REPORT ON CANDIDATES’ WORK IN THE
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
MAY/JUNE 2006

CARIBBEAN HISTORY
GENERAL COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice Paper

This paper consists of sixty multiple-choice items, thirty of which test knowledge and thirty the use of knowledge.

Paper 02 – Essay Paper

This paper consists of twenty extended essay and structured essay questions, testing all themes in the syllabus.

Each question is worth 25 marks, and candidates are required to answer four questions for a total of 100 marks.

Paper 03 - School Based Assessment

This paper consists of three assignments or one project. Candidates, with guidance from the teacher, are required to select a topic for research and write a project report or three assignments based on their research. Teachers mark the assignments and submit a sample of candidates’ work to CXC for moderation.

Paper 03/2 – Alternative to School-Based Assessment

This paper is the alternative paper to the School-Based Assessment for private candidates. It is a written paper, and candidates are required to answer five questions based on a specific theme identified in the syllabus.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 02 – Essay Paper

General Proficiency

Section A Theme 1: The Indigenous Peoples and the Europeans

Question 1

Candidates were very comfortable with this question which in sections (b) and (c) tested their knowledge of the impact of the conquest on Europe and on indigenous society. There were several excellent answers, with the majority of candidates scoring over 60 percent, and several obtaining full marks. Candidates discussed the
Columbian Exchange, the generation of European rivalry, the impact of the conquest on European economies, and the European migration to the Americas. For indigenous societies, candidates were particularly strong on the demographic impact of the conquest through disease, suicide, forced labour, and the destruction eventually of indigenous economic organization, Europe’s ideological (evangelization) impact, and the significant modification of indigenous culture were analysed. Some aspects of this theme were actually tested last year. However, the performance this year was much better - in fact impressive. Over 16 per cent of candidates scored full marks.

Question 2

In part (a) candidates were simply asked to list four forms of resistance used by indigenous people against Spanish domination. Most candidates were able to do so. Weaker performances consisted of those students who had studied African slave resistance, and simply transferred those methods to the indigenous peoples. They were less successful in analyzing the advantages that the indigenous people enjoyed in their resistance to the conquest. Most candidates were able to record the fact that indigenous people were better acquainted with the topography of the Americas. A few students noted the fact that the Caribs/Kalinagos were organised for war. A number of students noted the demographic advantage that the Indigenous people had, but failed to note the heavy dependence of the Europeans on indigenous skills and food supplies. The section of the question requiring a comment on the reasons for the failure of indigenous resistance was more competently done. Most candidates with a nodding acquaintance of the conquest, noted European military superiority. However, they did not look into the value systems in that the Europeans believed in total war, or that the belief systems of Indians imposed on them sometimes, the notion of limited war; nor did they bear in mind the ability of the Spaniards to make effective use of the divisions that existed between rival indigenous groups.

Section A: Theme 2 – Caribbean Economy and Slavery

Question 3

The first section of the question which required a knowledge of the organization of slave labour in the logwood and mahogany industry of Belize compared with the sugar industry in other British Caribbean territories, brought out some excellent answers-presumably from Belizean students who were very conversant with the way in which slave (and free) labour was used in the economic activities of Belize. The alternative question specifically required a discussion of the roles of enslaved people in the main stages of the manufacture of sugar and rum. Most candidates had a good acquaintance with the process of sugar manufacture from cane-crushing, through to boiling, crystallization and distillation. This section of the question was worth 16 marks. The candidates were less able to comment on the difficulties that could affect manufacturing of sugar and rum in the Caribbean - including weather and climatic conditions, breakdown of machinery, and industrial accidents. The majority of candidates scored between 50 percent and 75 percent, with a few obtaining full marks.

Question 4

This question tested candidates’ knowledge of slave plantation society. This was an essay requiring students to examine in particular, race and class division, family life and gender relations. The question required the usual analysis of the racial divisions of society, and the hierarchies of race and class. The syllabus now requires an examination of the position of enslaved women. It is surprising, therefore, that candidates did badly on this question - with students achieving between sixteen percent and forty-eight percent. Candidates are reminded to read questions carefully. Traditionally, candidates have responded very effectively to this theme on plantation society.
Section B: Theme 3 – Resistance and Revolt

Question 5

Candidates were asked to outline factors that contributed to the development of Maroon societies in the Caribbean. In Section (b) they were asked to outline difficulties faced by Maroon societies, and in Section (c) to discuss the measures taken by Maroons to overcome the difficulties they encountered. In Section (a) there were the stock responses that the Maroons wanted to be free, and that once communities had been established, other runaway slaves joined them. Peculiarly enough, there was very little mention of the origin of the Maroon communities in Jamaica at the end of the Spanish period, and little discussion of the topography of those countries in which Maroon communities were established. Section (b) found candidates discussing attacks by metropolitan troops on Maroon communities. There should have been further discussion, however, on the problems of the environment, access to supplies, the destruction of agricultural plots by the pursuers of Maroons, and the shortage of women. Many students handled the measures adopted by the Maroons quite well including the signing of treaties, development of skills in guerrilla warfare, establishment of group cohesion, and a surveillance network.

