

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
 OFFICIAL REPORT

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE SECOND SESSION (1959—60)
 OF THE FIRST LEGISLATURE OF THE WEST INDIES,
 CONSTITUTED UNDER THE WEST INDIES
 (FEDERATION) ORDER IN COUNCIL, 1957.

15th Sitting

Friday, 11th December, 1959

**HOUSE OF
 REPRESENTATIVES**

The House met at 2.30 p.m.

Prayers

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTIONS

West Indian Farm Workers in U.S.A.

Mr. Stone (Hanover, Jamaica) asked the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs to state the current wage rates that West Indian farm workers are receiving in the United States and whether these rates represent increases since the inauguration of the Federal Parliament.

If there has been no increase in the rates of pay, will the Minister consider the advisability of sending a delegation comprising of both sides of the House to discuss the matter with the American Government and trade unions?

The Minister of Labour and Social Affairs (Mrs. Allfrey): Mr. Speaker, in reply to the hon. Member for Hanover, Jamaica, may I say that the current wage

rates given will be stated in West Indian dollars? The reply:

The current wage rates on an hourly basis which West Indian workers receive by agreement under the Farm Labour Programme in the United States of America are as follows:—

Workers —

Sugar	\$1.36 per hour
Tobacco Ware-	
house	\$1.70 " "
Tobacco fields	\$1.58 " "
Vegetable	\$1.02 to \$1.70 per hour
Fruit	\$1.27 to \$1.70 " "

With the single exception of tobacco warehouse workers whose rates have not varied during the period, the above rates in all cases exceed slightly the contract rates paid in April 1958 when the Federal Legislature was inaugurated.

In all cases mentioned above except tobacco workers, piece rates are paid, but the hourly rates shown operate as the minimum earning.

There having been increases as stated above, the second part of the Question does not arise.

Mr. Stone: I am satisfied.

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U.S.A. LEASED BASES AGREEMENT

The Prime Minister : Mr. Speaker, I am about to make a Statement on what I think is even more important than anything we said yesterday, despite the rude remarks that have come from the Leader of the Opposition and in spite of anything that might have been said last night or this morning —

Mr. Sinanan : Said last night, where ?

Mr. Hill : In Woodford Square.

The Prime Minister : I have never heard of Woodford Square; where is that ? I have to make this Statement, Sir, and I hope that hon. Members will not read more between the lines than is invisible, but it is a very important statement and I am glad to know that Members have had some foretaste of what I am about to say. My official Statement is this :

“As a result of a request by the Government of The West Indies, the Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom have agreed to hold a series of talks at times and places to be agreed upon later to discuss the 1941 Leased Bases Agreement in accordance with the terms of Article XXVIII. The talks would be tripartite, with participation by the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom and The West Indies. It is understood that the delegation of The West Indies would include representatives of Unit Territories.”

Hon. Members : Hear, hear !

The Prime Minister : I would like merely to add this : the United Kingdom, the United States and ourselves have agreed on this wording, so that there can be no mistake as to what exactly we are going to do and who have agreed to do what.

Mr. Sinanan : Mr. Speaker, I trust that you would allow me to say a few

words on this Statement, on behalf of the Members of this side of the House. We welcome this Statement by the Prime Minister for a number of reasons, the most important of which is the fact that there is a recognition by the more experienced nations that all such discussions must be with the Federal Government and we welcome the fact that the Federal Government is displaying the anxiety to project and is in fact projecting the Federal Government as against any Territorial Government that might be part and parcel of the entire Federation. We welcome this also because we feel that, if there are differences of opinion existing, they should be discussed around the conference table in a statesmanlike manner. We support the Federal Government in this because we feel that if there is statesmanship in The West Indies it is to be found in the Federal Government and in the Federal Parliament. We hope and trust, Mr. Speaker, that the talks will be fruitful and successful, and that when the problems are solved and ironed out we will continue to have the confidence and the friendship of Britain and the United States of America — a friendship which is indispensable to the success of this Federation.

FEDERAL NEWS (BROADCASTING)

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Bradshaw) : Mr. Speaker, with the permission of the Prime Minister under whose portfolio Information falls, I should like to amplify and amend certain remarks I made about broadcasting in this hon. House on Wednesday. The present position is that through the courtesy of the Government of Jamaica fifteen minutes of that Government's allocation of time on the two radio

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stations, Radio Jamaica and Rediffusion, and the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation have been released for the use of the Federal Government. Hon. Members from Jamaica will, no doubt, have heard the broadcast of Federal news on these two Stations on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. In addition, through private arrangements made between this Government and Rediffusion West Indies Limited, Federal news is being broadcast over Radio Jamaica and Rediffusion on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, and a further fifteen minutes on this same Station have been kindly allocated to us on Sundays. Other temporary arrangements have been made for a broadcast report of the proceedings of this hon. House to be relayed to the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation. My information, based on a report received from Jamaica today, is that these broadcasts have been carried, wholly or in part, more or less regularly since the beginning of this Session.

