feel wickedly good and happy. I felt happy about it for two reasons. The first reason has to do with the spirit of the place. Many visitors coming here from other universities have from time to time remarked on the quiet orderliness of the student body as compared with student bodies at other universities. Here, they said, they found none of the heated debating of major issues; no big engagements on political and philosophic issues such as are constantly taking place in European universities; none of the cultural and social activities, or very little of them, of the American universities. From this some of our visitors concluded that our student body was a docile and earnest group of young men and women, bent only on passing examinations, afraid of holding or expressing views at all, let alone unpopular views. This was a harsh judgement, perhaps, but it was one to which I subscribed on the whole.

Now I am hopefully ready to revise this view. There is more than just a spirit of genteel respectability in the place. The young women have shown clearly and dramatically that they resented the off-handed attitude which denied them a dining hall for years - and then the dining hall was suddenly rushed up in record time because it was needed for the Convocation banquet. And the dramatised this protest, I think, without in any way being rude to their very distinguished visitor.

The second, and in the long run very much more important, item of university news was a brief report of statement Dr. Arthur

Lewis made at the United Nations in New York. Dr. Lewis ~~will~~ spoke about his plans for the University College when he arrives to take up the Principalship.

He plans, he said, to extend the professional schools. There will be a Faculty of Engineering; the Medical Faculty will be increased by 50% and so will facilities at the hospital. Then he went on to his most important point. He hoped, he said, that the number of students at the University College could be increased from the present 700 to 2,900 within the next four years.

You will remember that it was only last week that I told you about the small number of students at our university as compared with those at the university of Puerto Rico. I expressed the hope then that this would soon change. It looks very much as though that is precisely what Professor Arthur Lewis proposes to do.

A young teacher from Pepper sent me a letter after what I said about the teacher shortage last Friday. He tells me that he has been teaching at the same school for the past two years and nine months. He was taken on as a probationer two years and nine months ago; he is still a probationer, still getting a probationer's pay. So, at the end of this term he plans to leave teaching and go into the electronics industry where he'll get a little more money and respect. We are not going to solve our teacher shortage if we allow people to get as frustrated as this. This young man says he knows many others who are in the same position he is.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Monday March 14 at 6.15p.m.
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: The decision of the owners of Rose Hall to shut down their factory at the end of this year's sugar crop season means, I think, that we can expect some difficult days ahead for both workers and management in the sugar industry. It will be necessary for both workers and employers to face up to some very hard decisions in the months to come: and what they decide, and what they do is likely to have a very strong bearing on the general economy of the country.

The sugar industry, as you know, is still the largest single employer of labour in the whole country. And it is not located in one single area. It is spread throughout the country, from the plains of ~~St. James~~ St. Catherine, through Vere and right up to the North Coast: in fact, in terms of its physical location the sugar industry and its offshoots are just about the most 'national' of all our undertakings. The result is that the wages paid by sugar are spread throughout the country, and largely among workers who are either semi-skilled or unskilled. Now these two facts - that sugar is the largest employer of labour and that it is found all over the island - means that in can fairly be ~~described~~ said that the wages paid by sugar is the basis of the economic life of a very large majority of our people. In other words, sugar is most important to our daily living. Therefore the problems faced by sugar should be most important to us.

Now the problems faced by sugar are two kinds. The first is international, relating to world prices and quotas. Now here we have not done badly so far because we have sold our sugar at a guaranteed price under the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement. But in the

open market prices have dropped and export quotas under the International Sugar Agreement can be cut, as we saw last March when there was a cut of $17\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. We did not have to sell in the open market then because we did a deal with Australia. But that was a piece of luck for us. The point is the international position is not as fixed and unchangeable as some of us think. Our quotas could be cut; we could be forced to sell in the open market at lower prices.

The second kind of problem faced by the industry is internal. The Goldenberg Commission has recommended that the sugar industry pay its workers a $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent bonus on 1959 wages and a wage increase of $12\frac{1}{2}\%$ from the start of the 1960 crop. This means that for 1959 and 1960 the sugar industry will pay out a combined wages bill of about £10 million. There will be more money in circulation, spread throughout the country. Well, what is wrong with that? Nothing at all. It is all to the good.

But the Rose Hall factory is closing; and Barnet Estate may follow. This will mean men out of work; more unemployed. And to keep on operating, the bigger estates will have to use more efficient methods. The big estates may find it quicker and cheaper to use machines to do the work now done by men. This has happened elsewhere in the world: it has happened in agriculture in England and the United States and it has happened on the sugar estates of our neighbour island of Puerto Rico. I think it will happen here too. I think the unions and the workers in the sugar industry would be very wise indeed to address themselves to this problem.

Tomorrow I will talk about Sir Grantley Adams's attack on Dr. Eric Williams; so, till then, Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Tuesday March 15 at 6.15p.m.
Peter Abrahams speaking.

Good evening: The news of Sir Grantley Adams' powerful attack on Dr. Eric Williams was no surprise to those of us who try to keep in touch with Federal affairs. It has been brewing for a long time. What we have been wondering about was when and how Sir Grantley Adams would deal with Dr. Williams. Now we know. There is another thing which this blow-up of Sir Grantley Adams brings out which I should like you not to forget. We here in Jamaica sometimes talk as though there is a sort of united front of all the other islands of the Federation against us. This, of course, is not true. There is no ganging-up against us, and we are not the only people creating problems for the Federation.

