

# Shifting sands

## Letters to the SUNDAY EDITOR

The Editor, Sir—  
It was reported in "The Sunday Gleaner" of March 30, 1970, that all the established churches were filled to capacity on Good Friday. From coast to coast, "from sun to sun", thousands could be seen trudging along to the churches of their choice. But now "the day is passed and over" I mean Good Friday has come and gone, and the saintly sanctimonious sentiments have given way to things more mundane and ma-

terialistic. Instead of the metricious sartorial nonstrocities in black and white our women-folk have gone back to the gaudy mini and the eye-catching see-through. Instead of the rich, triumphant anthem and the sacred cantata, we turn again to the raucous reggae and the cacophonous calypso. No wonder the younger generation has come to think that God is dead!

For the older folk preach and practise Christianity as often as the carnival is celebrated in Trinidad—once a year. What kind of life does the Christian live between one religious festival and another. What, if any, are the outward manifestations of Christianity? How can we distinguish the saint from the sinner? The answer that comes to mind most readily is: "By their fruits."  
But unfortunately, these often take the form of selfishness, hypocrisy, self aggrandisement and nepotism. If this is true (and I think it is), then I have no claim on the shifting sands of sainthood.

# Morant Bay group

The Editor, Sir—  
In "The Sunday Gleaner", March 29, Mr. Harry Milner wrote an article "Home Grown Television" in which he discussed the need and the appropriateness of using more local material for our television entertainment. He gave credit to Mr. Wycliffe Bennett for his first "Parish of the Month" programme, which was focussed on St. Thomas. In his criticism, he said:

and not the "Frats Quintet" (which I believe he meant when he wrote Frate) that performed on that programme. Furthermore, while we admire the famous gentlemen a great deal and did use their "conventional treatment" of "Mrs. Flannigan", the opener "War Dung a Monkla" was done in a distinctly different style. Anyway, if Mr. Milner cannot tell us differently, by our voices or appearance on television he can have ample chance at either of our Folk Concerts in Kingston (part of our concert tour beginning in April); the first at the Excelsior on May 2, or the other at UWI New Arts Lecture Theatre on May 16.

I am, etc.,  
ERROL JOHNSON,  
(for Morant Bay Ecumenical Group)  
P. O. Box 11  
Morant Bay.

# 33-yr. mail delay

BLEKINGE, Sweden:  
Helge Lindgren received a letter reminding him that he had not yet paid a J\$1.60 fine assessed against him for giving a friend a lift on his bicycle. The letter was delayed in transit. Mr. Lindgren was given the ticket on Nov. 20, 1937.

# Looking back at the KSAC with ex-Mayor Bell

LAST WEEK a Sunday Gleaner Staff Writer met with the former Mayor of the Corporate Area, Eric Bell, and talked about the job of being a Mayor, his triumphs, his frustrations and his disasters while he held office as the first elected Mayor of the Corporate Area since 1964.



COUNCILLOR ERIC BELL

The questions and responses were:

Q: Mr. Bell, as the youngest Mayor of the Corporate Area and the 20th of the Municipality what was it like holding office?

BELL: Extremely challenging experience, particularly in trying to create a new dimension to the Corporation which had two Commissioners for nearly five years. Oh, I felt that so many things had to be put right.

Q: When you took office you immediately called for people of "goodwill and special training" to come forward and help city administration. What kind of response did you have?

BELL: First class, excellent response. You see, we had representatives from the JMA, the Chamber of Commerce, the JAS and from the Consumers' League on committees and from time to time got assistance. Co-opted members phoned in and asked to be involved and a number of people agreed to do specific pro-

grammes. We formed a citizens Committee for a cleaner city.

Q: There are some people who claim that the two Commissioners had left the KSAC in disarray. Would you agree? And if so, to what extent would you say your administration was one of putting your house in order?

BELL: I don't like the question and I don't like to refer to what others have done.

Q: Would you give some indication of the extent of the conflict between the KSAC and the Central Government on the business of financing the Corporation, please. You were often quoted as saying that the "beggarly cup in hand" attitude was inadequate for running a modern city?

BELL: In this legal framework we took over an organization which was in deficit. During my year every time the need for funds over and above the approved Budget arose we had to go "cup-in-hand" to the Ministry to ask for additional

money. Ideally, the KSAC should do three things.