Question 6

This question which tested candidates’ knowledge of the Barbados 1816 slave revolt and its aftermath, was not well done. Section (a) which asked for reasons for the revolt elicited fair and obvious responses such as slaves wanted to be free. Candidates should also have looked at the timing of the revolt, the complacency of the slave owners, and the persistent rumours that freedom had been granted but was being withheld by slave owners. Section (b) which asked for an explanation of factors responsible for the defeat of the slaves generally pointed to the military superiority of the Europeans, and was fairly well done. However, Section (c) which asked for an analysis of the impact of the revolt on the anti-slavery movement found candidates wanting.

Section B: Theme 4 – Movement towards Emancipation

Question 7

This question, divided into four parts asked candidates to identify groups who were opposed to slavery and groups opposed to abolition, to explain the reasons for the opposition to abolition Section (c), and to describe how the anti-slavery movement organized its activities. The simplest sections (a) and (b) were well done but were worth only four marks. In Section (c) candidates did a good job of pointing to the economic value of slavery (as planters understood it), the belief by planters and their associates that slavery was good as a civilizing influence on the African, racism, and the assumption by planters that there were no viable alternatives to slavery. This section was worth most marks - 12. Many candidates did well in Section (d) as they discussed the pamphleteering work, street meetings and other propaganda efforts of the anti-slavery society, and identified prominent individuals engaged in the anti-slavery efforts with respect to the slave trade, and amelioration.

Question 8

Candidates were not happy with this question which required a knowledge of the abolition movement in the British, Spanish and French areas. Section (a) which specifically addressed the British Caribbean was the best done; but they were at sea for Sections (b) and (c) which asked for factors in the abolition of slavery in the French Caribbean and Cuba.

Section B: Theme 5 – Adjustments to Emancipation, 1838-1876

Question 9

This is a theme that is frequently tested, because adjustments to Emancipation, in practical terms, meant an effort by planters to continue to bind ex-slaves to the plantations, while ex-slaves endeavoured, where possible,
whether by squatting or land purchase to assert some independence of the plantation. Sections (b) and (c) of this question were satisfactorily done. Section (c) which asked for an explanation of the decline of sugar production in some British Caribbean territories was not as well done.

Question 10

This was an essay which asked candidates to give reasons why planters decided to secure immigrants to work on their plantations after 1838; the reasons why some government officials in England and the Caribbean objected to this immigration; the factors which caused Indian immigrants to leave their homeland to come to the Caribbean; and the reasons for planter decisions to make India the main source of labour. The performance was satisfactory and there were very good scripts that demonstrated a thorough grasp of the question of immigration.

Section C: Theme 6 – Economic Diversification, 1875-1985.

Question 11

Section (a) of this question tested the knowledge of candidates on the sugar industry of the British Caribbean. Candidates were expected to demonstrate knowledge of the technological changes, experimentation with new types of cane, education, establishment of Central factories, as well as the search for new markets (including Canada). They were tested on the Cuban sugar industry in Section (b). Here candidates were expected to note the technological advancements in the Cuban sugar industry, the injection of new capital, the availability of markets, the importance of slavery up to 1886, the possibility of large scale production in a large, fertile country. Generally, candidates seemed to know more about the Cuban sugar industry than about the British Caribbean. Several candidates ignored the question asked and proceeded to give reasons for the decline of the sugar industry in the British Caribbean. Many candidates incorrectly emphasized indentured immigration as the primary factor in the recovery of the British Caribbean sugar industry. The main weakness in Section (b) concerning the Cuban sugar industry’s prosperity compared with the British Caribbean was that candidates simply listed points without discussing them. This was a very popular question and the results were generally satisfactory.

Question 12

As in the past, candidates evaded this question. Those who did it engaged in guess-work. It is possible that in preparing candidates sufficient emphasis is not being placed on the fact that the theme ‘Economic Diversification’ extends chronologically from 1875 to 1985. Teachers should remember, therefore, that the theme ‘Economic Diversification’ now covers a much broader period. Candidates need to be prepared for developments in the Caribbean bauxite and alumina industries, the petroleum industry, tourism, and light manufacturing in the Caribbean.

Section C: Theme 7 – Social and Economic Conditions in the 20th Century

Question 13

This question based on the Theme, ‘Social and Economic Conditions in the 20th Century’ tested candidates’ knowledge of the conditions in the British Caribbean that encouraged migration, and required an assessment of the impact of this migration on Caribbean society. This was one of the most popular questions in the section. Unfortunately, many candidates ignored chronology and spoke extensively of the post-Emancipation period- to the extent that there were discussions of ex-slaves in a period when slavery had long passed. However, most candidates were able to explain fully the factors which led to migration. There was only
limited discussion of the demand for labour in the Spanish Caribbean and Central America—much of the demand based on the expansion of U.S. capital in railroads, bananas and sugar. Factors such as limited economic opportunities in Caribbean agriculture, including low wages, and conversely the real possibility of higher wages in the Spanish Caribbean were omitted. Section (b) was not done as well as Section (a) with some candidates confusing the causes with the effects of migration. Some candidates gave sociological rather than historical explanation. The question was popular, and the answers were generally satisfactory.