Over the past few weeks the Government of Trinidad has been deporting people from the small islands from Trinidad. This has caused quite storm of protest from the small islands. Only last week Dr. Lincoln Radix, the Deputy Speaker of the Federal House of Representatives complained bitterly about the deporting of Grenadians from Trinidad. How, he asked, could we expect Canada and the United States to open their doors to our people when right here in the West Indies we imposed restrictions of movement on people of the federated territories. How, he went on, could we expect the respect of the rest of the world when we showed such disunity among ourselves. How could we protest when the Governments of Venezuela, Aruba and Curacao deport our people when we are doing the same thing ourselves?

All this, coupled with Sir Grantley Adams' bitter complaints against the Trinidad Government disproves completely the idea of any ganging-up against us.

Now Sir Grantley's statement was one of the strongest ever made in peacetime by one government against another. He accuses Dr. Williams

of being untruthful, of revealing information which should be regarded as confidential between one government and another, and he accuses Dr. Williams of presenting Federal matters in such a way as to harm the Federal Government and do damage to the very concept of Federation. Now all this, mark you, was not said in a wild outburst of anger. It was done in a carefully prepared statement which, we must assume, was approved by the whole Federal Cabinet. There is one other thing to be noted. If you examine these charges of Sir Grantley Adams carefully you will find that they are all founded on fact.

Now what does all this mean? It means that the Trinidad Government, and more particularly Dr. Williams, seems to be operating on a double standard in its approach to Federation. In the debate with Jamaica Dr. Williams is all for a strong Federal Government with vast powers for the centre. But, in his dealings with the Federal Government his attitude is one of contempt. Calling the Federal Government a stooge of the Colonial Office can hardly be described as a sign of respect. Or is it that Dr. Williams only wants a strong central government provided he can control it? If not, then what does he want?

Certainly, the attitude and actions of the Premier of Trinidad have lately not been those of someone dedicated to the building up and strengthening of the Federation. They have seemed more the actions of someone recklessly playing at power politics, and that, at this stage, is doing no service to the idea of Federation.....Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Wednesday March 16 at 6.15 p.m.

Good evening: This evening I want to tell you about a little book, which, if it is not in the news, should be. The book is called The Happy Warrior, and it is written by one of our younger journalists, Mr. Ken Chaplin who is on the staff of the weekly newspaper Jamaica Times. The book tells the story of O'Neil Gordon Smith - whom millions of people/knew so much better as Collie Smith - from the day he was born on May 5th. 1934 to that day on September 21st of last year when he was buried. The book costs two shillings and six pence and you should be able to get it ~~from the Novelty Trading Company~~ or from any bookstore. I would recommend this little book strongly to everybody, but especially to those young men in our society who feel that life has nothing to offer them, that there is no future for them because they were born into poor homes.

Collie Smith was born into a poor home. "He belong," writes Ken Chaplin, "to the under-privileged class in the West End of Kingston, where little boys roamed the streets half-naked and played cricket ~~far~~ with limes for balls and with bats carved out of the boughs of coconut trees; where fathers and mothers, eking out an existence, hardly had time to take proper care of their children."

Now there are many people who believe that a boy with such a background has very little future at all, and many of these people are to be found among the poor themselves. But there are other people - a small number still, it is true - who do not see things in this way. Among this small body of people was the Rev. Hugh Sherlock, a man who loves his fellow men and has a great faith in

their will to goodness if they are given half a chance. To prove his faith and help get the poor boys of Western Kingston off the streets, Mr. Sherlock founded Boys Town. Collie Smith went to Boys Town, met Mr. Sherlock and was inspired, and from there on his steady climb to success began. At the time of his death Collie Smith was possibly the best loved and most respected young sportsman throughout the world wherever cricket is played.

How all this came about is set down simply and clearly by Ken Chaplin in this book. It tells us the kind of person Collie Smith was: a warm-hearted, happy generous young man who never forgot his mother and his family when success came to him. He was deeply religious and tried to live out his religion instead of talking about it. In his last letter to his mother he tells her that he has sent her some money; tells her of his plans to come home; asks her for the shoes sizes of all the children so that he can bring them shoes; remembers his mother's birthday and promises her that he will not get into any trouble for her sake.

Now not every young man from a poor home can become a Collie Smith; but every young man can try to become the kind of person Collie Smith was. And surely the life of Collie Smith proves that if you have the ability and the will it is possible, even if you came from the poorest home, to make something of yourself in the field you choose for yourself. The life of Collie Smith, the happy warrior, is an inspiring story I would like everybody to read.....Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Thursday March 17th at 6.15p.m.
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: Trinidad's Dr. Eric Williams has now replied to the slashing attack made against him earlier this week by the Federal Prime Minister, Sir Grantley Adams. Three interesting things come out of Dr. Williams' reply. The first thing - and it is both interesting and surprising - was the very mild manner in which Dr. Williams replied to what was possibly the bitterest personal attack on him since he became Premier of Trinidad. I think part of the reason for this is that Dr. Williams - like a large number of other people - under-estimated Sir Grantley Adams and did not expect such a vigorous come-back. I also think that Dr. Williams, who is nobody's fool, realised that he had over-reached himself in some of his words and deeds.

The second interesting thing is that Dr. Williams did not even try to defend himself against Sir Grantley's charges that he had told untruths, that he had unscrupulously made public documents which were of a confidential nature, and that he had presented Federal matters in such a way as to harm the Federal Government and do damage to the concept of Federation. On this Dr. Williams was completely silent. You will remember I told you on Tuesday that these charges by Sir Grantley Adams were founded on fact. Dr. Williams' silence on these points is, I think, an admission of this fact.

