

Editorials

UNFORTUNATE STATEMENTS

Two unfortunately extravagant statements issued earlier this week must cause the gravest concern to Jamaicans, irrespective of political party affiliation.

The first was that of Senator Pearnell Charles on Sunday at the J.L.P. Conference when, in the midst of conference euphoria, he declared: "I might as well tell you from now that Winston Spaulding will be in charge of passports and certain people will have to answer to where they are going, what they are doing and where they are coming from."

One of the most criticised features of the J.L.P. Government in the first years of Independence was its extreme caution over subversion and its decision to withdraw passports from some Jamaicans. Mr. Charles' statement suggests that this unpardonable policy may well be implemented if the J.L.P. is returned to power. It is an indefensible statement.

Senator Charles suffered a grave injustice under the P.N.P. Government when he was detained without cause — as it later transpired. He must therefore be severely tempted to wish to see some revenge on those who did him injustice, especially where in his view, they might be culpable of crimes against the country.

If any Jamaican is charged for a crime, it is the law that Immigration can prevent him from leaving. If that is what Mr. Charles meant, he should

have said so. But his platform rhetoric was frightening. It is good, therefore, that his Leader has so promptly and effectively re-stated J.L.P. policy which in the process has repudiated Mr. Charles' statement. Mr. Seaga's declaration that "there will be no restrictions on any Jamaican passports" is timely and welcome.

The other unfortunate and extreme statement was that of Mr. Manley, the Prime Minister, who, losing his cool, said on Monday: "I denounce Mr. Seaga as a traitor and a liar." Mr. Manley's evidence was that of a report in an obscure magazine called The Latin American Review Weekly.

To charge the Leader of the Opposition with the high crime of treason — which is what being denounced as a traitor suggests i.e. that Mr. Seaga is "false to the allegiance to his sovereign or to the Government of his country or guilty of treason or of any crime so regarded" — is very grave indeed. If Mr. Seaga is so guilty, then the law should take its course.

Certainly neither Mr. Charles nor Mr. Manley in their outbursts have contributed to national unity — the goal which Mr. Seaga has declared to be that of his party if it forms the next government.

To Mr. Manley and Mr. Charles we say: Cool it! Revenge or mean-spiritedness should have no further part in our national politics.

Medical self-help

With the rising cost of medical care, the shortage of doctors and health care facilities, the time has come when we all need to know how to take care of ourselves through what is popularly called "self-medication".

Self-medication, if firmly established here, would not be peculiar to Jamaica, because it is strongly urged and supported in places like Britain and parts of Europe where good health-care facilities and services are available. Besides with our desperate situation here in Jamaica there is a lot to be said for the objective development of self-medication. Perhaps its primary goal is to develop good health-care awareness and full participation by the individual in

Since self-medication should not be allowed to return to the primitive situation based on ignorance, superstition and dangerous practices, there is need for a major thrust in this type of public education. Although it is recognised that the radio stations and the newspapers play their part in this, even more should be done by the health insurance companies and by the booksellers to provide reliable information on the subject.

At this time in the U.S.A., the American Medical Association and the Association of American Medical Colleges are supporting this type of development. Perhaps our own medical leaders could take a look in this direction.

OPINIONS on this page, except for those in the editorials above, do not necessarily reflect the views of the GLEANER

REPUBLIC: JLP, PNP disagree over appointment of President - Seaga

NOTE: Disagreement has arisen between the JLP and the PNP over the system of appointment of a President of a proposed Republic. In a statement at the 36th annual conference of the JLP at the National Arena on Sunday, Mr. Seaga spelt out his party's approach to a Republic and the Presidency. The following is an extract from Mr. Seaga's speech:

"Next year is also supposed to be referendum year, and you know that referendum is something that is dear to the heart of the Jamaica-Labour Party.

"A referendum is supposed to be held on the basis of agreement between the two parties on certain major issues; and changing the constitutional form of government from a Monarchy to a Republic is the most fundamental of these issues on which there is expected to be agreement for the purpose of a referendum.

"There is no disagreement between the leadership of the Jamaica-Labour Party and that of the PNP on the desirability of a Republic in place of a Monarchy as the constitutional form of government for this country. But there is great disagreement between ourselves and ourselves on the appointment of the President of such a Republic.

