

# THE LABOUR SPOKESMAN

Sound Speech That Cannot Be Condemned... Titus 2:8

No. 38 - 32nd YEAR BASSETERRE, ST. KITTS, W.I. SATURDAY 23RD SEPTEMBER 1989 Price: Seventy-Five Cents

## DISASTER STRIKES

### 1 DEAD, OVER 2,000 HOMELESS

St. Kitts-Nevis was plunged into darkness and cut-off completely from the outside world for at least two days this week, following last Sunday's violent attack on the twin-island federation by Hurricane Hugo, which left one person dead and over 2,000 residents homeless.

Described as the most powerful and dangerous hurricane to have struck in the Northern Leeward islands' modern history, Hugo battered St. Kitts-Nevis for more than 8 hours with winds of over 120 miles an hour.

As a result both islands were stripped bare of their electricity and water supplies as well as their telephone and communications service, causing a great deal of distress and inconvenience to residents.

Accompanied by heavy rainfall and travelling at a speed of 12 miles an hour, Hugo passed about 50 miles south of St. Kitts Sunday morning, September 17, between 8 and 9.15 o'clock.

Hugo caused widespread damage to houses and buildings in both islands.

About 80 per cent of the housing stock in Nevis are said to have been destroyed or severely damaged by the storm, compared with about 30 per cent in St. Kitts.

Among the damaged stock are several government schools and buildings, including the two main hospitals in the federation - the Alexandra in Charlestown and the Joseph N. France General Hospital in Basseterre.

The roof of the Alexandra Hospital was blown off and had to be replaced with assistance of a team from the visiting British Ship, the HMS "Bramble Leaf". The Infirmary roof at the Alexandra Hospital was also destroyed by the storm.

The roof of the Joseph N. France General Hospital was also very badly damaged. The Maternity, Private, Medical Wards and half of the Surgical Ward were also said to be extensively damaged and are not in use.

There are also reports of damages to the Dispensary Unit, the X-Ray Department, and Psychiatric Unit, caused by the excessive flooding at the hospital.

A newsbulletin issued by the National Disaster Preparedness Committee (NDPC)

#### A THOUGHT

It is better to be safe, than to be sorry.

### Funds Set Up In St. Kitts

The Rotary Club of Canada in Basseterre, and the general public launched an Emergency Relief Fund at the Royal Bank (Cont'd on page 12)

states that patients at the J.N.F. General Hospital had to be evacuated before the hurricane struck.

The release adds that representatives from the PAN-American Health Organization (PAHO) flew into St. Kitts on Wednesday to assess the damage at the hospital.

Hugo left the streets in St. Kitts and Nevis littered with fallen trees, utility poles and galvanise sheets and other materials ripped from homes and buildings by the raging winds.

After a few days there was restoration of electricity and water supplies in some areas in both countries, as they struggled their way back to some semblance of normality. The telephone service was also restored, but with a great deal of restriction to regional and international calls.

Meanwhile some 400 persons are reported to be housed in shelters in Nevis as against 359 in St. Kitts. Another 1200 and more are reported to be staying with relatives in both islands. The largest shelter in St. Kitts is located at the Conaree Community Centre, which is housing some 70 persons, the National Disaster Preparedness Committee stated.

Hugo has caused widespread destruction to life and property in Montserrat, Guadeloupe, Antigua & Barbuda, Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, St. Maarten, St. Baths, Puerto Rico, St. Eustatius, Northern California on the United States mainland.

St. Kitts last experienced such a devastating hurricane on September 12 and 13 of 1928, when over 12 persons were reportedly killed.

### N.D.P.C. Appeals For Help

The following appeal has been made by the National Disaster Preparedness Committee (NDPC).

We are in need of asphalt, nails, galvanise sheeting, plywood, felt shingles, T-111 lumber, cement, steel and other building materials. There is also a need for chainsaws, standby generators, batteries, electrical line construction trucks, electrical poles, electrical materials, plumbing materials, and a wide array of tools, and persons with this type of equipment are asked to contact the National Disaster Office at Police Headquarters, Cayon Street, Basseterre, at telephone number 465-2241.

Our needs at this time also include food such as rice, flour, canned stuff (preferably meats), fruit juices, canned milk, cereal, and bottled stuffs such as jams, food preserves and peanut butter.

We also are in (Cont'd on page 11)



More than 50 per cent of the low-income houses put down in St. Kitts by the Simmonds government had their roofs ripped off by Hurricane Hugo. Photo above shows low-income houses at Conaree left without roofs.