- (1) Have independent financial consultants investigate its financial affairs and systems including rates and taxes and properties on which they are paid or ought to be paid.
- (2) Then have the power to impose its own property rates and taxes up to a

certain point. A vote of the people, a kind of plebiscite, can't be provided for, if rates and taxes are to be increased beyond a certain point, and

(3) The KSAC should have the unfettered power to raise its own capital loans. The only brake on this would be the ability or willingness of capital market sources to provide the funds.

Q: But couldn't there be some justification for this attitude since funds apparently disappear and KSAC accounts have not been audited for some time now?

BELL: There possible justification which there might be disappeared with precaution as mentioned in my previous answer. It is true that the accounts had not been audited and I brought this to the attention of the Minister and pointed out that this was a reason independent financial consultant was necessary.

Q: In your maiden speech as Mayor you said that the people of the Corporate Area were expecting the Council to do more than just improve road surfaces, garbage collection and lighting. How would you describe the performance of your Council in these respects?

BELL: I think, save for the December-January period when the garbage collection service

was very bad, the Public Cleansing Department had performed reasonably well under difficult circumstances. In January the Prime Minister acceded to our request for additional funds etc., and normally restored.

The backlog in some areas in recent weeks has been due to departmental difficulties arising from the discontinuation of hired vehicles as well as problems of getting full complement of staff to work over the holidays. But if a reasonable attitude is taken and adequate funds provided the city could have a good garbage collection system before the end of the year.

Q: You've not been satisfied with the performance in the Roads and Works Department, but it must be appreciated that while our Engineer estimates that \$300,000 flood damage was done in rains in 1969 we were allowed only \$36,000 by the Ministry. Towards the end of the financial year our road maintenance vote was exhausted and we had to mark time.

On street lighting we did what we could within limits of available funds, and we've made proposals. This department is seriously handicapped by lack of capital equipment but it is hoped the situation will be remedied. However, I agree there are inefficiencies in the department which will have to be remedied.

Q: Would you care to comment on any effort made as Mayor to curtail rising industrial disbursements in the Corporation?

BELL: I realize that labour-management relation is important to successful adminis-

tration and I give particular attention to this aspect. I believe I spent more hours in that year meeting with labour than any one else. Naturally, we had our lot of go-slows but the KSAC lost less man hours in 1969-70 due to workers unrest than it did in the year previously. It is my impression: One problem is the slow pace at which worker claims are dealt with at Central Government level.

Q: It is customary for Mayors to run for a second term, at least, but you gave up after about 360 days an office. Does this reflect frustration and disappointment at the KSAC?

BELL: The answer is this—I had explained from the outset that I could not afford to do one year in office but apparently no one accepted my word. I've had to give up so as to earn a living and also to do certain political duties for my party.

The job was frustrating, but then I had anticipated it and that certainly isn't the reason I didn't run again. I do not have a feeling of disappointment. I think we have managed to lay foundation which if pursued should benefit citizens of the Corporate Area. And I'm told by those qualified to make comparison that we have been able to run the City with rather less purely political considerations determining the policies made.

Q: Finally Mr. Bell, will you continue to take active participation in KSAC affairs?

BELL: Of course, and in a way I can give my undivided attention to all issues in the interest of the people we serve.

# Preventing accidental poisoning

By Jackie Krug

NEW YORK:

EVERYONE knows that arsenic kills. Not everyone knows that hand lotion kills, too. The pharmaceutical industry would like to prevent the deaths of 2,500 Americans who may be expected to die this year from accidental poisoning.

Of the estimated 2,500 deaths, 95 per cent will be from preventable accidents. Mrs. Robert Roina, an industry spokeswoman, points out that the only "cure" for poisoning is prevention.

The statistics become even more alarming when it is learned that more than 300,000 children will swallow poisonous materials this year and that 90 per cent of these will be under the age of five.

Clearly, the most important factor in preventing poisoning accidents and deaths is the mother in the home. Genuine common sense and staying "one step ahead" when children are involved could avert tragedy.

Youngsters under five are in the curious years. They get around fast and fear almost nothing. Of course they cannot read caution labels and every closed bottle is a challenge.

There are specific things mothers should be more cautious of in each stage of a child's life. The "crawlers" (from six months to a year) find their worlds in the low places.

That means low cabinets or shelves anywhere under kitchen, bathroom and laundry room sinks, etc.

When the crawler becomes the "toddlers" (ages 1 to 2), he moves into the highest accident rate group.

Now his world is not only under the counter, it is the tops of everything. He is most likely to get into cleaners, polishes, lye and bleaches.