"The President is just the Governor-General by another name; and a disagreement exists between ourselves and ourselves of which they are aware, of which they have been informed, at the level of the Constitutional Committee of the House.

Firstly, the present Governor-General is appointed, in fact, by the Prime Minister, notwithstanding the legal niceties which do not say so. The Opposition will not agree to the appointment of a President if Jamaica is to become a Republic, by the PNP Government.

"And I am giving you two reasons why. The first reason is most important; at present, it is the Governor-General who makes selections to the new Electoral Committee if the two parties fail to agree on who the persons are that should serve on that committee.



Mr. Seaga

bol: somebody to whom all people can look — not just PNP or JLP. "We do not consider that Her Majesty the Queen, through no fault of her own, is in a position to give Jamaica today, the symbolism that is necessary for the people of present-day Jamaica. When we seek to replace the Queen, we seek to replace her by somebody who is able to provide a more meaningful symbol to the people of Jamaica. If that person is to be a proper symbol, then that person must first and foremost be a man who is impartial, who has no side, to whom everybody can look and in whom there will be integrity and independence. (Loud applause).

"For that reason, as well as the previous reason, I once again say that if the People's National Party proceeds to hold a referendum on the question of Republicanism, unless we can devise a means of appointing a President to guarantee an impartial person to hold that post, we are going to be at opposite sides in that referendum. We are going to be contesting against the PNP in that referendum; and you know what happened the last time that the JLP contested against the PNP. (Loud applause).

"The role of the Opposition is to oppose and to have such a warning bell when dangers confront the nation."

Voice of the People

Criminal hideout

THE EDITOR, Sir:— There have been several complaints from the citizens of Independence City to the St. Catherine Parish Council concerning an overgrowth of land above Portland Circle. This land is providing a hide-out for criminals in the area who conceal themselves in the bushes and lay wait unwary pedestrians and

attack them. Apart from that, almost every day these criminals break into houses in the area and make their get away in these thick bushes. This piece of land also adjoins the church and persons attending are also victims of these criminal activities. I am therefore using this medium to appeal to the St.

Catherine Parish Council to have this land cleared immediately and am calling on the Police to increase their patrols in the area.

I am, etc., REGINALD EBANKS Caretaker Councilor Independence City Division Nov. 19, 1979.

Weekly Gleaner

THE EDITOR, Sir: I have been hesitating to write you this letter, but I am now compelled to do so because I have seen the decline of the sale of your newspaper in this country. It does not rightly affect me or anyone like myself, but it affects the morale of people who are true Jamaicans (which I am one).

The reason is that the Weekly Gleaner, whether it is printed in England or not, is politically biased in view of the government of Jamaica in preference to the Jamaica Labour Party. Well most Jamaicans living in this country don't accept that bias. The headlines of the papers dated Wednesday, October 18, 1979, writes thousands of people march in protest in the city against the government, reading further down it states that it was 45 thousand J.L.P. marching in protest against the government in allowing rising prices and high unemployment and the presence of Cubans in the country.

It seems as if the JLP still want the people of Jamaica in the dark and that is to suit their own ends. Because JLP has been in power in Jamaica over 25 years and the people were never better off than now. At least they became more illiterate than since the PNP government took office. Say eight years ago there were parishes in Jamaica that were left to rot

under JLP support and the people said 'fuck the man stay de end eat money, we don't want nothing.

Let me tell you Mr. Editor, those days are past and will not come back. We notice some idiots writing stupid things about Mr. Manley and his government, but they won't win the day, because they try to hide the good side of the government, and only try to show the bad side. Your newspaper is favouring the cause of the JLP and we can't stop you. But we can stop supporting you by stop buying your newspaper and that we will be successful in doing, because we don't want any more destructive elements. We want people to be more constructive, then our country will progress by organisation with each other.

I am, etc., E. STEWART 9 St. Lukes Road, Highgate, Birmingham 5, England, 25.10.79.

Company.

In view of this gross misrepresentation of the facts and as an ex-member of that community I would like to point out for the benefit of the people of Jamaica exactly what are the problems of Southern Processors and I dare the Member of Parliament and Mr. Earnest Powell to deny these charges.

Isn't it a fact that the most competent Manager resigned because he refused to be a surrogate of the P.N.P. MP.

