

TOURISM

For tourism in Jamaica 1969 was a year of consolidation. Faced with increasing competition from abroad, particularly from Europe, emphasis was placed on improving standards within the industry, including the amenities provided for visitors.

2. Long-stay tourists spending three nights or more, to whom the major proportion of all tourist expenditure in the Island is attributed, rose last year by 6.6% to a total of 255,681. Short-stay tourists who spend only one or two nights increased by 14.9% to 21,248. The total number of stop-over tourists who required accommodation last year was thus 276,929, representing an increase of 7.2% over 1968. This growth rate was slightly less than the 10% achieved in 1968. Cruise ship passengers rose by only 3.6% to 97,377, after the outstanding increase of 37.4% in 1968. The total number of tourists last year (long and short-stay and cruise passengers) was thus 374,306, an overall increase of 6.2% compared with 1968. The comparable increase in 1968 was 16.2%.

3. Armed forces personnel visiting the Island on shore leave are not classified as tourists but they are included in our overall visitor statistics. Last year's armed forces figure was 32,799, a decline of 25% compared with 1968. Despite this decline, the total number of visitors (tourists and armed forces personnel) rose by 10,758 to 407,105, an increase of 2.7% compared with 1968.

4. As regards cruise passengers, in recent years a number of cruise ships have been calling at two or three ports and, to avoid double counting, their passengers are recorded only once in the tourist statistics for the Island as a whole. As indicated in paragraph 2, last year's total was 97,377.

However, taking the three ports separately and bearing in mind that many cruise passengers actually visit more than one port, the figures for Kingston, Montego Bay and Port Antonio for the past two years were as follows:-

	<u>1968</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>Increase</u>
Kingston	54,819	59,498	4,679
Montego Bay	21,783	42,913	21,130
Port Antonio	19,459	31,947	12,488

There was only a small rise in the number visiting Kingston while, on the other hand, the increases to both Montego Bay and Port Antonio were substantial. Local expenditure by these cruise passengers is of considerable economic assistance to the areas involved.

5. The tourist arrival figures for the first quarter this year are encouraging so far as stop-over traffic (short and long-stay) is concerned but they give cause for concern about cruise passengers. The following figures indicate the percentage changes for the first quarter over the past two years:

	<u>Long Stay</u>	<u>Short Stay</u>	<u>Total Stop-over</u>	<u>Cruise</u>	<u>Total Tourist</u>
1970 compared with 1969:	+ 12%	+ 24%	+ 12.7%	- 9.6%	+ 5%
1969 compared with 1968:	+ 9.5%	+ 18.4%	+ 10%	+ 16%	+ 12%

The increase in long-stay tourists is particularly encouraging, this being the category which makes the largest contribution to the tourist industry.

6. In 1959 overall gross earnings from tourism were estimated at \$20 million. By 1969 the figure had risen to \$78 million, an increase of 290%. The increase in 1969 compared with 1968 was \$4.7 million (6.4%). The tourist industry accordingly continues to be of major importance in the Island's overall income and balance of payments.

7. In this context, particular attention has been paid to meeting a larger share of the needs of the industry from local farm output, as well as from the production of other local goods and services.

Sustained efforts were made through the Jamaica Tourist Board, Agricultural Marketing Corporation, Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association, Jamaica Agricultural Society and other organisations to impress on farmers the importance of regular supplies of standard quality. There has been a positive response to these efforts. Not only is more food being produced, which means that tourist money is being spread throughout

the Island's agricultural community instead of going abroad but also, as a consequence, more employment is being created in addition to the several thousand workers already employed directly in the tourist industry.

8. Hotel and other tourist accommodation has expanded very significantly. At the end of 1969 there were 10,950 beds available to tourists, an increase of 1,334 (13.8%) over 1968. This figure includes an increase of 821 beds (10.4%) in hotels and apartments, 503 (36.9%) in resort cottages and 10(2.7%) in recognised tourist guest houses. This overall increase is the highest in any one year in the history of the industry in Jamaica.

The substantial increase in resort cottages illustrates the growing tendency of some travellers to prefer the more informal life of resort cottages. This is particularly true of people with small children.

