

# Nagging Problems Beset St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla

CAUGHT IN THE tangling maze of a cobweb of ticklish problems, Premier Robert L. Bradshaw of St. Kitts undoubtedly yearns for the wisdom of a Solomon to pilot the 50 square mile territory to a haven of tranquility.

Constantly nagging in the back of his mind is the upheaval in the State caused by the unsettled three-year revolt of defiant, rebellious Anguilla.

Then there is the threatening clouds of dissent in Nevis which he cannot ignore.

And at home, he is buffeted by worries of an insolvent economy which has suffered one setback after another and is only saved from crumbling by handouts from Britain.

St. Kitts had scarcely recovered from a destructive flood which cost a life and thousands of dollars in property damage when a pall of gloom settled over the territory with the devastating blow of the sinking of the Christena with more than 200 souls.

And as if to compound an already grim situation, a rash of fires caused a drastic reduction in the output of sugar expected in this year's crop. Worst still, machines imported to harvest the rest of the crop refused to work.

So workers who depend on the annual sugar crop for their livelihood found themselves in a rut with little or no spending money to keep promises made to their wives and children.

This blow of disappointment not only aggravated the ills of

poverty in the State, but it set up Premier Bradshaw as the target for the outflow of pent-up emotions.

And of course, the opposition party jumped at the chance to rub it in thickly by calling on the government to resign. Added to all this is the task of preparing for general elections within the next nine months.

It is from this atmosphere that Bradshaw was called upon to handle the diplomatic affairs of the territorial government.

### BACKGROUND

First he met with Joseph Godber, Minister of State in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of Prime Minister Edward Heath's new Conservative Government to talk about the Anguilla crisis.

Godber was sounding out Bradshaw and the Anguillans in order to form his own impressions so that when the Wooding Report is turned in, he could consider it against the background of the talks he held in St. Kitts and Anguilla.

It must be remembered that Michael Stewart who held the title Godber now holds as a member of the former Government, had assured the Anguillans they would not be forced to return under an administration they didn't want.

If Godber thought world opinion would have influenced Bradshaw to change his mind over the past three years, he was mistaken.

The Premier who has repeatedly asserted he was not elected to preside over the break up of the State, stuck to his guns and told Godber what he has said all along, that Anguilla's secession is unconstitutional and it is legally a part of the State.

It is believed Ronald Webster was equally adamant about Anguilla's blunt refusal to return to the fold.

The British Minister, convinced that he has a sticky problem on his hands, is just as anxious as others in the Caribbean to see what light the Commission's Report can throw on the situation in an effort to break the political stalemate.

Shortly after saying goodbye to Godber at Golden Rock airport, Bradshaw welcomed Verna Crichlow, Trinidad & Tobago High Commissioner to Barbados and Commissioner to the Associated States who was on a two-day routine visit.

Following close on her heels was Senator Paul Martin, leader of government business in the



SIR HUGH WOODING, former Chief Justice of Trinidad & Tobago who headed the Anguilla Commission Report, left, chats with Premier Bradshaw on the steps of Government headquarters in Basseterre.

## Bradshaw Hopeful St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla Soon Return to Troubles

By Richie Allen

Canadian Senate who was on a Caribbean tour discussing with island leaders his Government's proposed agricultural development program for Caribbean Commonwealth countries.

Martin who said he found

nothing but goodwill for Canada in the islands described Bradshaw as an understanding friend. It was his first visit to St. Kitts-Nevis.