The third interesting thing is Dr. Williams' reasons for his own personal attitude and the attitude of the Government of Trinidad to the Federal Government. This, in fact, makes up the essence of Dr. Williams' reply to Sir Grantley Adams. The Trinidad Government, said Dr. Williams, has slowly been forced into feeling that the Federal Government is hostile to Dr. Williams' party

and his Government; or, if not hostile, then the Federal Government is completely out of sympathy with them.

He listed a number of differences which had developed between the Federal Government and the Government of Trinidad. There was the issue of the Federal Government's Land Acquisition Bill. The Government of Trinidad had revealed its objections but the Federal Government had proceeded with the Bill.

Then, went on Dr. Williams, there was the issue of Jamaica's attitude to the Constitution. The Federal Government had taken no stand on this, and as a result what should have been an issue between Jamaica and the rest of the Federation has become, in the public mind, a conflict between Jamaica and Trinidad. Dr. Williams resented the fact that the Federal Government had not sided with Trinidad over this matter. I wonder if Dr. Williams realises that this statement of his can be interpreted to mean: You must either be on my side or you are no good. And, of course, it shows a clear attempt at ganging-up - which failed, as none of the other unites wanted to gang-up. Now I personally have a lot of sympathy for Dr. Williams' idea of a strong central government, but I think we are going to need a lot of time to get there - and a lot of give and take. That is where I disagree with Dr. Williams.

Another point is Chaguaramas where he feels the Federal Government should have made a clear declaration backing Trinidad. Now I'm not trying to suggest that every thing is right with Sir Grantley and everything is wrong with Dr. Williams. What I do feel is that if Dr. Williams used some of Mr. Manley's restraint he would make a great contribution to the healthy growth of the Federation. Tomorrow I want to talk about some of the new Bills tabled in the House of Representatives this week. .. Till then, Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Friday March 18th at 6.15p.m.
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: Eleven new Bills were tabled in the House of Representatives this week. They cover a wide range of subjects and most of them were to amend laws already on the Statute Book. Now, in a short commentary such as this I can only touch on one or two of these Bills and, possibly, deal with one in some detail. Let me deal with the brief ones first.

You know that as a result of the growing crisis that gripped the Banana industry throughout last year Government had set up a Commission of Enquiry to go into the workings of the industry. Between the end of last year and the beginning of this year the Commission made its report. None of those concerned with the industry came out of the Enquiry with a clean ~~sheet~~^{slate}. The Commission blamed the growers for the poor quality of the fruit; it blamed the Banana Board for the poor state of the organisation; and it recommended that Government create a strong central body to take over the running of the industry. Now the Minister of Agriculture has introduced ~~a~~^a Bill to amend the Banana Law for this purpose.

The Minister of Trade and Industry has introduced a Bill to amend the Loans to Small Businesses Law so that in future ~~all~~ Co-operative Societies ^{can} come under it instead of only Credit Unions as at present. The Amendment also makes it possible for people in the retail trade to borrow money to get equipment to start in business or to improve their existing businesses. Then there is a Bill by the Minister of Home Affairs to make sure that your favourite rumshop and mine have decent toilet facilities for us.

Now let me tell about my main Bill for this evening.

This is a new one, and a very important one. It is called the Clean Air Law and it is a law that is likely to grow in importance as our industrialisation programme develops. Where you have factories you are bound to have smoke; industries use fuel and fuel lets off smoke and gasses. Mining lets loose dust particles in the air; and not only mining, as the people near Kingston's cement company know. And now, as well as bauxite mining there is the possibility of copper mining coming to the island. And then, added to all this, there is the oil refinery. And, as you know, when Frequency Conversion is completed and electricity spread all over the island factories are likely to spread all over the island.

In short, as Government's far-reaching plans to transform this land develop, mines and factories are likely to belch out their black smoke, their fine dust particles and their lung-destroying gasses - that is, unless something is done about it.

Now in countries where nothing has been done about it the problem has gotten out of hand. There are times when the citizens of the great city of London cannot raise their heads and look at the sky because of the fog and the smog. All they see is a thick blanket of ~~a~~ dirty grey smoke. And that is not good for man's health. And the problem is out of hand. Our Clean Air Law is to make sure that we deal with the problem before it starts properly. Under this Law it will be possible to compel factories to use clean rather than dirty fuel; it will be possible to control the gasses that are let out into the air for us to breathe. Some factories ~~would~~ ^{will} have to put in filters to purify the stuff they release into the air. And the fine cloud of cement dust that is sometimes over Kingston will, I hope, become a memory which warned us of what could happen. This is a most important law in terms of our health... ~~Goodnight~~ Tomorrow I will talk about the police and the rule of law... Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Saturday March 19th at 6.15p.m.

Good evening: Two newspaper columnists writing in our two daily newspapers, and doing so on the same day, were extremely angry this week. Both of them wrote about the rule of law in this country. Both felt that the rule of law was in a very poor state in Jamaica.

The one columnist wrote of two cases where the police were alleged to ^{have} mishandled prisoners. The first was the case of a bearded young man of the professional classes who was arrested and whose beard was forcibly shaved off before he was taken into court. The second case was that of a salesman who also happened to have been bearded and whose beard was also cut off. Both these incidents were reported as taking place in Spanish Town. The police explanation for the first incident, which the columnist published, was that the man was tidied-up before being taken in front of the magistrate. My columnist colleague wants to know ^{by} what right the police shaved off the beards of these two men. He then becomes extremely angry and says that the state of civil liberty in Jamaica is sick (and he uses the word sick three times).