Question 14

This was an essay question which tested candidates’ knowledge of efforts by British Caribbean governments to improve education and health for their citizens between 1962 and 1985. While there was mention of governments building schools and hospitals; the answers were not strong with respect to government policies, which included efforts to eliminate contagious diseases such as typhoid fever, malaria, polio, nutritional programmes, in particular for school children; the establishment and expansion of tertiary and technical and vocational institutions; the expansion of school spaces at the Primary and Secondary School level, and moves towards (in some territories) compulsory education; and finally, the growth of education budgets.

Section C: Theme 8 – The United States in the Caribbean 1776-1985

Question 15

Teachers are advised to have a close look at the syllabus. In the past, candidates have delivered very good answers on the U.S. in Panama, for example. This year’s answers confirm that the whole syllabus is not being covered. Section (a) asked candidates to indicate the extent to which the U.S. Independence War affected the British Caribbean. There were vague references to the limitations imposed on trade. But there was no discussion of the movement of ‘loyalists’ for example to the British Caribbean, or the efforts of the British Caribbean to promote local production. Little mention was made of the fact that consideration was given in some quarters to linking British Caribbean political fortunes to those of North America. Chronological confusion was demonstrated in the fact that some answers discussed relations between the U.S. and the Spanish Caribbean and Haiti in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The performance was disappointing.

Question 16

Section (a) of this question sought answers on US influence in the British Caribbean between 1939 and 1945 (World War II). Section (b) asked for the reasons for the growth of US trade and investment in the British Caribbean after 1945. Ignoring the question asked in Section (a), candidates discussed US influence on Caribbean culture. There was no discussion of the establishment of naval bases in the Caribbean during World War II, or the fact that the US considered establishing a Protectorate over the British Caribbean during the war years, and the impact on employment. Section (b) was even more disappointing, given that for 20 marks candidates were asked to look at US trade and investment in the British Caribbean after 1945. The answers should have taken into consideration that with growing autonomy in Caribbean politics, US investment was encouraged and had an impact on aviation, the construction of international airports, the growth of tourism, the hotel industry; the demand for oil which led to the expansion of the petroleum industry in Trinidad, the bauxite and alumina industry in Jamaica and Guyana and the policies in the 1950s of encouraging US capital in imitation of the Puerto Rican ‘model’. Candidates had surprisingly little information on Section (b).
Section D: Theme 9 – Movements Towards Independence and Regional Integration up to 1985

Question 17

True to form this question was poorly answered. The tendency over the years has been for candidates to prepare the Federation of the 1950s, and ignore the earlier attempts at Federation. The responses to the question, which was intended to test knowledge of the Leeward and Windward Federation, and challenges to the success of those Federations, showed an absence of preparation.

Question 18

In past years candidates have performed very well on the reasons for the rise and fall of the British Caribbean Federation. This was not the case this year. Some papers were flawed in the sequencing of events, and explanations for the collapse of the Federation were poor. The general impression was that the candidates were not prepared for a question on the Federation of the British West Indies. Issues such as Freedom of Movement, the Customs Union, debates on the location of the Federal Capital, insularity, the prospect of independence without Federation were not highlighted. The disagreements between Trinidad and Jamaica, differences of opinion as to whether the Federal government should be a strong or weak central authority needed to be discussed.

Section D: Theme 10 – Social Life, 1838-1962

Question 19

This question required candidates to give evidence for the claim that there was widespread poverty in the British Caribbean in the 1930s and 1940s. In Section (b) they were asked to describe measures taken by the colonial governments to bring relief to working peoples in the British Caribbean between 1945 and 1962. Responses showed a good understanding of poverty and showed evidence to support such claims. In section (b) however, there was a tendency to confuse the evidence of poverty with the causes of poverty. There was also an unnecessary concentration on racial discrimination as a cause of poverty. Knowledge of what governments did to bring relief to working people was weak. It is evident that social policies of Caribbean governments are not well known. Candidates also showed confusion in chronology, by emphasizing the immediate post-emancipation period, not the twentieth century. The performance was barely satisfactory.

Question 20

This question tested candidates’ knowledge of the relationship between the Christian Church and the African community. Section (b) also examining the role of the Christian Church inquired about the reasons why the Christian Church found it difficult to convert the Indian immigrant to Christianity. Although answers were generally satisfactory in Section (a), candidates sometimes spent too much time discussing reasons why people of African descent rejected Christianity, and discussing black and white relationships during slavery as a reason for rejecting Christianity. The word ‘retained’ in the question was generally ignored. Perhaps more effort should be made to look at the works of Mary Turner and Shirley Gordon in order to understand the context of Christianity prior to abolition. The work of the Religious bodies in the post-Emancipation period in the foundation of mutual aid societies, free villages and educational development in the Caribbean needed more attention. Candidates were more comfortable with Section (b), demonstrating good knowledge of the continuity in Indian culture.