

THE LABOUR SPOKESMAN

Sound Speech That Cannot Be Condemned --- Titus 2:8

No 72 17th YEAR BASSETERRE ST. KITTS W.I. SATURDAY 1st FEBRUARY 1975 Price TWENTY CENTS

The people And The Land--- 40 Years On From 29 January 1935 To 31 January 1975

THE occasion was full of emotion. But it was also full of humility and quiet dignity. The large crowd of people present at Buckleys Estate yard yesterday morning between 9 and 10.30 were all undoubtedly aware of the profound significance of the ceremony they were witnessing. Comrades like Joseph N. France and Margaret O'Brien must have been choked full of powerful emotion.

The occasion was the symbolic taking possession of the sugar estates in St. Kitts by the Premier, the Hon. Robert L. Bradshaw, at Buckleys Estate.

Why Buckleys Estate? Because "it was there, on Tuesday 29 January 1935, that — to use the words of the Hon. Premier yesterday — "the blood of the workers of St. Kitts was first drawn". It was at Buckleys Estate that workers were shot in cold blood in January 1935 when they were peacefully demonstrating on behalf of their rights.

Yesterday morning, Government and Opposition in the House of Assembly presented a united front at the ceremony.

For the Government side there were present the Hon. R. L. Bradshaw, Hon. C. A. P. Southwell, Hon. J. N. France, Hon. E. St. John Payne, Hon. Lee L. Moore, Hon. F. C. Bryant, Hon. F. A. Parris and Mr. Owen Caines. For the Opposition side there were present, the Hon. Ivan De Grasse, Mr. I. Stevens and Mr. U. Swanston.

Elsewhere on this page THE SPOKESMAN records what the Hon. Premier said at the ceremony.

The deed is done. It now remains for the Government and people of our State to show, by their hard work and dedication, that the new owners of the estates can make far better use of the estate lands than the former owners.

Forty years has been a long time to wait. But it was worth the waiting.

FOR THE GOOD OF ALL

[Address by Premier Robert L. Bradshaw at Buckley's Estate yard yesterday, when he formally took over all the Sugar Estates lands in this island in the name, and on behalf, of the Government of

all the people of this State:]

We are gathered here this morning collectively to make history by assuming the greatest responsibility which could fall to a people; namely, to take over, by law, absolute ownership and control of all the really productive land in this isle of our birth, for our mutual benefit and for the benefit of our posterity forever.

As serious people we assume this great responsibility soberly and even reverently, being mindful of the fact that rank and responsibility carry inexorable obligations.

As I see it the most important of those obligations are pride of ownership, good husbandry and an absolute commitment by all of us to add our labour and apply our talent to the bounty of the good earth, so that all may benefit from the harvest.

LABOUR hath made this day possible. In this it was aided and assisted by an unanimous Legislature in evidence of which the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition as also his and our colleagues on the Opposition Benches are here with us this morning (Applause).

Also very present here in this company is a staunch Comrade Margaret O'Brien (Applause) whose contribution to the cause of LABOUR helped to make this day possible. But there are at least two others, one of whom is Comrade Alfred Kelly (Applause) who as a boy was present in this estate yard along with Comrade O'Brien and others, (most of whom have since passed to the Great Beyond) on the 29th of January 1935 when the

first blood of workers was drawn right over here, by gun fire from the management of Buckley's estate.

There is also present with us Comrade the Honourable J. N. France (Applause) who was at that time, forty years ago almost to the day, even at that time, one of the leaders of the struggling LABOUR Movement (Applause). And as I see this morning here two of the Representatives from Nevis, Mr. Stevens and Mr. Swanston, let us remind ourselves that both Comrade France and Comrade Kelly were born over in Nevis (Applause) So that today it is not a St. Kitts affair. It is a State Affair (Applause).

Comrades, I say we are making history today and that forty years ago the first of our blood was shed here and later at St. Johnston's Avenue. We come here not as victors over anybody but as sober people assuming a great responsibility in our State. We are to commit ourselves to working harder for ourselves than we did for our masters.

On his way to work this morning, a Comrade Wattley said to me: "Today could be likened unto Emancipation Day. And truly we can say," Mr. Wattley went on, "Massa Day Done." (Applause)

We are the new

masters; not those of LABOUR alone; but all of us. Let us together, whatever the colour of our skin may be, whatever our racial origin, dedicate ourselves to use this land of ours productively, sensibly, so that all of us, I repeat, could benefit.

As a gesture of appreciation of the Government and people of this country to the part which she played forty years ago and has been playing ever since, I am now requesting Comrade Payne, the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Labour and Housing to bring before CABINET as quickly as he could in conjunction with the Honourable Attorney General a submission by which a free Crown Grant will be made to Comrade Margaret O'Brien of the plot of land, Government lands, upon which her house stands at Pond Pasture.

Comrades, Let us mark this day! Let us remember it! Because it is a turning point in our history! And let us continue to make history more than ever before, by working together for the common good.

I thank all of you who have taken the trouble to come here this morning. Comrades, this is a great day for us! Let us make it greater by the use we will make of the productive soil of this land of ours. I thank you (Applause).

WISA Court Of Appeal

The West Indies Associated States Court of Appeal is scheduled to hold the 1975 Sittings in St. Christopher Nevis, Anguilla on 21st April, 21st July and 17th November.