The second columnist writes about the man who was sent to prison for six months and ordered to receive six strokes for committing an indecent assault in a young woman in daylight. He approved of this, but he was angry because the law did not do this more often. He wanted a law rushed through by the Cabinet to make flogging compulsory for any person found guilty of any kind of assault and wounding charge. He wanted the Minister of Trade and Industry to put the sale of kitchen knives and daggers under special licence and forbid their importation into Jamaica.

From this you will see that the rule of law is quite a talking

point in certain circles, including the press. In one case we get the picture of the police as a bunch of arrogant men out to humiliate the private citizen at every opportunity; and in the other case we have the picture of the private citizen as a sort of wild savage determined to cut up everybody he meets and who can only be dealt with by severe floggings.

The trouble is that when people ride an obsession they ride it so hard that they defeat their own purposes. The one columnist wants the police to be more thoughtful of those people who are temporarily in their charge. This is reasonable and humane. But when he screams that there is no civil liberty in Jamaica then he overstates his case so badly that nobody wants to take him seriously. The same goes for the other columnist. He wants an end to violence, and that too is reasonable. But when he says we are fast becoming a law-less and semi-barbarous nation, he too overstates his case so badly that few people would take him seriously.

I certainly have not found this wild lawlessness all over the country and I doubt if you have. And on the whole I have found our police a reasonably good body of men. I would much rather deal with them than with the police of many other countries I know.

There is one thing though which I think our police ought to watch carefully and it is this: under the rule of law every citizen has exactly the same rights in law. There should be no difference in the rule of law when applied to either the rich or the poor, the powerful or the weak, the high or the low. That must be a cornerstone of our law and its enforcement. On this point I think our police have been at fault at times. We are all equal in the eyes of the law.

Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Monday March 21st at 6.15p.m.
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: I know that many of you asked many questions, either to yourselves or to your friends, when you read and heard of the big rum deal at the end of last week. You remember that it was last Thursday morning that we got the news that the rum companies of Wray and Nephew, Captain Morgan and Edwin Charley had decided to merge and to set up a new £5 million company to be known as the Consolidated International Corporation.

Now what is behind this? Why did the merger take place? And who will now be running Jamaica's rum industry?

Well, to begin with, mergers and take-overs on such a scale are an interesting sign of the times. In countries where the economy is simple and backward the buying up of one company by another is a very simple matter. But this was a very sophisticated operation with an interesting history of competition behind it. As some of you will remember, the Canadian firm of Seagrams came into Jamaica some time ago by buying up Captain Morgan. ~~They pumped~~ Seagrams is a very big firm with world-wide distribution outlets. They pumped a lot of money into Captain Morgan and for a time it looked as though they might beat their main rival, Wray and Nephew, at the tough business of selling rum. But Wray and Nephew fought back in great style and with great skill and imagination and outstripped Seagrams' Morgan. The result was a fall in Seagram's sales. Stocks of rum piled up.

Now in this kind of competition there is an accepted rule in the international business world that goes something like this: If you can't beat, ^{then} buy them; if you can't buy them amalgamate with them. Another thing which added to Seagrams' problems is that the man heading their operations in Jamaica will soon be leaving for England to head the Banana Board's selling office in England. So the best way out was

~~obviously~~ to merge. And of course, it suits Wray and Nephew who will now have the ~~largest~~ facilities of the largest distillers in the world behind them. And ~~of course again~~, the Edwin Charley interests ^{another} would ~~have found this new set-up impossible to compete against and so it suits them to join it too.~~ And there you have the background.

The new company will be run and controlled by local interests, and the first directors of the company - five of them - are all Jamaicans. And there is one more thing to note. Wray and Nephew, Captain Morgan and Charleys will still operate as separate companies, offering their own brands of rum in competition with each other. But, you will ask, how real will this competition be? After all, ~~the truth of the matter is that~~ we will now have a ^{virtual} rum monopoly in Jamaica. And ~~when all is said and done~~, whether you buy your bottle of Appleton or your bottle of Morgan or your bottle of Charleys, you/~~are~~ basically buying from the same firm.

And ~~of course~~, ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ for all of us, the 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....Tomorrow I hope to talk about labour relations; so till then....Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Tuesday March 22nd at 6.15 p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: You will remember that I have, in the past, talked ^{ab-} labour relations ~~on~~ specific issues as they came up. You remember in one commentary I talk ^{ed} about the strike at the Colonial Shirt factory. In another I talked about the problems facing the sugar industry and the workers in that industry. Tonight I would like to talk about the idea of labour relations because it seems to me most important that we should try to get our ideas as clear as possible on this question. I think that to a large extent the future well-being of our country depends on this. And I think it is most important that in our thinking we try to think with the good of the whole country in our minds. To think of the interests of only a group or only a section of the country, is not good enough. To an extent we have to think sectionally in our day-to-day dealings with problems. But I am sure that if, as the background to even the most sectional of our problems, we always remembered the good of the whole country, our thinking will be so much more constructive and creative. This, I feel, should apply to all of us, whether we are workers or employers, skilled or unskilled,; civil servants or any other category.

But when we talk about labour relations we are generally talking about the relations between the employer and his workers and we are generally thinking of a factory or an estate. It is labour relations at this level that has been in the news of late.

