

MOUNT ALEXANDER COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

No. 7

NEWSLETTER

March 8, 1971

This is the Newsletter which I have been waiting for four years to write, for it marks, I believe, the beginning of visible progress on the development.

If the planning, organizing and surveying of a project such as this are activities which absorb much time and effort with little to show for it, the project seems now to have reached a stage where everything that is done brings visible results.

The upper floor of the Clubhouse is now the home of Mr. & Mrs. Rocafort who moved in a couple of weeks ago. The finishing touches such as wrought-iron etc. have still to be installed but it is already evident that their presence is likely to accelerate things quite a bit. This looks like being a beautiful place before very long.

Just across the road in the workshops opposite, are a truck load or two of cement, some dozens of steel forms for the roads, a couple of cement-compactors, two asphalt sprayers and about a truck load of tools and miscellaneous small pieces of equipment including an electric saw. We were assured that it is not a federal offence to use a skilsaw in Grenada! (I believe there is some law against them in Barbados.)

Beyond the workshop is a newly levelled piece of ground on which is parked a grader and a new Ford 10 ton truck. The extra space, Mr. Rocafort explained, is needed for five more trucks which he has ready to come up, along with a couple more bulldozers.

While we were there a truck drew up in front of the workshop and unloaded some heavy old timbers. These Mrs. Rocafort explained were to be used to match the old stonework in building the roof on the bar. With the timbers unloaded they also dropped off about half a truck load of twenty foot lengths of four inch cast iron water pipe.

There is a caterpillar working in the bush below us cleaning a swath, it must be at least 40 feet wide and in some places two feet deep. Mr. Rocafort says the roads will not be more than 30 feet wide but in some places he will be cutting the road ten feet deeper to ease gradients and provide the proper relationship between the levels of the roads and the lots.

We were driven in the Land Rover around what seemed to be a bewildering maze of roads. During the ride Mr. Rocafort said that he hopes that by June we could do it in our own cars.

At the rate things had progressed during the week between our two visits it looks as though he may not be far out, provided of course, he doesn't hit any major hold-ups.

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It is pleasant to note that, as far as possible, no mature trees are being destroyed in the process. We may therefore have some roadside public mangoes.

Mr. Rocafort has mapped all of the lots where our survey showed desire to build soon and these areas (North of Tamarind & Humming Bird) are going ahead first. He intends to mark the roads and lot numbers, then we can see our boundary posts and get an idea of the view and the direction of the breeze, which of course, is most important for the planning of the house.

The plan is for all the roads to be finished by the end of 1971.

Mr. Rocafort discussed plans for the shopping centre, social centre and swimming pool which are still very much on the "active" list and the intention is to get on with these as soon possible, without waiting for the houses to be built.

It is very evident that the weather can have a big influence on progress. We were shown a section of seaview that was cut yesterday, after one of those sudden Grenadian "showers". The ground simply congealed into clods the size of footballs which went as hard as rocks as they dried out in the sun. The only way to do this earth moving is when the ground is reasonably dry. (DUST IS BEAUTIFUL!)

Mr. Rapicault's hotel is due to be started this month. It will certainly have a wonderful view, but then Mr. Rocafort assures us, so will we all!

On the question of building, Mr. Rocafort asked me to pass on the word that if anyone wants to build immediately, he will cut the road and put in the services so that we can go ahead. In his own words, no one needs to feel held up if they really want to go ahead, but by June we should have a usable road anyway.

Doctor and Mrs. Gillis are living in their house and very happy with their location.

During the two weeks we have been in Sauters we have seen failure of the water supply, then the telephone and finally the electricity. This is probably exceptional although the local people have come to accept these things as normal, however, it might be wise to consider auxilliary power to keep the fridge and freezer going.

We noticed that the beaches at the north end of the Island are exposed to the sun and the trees mostly cast their shadow away from the beach for the greater part of the day. It would be useful to have some form of shade such as beach umbrella or something if you plan to holiday at the north end of the Island. Better bring Guy ropes for it though or it'll blow away for sure.

After quite a bit of discussion on building costs it is evident that, just like anywhere else, the best way to approach that question is to choose your design and draw up detailed specifications, preferably with the help of a local architect who knows the local conditions, materials and locally familiar construction methods. Then use these plans and specifications to get quotations. Without the plans and specifications any builder is either going to quote high to cover himself or he may quote low to get the job and then add on "extras" which will push the price up to where he should have quoted in the first place.

Thats about all for now so, until next Newsletter its - Back to the drawing board.

*Gordon Rogers*