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Fort Young Hotel in Dominica Lays off 40 Employees as Coronavirus Takes Toll

Coronavirus / **Published On May 27, 2020 07:22 AM /**

Staff Consortium **May 27, 2020**

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Fort Young Hotel, Dominica

ROSEAU, Dominica, CMC – Fort Young Hotel, one of the largest facilities in Dominica, Tuesday announced that it had sent home 43 of its employees as the island continues to grapple with the financial impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

In a video message to staff members, the proprietor of Gems Holding Limited, Gregory Nassief, said that from the middle of March to April “we tried our best to maintain the level of operation and to keep many of you on payroll as we could to cushion the impact of this evolving crisis”.

But he acknowledged that in the current scenario “realising that recovery will take much longer and also comforted by the fact that the government stimulus will give a level of income support

we now think it is the appropriate time to move to a layoff scenario.”

Nassief said one of the key reasons the hotel had embarked on the redundancy programme, is because ‘we don’t know how long this will last’.

He said that by placing the workers on “layoff, it does give you the right after six weeks...to choose the redundancy option if that is what you would like to do, we understand and we fully support”.

Nassief said that management would now be focusing on the financial health of the 71-room hotel that was established in 1964 and hosts a diving centre. The facility is undergoing a major renovation work following the destruction caused by Hurricane Marie two years ago.

“It gives is the opportunity to really focus on Fort Young’s financial health and financial future which we need to do at this stage because the crisis will last longer than we had hoped”.

Dominica, like many other Caribbean countries, had locked its borders as a means of curbing the spread of the virus that has killed 340,000 and infected another 5.5 million others worldwide.

But while the island has gradually started to re-open its economy, it has said discussions are continuing with other regional countries on re-opening the borders, even though it is developing a national plan.