

OUT OF MANY, ONE PEOPLE

by Robert R. Smith

The coat of arms of Jamaica bears the words, "Out of Many, One People" and truer words were never spoken, because the people of Jamaica are of many races, many colours, many types who live and work together in harmony.

While we think of Jamaica as the land of sun, rum and calypso, behind this facade of tourism lies an extremely beautiful island, rich in natural resources, rich in its luxuriant growth, and above all else, rich in its people, who make the country strong.

In recent months I have had the pleasure of talking to Jamaican engineers and land surveyors about our common problems. The Land Surveyors Law in Jamaica is very similar to our Land Surveyors Act except it is somewhat less restrictive. As with our laws, the Act is supplemented by the Land Surveyors Regulations.

The Act is administered by the Land Surveyors Board which is composed of the Director of Surveys, the Registrar of Titles, and two practising surveyors appointed by the Land Surveyors Association of Jamaica.

Briefly, to receive a commission as a land surveyor a person must be twenty one years of age and of good character and

- (a) Possess such qualifications as are requisite for appointment in the Colonial Survey Service, or is a Corporate Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers and has passed the examination set by such Institution in surveying or geodesy. Such person must pass an examination in local law and, if required by the Board, act for six months as an assistant to a surveyor, or
- (b) Has apprenticed himself of the Director of Surveys or to a surveyor practising on the Island for a period of three years and has passed both preliminary and final examinations.

A surveyor in private practice may only take on an apprentice after he, himself, has been in practice for at least five years and each surveyor is limited to two apprentices.

The examinations are described in the Regulations and consist of Four Parts. Part I - consists of general elementary knowledge of instruments, field practices, drafting, calculations, etc. Part II - is entitled "The Advanced Theory of Surveying" and consists of two papers. Paper A briefly consists of town planning, subdivision design, stadia work, plane table work, descriptions, location of roads, earthwork computations, curve problems. Paper B consists entirely of spherical trigonometry and astronomy. Part III - is entitled "The Law in Relation to Surveying" and consists of a knowledge of some thirteen acts related to Surveying. Part IV consists of Practical Surveying.

The Land Surveyors Law also provides that a person in the survey branch of the Public Works Department who has practiced surveying in such branch for not less than five years, and has passed the final examination, can receive a commission.

One interesting point is that every government surveyor and every official in the Public Works Department, or employed by the Jamaica Government Railway, or by the Kingston and St. Andrew Corporation, or by any Parochial Board, possessing such qualifications as would entitle him to become a surveyor shall, while holding office, be entitled to act as a surveyor for any purpose rendered necessary by, or arising out of, the performance of the duties of his office, and for such purposes shall have all the powers and privileges of a surveyor.

Superintendents of the Public Works Department and Superintendents of Parochial Boards shall be deemed to have the power for the purposes of their offices, to survey the boundaries of Main and Parochial Roads.

Under the Law a surveyor has the right to enter any property for the purpose of carrying out his duties but only after he has given due notice to the owners or occupiers of adjoining lands which may be affected. A prescribed form is used to give the required notice. Once the notice is given the Surveyor must commence the survey on the date mentioned and having commenced the survey cannot allow a lapse of more than ten days without doing any survey work on the land without serving new notices.

Every plan that is made from a survey and which is to be attached to a conveyance deed or document is checked by the Director of Surveys. This checking by the Director appears to carry considerable weight because no document containing an uncertified plan may be registered.

Contrary to our laws, the Jamaican Land Surveyor is not personally responsible for any necessary and unavoidable damage caused as a result of making a survey. It is provided that such loss may be recovered from the owner employing the surveyor.

Various penalties are provided for contravention of the Law. A person who falsely describes himself to be, or holds himself out as, a surveyor is liable to a fine of up to 50 pounds (\$130.00) or to imprisonment with hard labour for up to six months.

The Land Surveyors Regulation contain many interesting sections.

Any tape to be used for land surveying is submitted to the Director of Surveys at least once every six months for inspection. If the tape proves accurate it is returned and if not, it is condemned.

Under the Regulations, certain standards of measurement and accuracy are outlined and in most cases there are considerably less than our minimum requirements. Far more accuracy is required in an urban survey than in a rural survey. This matter has been discussed many times in our Association and various classes of surveys have been advocated.

Standards for survey plans are particularly well outlined and all plans are checked by the Director of Surveys.

One rather interesting requirement of the plan is "All survey marks must be shown and nature of boundary, i.e. wall, fence or growing stakes, slips of dragon's blood, blazed trees, or other mark".

Standard monuments of concrete and iron bars are provided and in addition a hardwood post, not less than 2'-6" long and 3 inches in diameter made of any of the following woods is acceptable - BLINDEYE, BRAZILLETTO, BREAKAXE, BULLET WOOD, CASHAW, FIDDLEWOOD, IRONWOOD, LOGWOOD, MAIDEN PLUM, MOSQUITO WOOD, MOUNTAIN GUAVA, PIMENTO, PRUAN, REDWOOD, RODWOOD, WILD CASSAVA, COGWOOD, DOGWOOD, GREENHEART, SAPODILLA, LIGNUM VITAE, EBONY,

HOW MANY DO YOU RECOGNIZE?

Jamaica is a very mountainous island with flat plains along the coast, consequently in many areas land surveying would be most difficult. Except in the higher mountains, the temperatures are always above the 68°F, at which tapes are calibrated.

Although a good system of title registration is used, many of the titles in small holdings are by possession. The Land Surveyor in making a survey must give due consideration to both paper and possessory title.

Most of the roads are torturous and a driver has to be constantly on the lookout for cattle, donkeys and children in the middle of the road. A car without a horn would not last long in Jamaica.

The Survey Branch of the Ministry of Communications and Works is a small but well equipped unit. A modern photogrammetry department is included.

We find the Jamaicans to be a friendly, hospitable people and a trip to the island by members of our association would be a rewarding experience.