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I N F O R M A T I O N S E R V I C E S

The three Organisations involved in the Information Services are -

- (a) the Jamaica Information Service - a Department of the Ministry;
- (b) the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation - a public owned commercial broadcasting Corporation; and
- (c) the Broadcasting Authority - a statutory advisory and regulatory body.

I - JAMAICA INFORMATION SERVICE

Special Events 1966/67

1. The Jamaica Information Service was responsible for handling the press arrangements for the visits of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, His Imperial Majesty, Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia and President Kaunda of Zambia.

Regarding the visit of Her Majesty the Queen, a committee was appointed to co-ordinate all the publicity arrangements under the chairmanship of the Acting Public Relations Officer. This committee included representatives from the Jamaica Information Service, the Daily Gleaner, Radio Jamaica and Rediffusion, the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation, the Post Office, Cable and Wireless and the Jamaica Telephone Company. In addition the services of the Public Relations Officer of the Jamaica Public Service Company were made available to the Government by his Company.

The Jamaica Information Service prepared all the pre-publicity material and made arrangements for accrediting of journalists, providing accommodation for the visiting overseas Press (and the local Press in Montego Bay), meeting them on arrival at the airport, providing a Press Centre, holding briefing sessions, locating journalists, photographers and radio and television broadcasting facilities at all points of the Royal Visit; as well as providing transportation between all points of the royal routes. The fire at the Myrtle Bank Hotel on the eve of the Royal Visit created complications, but these were solved with the assistance of the Director of Tourism.

On the visit of His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie the same committee was re-appointed to deal with the publicity arrangements. These arrangements were almost similar, except that because there were only a few overseas journalists, some of the problems (such as meeting them at the Airport and processing them and their equipment through Customs and Immigration) were less.

As with the visit of the Queen, the Jamaica Information Service was responsible for preparing all the advance publicity material. The Jamaica Information Service also provided a Press Centre where facilities for telephone, cable service, typewriters etc. were provided. Transportation was also provided between all points of the Emperor's visit. Arrangements in detail were also made for journalists and photographers, and radio and television broadcasting facilities at all functions.

Regarding the visit of President Kaunda publicity arrangements were made exclusively by the Jamaica Information Service.

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Prior to the visit, the Jamaica Information Service prepared all advance news releases and other publicity material for distribution to the press, radio and Television media.

Detailed arrangements were also worked out by the Jamaica Information Service in collaboration with the radio and television services to provide for adequate coverage of the visit.

Close co-operation existed between the Press Liaison personnel of the Jamaica Information Service and the Police and Military during the three visits.

Commonwealth Games

2. In collaboration with a United Kingdom firm, the Department provided personnel and equipment for making a 70-minute 35 mm colour film on the Eighth British Empire and Commonwealth Games.

The film included most of the finals of track and field events in the Stadium and also took in finals of events like fencing, wrestling, badmington, rifle shooting which took place at other venues.

Two of the most interesting items covered were the marathon and the long distance cycle race, the latter which was partly filmed from a helicopter showed up the beauty of the Jamaican countryside to advantage.

Various sequences were also linked by shots of rural Jamaican life to provide tourist appeal. The film had its world premier in Jamaica on the 6th March, 1967.

Cinema Units

3. Eleven new mobile cinema units were purchased and put into operation during the course of the year. These units will greatly increase the scope of the projection services.

Accommodation

4. Work began on reconditioning of the old Town Planning building at Odeon Ave., Half Way Tree, where the Films Section is to be located, along with the Radio and Television Sections. Accommodation for the Radio and Television Sections has already been completed. Processing and printing equipment for new laboratories of the Film Unit have been received and a Film Laboratory expert from the United Kingdom arrived in January, 1967, to set up the laboratories and train staff.

The Administration Section of the Jamaica Information Service together with the Press and Publications Sections were moved from 124 East Street to 10 South Avenue, Kingston Gardens.

Proposals 1967/68

5. The Jamaica Information Service intends to process and print its own films for the first time. This will result in the saving of money and valuable time as, except for colour production, films will no longer have to be sent to the United Kingdom for completion. It is also hoped that a Dubbing Theatre which is to be built on the Odeon Ave. premises will be completed in 1967/68. This would result in a much improved sound quality in films.

Publications Section

6. Three campaigns dealing with National Insurance, Police Recruitment, and a New Deal for Education were undertaken and assistance given to the Jamaica Industrial Development Corporation in the promotion of frozen food.

Fact Sheets on Jamaica were issued on National Insurance, Economic Trends in Jamaica, Industry in Jamaica, Code for National Symbols and Sir Donald Burns Sangster.

The monthly "News of Jamaica" published on behalf of the Literacy Campaign of the Social Development Agency was discontinued, but in its place a newspaper-type publication "Jamaica News", printed by the Gleaner Company Ltd., as a paid advertisement, in the "Children's Own" newspaper appeared in December, 1966. Public reaction has been favourable.

Press and Photographs Sections

7. During 1966/67 the Press Section issued a total of 1,700 news releases of which 25% were follow-up stories. This represents a slight decrease in output as compared with the previous year, due to staff shortage. Regular issues of the "Weekly News Letter" were published and distributed to Jamaican Missions overseas.

The Photographs Section covered 957 assignments and gave out an additional 200 to free lance photographers, due to lack of technical personnel. Production embraced not only official photographs, but material for Press, Educational Television, JIS-TV, books, magazines, diaries and calendars. Over 260 requests were received, from overseas and local sources, involving a distribution of 3,000 photographs.