Isn't it a fact the Manager resigned because he refused to be manipulated or used by the M.P. and continued to execute his duties without fear or favour.

Isn't it a fact that a constant supply of raw materials is a serious problem because the majority of the farmers in the area have refused to sell their product to the factory because of victimisation.

Isn't it a fact that theft is very rampant in the company.

Isn't it a fact that canning of illicit drugs was once uncovered.

I urge the J.I.D.C and the Government to order an investigation into the operations of Southern Processors and I urge the farmers of the area who have been victimised for political reasons to stand firm.

I am, etc., RICHARD M. POWELL P.O. Box 750 Spanish Town St. Catherine November 5, 1979

Southern Processors

THE EDITOR, Sir: I refer to a report appearing on page one (1) of your publication of Oct. 4, 1979 under the heading "Southern Processor in trouble"

The report read on behalf of Mr. Earnest Powell by the President of the J.A.S. erroneously states that Southern Processors' problems are related to poor marketing and the importation by Government of certain items manufactured by the

SITES AND SERVICES

ONE OF THE unfortunate things about news is that there is a tendency to concentrate on the bad things that point the finger of blame and sometimes to ignore the good things that bring benefits to people.

The recent highly publicised reports of financial mismanagement of the Ministry of Housing's Sites and Services low income housing project is a good example of news that ignores the good and highlights the bad.

The Sites and Services Project in the Ministry of Housing has contributed a not insignificant thrust towards the upgrading of living conditions among the urban poor and the provision of houses at a price within the reach of the incomes of the working class.

Funded partly by World Bank loan funds and counterpart Jamaican government funds the project has developed several large housing sites in the Corporate Area, in Spanish Town, in May Pen and in Montego Bay. The Camplands project immediately south of the Stadium and the Spanish Town project built on the Prison Farm Lands are the most advanced sites and have seen the construction of several hundred houses built by self-managed construction.

The idea behind this approach to housing is that access to housing can be increased if the state prepares a site in terms of roads, water supply, community buildings, etc., and provides those to be housed with a simple core consisting of a few walls which they complete using their own labour or hired labour to finish the dwelling.

The cost of the site development is recovered by monthly payments from the dwellers who lease the land on a long term basis. This avoids the high costs of having to purchase the real estate and makes modern community facilities possible at the cheapest cost.

From an evaluation of the houses built at the two advanced sites it was found that dwellers were building attractive two

and three bedroom structures for costs that ranged mainly between \$4,000 and \$9,000. Although conceived on the basis that dwellers would be learning building skills and doing their own construction, most of the units were built with hired labour cheapened by the slump in the building industry.

This was the first effort of large scale housing construction in Jamaica using the methodology of self-managed construction. Consequently, the project had its problems.

Sections of the core design and layout were rejected and modified at a cost by dwellers who had ideas of layout that differed from the planners. Attempts at encouraging communal or shared labour by groups of dwellers were unsuccessful in the face of the individualism of the dwellers. Some dwellers were too inexperienced and got ripped off by small contractors. Organisational problems developed on some sites, although the Camplands site was a model of good management.

Far cheaper In the end, however, many people were able to put up houses at a cost far cheaper than they would have had to pay for a similar unit on the housing market and a strong sense of community spirit and civic pride has resulted from efforts by Ministry staff to foster community participation, leadership, and management of site facilities.

Some of the sites have been plagued with political problems and violence as the Opposition JLP has complained that the sites have been designed to strategically locate large numbers of PNP dwellers in constituencies in order to change the political balance in favour of the PNP. The site development has suffered from poor quality construction as has the construction of the building cores because of the shoddy work done by some of the political subcontractors, and the latter's resistance to engineering supervision.

The project is way behind schedule because of poor planning, overall management weaknesses, financial mismanagement and inadequate staff to supervise and man what is a very large undertaking.

It would be a mistake to assess the project purely in terms of its organisational and management weaknesses and failures. Self-help and self-managed construction has always posed problems that cause long delays in building completion. The positive side has to do with the eagerness, enthusiasm and

initiative shown by most of the dwellers on the two most advanced sites in completing their own homes and the positive efforts that have gone into building new communities imbued with a spirit of self-reliance.

The rate of completion of units by dwellers is much higher in Jamaica than in most of other countries where similar projects have been tried in Africa and Latin America where research has found that completion rates are exceptionally low among urban dwellers.

