

# ENVIRONMENTALIST OR OPPORTUNIST

Contributed)

"For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment; because he pursued his brother with the sword, and cast off all pity, and his anger tore perpetually, and he kept his wrath forever." AMOS

*On a daily basis the radio bombards the airwaves with the info that it is illegal to capture, sell or keep parrots, (yellow head), or destroy their nest or nesting habitat. This is very commendable if we believe that each and every form of life plays an important role in the ecological balance. This is also great if we agree that the human being (Belizeans) is the most endangered spice. But sometimes it appears that what is good for 'Peter' is not good for 'Paul'. We have heard news of parrots and monkeys been taken away from various owners, yet we overlook the major offender. In fact she does not only confine animals but she does it for a profit. It is common knowledge that there are wildlife shelters worldwide that take animals, birds, reptiles et al for rehabilitation and protection. Their sole objective is to return them to their natural habitat, after rehabilitation. So why is it that Sharon Matola is allowed to confine birds, mammals, reptiles et al so as to fine the general public and the tourist upon visiting her animal jail?*

It was extremely nauseating to see Ms. Matola gloating over her success, to Princess Ann, in removing the waste disposal project from mile 27 to mile 24. I do not claim to know any engineering fact about this project, but judging from Matola's and Bocongo's arguments, it appears that the move from mile 27 to 24 was personal and not in the best interest of the Belizean people. Their arguments about this project affecting the aquifer, rivers and all water source at mile 27 seems hypocritical when they became satisfied with the movement of said project to mile 24.

To my limited knowledge of this project, it appears, and legends on the maps indicates, that mile 24 is much lower, in fact it is 'mangrove swamp land subject to inundation' International Travel Map of Belize, 1998 fourth edition, than mile 27 and that the area is even closer to the Sibun river. The mile 24 site is definitely closer to Belizean villages such as Gracy Rock, Hattieville and Freetown Sibun. The major difference I can see is that the waste manage-

ment project will not affect Matola's Zoo, Bocongo's members and the Chinese community at mile 25. Of course Matola and Bocongo do not have a problem that it will affect the Belizean villagers, farmers, and business personnel. Interesting.

The hypocrisy of these environmentalists continues as one remembers two incidents earlier this year and last year in the Belize and Stann Creek districts. Unfortunately both incidents had something to do with Del Oro, of whom I have no beef, but both incidents affected the environment. It has been extremely note worthy to hear the deafening silent of Matola and Bocongo when Del Oro's waste spilled into the Stann Creek River. This spill contaminated the river, all the aquatic life, the riverbanks, the related animals, marine life and, of course, the sector that Matola and Bocongo always forget, the people of Stann Creek. Matola and Bacongo, environmentally conscious and friendly personas, made no effort to comment, assist or do any environmentally related campaign to ensure that the accident does not happen again. The plot thickens as we hear of the Mexican truck spilling oil, bunker C, into the creek near Gales Point Manatee. Matola and Bocongo, with their international affiliation, WWF, made no attempt to try and obtain assistance for the clean up nor the return of the Mexican driver, who fled the seen. If one remembers some years ago, Mr. Eiley was jailed in Guatemala for almost a year when the barge he pulled ran aground and spilled oil in front of Guatemala. Yet the Mexican ran, and our tax paying dollars had to be used to clean up Gales Point.

What is the common factor in all the silence from Matola and Bocongo? Look deeply, and one would see that whenever the Belizean people are or will be affected, mum is the word. In the waste project, the so call environmentalist have no problems because her caged animals will not be affected, only the Belizean villages. In the Del Oro spill, again because the people of Dangriga are of no importance to Matola and Bocongo, they expressed no concerns for the environment much less the people. Similarly, when the oil spilled near Gales Point, Matola and Bocongo were silent. Coincidence? It is so interesting to see that they are willing to sacrifice the endangered Manatee so as to neglect the needs of the Belizean people who reside in Gales Point.

Generally, these so call environmentalist keep showing that as long as the people of Belize will suffer and will no-

get the opportunity to develop and grow, even through tourism, they, the environmentalist, do not have any concern or care. The progress, health and development of the Belizean populace, the ability for the Belizeans to put bread on the table, and the ability of the Belizean to become independent not slaves, are of no importance to Bocongo and Matola.

It appears that once they can get the slave labor from a few loyalist, then the remaining Belizeans can die of starvation, contaminated water, unemployment and underdevelopment. However as long as they are not affected and their supposedly precious flora and fauna et al, in certain areas, is kept intact, then they will not cry foul. It is obvious that they do not have the Belizean well-being at heart. It is obvious that if the price is right then they can create an environmental cause.

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