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WORKSHOP REPORTS

Delegates were able to choose from four workshops. Sessions began on Thursday afternoon and continued on Friday. Most groups finished their deliberations on Friday morning or early afternoon, thus allowing workshops chairmen and secretaries time to prepare reports for the final plenary session on Saturday morning.

REPORT OF WORKSHOP I

Subject: "Social objectives as the major criteria in formulating land settlement schemes for rural communities"

The Workshop recognised that there were distinct social and economic objectives in the various proposals put forward by the consultants, which in some cases could conflict.

In the context of conditions in the area it was strongly felt that the social objectives should be paramount. Social objectives were enumerated to include:

- (a) improved infrastructure and utilities;
- (b) more and better housing and health;
- (c) improved nutrition for the population; and
- (d) more suitable education facilities and provision for community activities.

It was suggested that the objectives had to be set within national objectives and that, for example, consideration should be given to measures for broadening the tax base to pay for other activities and cover Government's acquisition of the property. Most members felt that narrow financial objectives should be minimised.

It was recognised that scarce resources had to be allocated among priorities and that there were dangers in giving special treatment to one sector at the expense of the whole nation, especially as higher expectations might be aroused by a demonstration effect.

The social problems of Grand Bay were seen to be separate though closely linked with the economic development of the Geneva Estate. It was observed that the Geneva Estate was not the only economic resource in the area and could therefore be treated as an economic project.

Achievement of improved economic conditions and therefore of a better quality of life was seen to depend on involving the people of the area. The cooperative way was thought to best serve the meeting of these objectives.

It was suggested that if the test of economic viability is applied too stringently a start may not be made. Given the objective of social development and using social cost/benefit analysis, it was agreed that the project should proceed immediately since the risk of not developing may incur greater social and financial costs in dealing with eruptions of social unrest.

Nevertheless, it was felt that the various objectives should be weighted. The estate would be unlikely to generate enough surplus to pay the purchase price of the estate and the mortgage burden would be heavy. It was agreed that more limited targets should be set.

In determining viability, the following points should not be overlooked:

1. *shadow pricing* of labour could be used as a recognition of the benefit of additional labour absorbed since labour opportunities are limited;

2. the value of a housing area of 50 acres for the expansion of Grand Bay should be offset against costs of agricultural development at Geneva; and
3. the purchase price of the estate should not be included in spite of Government's straightened financial situation, since land is a national resource of the country.

Concern was expressed that in the Grand Bay area an available male labour force of about 1,000 existed whereas all the schemes proposed could not engage more than about 300, with another 300 already having their own plots. As a result, some 400 persons would not be involved.

The following recommendations were made:-

1. There should be established an interim body to be known as the Grand Bay Development Council under the provisions of the Dominica Land Management Authority Act Section 24 (1) which states that the Authority shall have the following powers and duties "to undertake such other things connected with the development of land as the Minister may from time to time direct".

The Council shall comprise representatives of the Grand Bay Community and Government nominees weighted in favour of the Community representatives and with the management staff as ex-officio members.

This Council shall be mandated among other things to perform the following main functions:

- (i) to assume control of, and responsibility for, the development of the Geneva Estate;
- (ii) to recruit and employ technical and managerial staff to manage the estate;
- (iii) to undertake the immediate rehabilitation of the existing crops to generate maximum income from the present enterprises; and
- (iv) to promote the training of members of the Grand Bay community in cooperative development and management and technical skills with the view to the eventual handing over of full responsibility to a cooperative and, further, the Council shall phase itself out as soon as these responsibilities can be reasonably discharged by the members of the Grand Bay community working cooperatively.

In addition to these functions, the Council should:

- (i) initiate the structural changes necessitated by the accepted development programme for the Geneva Estate; and
- (ii) liaise between the community and Government on matters of social and community development in the area.

2. Project evaluation should be approached by using full social cost/benefit analysis. The financial analysis of the Draft Proposals for Geneva/Grand Bay should be re-appraised. In so far as Melville Hall and Castle Bruce are concerned, further study should be undertaken

to improve their structures and performance. Specifically, the rental system of Melville Hall should be re-appraised.

3. In recognition of the financial constraints, phased development of the estate was recommended. Thus, Phase I would be the development of the Geneva Estate itself in phases, for example, rehabilitation of the coconuts and of the copra factory will yield quicker benefits than development of the bay oil project. An important criteria for ordering the phases would be the early creation of greater employment opportunities. One consideration is the Housing Authority's plans for developing the housing area with labour-intensive techniques.

4. Among the immediate targets recommended were:

- (i) the construction of a large shed for storage, training in crafts and other related activities;
- (ii) the establishment of an improved communal pasture, where possible under the existing coconuts in a controlled area;
- (iii) identification of the village expansion area for the purpose of generating funds towards offsetting the cost of the estate; and
- (iv) establishment of an experimental/pilot project to develop new crops for the dynamic growth of the estate, perhaps using the Grand Bay Agricultural Station.