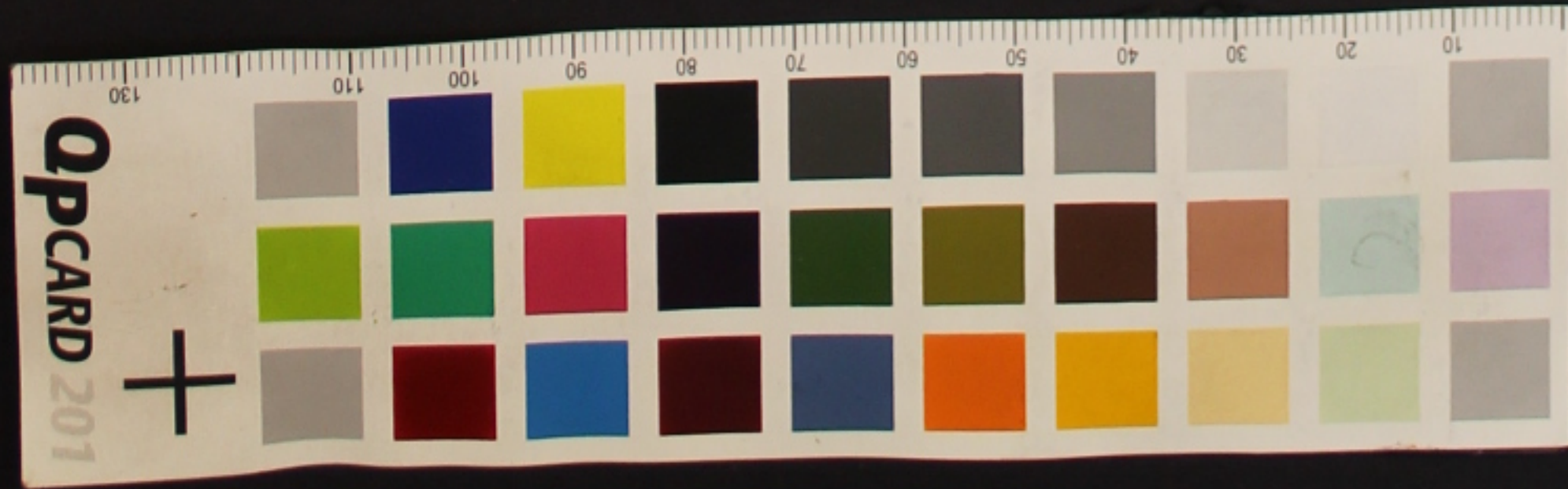
When I managed to corner the Premier during a break in his busy schedule, he spoke briefly of the Christena affair which is



HOME JOURNAL CITY EDITOR Richie Allen quizzes Premier Robert Bradshaw during recent trip to St. Kitts. At right is Miss Verna Crichlow, Trinidad's Commissioner to the Associated States.

