

REID REPORTS ON JONESTOWN DISASTER

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People's Temple Investigations have revealed that among the dead are four (4) children who had been informally adopted by the People's Temple but who are of Guyanese birth.

We deeply regret their death and extend our sympathy to their relatives.

Later, Cde. Speaker, a report was received at Matthew's Ridge that a number of persons had committed suicide at Jonestown. The civil forces with the help of the Guyana Defence Force, later Saturday night despatched ranks into Matthew's Ridge and moved by foot and train to Kaituma. During the next twelve (12) hours arrangements were made to fly up troops at Kaituma to move into Jonestown.

On Sunday, troops advanced on foot to a junction near Jonestown. It should be noted that all this was done under very adverse conditions since the terrain was difficult. The situation at Jonestown was unclear and there was unusual rainfall with poor visibility.

Early Sunday evening the troops were in control of Jonestown where they discovered bodies which on subsequent count amounted to 383. Further discoveries have up to now taken that

figure to 775 and it is possible that this number will increase.

During Sunday, senior officials, headed by our Crime Chief, arrived in the area and commenced investigations and identification of the dead. By early Monday morning additional police manpower was flown in and Guyana Defence Force troops mounted clearing patrols in the jungle surrounding Jonestown with the primary task of searching for survivors of the tragedy.

Simultaneous with this operation an area reeve was done by helicopter around Jonestown. Meanwhile on the grounds - the Jonestown area, Guyanese personnel with the assistance of two survivors and the police were able to identify and tag 183 bodies. By Tuesday morning, after earlier discussions with the American Ambassador and senior Government officials, area of co-operation and collaboration were agreed on.

Later that day the major Task Force arrived at Timehri. It had earlier been agreed that the bodies be returned to the USA, primarily to avoid the obvious logistic problem of relatives having to travel all the way to Guyana and possibly to a remote part of the country to recover the bodies and also to permit the

American investigative forces to make positive identification of the victims where necessary.

We have so far received optimum co-operation and assistance from the US Government, and officials, as well as other personnel despatched to assist in this massive operation of removing cadavers, searching for survivors and seeking to find answers to the very many problems posed as a result of the Jonestown disaster.

On the very Saturday, and the assumption is that there is some connection with the incident in the North West, a mother, Sharon Amos, an assistant to Jim Jones, and her three children were found dead in the People's Temple headquarters at 41 Dennis Street, Campbellville.

At this moment investigations have reached a point where charges of murder are likely to be made.

Simultaneously, the intensive search for survivors is continuing and in this we have been receiving valuable assistance from the United States authority.

Our late Honorary Consul, who had lived and worked in Los Angeles, had recommended that the Guyana Government give consideration to an application for the People's Temple to establish a Community in some part of the Hinterland where the main activity could be land development.

This religious group had an establishment in California, and was anxious to establish a branch in this country. They had a history of community work and agricultural involvement. They had applied for a lease of 25,000 acres but after the area had been surveyed, a lease of 3,000 acres was

eventually granted to accommodate a project expected to involve at least 500 people.

This was consistent with Guyana's policy of hinterland development and our attempts to encourage individuals and groups to establish themselves as farmers particularly in the hinterland area. Grants of land have always in quantum related to location of land and purpose for which it would be used.

The People's Temple began to work in 1974 and their attitudes enable them to take advantage of the agricultural potential of the area. They grew a variety of crops and engaged in livestock rearing.

Inevitably the tragic events of these last few days have given rise to speculation and questions.

While rumours have been circulated, some within Guyana and some printed as fact by certain sections of the overseas Press.

But there are some issues with which we must deal now.

We can state with certainty that the leader of the group, Jim Jones, is dead. Not only have our army officials, experts and former residents of Jonestown identified Jim Jones among the dead but US authorities officially confirmed today that they have made similar identification.

How many people were at Jonestown at the time of these tragic events? There have been contemporary reports about the exact

number and investigations are still proceeding to get the final figure.

It must be remembered that Guyana is a free country in which people are free to enter and to leave, of course in accordance with our regulations. More than that, all persons legitimately in Guyana are free to move from one place to another within our country without control, and this, of course, results in there being at any one time a state of flux as regards settlement of people. But based upon our own records there should be 915 members of the People's Temple in Guyana.

There have been questions concerning the security of the area. We can state positively that the authorities have been aware of the significance of the security of the area and have been exercising supervision.

With regard to the possession of guns and ammunition by persons at Jonestown, our records show that four (4) licences were granted after applications had been made and in

respect of which proper checking had taken place.

Our present information discloses that there has been a serious breach with regards to the possession of firearms but there had not before been discovered any indication that such a breach had occurred, in any case the culprits may now be beyond our punishment.

Cde. Speaker, the Government recognises the unprecedented magnitude of this tragedy and will continue to do everything possible to carry out its obvious responsibilities. A diligent and intensive search for survivors is being maintained. The police are pursuing investigations and are likely to institute other charges in the very near future regarding breaches of the law.

The future of Jonestown is receiving the active attention of the Government.

I wish in conclusion Cde. Speaker, to reiterate our deepest and heartfelt sympathy to all who are bereaved. We mourn with them in this hour of grief.

Air Jamaica seeking \$3.2m loan

KINGSTON, Jamaica: (Cana) - Jamaica's national airline Air Jamaica, is seeking a 3.2 million-dollar (J) loan 2 million dollars (US) from the Bank of Jamaica to offset financial problems resulting from industrial action between June and September this year, according to a government announcement here.

A ministry paper setting out details of the loan and seeking the approval of the

million dollars, and the company anticipates an improved performance this year.

It also expects to earn 25 million dollars (US) in foreign exchange between 1979 and 1981.

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