And, sadly, the offender is most often not in its original container. Bleach in a soft drink bottle is irresistible.

No high, safe place is safe once the child reaches the "climber" stage. Now drugs and medicines are the most trouble. Aspirin causes 25 per cent of all accidents.

Never, Mrs. Roina stresses, tell a child that medicine tastes good like candy. He'll want more of it, or even all of it.

**Precautions**  
WHAT CAN BE done to prevent poisoning?  
PHARMACISTS recommend these precautions:

- Keep medicines under lock and key and away from anything associated with foods.
- Give medicine only to the person prescribed for and only in the correct dosage. Never give leftovers to others who may be fatally allergic to them.
- Keep medicines in their original containers because the infor-

# Stiff driving bill passed

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (UPI)—The Rhode Island Senate has passed a bill to suspend the licence of a driver convicted of three serious traffic offences within 10 years.

The measure would also suspend the licence of a driver convicted of 12 lesser offences within 10 years. Anyone convicted of driving without a licence during the suspension would face a mandatory five-year prison sentence.

Sen. James C. Mahar (D, Glendale) said, "If you think this is not a good bill, just go to any city fire department and ask to ride on the rescue wagon."

the most important thing is speed.

1. Call the doctor, police or hospital. If possible, get someone to do this while you
2. Dilute the stomach contents if the patient is conscious and not convulsed. Give tap water or milk as much as the patient will swallow (one cup to one quart).
3. Find the suspected poison and save the container and the rest of contents for the doctor.

If the victim has NOT swallowed a corrosive (like antifreeze, furniture polish, gasoline, kerosene, household ammonia or turpentine or petroleum product, and is conscious and not convulsed, try to induce vomiting. Do this gently on the back of the victim's tongue with fingers or a spoon handle.

If this fails, try a teaspoon of salt or baking soda or mustard dissolved in a glass of warm water. When the victim starts to gag, hold his head over a basin. Keep the basin and its contents to help the doctor identify the poison and prescribe proper treatment. Then dilute again with more warm water or milk. Never give anything alcoholic.

If poisoning is due to fumes:

1. Ventilate the area immediately. Smash a window if necessary. This may prevent rescuer from becoming another victim.
2. Move the victim out into the open air.
3. Call the doctor, police or hospital.
4. Begin artificial respiration if the victim is breathing irregularly or not at all. Keep an until help arrives or the victim breathes normally.
5. Keep the victim quiet and don't give food or drink.

If poisoning is suspect or fact:

**Symptoms**  
SYMPTOMS of poisoning are difficult to catch because they often show up only when it is too late. But, be watchful for unusual stains or odours on clothing; sudden changes in behaviour, such as drowsiness, stomach pain, irritability or signs of fear; and open drugs or chemicals out of their usual place.

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The second way is to buy shares in companies whose business is property. As these companies prosper, their shares grow in value, and so does the value of your investment.

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# The Directors of THE WESTMORELAND BUILDING SOCIETY & THE ST. JAMES BENEFIT BUILDING SOCIETY

Wish to inform their Shareholders, Members and Depositors that they are at present jointly investigating the advantages which will arise from merging their respective Societies.

The Directors feel that a merger of the two Societies would not only produce operational economies but would, at the same time, also produce a greatly enhanced service to existing and future members: whether they be investors or home loan borrowers.

The Directors of both Societies will only recommend a merger to their shareholders if, after full examination of the facts, they are convinced that the interest of existing Members and Depositors will be fully protected and wherever possible, improved.

The Board of both Building Societies will keep their members fully informed of any developments arising from these negotiations.

In the meantime, the Directors jointly wish to assure their Members that they regard the protection of their rights and interests as of paramount importance in these negotiations.

Whilst they are extremely conscious of the highly respected individual reputations which both THE WESTMORELAND BUILDING SOCIETY and THE ST. JAMES BENEFIT BUILDING SOCIETY now command, they feel that their Members and Jamaica as a whole, will be better served by a merger of both Societies.

Signed on behalf of:—

**THE Westmoreland BUILDING SOCIETY**  
J. O. H. Hudson — Chairman  
Eric H. Clarke — Deputy Chairman

**THE ST. JAMES BENEFIT BUILDING SOCIETY**  
Hon. Walter Fletcher, C.B.E. — Chairman  
R. C. Clegg — Vice Chairman

Dated 17th April, 1970