**St.Philip**

**Background information**

St.Philip is in the Caribbean.  It relies on Britain for external policy and aid, but controls its own internal affairs.  The Parliament meets in Queenstown, the capital (pop.40,000).  The other major settlement is the port of Purple River (pop.8,000).

The Northern Sector of the island is low and flat.  North Bay has always been an isolated place.  People there like to be away from the mainstream of island activity.  In the South, there are two extinct volcanoes. The best soils are in Mid-Island but there is no really good agricultural land. The beaches are nice but the sand is brown not white.

Sugar plantations were established when European colonisers arrived in 1622. But, the poor quality of the soil led to the decline in cane agriculture from 1850 onwards.

The sugar estates collapsed in the 1960s because of increasing costs of production and competition from elsewhere, and unrest about the conditions of labour. Sam Wells, Senior led the Philip Friendly Society (a trade union) in opposition against the planters. He was also Prime Minister from 1968-1998. Now Sam Wells, Junior has returned to the island and is following in his father’s footsteps. The only planter family that did not leave the island are the Talbots.

Under Sam Wells, Senior, the sugar lands were divided up and given to the islanders; the cultivation of bananas was encouraged because they are easy to grow. As a result, small banana farms have grown to replace large sugar plantations. Bananas make up 80% of the exports but the industry is now suffering from competition from other islands, hurricanes and general decline in exports.

The country faces population pressure, rising unemployment and the vulnerability of a one-crop economy. Recently, the idea of tourism has been encouraged but the islanders are wary as they have seen the disruptive effects tourism has had on some of the other islands. There is talk of extending the airstrip at Queenstown to allow large jet airplanes to land on the island. This would increase the number of tourist arrivals.