9. The impetus given to the hotel industry by the Hotels (Incentives) Act which was passed in March, 1968, became fully apparent in 1969. By the end of the year 37 enterprises involving 2,795 rooms had been approved under the Act. Of this number, 811 rooms were completed by the end of 1969, 229 of them being under the retroactive provisions of the Act. With the expected completion of another 925 rooms, the 1970 summer season will have around 12,800 beds, 29% more than the 1968 summer season.

10. Particular reference must be made to convention hotels. A year ago Jamaica had only eight hotels with more than 100 rooms each. The largest had just under 200 rooms. Lack of the required facilities meant that the industry was only able to accept an insignificant percentage of the available convention business, and enquiries covering literally tens of thousands of convention visitors had to be declined.

11. The first convention hotel which was approved under the Hotels (Incentives) Act was the Rose Hall Holiday Inn, involving 442 rooms. I am happy to say, however, that so enthusiastic are the owners and operators about the prospects available that they have decided to add another 116 rooms, making 558 in all. The original 442 rooms are nearly complete and the remaining 116 should be in use early in 1971.

Other large hotel projects now under construction are the 200 room extension to the Sheraton in Kingston which will give it 400 rooms in all, the BOAC/Fortes "Pegasus" nearby which will have 352 rooms and the Montego Towers Apartment Hotel in Montego Bay.

12. Other convention hotels so far announced, which are now in the planning stage, are:-

- (i) the Jamaica Village in New Falmouth;
- (ii) the Trelawny Beach, also in New Falmouth;
- (iii) the Rose Hall Intercontinental in St. James;
- (iv) the Kingston Intercontinental, to be built by the Urban Development Corporation;
- (v) the Ocho Rios Intercontinental, also to be built by the Urban Development Corporation;
- (vi) the Skyline at White River.

13. Negotiations are currently proceeding for other convention size projects. At the same time, a number of other smaller hotel projects are at various stages of negotiation or planning.

14. It will be noted that the Island has been experiencing an unprecedented rate of expansion of tourist accommodation. This situation is to be welcomed because of the obvious benefits to the country but it presents certain problems about which the House should be made aware.

15. It is anticipated that by March, 1971, the total number of beds available for tourist accommodation in hotels, villas and other facilities will be approximately 15,000, an increase of about 3,500 beds (31%) compared with March, 1970. It is anticipated that three-quarters of this increase, comprising projects now close to completion, will materialise by the end of September this year.

16. This rate of expansion in accommodation is at the present time far out-pacing growth in tourist arrivals, despite the significant expansion of the latter. Between 1966 and 1969 tourist arrivals (excluding armed forces personnel on shore leave) increased from 294,947 to 374,306, a substantial expansion of 26.9% in just three years. However, it has to be recognised that the faster current growth rate of tourist accommodation is now reflecting itself in reduced overall hotel room occupancy levels. In 1969 the level dropped from 67% to 62%.

Every effort is being made to arrest and reverse that trend, and the indications so far this year are encouraging. For the January - March period the increase in the number of tourists requiring accommodation was 12.7% over the same period last year, compared with 10% in 1969. This trend must be accelerated despite the increasing competition from European resort destinations and evidence of weakening in the American travel market as a result of certain recessionary trends in the United States. This cannot be achieved merely by increasing our advertising and promotion but will require the support and co-operation of all sectors of the community.

17. The Jamaica Association of Villas and Apartments which was set up early in 1968, with offices in Kingston and New York to provide a centralised booking service, has continued to justify itself. It has achieved a situation in which it is now as easy and convenient to reserve a cottage as a hotel room. A significant measure of what has been done is the fact that resort cottages now account for 17% of our total tourist room capacity. The Government is considering an appropriate scheme of incentives for encouraging further expansion of resort cottage accommodation. Unfortunately, in view of the many pressures on Government personnel, this has taken longer than was anticipated.

18. In August last year compulsory licensing of hotels under the Tourist Board Law was introduced. Before licences are issued, all hotels are thoroughly inspected by the Jamaica Tourist Board to determine whether they measure up to the standards prescribed. These procedures are already having a salutary effect.

19. The Tourist Board continues to operate the Courtesy Corps which, due to the expansion which has taken place on the north coast, especially in the number of resort cottages, now has its own offices in Montego Bay and Ocho Rios, as well as in Kingston. The "Red Cap" porter service and the "Despatcher" service which the Board maintains at the international airports have resulted in baggage handling and the hiring of transport being conducted in a much more orderly and efficient manner.

