

Hard Hitting

“Environmentalists” - inept or enemies?

By: Barry M. Bowen

Several individuals and NGOs claiming to be “environmentalists”, and pretending to be such, have written, have threatened and have acted in the most reprehensible manner imaginable toward our country’s development. One would think that these people are enemies of Belize.

Every modern society must develop, and must develop in a competitive manner. Must Belize always depend on other countries to exist? We depend on Mexico for electricity. If Mexico pulls the plug on Belize, what would we do? Does Belize have the clout to demand that they plug us back in? When we are so dependent on a neighbor does it give us any semblance of bargaining power? Belize must become self-sufficient in such a basic vital area as electricity. Which developed country has not utilized its indigenous energy and consequently which of these countries have the right to tell us that we should not do the same? I firmly support the building of the Chalillo dam to enhance the Mollehon dam and power station. I also will promote the building of a third dam to support these two with another reservoir. The “Chicken Littles”; Sharon Matola, Meb Cutlack, BACONGO, Lee Durrell, Kathryn Fuller, etc., etc. should be held responsible for the waste of time, money and human resources expended on defending what is good for Belize. If citizens of Belize influence powerful organizations like the World Conservation Congress and others against a development project in Belize, I consider their actions seditious.

The Brazilian government recently made available a very large tract

of national land for shrimp farming. Because of the value of the industry for Brazil, the government not only is promoting the industry, but assisting in financing it. They have stated that their goal is to build 75,000 acres of ponds in the next three to four years at a budget of US\$500 million. How far or how long do you think any “Chicken Littles” could succeed in delaying this project? Mary Toy in Placencia is doing her utmost to stop a few hundred acres in Belize.

The Greenpeace organization has become so radical that today it has lost many of its’ supporters. According to The Sunday Times of London “Greenpeace has lost more than 1.6 million members and seen its income plummet by £30 million since the mid-nineties. In Britain, Membership is down to 200,000 - a 33% decrease from five years ago.” I suggest that “environmentalists” with their vast funding and human resources be responsible enough to constructively assist in helping developmental projects to be as ecologically friendly as possible rather than try to obstruct the inevitable.

What has BACONGO done for Belize in comparison to what Caye Chapel Ventures, Ltd. has done? If the grapevine is correct I understand that BACONGO wants some international golf association to blacklist Caye Chapel because Caye Chapel has used pesticides on their golf course. I defy anyone to prove any ill-effect on the environment by Caye Chapel, and I am embarrassed by the ignorance of the individuals of BACONGO, especially those fellow Belizeans that would consider supporting such a disgusting attempt at further damage to our country.