

P O R T S

No island can develop to its maximum potential without developing its ports. Jamaica has twenty-one (21) ports which in 1967 handled a total of 13,120,825 tons of cargo, of which 2.7 million tons were imports and 10.4 million tons were exports. This volume represented a doubling of total volume handled in 1957. There has also been increased activity at new ports, such as Discovery Bay and Ocho Rios, while Manchioneal, Morant Bay, Annotto Bay, Port Maria and Rio Bueno have almost ceased to operate.

2. Jamaica has always been known for its fine natural harbours; indeed, Kingston Harbour ranks high among the best harbours in the world. But, until recently, the converse was also true, namely, that operationally they were among the worst in the world. Since 1962 much has been done to remedy that situation.

Kingston Harbour

3. The removal of shipping operations from the shore of down-town Kingston to Newport West and East has created a modern port complex. The new wharf facilities are proving to be more efficient than the old-time wooden finger piers. Ships are spending less time in port to load and discharge cargo, and the productivity of stevedores on the ships has increased from 6.5 tons per gross gang hour in 1963 to 8.1 tons in 1968.

Several new developments are planned by private sector. Western Terminals are providing berthing facilities for roll on/roll off vessels at a new berth which may involve capital expenditure of up to £100,000. Kingston Wharves have acquired the land for four additional berths but, at present, propose to construct only two initially; these facilities it is estimated will cost about £1,500,000 inclusive of land, and will be able to handle up to 110,000 tons of cargo per berth per year.

Newport East is being used for off-loading lumber and is to have a "marina" with facilities for Government Offices (Water Police, Harbour Master, Customs, etc.) at a cost of £386,000.

With the construction of larger vessels, the need for an easier access to Kingston Harbour has arisen. It is planned to remove the tip of Beacon Shoal which obstructs the entrance. The cost will be £75,000.

Montego Bay

4. The reclamation of land in the Bogue area by Montego Bay Freeport Ltd. has created 343 new acres and a 34-foot deep channel capable of handling the largest commercial vessels. Montego Bay is now a relatively minor port but it is expected that with creation of the new facilities it will increase in importance and contribute to economic development in the western area of the island.

The plans are to construct four berths for use of tourist and cargo ships. In the near future, it is expected that bananas will also be exported from these deep water berths and to provide special facilities at each point. The Jamaica Tourist Board also expects to attract a large number of cruise passengers to the area as soon as the facilities are completed.

Port Antonio

5. This traditional banana and tourist port suffered a general decline over the past two decades, but there are plans to make it a major shipping point again. The Government is now building a deep water pier at Folly at an estimated cost of £128,000.

Port Control 6. At present, control of the ports is exercised by a number of Statutory Authorities operating under different laws and different Ministries. It is recognised that this arrangement is not conducive to maximum efficiency and it is expected that legislation will be introduced in due course to provide for unified control of the ports thereby ensuring greater efficiency of operation. Included among these bodies is the Port Authority appointed in October, 1966. Since its appointment, it has been solely concerned with the fixing of wharf rates. In 1967, it fixed the wharfage rates for the port of Kingston and early this year it completed a review commenced in 1968, of the wharf rates for ports in the parish of Saint James and other outports. Much credit is due to the Chairman and members of the Port Authority for the thorough and efficient manner in which they have undertaken their duties.

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MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY.
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