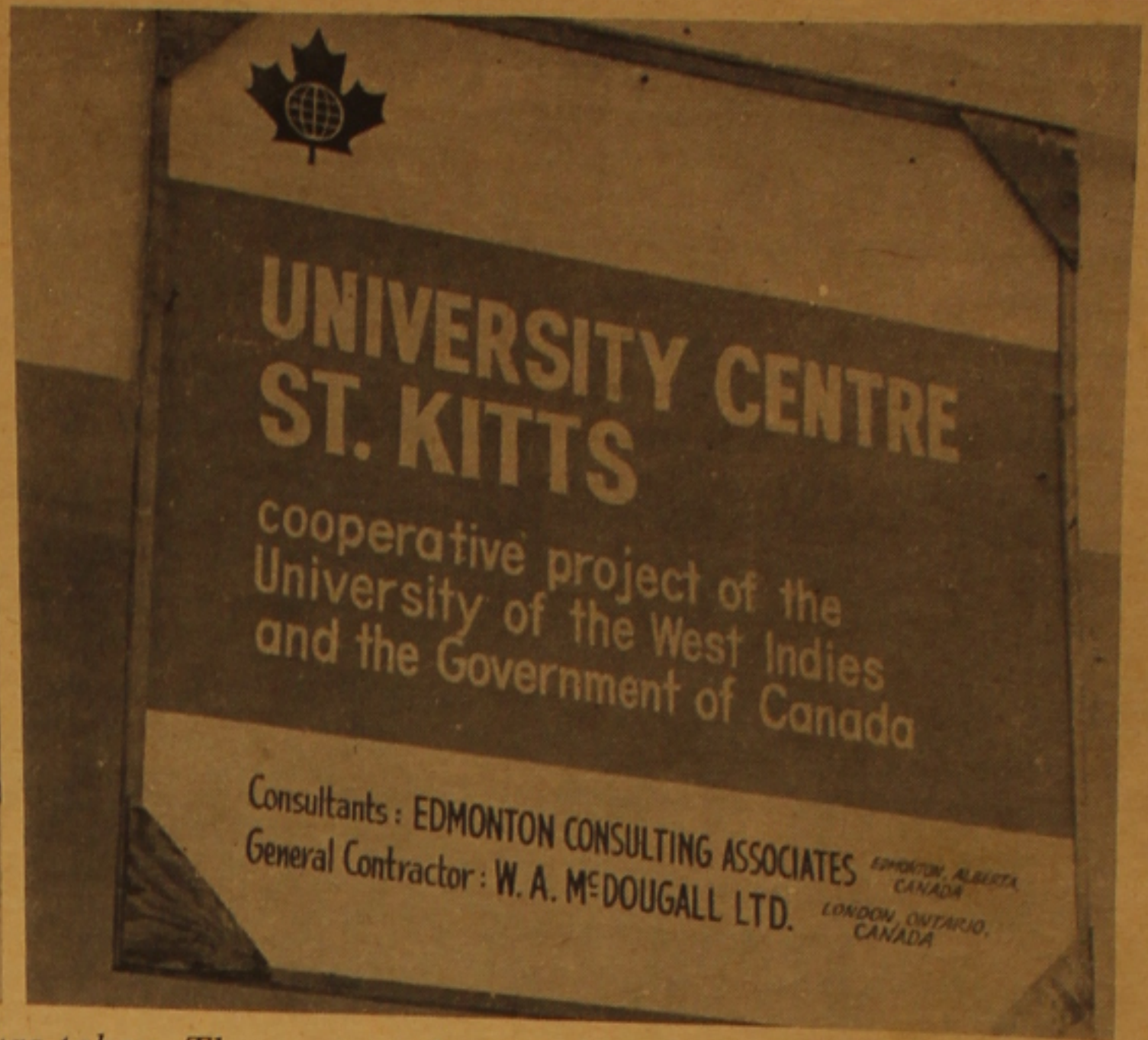


THE GOVERNMENT'S customs launch, shown alongside the pier in Basseterre, ferries passengers bound for Nevis to the Barfish, far right, a temporary replacement for the ill-fated Christena which sank Aug. 1 with more'n 200 souls.





THE UNIVERSITY CENTER in St. Kitts, nearing completion when this picture was taken. The center is located in the Botanical Gardens near the War Memorial. The sign at right speaks for itself.



still much in the air.

The report by Justice Renwick who conducted the inquiry into the disaster was being typed and was expected to reach the Premier's office shortly.

As Minister of Communications and Transportation, the operation of the Christena came under the port folio of Mr. Bradshaw. He admits the boat was overloaded, but contends it was well

rudder locked hard to starboard.

Bradshaw said his government requested Britain to provide one or two landing craft type vessels for use while a team of British experts study travel trends between the islands to recommend the best type of boat to replace the M. V. Christena.

In the meantime, the Barfish which was rented for \$9,600 per month as a

future.

Asked if the tragedy might adversely affect his Labor Party at the polls next year, Bradshaw said he didn't think so, and at the same time leveled a blast at those who are so lacking in scruples as to play political football with a disaster that has left so many scars.

Presently, he is pushing for Canadian assistance to extend the runway in Nevis to 3,200 feet to accommodate the LIAT's Avro planes.

Canada is also financing the construction of schools at Irish Town in St. Kitts and at Lowland in Nevis as well as well-drilling projects in both islands to increase the water supply.

In reference to the woes of the ailing sugar industry which has been the

mainstay of the economy for years, Bradshaw lamented that hopes for 35,000 tons of sugar this year sank to a low ebb due to several fires and difficulties in reaping the crop.

In a bid to speed up production, harvesters were imported from Louisiana for the first time this year at the recommendation of the sugar bosses, the Premier noted, but the type brought in proved unsuitable.

The shortage of labor to reap the crop has forced the island to look to the Windward Islands of St. Lucia and Dominica for reapers.

An experienced politician (he was Minister of Finance of the now defunct West Indies Federal Government

in Trinidad), Robert Bradshaw believes that stability will soon return to the Associated State.

His deputy, Paul Southwell who holds the portfolios of Minister of Finance, Tourism, Trade & Development predicts the State can become economically viable in five to ten years depending on the success of government's program to diversify the economy.

And by that time, with political calm restored, Premier Bradshaw would be able to smile again, that is, if he still chooses to hold the reins of government.

NOTE: This article was written several weeks ago for publication in CARIB. Readers missed the magazine due to difficulties at our printing plant which was sabotaged by vandals at the time.

# Stability Will Troubled State

maintained, having been overhauled ten times during its 11 years of operation.

## REPLACEMENT

During the inquiry, it was brought out by divers who inspected the ill-fated vessel at the bottom of the sea, that a mechanical failure in the steering system could have been responsible for the fact that they found the

temporary replacement is now in its fourth month ferrying passengers between St. Kitts and Nevis.

Meanwhile, the Commission requested copies of the regulations imposed by the American Coast Guard on ships plying between the American and British Virgin Islands to recommend as guidelines for vessels ferrying passengers between Saint Kitts and Nevis in the



BRITAIN'S FOREIGN and Commonwealth Minister Joseph Godber, right, is interviewed by a St. Kitts newsman during recent visit to sound out government's attitude for reconciliatory talks with Anguilla.



THESE KITTITIAN women obviously like coconuts and the salesman, partly hidden by his bags laden with nuts, seems to be making a brisk trade.