Films Section

8. The Film Unit produced approximately 1,795 minutes of film material representing a slight increase over the 1965/66 output.

A wide range of topics was covered including Health, Education, Water Supplies, Youth Development, Communications and Works, Housing, Industry, Agriculture and other Government Projects.

Television Services

9. The Television section continued to produce programmes featuring Government activities, cultural performances based mainly on the Jamaica Festival and important events and topics. Presentations are mainly live with an increasing number of video-tape recordings and films on the Jamaican way of life.

Radio Services

10. The Radio Service provides three broadcasting hours per week on each of the two commercial broadcasting stations with broadcasting time now standardized to provide half an hour daily programmes commencing at 6.15 p.m. Sundays through Fridays, on Radio Jamaica and Re-Diffusion (R.J.R.) and at 7.p.m. Saturday through Thursday on Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation with a 5-minute bulletin-type programme at 1.05 p.m. Monday through Saturday on Radio Jamaica and Re-Diffusion with repeats at 5.40 p.m. on the same days on Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation.

Distribution Section

11. Three types of services are provided by the Section -

(a) Technical and Projection Services

The Mobile Cinema Units showed 435 films to an audience of approximately 22,500 at schools, hospitals community associations and other social and educational organizations in the Corporate Area and 791 films to over 243,000 persons in the country parishes at Community Centres not served with television sets.

The scope of the Projection Services will be greatly widened as a result of the increase in the fleet of mobile units.

(b) Library Services

A daily average of 35 requests for miscellaneous information was received and answered, and loans of 610 films and 65 film strips were made during the year.

(c) Circulation

There was a free distribution of 330,000 of routine informational publication and 1,482,000 copies of other printed matter.

Over 12,000 copies of brochures (Jamaican Cuisine, Around Jamaica, Our People, Banana Recipes etc.) and 1967 diaries and calendars were distributed for sale through "Crafthings" and private firms.

II - JAMAICA BROADCASTING CORPORATION

12. Increased attention has been paid to the general presentation of radio programmes and for the first quarter of the year Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation carried out a promotional plan "New This Week" which involved starting a new programme feature every week with complementary press advertising, in order to impress on the public that there was constant development of radio programming.

13. The Assistant General Manager visited New York and London in January in order to select a complete new schedule of television filmed programming and these programmes began on 1st April, 1967. General public reaction has been most favourable, particularly in regard to the improved balance of programming as well as to the individual new features themselves.

14. The coverage of events such as the February General Elections and the untimely illness and death of Sir Donald Sangster in which the News Department played a major role has resulted in much commendation from the general public. This department has shown increasing alertness and the speed with which major news developments have been broadcast promptly without any deterioration in reliability and responsible presentation of the news in general has also been noticeable.

15. Joint advertising revenue from Radio and Television shows a steep upward trend, 1964 - £305,000; 1965 - £360,000; 1966 - £459,000. Although Radio still continues to show a loss (1966 - £43,000) this was more than offset in 1966, by the profit on Television (£47,000), leaving a net balance of £4,000, which is the operating surplus remaining after making provisions for depreciation and obsolescence amounting to £57,000.

Studios and Equipment

16. Two new Outside Broadcast vehicles - one for Radio and the other for Television - were purchased and equipping was carried out by the Corporation's engineering staff. The Outside Broadcast Units were used for the first time for the Commonwealth Games. Previously, Television Outside Broadcasting was carried out by displacing studio equipment and mounting it in hired vehicles, under difficult conditions, with much loss in time and money. The new units have been functioning satisfactorily proving their adaptability and reliability. It is hoped that maximum use of these Outside Broadcast Units will bring recordings and live Radio and Television programmes of events all over the country to listeners and viewers.

17. An Ampex VR-650 Video Tape Recorder for Television programmes was purchased and a further machine was received from the U.N. - AID for the Educational Television Programmes of the Ministry of Education.

A number of light weight portable tape recorders was purchased to facilitate short notice interviews and news recordings for radio broadcasting. The television studios were used to maximum capacity due to increased rehearsals for live shows and extension of Educational Television.

A solar powered transmitter, the first of its kind in the world, was installed at the Morant Point Light House on an experimental basis to assess the potential of solar power. It is a joint project between TIE (Communications) Ltd. of the United Kingdom, who supplied the equipment, and the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation, who carried out the installations. This transmitter has so far been providing satisfactory television signals for the eastern section of the Island and if the experiment proves a success, further installations will be made to provide television service in certain areas not served with electric power.

18. In December, 1966, a Standing Technical Advisory Committee was established to deal with the long-term policy for Radio Transmission with particular reference to exploring the possibilities of minimizing interference from foreign stations. This Committee had discussions with a CBC team from Canada on the subject of long term radio policy on a regional pattern, initially with Canadian Aid. Quite recently officials from the U.S. Federal Communications Commission had informal talks with the Committee on mutual interference problems but, unfortunately, the greater part of the interference emanates from Latin American Stations. The matter of interference is still under consideration.

III - BROADCASTING AUTHORITY

19. Frequent changes in the membership of the Authority, particularly in the office of Chairman, restricted its activities during the past year.

Despite this situation the Authority was in constant communication with the two commercial broadcasting stations - Radio Jamaica and Re-Diffusion and Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation - to ensure that broadcasting programmes were kept within the standards prescribed by the Broadcasting Regulations. Of particular note was the action taken to remove advertising material from a Quiz programme.

20. The Authority is at present giving consideration to the possibilities of arranging for broadcasting stations to publish programme classification in order to ensure proper programme balance.

Edward Seaga,
Minister of Development and Welfare,
5th June, 1967.

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