20. The Tourist Board had responsibility for rafting on the Rio Grande since 1967 and succeeded in establishing a system under which the

150 raftsmen work on an orderly, equitable and remunerative basis. Control of rafting on an island-wide basis has now been taken over by the Authority appointed under the River Rafting Act passed last year. The Tourist Board is permanently represented on the Authority.

In 1969 the Rio Grande raftsmen did 16, 507 trips and earned some \$97,000 for themselves.

21. The Hotel Training School which was opened early in 1969 at the Casa Monte Hotel in Kingston is already turning out trained night auditors, receptionists, cooks, waiters and room maids who have been absorbed within the hotel industry. From its first graduation in June, 1969, to the end of April this year, a total of 153 workers in the various categories have been trained. Based on the enrolments for 1970, it is expected that a further 196 will be trained by the end of April, 1971.

22. Under separate arrangements sponsored by the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association, involving the use of domestic science centres and hotels, 115 workers (58 room maids and 57 waiters) were trained between November, 1969 and early May this year. The Association expects to have a further 100 such workers trained in the course of the next twelve months.

Under the Association's scheme for junior management training, lasting three years, 8 Jamaicans are now being trained at the larger hotels. It is hoped to increase the number to 14. The first graduates will be available early in 1972.

23. It is recognised that training at all levels is a vital area which must be enlarged and intensified to meet the considerably expanded needs of the industry. With this in view, plans are now being drawn up for establishment of a second training school outside of the Corporate Area.

24. Much emphasis is being put on improving relationships between our citizens and tourists, as well as on diversifying the amenities available to visitors and citizens alike. We must recognise that the expansion taking place in tourist accommodation is not so far being matched by growth in the number or variety of the amenities and

attractions we provide. The latter is essential if we are to have a balanced tourist product to offer, particularly in view of the strong competition being offered by other resort areas. The programme now being followed includes assistance by the National Dance Theatre Company in teaching floor show performers better techniques, and improvement of the conditions under which the performers work. Paint-up and clean-up campaigns have been carried out. Emphasis is being placed on the fact that while it is important to attract the visitor to Jamaica, it is even more important to make his stay enjoyable and memorable.

25. One of the major tasks that now faces the industry and the Jamaica Tourist Board is that of putting together a number of projects for better visitor entertainment, to ensure that the tourist gets a good holiday. These projects will also be available for participation and enjoyment by our citizens. A high priority is being given to that programme, under which new areas of the Island will share in the benefits of tourism. Development of rafting on the Martha Brae and inland tours are two immediate projects. These tours will expose our visitors to a broader cross-section of the Jamaican community and will at the same time spread the benefits of tourism more widely than hitherto.

26. Another area in which the Tourist Board will be expanding its activities is in helping our people to appreciate more fully and more realistically the nature and benefits of the industry, not only to those directly employed in it but also to the country as a whole.

Jamaica's natural beauty and expansion of the range of available recreations will not be sufficient for us to realise the full potential of this industry. We must bring about a fundamental change in attitudes. The Board will thus be concentrating on an in-depth public relations programme aimed at all sectors of the Jamaican community. This programme will be based on practical projects and a well planned educational programme.

27. In 1967 my Ministry set a target of doubling the Island's tourist accommodation by the end of 1972 and the number of visitors by the end of 1973. While this is undoubtedly a very ambitious target we are still seeking to achieve it. This will require significant expenditure

on advertising and promotion, the lowering of air fares, sensible hotel rates, better service, as well as further capital expenditure on infrastructure and amenities. The challenge is formidable but we have already made good strides towards realising our objective. Success will mean thousands of new jobs not only directly in tourism but also in agriculture, industry and services which supply tourism.

28. It must be remembered, however, that tourism is a highly competitive business and, due to the recent reduction in air fares between North America and Europe, the latter has become a very serious competitor. Furthermore, we can only hope that the political and economic situation abroad will not create further obstacles in the path of the accelerated expansion we seek. Fortunately, our tourist industry now has a sound base and, if all sectors of the community work together wholeheartedly, the realisation of our objective will be considerably facilitated.

29. Special acknowledgment is due to the Tourist Board and to the Board's staff for the valuable work done last year.

Robert C. Lightbourne
Minister of Trade and Industry.
15th June, 1970.