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MINISTRY PAPER NO. 51

RIO COBRE FLOOD CONTROL PROJECT

For several years Government has recognised the problem of flooding by the Rio Cobre River in its lower reaches, and it has been apparent that if a flood control scheme could be implemented large benefits would be derived.

2. Further, to cope with the present population increase of 20,000 to 25,000 persons per annum in metropolitan Kingston it is necessary for 5,000 new buildings to be built each year. There are no large areas of the Liguanea Plains remaining unsubdivided which are suitable for mass housing, and not only are subdivided lands rapidly being used, but the value of land is rising rapidly also. Lands to the east of Kingston present considerable difficulty for mass development, and the only land resources, in close proximity, capable of taking the expansion of Kingston is from Portmore to Hellshire.

3. During 1966, Construction and Dredging Limited, approached Government with a scheme for building a causeway across the Kingston Harbour and developing 2,000 acres of swamp lands near Port Henderson as a new residential area at a total estimated cost of £4.2 million. This development is to be carried out entirely by private enterprise at no expense to Government.

4. Having fully considered the need for mass housing development in Kingston, and taking into consideration the following facts:

- a) there can be no development between Spanish Town and Kingston in the areas between Stubbs Bridge and the sea unless the Rio Cobre is contained in its lower reaches; and
- b) a flood control scheme would enhance the value of the vast area between Spanish Town and Kingston now affected by periodic flooding;

Government has decided that a flood control scheme for the

/lower reaches.....

lower reaches of the Rio Cobre should be implemented.

5. Construction and Dredging Limited, who had undertaken preliminary investigations into the problem of the Rio Cobre, held discussions with Government and its officials and undertook to carry out, at a cost of £2,168,000, a flood control scheme consisting of the design and construction of dykes, berms and bridges so that the Rio Cobre would be contained in its present course between Stubbs Bridge (Spanish Town Road Bridge) and the present delta in Hunts Bay, and all areas between those points would be free from flooding by the Rio Cobre at all times - only the agricultural lands lying between the dykes and berms being subject to inundation during times of flood. More specifically, the project would provide for -

- a) entrapment of the Rio Cobre from Stubbs Bridge to the sea, so as to accommodate safely a 50-year frequency flood of 73,000 cubic feet per second;
- b) construction of two large bridges across the Rio Cobre - one a highway/^{bridge} in the vicinity of the existing Bailey Bridge, and the other a railway bridge in the vicinity of the existing railway bridge;
- c) construction of a 24 ft. carriageway with 8 ft. shoulders on the proposed southern embankment of the Rio Cobre river connecting the Spanish Town Road to Passage Fort, and the paving and draining of three (3) presently unpaved roads in the Gregory Park Housing Scheme; and
- d) construction of drainage channels in the Naggo Head area, the provision of alternative drainage between or outside the dykes where natural or existing drainage is interrupted by the works, and the provision of additional drains in the area between the dykes required to permit flood-water to re-enter the main river channel.

6. The proposal from Construction and Dredging Limited, was referred for advice to the Government's Consultants engaged on the Harbour Siltation Study, and that Company, having undertaken an evaluation of this scheme, advised that the proposals can be developed into a satisfactory flood control scheme, and that it is in order for final designs to proceed on the basis of Consultants being engaged for this specific project by the Government. The Consultants are of the opinion that the implementation of the scheme would not prove detrimental to the development of the Kingston Harbour.

7. Government gave further consideration to this proposal, and in due course, a decision was taken to execute a Contract with Construction and Dredging Limited, to undertake the scheme in the amount of £2,168,000 (inclusive of the fees of the Consultants). The negotiation of a contract of this magnitude with a particular firm was dictated by the fact that this firm already had plans for major developments in the area, and so was prepared to quote a figure lower than normal to undertake the project. Government's technical officers considered that the price offered for the execution of the project would under normal circumstances be higher. The present proposal contemplates design and construction proceeding concurrently, and it should be noted that to follow the normal procedures of inviting public tenders would not only involve substantial additional cost but would create considerable delays. Construction and Dredging Limited have agreed to complete the scheme within a period of twenty-four (24) months.

8. It is estimated that during peak periods of operation, direct employment will be provided for some 300 - 400 persons. In addition the contract will provide other indirect employment opportunities.

9. The conditions under which the Company will undertake the project are listed in an Appendix.

10. With reference to condition 2 in the Appendix,
/Government's ...

Government's Contract Committee considered the appointment of Consultants for the project, and recommended three (3) firms from which the first choice, A.J. Benghiat & Associates, a Jamaican firm, has been selected. The fees of the Consultants will form part of the total contract sum of £2,168,000 already mentioned above.

11. The Ministry of Housing has secured from Portmore Land Development Limited, an option to purchase, for use in low cost housing, 125 acres in three (3) blocks of approximately 40 acres each to be selected from areas which the company, in agreement with the Government Town Planner would reserve for housing, at a cost equivalent to the original purchase price of the lands plus the cost of development.

In due course, construction of the causeway and development of Portmore will also allow easy development of the Lakeside property of 1,800 acres between Portmore and the Hellshire Hills; the development of the Portmore area including the construction of a causeway will provide access to the Hellshire Hills, which area is owned by the Government and open up that location to resort and other types of development.

12. In the private sector present plans are for private entrepreneurs to erect some 30,000 houses of varying designs and cost over a period of ten (10) years subject to the availability of long term mortgage finance.

13. Contracts were executed for this project during August, 1967, with:

- a) the Consultants, A.J. Benghiat & Associates in the sum of £ 82,250, and
- b) the Contractor, Construction & Dredging Limited in the sum of £2,085,750.

14. A Resolution will be moved by me asking for approval of the House for the provision of £800,000 under this Ministry's Capital Head of Estimates, in the First Supplementary Estimates 1967/68, to meet the estimated expenditure in this financial / year

year on the Rio Cobre Flood Control Project.

N. C. LEWIS
Minister of Communications and Works
18th October, 1967

Rio Cobre Flood Control Project

Conditions for execution of work

1. The Company will cause to be prepared by qualified Engineers, the necessary designs for carrying out the works in the schedule.
2. An independent firm of Consulting Engineers will be appointed to review the engineering details submitted for approval, and will be responsible for the inspection of the works during construction.
3. The Company will be responsible for the purchase of the necessary lands to provide the right-of-way for the widening and construction of the new road from Grange Lane to the Rio Cobre delta and its connecting link to Passage Fort. Titles for this land will be handed over to Government at no additional charge.
4. The Company will be responsible, and will hold Government harmless from all claims from owners of properties within the area of the works, for damage caused by construction.
5. The Company will obtain from the owners of land in the area of the works, the necessary permission for the construction of the unpaved dykes to the north and east of the river, and will be responsible for all claims by these owners for damage to crops and rehabilitation of the agricultural lands through which the new embankments will pass.
6. Government will be responsible for obtaining, without unreasonable delays, all the approvals necessary from the Parish Council and other bodies for the work to be started as early as possible and so that it may be proceeded with, without delay.
7. All fees to be paid to Consulting Engineers for designs, approvals and supervision, will be included in the total cost and there shall be no additional charge to Government for engineering services, drawings, consultation or supervision.