There is a further note that the Federal news is broadcast on JBC from 5.05 to 5.10 p.m. Monday to Wednesday inclusive and on RJR from 9.40 to 9.45 p.m. on the same days. It is also broadcast on RJR Thursday to Saturday inclusive at 5.05 p.m.

CARIBBEAN EXHIBITION

Motion made, and question proposed, That this House do now adjourn to a date to be named by the Speaker in consultation with the Prime Minister.—[*Mr. Bradshaw*].

Mr. R. J. Williams (Port-of-Spain West/Diego Martin): Mr. Speaker, after hearing the momentous announcement by

the Prime Minister I am somewhat loath to raise the question I am about to raise but I wish to draw the attention of this hon. House and the Government of The West Indies to the activities of an organisation that was started in Trinidad some ten years ago and is beginning to spread throughout The West Indies. I refer to the Junior Chamber of Commerce of Trinidad and Tobago of which I am not a member.

Mr. Sinanan : Why ?

Mr. R. J. Williams : Resigned. This organisation started some ten years ago and as in so many other things, Trinidad leads the way because through the instrumentality of the Trinidad & Tobago J.C.C. a chapter of the Jaycees — as they are familiarly called — was established in Barbados in 1957. This year other chapters were established in St. Vincent, St. Kitts and Jamaica.

This body of young men are very civic-minded and very public-spirited. In 1955 they organised the first Caribbean Trade Fair — which in fact was not really Caribbean because it merely confined itself to firms operating in Trinidad. In 1957, just on the eve of the inauguration of this Federal Parliament, they organised a Caribbean Exhibition that was truly Caribbean. At that exhibition products from the various Units of this Federation were exhibited and I remember very distinctly how surprised many of us who visited that exhibition were at the wide variety of manufactured products that came from Jamaica. We had been of the opinion that Jamaica only exported cigars, bad rum and emigrants ! We were some-

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[MR. R. J. WILLIAMS]

what surprised to find so many other manufactures of light industries shown, a lot of canned products — I didn't notice canned topee bamboo but there were many other products.

In 1960 the Junior Chamber of Commerce of Trinidad & Tobago are organising their third Caribbean Exhibition. It is my hope, Mr. Speaker, that the various Territories of The West Indies will take note of this Exhibition and will let us see what they have to offer and what they have to produce.

Surely, Mr. Speaker, one would expect that the Territory of Barbados, for example, known so far for its sea-eggs, rum, coo-coo, flying fish, sea moss and Prime Ministers, has a lot more to offer.

Sir, we in this House are doing a lot to weld together this Federation and I think that the Junior Chamber of Commerce of Trinidad and Tobago by this effort and their other various efforts are also doing a great deal to weld together this Federation.

It is for this reason that I wish to draw to the attention of this House the Caribbean Exhibition to be held in May next year.

The Prime Minister : Mr. Speaker, I hope the hon. Member will not blush, but after listening to him I think it is regrettable that he does not speak more often. He speaks very well.

If I may with the tolerance due to an older brother from a younger one, I wish to say that I have been told that the hon. Member is no longer a member of the

Junior Chamber of Commerce of Trinidad & Tobago but nevertheless he did a great deal of work while he was there and he would still do all he can for that body. That is good.

I should like to say this officially on behalf of the Federal Government. The Federal Government has learnt with pleasure of the plans of the Junior Chamber of Commerce for holding a Caribbean Exhibition in May next year — and I say, like the late T. A. Marrayshow, Caribbean. This project deserves the widest possible support. The Federal Government is prepared to consider participating in this Exhibition and has already suggested to all the Territories that if possible they also should participate. It is hoped that they will do so, and that the Exhibition will be given strong public encouragement and support.

That is the official statement; but I will add just two sentences, if I may. Two or three times I had the good fortune to have been in London during the British Industries Fair. I never went to Birmingham or wherever else others would go, but I used to go to London, and it was striking to see the difference between what Jamaica had done and what the rest of us had done. It was a sorry thing to see the Windward & Leeward Islands' booth advertising Barbados rum. Nobody should boost Barbados rum because it speaks for itself. But that was stupid. The point is that we did not sufficiently advertise ourselves. Right next to us was Nigeria, and the Nigerian booth carried everything, and everybody, even all the West Indians at the Fair were walking away and going to look at the Nigerian booth.

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So far as the Federal Government is concerned, money, or no money—the Member for Surrey seems to be surprised at my statement—we are anxious to help the Unit Territories to put themselves on the map when this Exhibition takes place next year. Some of us who spoke to persons concerned with the Junior Chamber yesterday told them that so far as it is possible for us to put off anything—that is, any conference or any such thing in London or any other place—in May next year, we will do so in order that we may be here in Trinidad, in The West Indies (if we remain in Trinidad till that time) in order that we may be able to tell the

whole world, “Here is a West Indies Trade Fair—a Caribbean Exhibition; the Federal Government of The West Indies is backing all the Unit Territories in whatever they are doing”.

I do hope everybody will realise that the Federal Government, whether poor or not, is strongly behind that Exhibition.

Mr. Hill: Will the Prime Minister say who will be the exhibit of the Federal Government.

The Prime Minister: A Member of the Opposition.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at 3.00 p.m.