Now the first fact we have to face quite clearly is that the worker in Jamaica is nowhere nearly as well-paid as is his opposite number in the United States or Britain. There are clear reasons for this. Generally speaking, the American and British worker has

had a longer history of industrialisation and this has resulted in a number of things. First, he has developed his skills over a long period of time and handed them down from generation to generation. Second, he has built up a very strong labour movement which is an integrated part of the very structure of his country and which is a most powerful force in the social, economic and political affairs of his country. And, third, nobody disputes his right to organise himself into and to be a member of a trade union. In fact, unionism is accepted by almost everybody in those two great countries as right proper and respectable.

Now, once you have a situation like that your worker becomes a responsible and respected member of his society. He knows that he is strong in his organisation and respected in his society. He knows that the relations between himself and his employer are generally regulated by agreement and that his employer has a basic respect for his union. His union leader does not have to fight or make a show of strength before the union is recognised. And so labour relations in those countries are on the whole very good.

But we have to do in a very short period what Britain and America did over a long stretch of time. We have to industrialise fast, we have to build up an industrial working class fast. We have to make a great leap in time and such great leaps are never easy. They are made more difficult by employers who do not want to recognise unions; by workers who do not listen to their leaders; and by union leaders who are afraid to do the right thing because it is unpopular; and of course by the society which tends to be hostile to unionism. The unions can and will, I believe, become our greatest force for good labour relations in the days ahead.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on

Wednesday March 23rd at 6.15p.m.

Peter Abranams speaking

Good evening: News on the British Guiana constitutional talks now going on in London is very sketchy indeed, but it does seem that the deadlock which threatened the talks earlier has now largely been overcome. This does not mean that everything is going to be plain sailing from here on, but I do think we can now look forward to an agreement which will give B.G. a greater degree on internal self-government within the next year or so.

I think that under this agreement we can expect B.G. to get a large measure of the kind of internal self-government enjoyed by Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad. There is likely to be an upper and lower House such as we have and responsibility for running the country will be in the hands of the majority party.

I am very glad about this because it means that the Colonial Office has accepted the central fact of the B.G. situation, and that is that Dr. Cheddi Jagan and his party are there to stay. I have had the feeling for a long time that there were some people at the Colonial Office who thought that if they could delay self-government for a sufficiently long time the people of B.G. might become disappointed with Jagan and turn from him. I do not think this would have happened and I think Mr. MacLeod, the Colonial Secretary has shown great good sense in accepting the fact that Jagan and his party are no pushover in B.G.

Now, turning to Trinidad we find that Dr. Eric Williams is still making startling and disturbing news. We have just heard that ~~he~~ his Government has refused to make a contribution towards the entertaining of the Princess Royal and that they are likely to boycott her visit. And ~~even~~ earlier towards the end of last week we had the news

that the American authorities at Chaguaramas had to bury 40,000 dollars worth of citrus because Dr. Williams refused to give the Americans permission to hand over the fruit to Trinidadian charities.

Now these are very drastic actions and I know many people would be inclined to dismiss Dr. Williams out of hand for them. Some of his/^{own}fellow Trinidadians have charged Dr. Williams with showing a gross inhumanity over this citrus business. They say he does not care what happens to the poor and the needy. And, of course, his actions tend to lend support to this judgement.

But I think it would be superficial to just dismiss Dr. Williams as some of us tend to do. I think that behind most of his actions there is a burning desire to bring to his country and to his countrymen a sense of dignity and a sense of self-respect, a sense of nationalist pride. To Dr. Williams the Americans, against whom he is now fighting over the issue of Chaguaramas, are the enemy. Well then, if you are a proud, self-respecting man you do not accept charity from your enemies. Now this is, I think, an understandable position, whether we agree with it or not. It was Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, I think, who raised the cry in the early days of Ghana's struggle for independence: It is better to be hungry and free than well-fed and unfree. And to Dr. Williams an important part of freedom is for Trinidadians to control all their land. I think it is important for us try and understand Dr. Williams' reasons even when his actions seem most unreasonable to us. He is, whether we like it or not, a most important West Indian.

Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Thursday March 24 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking.

Good evening: South Africa has forced itself into the forefront of world news with dramatic violence. The facts of what has happened there are painfully simple and tragically clear. The black men and women of South Africa chose Monday of this week as the day on which they would launch a protest movement against the carrying of Passes. They had decided that this would be a peaceful protest, that they would leave their homes without their passes and invite the police to arrest them. Thousands of them, all over the country did just that. And remember, there are more than ten million black folk and less than three million white folk in that country. Well, when the white folk saw hundreds of thousands of black folk making this great demonstration, they were afraid and there was an outburst of violence that was savage and brutal. Before this week is out I am sure that the list of the dead will be more than one hundred. It is close to that now. And so far all the dead are black folk. We do not have news of a single white person being killed.

Those are the sad facts. But the reasons behind these facts, the reason why so many Africans had to be killed, is a very much more complicated story which has a lot to do with what is happening all over Africa, and which we can only understand fully by looking at the whole of Africa and by looking at the problems of race and colour in the world today. But this I cannot attempt to do in a single commentary; so I have decided to devote this, as well as my next two commentaries to explaining ^{the} reasons behind the brutal killings in South Africa.

Let me begin with the pass Laws which set off the killings.

