News in Brief

LAST Wednesday, March 4, was a memorable date for His Lordship Bishop James Moris. On that day he arrived in Dominica half a century ago, namely on March 4, 1903, a young priest of 27 years of age. All those years he spent in Roseau with the exception of two years in St. Thomas, one year under the Danish flag and another under the American, and three years in Antigua. By a mere coincidence he was elected Bishop of Roseau on March 4, 1922 by the late Pope Pius XI. who had been crowned a few weeks earlier.

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SOME two years ago vanilla beans were banned from the side-walks of Roseau as being "obstructions." There may have been other reasons for their banishment, such as their being deteriorated by the direct rays of the sun, their becoming covered with a coat of dust, and their not being respected by passing dogs

But if they were only "obstructions," why are so many and sundry objects allowed at present to stay on the side-walks such as carts, barrels, remnants of broken houses, stones, sand and others?

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IT has been suggested once more that Eisenhower and Churchill should meet Stalin to confer on their differences and to end the cold war. But what would be the use of such a conference? For the last seven years the three nations have been conferring, and not one single peace treaty has been concluded, not one single enslaved country has been freed, no approach whatsoever to peace has been effected and Russia has continued to devour weaker nations one by one. What Russia wants is world conquest, and it is of no use to confer on that.

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TRUTH, liberty and peace can not be compromised, just as between world conquest and world peace no discussion is possible. The only language the Soviets understand is force; and that is why the Western European powers, Britain and the U S.A should be strong in order to be able to prove to Russia that they do not fear her threats of aggression.

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LAST Tuesday, the Very Rev. Canon P. Joussemet F.M.I. Dean of Grand Bay, celebrated the 25th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. Ad multos annos! On the other hand, Father Joussemet placed into the hands of Very Rev. Father Brivet, Dean of Portsmouth, the office of Superior of the F M.I. Fathers, an office he had held, with special permission of Rome, for more than twelve years. Congratulations!

AT a meeting of the Dominica Amatuer Sports Association held at the Dominica Grammar School last February, the following Gentlemen were nominated to serve on the Cricket Selection Committee for 1953. Messrs A F. Brown, Chairman, Stafford Shillingford, Eric Richards, and J.A.M. Trotter.

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The Selection Committee held its first meeting last week and selected Mr. Ivan N. Shillingford as Captain of the forthcoming Windward Island Tournament to be played in St. Vincent on April 29.

The Circumstances Call.

WHY NOT SUGAR FOR DOMINICA?

THE question in the headline has been asked and inconclusively debated many times (especially in the 20's of this century when Dominica faced a major economic crisis), until the ghost was laid to rest (but not in a final place) by the late SIR FRANCIS WATTS in 1925.

This economic expert-adviser of THE DAY, taking into cognizance the popular request for a resuscitation of the sugar industry in this island; the position that Sugar occupied held in the island's export trade in 1875 and 1892; the over-production of Sugar and consequent keen price competition on the world's market at the time of his enquiry, and other relevant factors, advised against sugar manufacture on the grounds that –

> .... "the present low price of sugar will preclude the possibility of Dominica producing sugar for export in competition with countries more favourably situated" (in regard to topography and transportation facilities).

He visualised that while the price of sugar (in 1925) may fluctuate, it was extremely improbable that it would attain a level in which a Dominica product could compete in the world's market.

The Doctor based his contention mostly on the assumed imperative necessity of employing "heavy machinery located in factories of considerable size" for the economical production of sugar, but eventually decided that machinery could be installed "as would make a moderately good centrifugalled muscovado sugar for local use." He thereafter recommended the grant of financial assistance for the establishment of a factory that, in addition to making syrup for export, would make "so much centrifugalled muscovado sugar as can be disposed of to advantage in the Presidency."

At the time of this report Sugar was a drag on the world's market and our own local consumption was in the vicinity of only a few hundred tons a year. Today, sugar is a scarce commodity. It is rationed in England and its importation into our island (where consumption has increased by some times over 1925) is restricted to a maximum 2,500 tons—which is inadequate.

The circumstances for a reconsideration of the strong and popular 1925 demand for resuscitation of the sugar industry in this island are now clearly present. The improbable position, with regard to world market price, seen by Dr. Watts in 1925, is now an untenable argument and also has apparently disappeared the contention that economic production of sugar can be undertaken in only modern factories of considerable size. For our late Governor is found in his "farewell" Address to the Grenada Legislative Council in December last advocating three sugar factories for St. Vincent.

If physical room can be seen in St. Vincent for *three* sugar factories, it is undoubted that these cannot be the large sugar factories in Sir Francis Watts' mind when he examined Dominica's demand in 1925 for a sugar factory. At that time the island's consumption of sugar was hardly over 600 tons per annum. Today, if there were no restrictions on sugar import, the consumption would easily top 3,000, and with more money in circulation provided by the industry a consumption of 24 lbs. per head of population per year is not inconceivable.

On the low average of 2 tons to the acre, 5,000 tons of sugar will require 2 500 acres of land under cane. Will it be seriously contended that this area is not to be found within a radius of ten square miles in the Portsmouth district? Bananas are headed to certain points and transported in trucks over longer distances than ten miles; what therefore would be wrong with the transportation of canes by trucks to the factory. The assumed essentiality of rail transportation seems as much a bogey as the modern-factories-of-considerable-size conception. And the related questions of operation and maintenance costs of the two transportation services are yet to be determined in the favour of the steam railway.

Unrefined sugar importation in 1951 was $5,688,032 of good West Indian dollar. In the same year the adverse trade balance was close on $2,500,000. Our trade for 1952 was expected to show no considerable improvement on this unsound financial situation which His Honour the Administrator regarded as "particularly depressing." His Honour has co-incidentally suggested that "we must attempt urgently to improve our earnings by all legitimate means." (This depends no more on increased exports than it does on decreasing imports).

His Excellency saw the expansion of development as the hope for emer-