Administrative failures apart, the project has shown that the self-managed methodology of housing construction can work and work to the advantage of low income groups who are unable to purchase shelter from either private or public schemes. These costs could be considerably reduced with better planning and strategies that leave more of the construction to the dwellers.

Another very important side of the Sites and Services Unit has been the upgrading of squatter communities. Most of the urban poor who live in these squatter areas have neither the means nor the opportunity to move to better quality housing and areas where the physical environment is less depressing, unkept and primitive in terms of basic facilities and amenities. What the squatter upgrading has tried to do by Ministry initiative aided by community mobilisation is the general upgrading and improvement of these very depressed environments to make them more livable and to encourage the dwellers to help each other in maintaining the infrastructure of these communities.

Vicious lie It is one of the most vicious lies perpetrated about the urban poor that their aspirations for a better life is far more than the society can afford. One of the interesting experiences of visiting these upgraded squatter communities is to see how much these citizens appreciate having sidewalks and curbs where only a dirt track existed; having wider roads and access ways where none existed; having proper fencing that gives them some privacy; achieving security of tenure to the piece of land they captured; and having clean and tidy-looking environs created by their own efforts. Of course once these things are done aspirations for improved housing begin

(Cont'd. on Page 17)

Of this and that - by Colin Gregory

Does the media only instruct?

MR. SEAGA has read from a document the significant statement, "Unless steps are taken with the media so that it politically educates the people our chances in the next election are negative." (And what an odd way of writing, "we shall lose the next election!")

Today I'm not so much concerned about the significance or danger of this supposedly planned assault on our minds but with the question, "What ever happened to reading for pleasure?" Or, indeed, "Must the media whether radio, TV or newspapers, etc. be used only for 'education' (so-called) and instruction?"

I grew up in a family where books and magazines were common articles and so, thank goodness, I still read for pleasure (which also educates me, I may say) but this seems to be a dying practice — though it still persists, I admit, or book importers would go bankrupt, something I'd hate to see. TV and radio, I'm told, is now all instruction,

except for the music (if that is what it is) which almost incessantly fills the airwaves. Is that pleasure? Well, perhaps mindless pleasure.

I think I've told before now the story of my attending a large meeting which I knew was bound to be subject to long delays and so I armed myself with a book to while away the periods of waiting I knew would occur. This occasioned much astonishment and one individual expressed his surprise by saying to me, "Studying, I see." "Nuff said."

But it seems to me that those who use the media whether TV, radio or the press for 'instruction' are overplaying their hand and there will be a revolt against it so that the thinking people close their minds to it. As for the poor youngsters! When this document — I assume that it is a genuine one — can state, "Education Schools Broadcasting is a scandal!" (which it may be, but for other reasons than that stated) and refer to "emphasis on educating children and adults on matters of importance to their survival and development" it would seem that

the intention is to deprive the children and adults of real education

It's a long time since I left the schoolroom but I've always understood that the prime requisite was to awaken the child's interest. Once that has been done — and it can be achieved in every subject — the teacher can relax because the child will want to know more about the subject. Maybe that's what the 'progressives' aim to do but what dull adults they're going to produce from the dinning of socialist doctrine into their poor ears and eyes! And how deprived of real knowledge they will be!

Trivialities preferred I feel strongly on the subject because I've recently read the 'book of the TV series' 'Life on Earth' presented by David Attenborough and regard the book as excellent. The 13-part BBC TV programme must be magnificent; it was, of course, offered to JBC, and even though Jamaica doesn't have colour television it would have been a run-away favourite and enormously

instructive.

JBC didn't take it; maybe lack of money was the prime factor and in the years to come when the price drops it may be taken — if it can be squeezed into the short space available after propaganda programmes. But here was a real chance of presenting the public with an enormously instructive programme which would have widened the knowledge of all viewers and not merely attempted to indoctrinate them. Trivialities and propaganda have been preferred.

So, once again the present government party has shown to us that there is one prime objective which overrides all others, namely that of staying in power, in other words, being re-elected. This objective takes precedence over salvaging the economy and, indeed, of saving Jamaica.

But that is no way to run a country. How much longer must we continue to see our best interests ignored while power-hungry persons spend their time planning to hang on to the power, power which they have so misused?

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