The newspapers have described these Passes as identity cards. But it is not as simple as that. There are a host of these Passes. I can remember ten, but I know there are more, and every black person, from the age of about fourteen has to carry one or more of these Passes. The main one is called the Monthly Pass. This one identifies you, shows where you live, how old you are, your finger prints and who your parents are. If you are ever caught without it you are sent to jail as a criminal. If a black man goes from one town or village to another he has to get a Travelling Pass. When he looks for work he must have a Six Day Special Pass. When he gets work he must have an Identification Pass as well. On his day off he must get a Special Day Pass. If he wants to visit a friend in one of the ghettos reserved for black people he must get a Visitor's Pass. To be out at night he must have a Night Special Pass. To live anywhere, since he can no longer own land in his own country, he must get a Lodger's Pass. And there is even a Pass for schoolboys. These are only a few of the long list, and the black man has to produce one or all of them on demand by any policeman or else go to jail.

But what is the point of all this, you/ask. First, it means that the rulers of South Africa know at any time, night or day, where any black person in the country can be found by simply looking at the Pass records. This turns South Africa into a vast prison camp for all its black citizens. There is not a move anyone can make without the rulers knowing about it. The second reason is to convince the black man that he is inferior to the white. It is because they have failed to convince the black man and because of what is happening elsewhere that they had to kill so many Africans last Monday...But I will tell you more about that tomorrow.

Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Friday March 25 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: You will remember I told you last night about the Pass Laws which set off the killings in South Africa on Monday of this week. You will also remember that I ended by saying that it was because the whites^{folk} had failed to convince the black folk that they were inferior and because of what was happening elsewhere that the rulers of South Africa had to kill so many Africans. Well now, what does this mean? It means, I am sure, that we are seeing the first signs of desperation and the beginnings of panic among the white rulers of South Africa. The pressures are beginning to tell on them because, instead of facing only one enemy, as they formerly did, they now face three enemies.

The first enemy they faced were the black people in South Africa. Ever since the beginning of the Union of South Africa in 1910 the white South Africans have, with rare exceptions, looked on the black South Africans as their enemies. That is why they had to build up the elaborate colour bar system with its complicated and ruthless Pass Laws. It is because they have always looked on the black man inside the country as their enemy that they have built up the largest police force on the whole continent, and that is why and air force /they have the best and most modern army/with the most modern guns and tanks and planes on the whole African continent. They knew that they would have to deal with these people sooner or later, so they armed themselves and felt secure.

After the Second World War and in fact, right up to 1950 Africa, which is as large as the United States, Western Europe, India and China put together, was still controlled and dominated

by European powers. The more than 200 million peoples of Africa were still the colonial subjects of Britain, France, Belgium, Portugal and Spain. There were then only four independent countries on the whole vast Continent: these were South Africa itself, the ancient kingdom of Ethiopia, Egypt and the tiny Republic of Liberia. All the rest were colonies. As long as that was the situation and she was well armed to deal with her own black people the rulers of South Africa had very little to fear.

But the world changed very suddenly between 1950 and 1960, and no part of the world changed as much as Africa. In 1951 Libya became independent; in 1956 Morocco, Tunisia and Sudan became independent; in 1957 Ghana became independent; in 1958 Guinea became independent; and this year Nigeria, the Belgian Congo, Somalia and Cameroon will all become independent. And those that are not yet independent, such as Kenya Tanganyika and Uganda have just received or ~~will~~ are now working out new constitutions which will lead to independence. Today there are only two bits of Africa which are still old-style colonies; and in one of them, Algeria, the French are losing a bitter war against the independence movement. What a change in ten short years!

It is this change that has struck fear into the white South Africans. They know they do not have a single friend among these newly independent black states. They know the black people in their own country ~~will~~ look on these states as examples to follow and so they try to clamp down more firmly and make a show of strength by massive killings. But there is another wind of fear touching them about which I will tell you tomorrow.....Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Saturday March 26 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: Last night and the night before I gave you two of the three reasons behind the mass killings that took place in South Africa this week. The first, you will remember, was the fear in the hearts and minds of the two and a quarter million white South Africans that the more than ten million black South Africans will one day revolt against their oppression; so they had to make a brutal show of strength to try and intimidate them. The second reason, you will remember, was to be found in the changing face of Africa, where in less than ten years black men have taken power into their own hands in nearly the whole continent: and all these new independent states are hostile to the race and colour rule of South Africa. Tonight I want to give you the third reason, and this has to do with the changed and changing attitude of the world at large to the question of race and colour.

Today all the independent governments of the world, except that of South Africa, have rejected the idea of legal segregation and discrimination. Where you do still have discrimination, as in parts of the United States, the national government is actively working against it. There is a great battle going on in the Legislature of the United States right now to remove such legal handicaps as the American Negroes still suffer under. The important point is that the Government of the United States is itself fighting against racial discrimination within the United States; and the higher courts of the United States have been among the greatest champions of racial equality. Only in South Africa is racial discrimination a policy of the Government; only there is it upheld by the courts

of law. And when there were the race riots in England, the English Parliament and the English courts were firmly against the racialists among their own people. So you see, South Africa is alone in her stand of legalised discrimination. And the rest of the world, for reasons of political interest as well as for moral reasons has found it increasingly difficult to turn a blind eye to what is happening in South Africa. And so the heavy pressure of world opinion was slowly turned against South Africa until she is, today, the most condemned and the most criticised country in the whole world for her racial policies. But criticism and condemnation by themselves could do very little. And it was here that Jamaica showed the world what could be done and became the leader of the world on a most important moral issue: Jamaica started the boycott movement, and I promise you we have not heard the last of them yet. And now even Britain and the United States can no longer remain silent.

