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I returned on the evening of 2nd February from my visit to Chagos. In addition to the nine members of the U.S. reconnaissance party, Paul Moulinie also came along.

2. We left Mahe on 19th January and arrived in Diego Garcia on the 23rd. The reconnaissance party, helped by a boat and a tractor and trailer from the plantation, got down to work whilst I collected the various details necessary to arrange the evacuation of the island. On the 24th January I told all the inhabitants that we intended to close the island in July but, that for some time, we would be continuing to run Peros Banhos and Salomon and that we would send as many people as possible from Diego Garcia to these two islands. This drew no comment from the Seychellois but a few of the Ilois asked whether they could return to Mauritius instead and receive some compensation for leaving their "own country". I played this one into touch by saying that our intention was to cause as little disruption of their lives as possible and that due to the difficulties of communications with Mauritius it would not be possible to arrange a return there until towards the middle of the year when the M.V. Mauritius would resume its calls at Mahe.

3. Paul Moulinie and I left Diego Garcia on the evening of 24th January and went first to Salomon and then to Peros Banhos where we obtained details of those on the islands and the accommodation available. We returned to Diego Garcia on the 27th January.

4. The detailed position on the islands is shown in the attachment to this letter. As you will see we shall in July have on Diego Garcia 36 Ilois families (36 men, 37 women and 64 children), 1 Mauritian and 45 Seychellois families (45 men, 17 women and 30 children). The 36 Ilois families and the single Mauritian should then go to Peros Banhos and Salomon. Only 10 families will have left these islands by then but by reorganizing the allocation of some quarters and carrying out limited repairs on others, we will be able to absorb the 37 Diego Garcia families without prematurely terminating the contracts of Seychellois on these islands. The Ilois will be able to be economically employed on the islands and indeed, some further labour could be absorbed if the running of the plantations was the only consideration

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5. To absorb further labour would however mean building more houses, which economically we cannot justify for a short period, and it will therefore be necessary to terminate the contracts of those Seychellois labourers left on Diego Garcia in July 1977. There are 45 families involved and the cost of compensation will be some £3,000. The cost of repairing houses on Peros and Salomon can be met from the normal running costs of the plantations and the transport costs are also a fair charge on this, as we can combine the movements with normal commercial visits. It would, I consider, be fair to pay each of the Ilois families who are moved to Peros Banhos Rs500 to compensate them for the move which will involve them in some expense as they will have to leave some of the fittings which they own in their houses. This would add a further £1,550 to the cost of the move, bringing the total to £4,550.

6. One problem we shall have to face is that mentioned in paragraph 2, the problem of those Ilois who would prefer to go to Mauritius or Agalaga. Moulinie has agreed to transfer any who wish to go to Agalaga to that island. This leaves the more difficult problem of those who wish to return to Mauritius. Under the terms of their employment we cannot refuse to allow them to return if they so wish, as they have all completed their contracts. At the same time it would obviously be embarrassing for us if they arrived in Mauritius with at most their Rs500 disturbance payment in their pockets. All we can do is to encourage them to go to Peros Banhos and Salomon. The offer of the Rs500 only to those who did so would help, but it would be more helpful if we could at that stage tell them that the move to the other islands was intended as a temporary one whilst we worked out a detailed scheme to provide adequately for their future.

7. Moulinie remains hesitant about any definite scheme for Agalaga. All I have been able to get out of him is a general statement on the island, a copy of which I am attaching to this letter. I will continue to press him when suitable opportunities present themselves, but I can hold out little hope of a firm practical plan emerging unless we can make the first move by making a concrete offer of assistance. This could only be done after a visit to the island by an expert which would mean obtaining the agreement of the Mauritius Government. This changes round our proposed approach and may well complicate your position with the Mauritius Government, but I think it is the only approach which will effectively get anything constructive out of Moulinie.


J. R. Todd

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PEDRO GARCIA

Total on island
January 1971
Due to leave island
before mid-July 1971
Balance remaining :

I L O I S			
Families	Men	Women	Children
36	36	27	64
-	-	-	-
36	36	27	64

M A U R I T I A N S			
Families	Men	Women	Children
3	3		1
2	2		
1	1		1

S E Y C H E L L O I S			
Families	Men	Women	Children
92		39	52
47	41	22	42
45	45	17	30

PEROS BANHOS

Total on island
January 1971
Due to leave island
before mid-July 1971
Balance remaining :

Families	Men	Women	Children
33	27	25	75
-	-	-	-
33	27	25	75

Families	Men	Women	Children
2	1	2	1
-	-	-	-
2	1	2	1

Families	Men	Women	Children
28	28	5	13
4	4	2	3
24	24	3	10

SALOMON

Total on island
January 1971
Due to leave island
before mid-July 1971
Balance remaining :

Families	Men	Women	Children
31	30	22	81
-	-	-	-
31	30	22	81

Families	Men	Women	Children
1	1	1	-
1	1	1	-
-	-	-	-

Families	Men	Women	Children
10	10	-	-
5	5	-	-
5	5	-	-

28
10