So there you are: the white rulers of South Africa are now under pressure from the black people inside South Africa; they are under pressure from the independent African states; and they are under pressure from the rest of the world. And like a cornered beast they are lashing out violently. I think we can expect more violence from them, more killings as they grow more desperate. They have had these killings in the past but the world took very little notice then. It is different today. And I am convinced that under these pressures we will, within the next decade, see the end of the world's last great racial tyranny. Good speed the way.

Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Monday March 28 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abranams speaking

Good evening: The racial killings in South Africa so dominated world news last week that I have rather neglected local affairs in my commentaries. So let me try and put this right now. One of the most important events on the home front last week was Mr. Arnett's announcement on Wednesday that there would be an increase in our property tax. You will remember that the Minister of Finance said that as from April the first of this year property tax will go up from Eight Pence in the £10 to One Shilling and Four Pence in the £10. He also said that this would apply to all the Parishes of the island except St. Catherine and St. Ann, as these two Parishes started paying tax on the unimproved value last year and March 1st, the date for making adjustments in them, has already passed.

Now the first and most obvious thing this means is that on April 1st, which is on Friday of this week, all those of us who own property are going to pay more tax. But how much more? The Minister explained in the House the next day, Thursday, that the new increase would put the total land taxes and Parish council rates we pay up by 7%, and not by 50% as some people have made out. The second obvious thing is that this is not a general or indirect tax which all of us are going to have to pay. If you do not own ~~property~~ property then this tax does not affect you. And if you own a very small property then you will hardly notice the tax/^{increase}at all. It is the people with large properties who feel this most because they are going to have to pay more. And they are the people who are most bitter against this tax increase. Now, the bitterness of large

property owners against this tax increase is understandable: we none of us like to pay taxes; I don't, and I'm sure you don't; taxes are a necessary evil with which we have to put up, but we certainly do not like them. And we like even less to have our taxes increased. So, the big property owners have my sympathy. But I do see the point of this tax increase, and I welcome it for two main reasons among others.

Now, all you have to do is travel across Jamaica from north to south or east to west to see the remarkable improvements in our roads compared with five years ago. And yet many of us, especially people with cars, those who are likely to own big properties, are not satisfied. We feel the roads can do with more improving. And not all these roads are paid for by central government the local authorities pay for some. The additional money from this tax increase will go into some of our roads. The same thing will apply with water where we have more and better piped water than five years ago; and some of this money will go into playing fields for our children and clinics for our sick.

My second main reason for welcoming this tax increase is that it is likely to bring down the price of land and reduce speculation in land. Land prices have become unreasonably high, so high that it is practically impossible for any person earning less than £1,000 a year to buy a ^{decent} piece of land and build a home on it. And I think it is wrong for the price of land to be so high that only a small section of our society can afford it. This tax increase will, I hope help to change that.... Tomorrow I want touch on aspects of agriculture. So, till then, goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Tuesday March 29 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: There is a big debate going on currently in agricultural circles about the faults and good points of the Farm Development Scheme which comes to an end this week. As you know, the Ministry of Agriculture, has told farmers that the old Scheme with its emphasis on assistance will come to an end on Thursday. But farmers will have until the end of September of this year to complete such projects as they still have in hand, and then a revised Scheme will come into operation. Under the new Scheme farmers are not likely to get the kind of grants and assistance they got under the old Scheme. They are going to have to stand more firmly on their own feet, though they will be able to borrow money for approved projects.

Now that the old Farm Development Scheme is coming to an end there are many voices raised against it and many people, some of them quite powerful in agricultural circles, seem to want to throw out the baby with the bath water. There those who say that the Scheme has done very little good, that agricultural output has not increased under it and that the farmers have learnt hardly anything from the ~~Scheme~~ Scheme. Then there are stories of J.A.S. Journals being piled away in cupboards without the parcels being even opened. I daresay all of this is probably true. Output has not been as high as most of us want it to be. And some farmers have used the Scheme and the funds from the Scheme for purposes for which it was not intended. There are always people who think it is clever to cheat but I do not think they are any more numerous in our farming community than in any other walk of life. And, you know, sometimes the J.A.S. Journal makes such dull reading

that one just opens it and then puts it aside: I have certainly done so often enough.

For myself, I think I am inclined to agree with the judgement passed on the Scheme by Captain Arthur Thelwell, the chairman of the Christiana Area Land Authority. These were Captain Thelwell's words: "The effects of the Scheme cannot be judged only in terms of crop returns. Out there on the land, it is creating a revolution in people's thinking and in the methods by which they do things, and the revolution is leading to higher living standards, better housing ideas and altogether an improved outlook on life. I think if you take all these things together you will find that the Scheme has been well worthwhile." Those are Captain Thelwell's words and, as I said, I am inclined to agree with him. In order to change your world, you must first change your outlook and this, I think, the old Farm Development Scheme has to a great extent succeeded in doing.

What I hope will be very closely watched under the new Scheme, is the size and quality of our Extension Services. I hope we will not see, as has so often been the case in the past, three Extension Service officers in three very big cars converging on one little spot to give instruction to between six and a dozen people. This is a sheer waste of the tax payers' time and money. I also hope that we will have less of the superior instructor who feels that he knows everything and that no small farmer can teach him anything.

To sum up then, I think the old Scheme has served the very useful purpose of helping to create this change in the farmer's outlook. But the time is now ripe for the Revised Scheme; the time is ripe for better and more intelligent farming, and the old Scheme has helped to make that time ripe for the new Scheme. ~~xxxx~~
~~xxxx~~ Tomorrow I will look at the Federal scene.....Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Wednesday March 30 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: There were three interesting developments on the Federal scene last week, but the news from South Africa meant I had to postpone comment on them till now.

First there was the grant of $2\frac{1}{2}$ million dollars made last Tuesday to the Federal Government by the United States Government through its International Co-operation Administration.

This money will go into ~~axfund~~ the Development Loan and Guarantee Fund recently set up by the Federal Government. The United Kingdom Government has already contributed $1\frac{1}{2}$ million dollars to this fund and the Federal Government has itself provided one million dollars: which brings the total in the Fund at present up to 5 million dollars.

Now, the purpose of this fund is to help establish development programmes in the various Unit territories and I think it is reasonable to assume that the Units who will benefit most from this Fund are the small islands of the Windwards and Leewards. And that is as it should be. It is important to note that this money will not be used as handouts in any shape or form but rather to build up and diversify the economy of the area. The political aspect of this grant is that it has given more stature and dignity to our Federal Government than many of the recent speeches of some of our own politicians. It is almost as though the U.S., Canada and Britain are more genuinely interested in the Federation than we are.

The second interesting item on the Federal scene was Dr. Williams' declaration on Tuesday of last week that Trinidad will

leave the Federation if his Government's demand for an independent Federation with a strong central government is not accepted.

This, I fear, brings the dismal Federal picture into full circle. We now have the picture where Jamaica says that unless she has her way she will leave the Federation, and Trinidad says that unless she has her way, she will leave the Federation. In other words, the two most important Units of the Federation are now indulging in what can only be called politics-at-pistol point. Each of these two powerful Units now say: It is either going to be a Federation along my lines or I quit. Now look at this any way you like, or, to use Dr. Williams' own words 'Jump high, jump low, like it or not', this is politics at a very poor level of statesmanship. For myself, I should like to see Mr. Manley and Dr. Williams meeting privately and without any advisers and try to work out their differences at a personal level. The future of a great dream is involved.

The third interesting item is a very much happier piece of news. Introducing his fourth Budget to the Trinidad House on Wednesday of last week, Dr. Williams announced that free secondary education will progressively be introduced into Trinidad. In the first instance secondary education will become free in three government schools as well as in two more to be built this year. The same will apply to nine other schools to be built or now building. Then the Government will work out with the churches ways and means for their secondary schools also to become free. This is wonderful news because the importance of education to the future development of the West Indies as a whole can never be over-emphasised. This is, I think, one of the most valuable contributions Dr. Williams and his government are making to Trinidad and the West Indies as a whole. Goodnight.

NEWS COMMENTARY

For transmission on
Thursday March 31 at 6.15p.m
Peter Abrahams speaking

Good evening: I should like to talk about your health this evening because tomorrow, April the first, something that is very important to ~~all~~ the health of all of us will come within the reach of practically everybody in Jamaica. I am, of course, referring to the Jamaica Blue Cross Plan; about which I am sure many of you already know. Up to now this Plan has only applied to groups of ten people or more; but from tomorrow any single person or any family will be able to join the Plan.

Now what is this Plan? Well, to answer it properly I must first remind you of ~~if~~ things which have happened to most, if not all, of us. I am sure that among all of you listening there must have been a large number of people who have been ~~ill~~ sick at one time or another and who have not been able to afford to go to a doctor. I am sure that among you there are parents who at one time or another have made themselves ill with misery and unhappiness because they could not afford to take their child to see a specialist or pay for that operation or that special treatment the child needed. And I am sure there are yet others who got themselves deep into debt in order that a loved one should get the proper medical treatment at a time of sickness. And I am sure there are many sad people among you who have lost ~~there~~ loved ones because they could not afford an expensive treatment that might have made all the difference between life and death. I am sure of all this because every year one out of every three families in Jamaica has a need to use a hospital. We none of us have any security against sickness or accident, it does not matter whether we are rich or poor, big families or small; sickness can strike anywhere.

What we can do is to make sure that when sickness/strickes^{does} we will be able to get the best doctors, the best medicines and the best hospital treatment possible. And this we can do by joining the Blue Cross Plan. If you join Blue Cross as an ^{individual} ~~individual~~ or as a family, you, your wife and each of your children who are not yet eighteen, will each be entitled to ninety days of free care and treatment each year in a hospital should the need arise. Your ambulance, your X-Rays, your operations, your medicines, your doctors visits will all be free; in the event of pregnancy your wife will be able to have her baby in home or hospital and all treatment will be free - provided you have been enrolled in the Plan for ten months before the birth of the child.

In snort, the Blue Cross Plan frees you of the worry as to where the money for treatment is to come from when there is sickness in the house. And you all know how great that worry can be.

Now how do you join Blue Cross? As from tomorrow there will be two ways: there is the Group plan which has been going in Jamaica for two years now. In this there must be ten or more people. If you earn less than \$500 a year you pay 6/- a month if you are single, or 18/- a month to cover your whole family. If you earn more than \$500 a year you pay 12/- a month single or ~~£2~~ 2 a month for your family. If you are joining not as a group then you pay 7/- single or 22/- per family per month if you earn \$500 or less; if you earn more then you pay 15/- single or \$2.8.0 per family per month. And for this you will get full and free care in your time of need. If you are interested in this wonderful plan write to Blue Cross, care of the University Hospital, Mona, Kingston 7.... Tomorrow I will talk about the fuss in the House between Busta and Father Coombs on Tuesday. Till then, goodnight.