

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, 10TH MARCH, 1948

The Council met at 8 p.m., His Excellency the Governor, Sir Charles Woolley, K.C.M.G., O.B.E., M.C., President, in the Chair.

### PRESENT.

The President, His Excellency the Governor, Sir Charles Campbell Woolley, K.C.M.G., O.B.E., M.C.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. D. J. Parkinson (acting).

The Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr. E. M. Duke (acting).

The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer, Mr. E. F. McDavid, C.B.E.

The Hon. C. V. Wight, O.B.E., (Western Essequibo).

The Hon. F. J. Seaford, C.B.E., (Nominated).

The Hon. Dr. J. B. Singh, O.B.E., (Demerara-Essequibo).

The Hon. Dr. J. A. Nicholson, (Georgetown North).

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

The Hon. C. P. Ferreira (Berbice River).

The Hon. T. T. Thompson (Nominated).

The Hon. W. J. Raatgever (Nominated).

The Hon. G. A. C. Farnum (Nominated).

The Hon. D. P. Debidin (Eastern Demerara).

The Hon. J. Fernandes (Georgetown Central).

The Hon. Dr. G. M. Gonsalves (Eastern Berbice).

The Hon. J. C. Jagan (Central Demerara).

The Hon. W. O. R. Kendall (New Amsterdam).

The Hon. C. A. McDoom (Nominated).

The Hon. A. T. Peters (Western Berbice).

The Hon. W. A. Phang (North Western District).

The Hon. G. H. Smellie (Nominated).

The Hon. Capt. J. P. Coghlan (Demerara River).

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River).

The Clerk read prayers.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 5th March, 1948, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

### GOVERNMENT NOTICES

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr. Duke) gave notice of the introduction and first reading of the following Bills:—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the Sea Defence Ordinance, 1933, with respect to the definition of Sea Defences, and to provide for the conservation of lands along the foreshore."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to appropriate the supplies granted in the current session of the Legislative Council."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL. This Appropriation Bill is intended to implement the approval which has been already given by this Council to the Estimates of Expenditure for the year 1948, and at the next or a subsequent meeting of the Council a motion will be moved to have the first, second and third readings of the Bill taken on the same day.

UNOFFICIAL NOTICES.

GOVERNMENT HOUSING LOANS.

Dr. NICHOLSON gave notice of the following motions —

WHEREAS

- (1) The lives of Civil Servants of British Guiana who are members of the Pensionable Establishment are by law heavily insured through the Widows and Orphans Pension Ordinance;
- (2) Life Insurance Companies habitually make loans to policy-holders on the security of their policies to assist them to acquire or repair properties;
- (3) It is desirable as principles of public policy that all public servants should be encouraged to invest their savings in real property and be securely and decently housed;
- (4) The Government of Trinidad through the Trinidad Government Housing Loans Board advances mortgage loans to public servants in that Island deducting repayments from salaries, eligibility to obtain a loan being in all cases determined by the Executive Council.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

This Council recommends that a Committee be appointed:

- (1) To consider and report on the question that loans be made from public funds to public officers on the pensionable establishment, to teachers, members of the Police Force and Militia, employees of Transport and Harbours and Postal Departments, and any other officers whose superannuation is secured so as to assist such officers to acquire houses for themselves and families or to repair houses in which they or their families reside.
- (2) To make recommendations as to the consideration under which such loans should be made and the machinery necessary for administering such loans

EXCESS PROFITS AND MINIMUM WAGE.

WHEREAS

- (1) The cost of living has increased out of all proportions to wages earned by workers of every class in every branch of Industry in this Country since 1938,
- (2) The collection of excess profits tax has been abolished;
- (3) The margin of profits on consumer goods; foodstuffs, textiles, clothing, etc., etc., to merchants and retailers remains exceedingly high in spite of some attempt at reduction in 1947;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT

- (1) This Council recommends that a Committee be appointed forthwith to review the whole question of profits by merchants and retailers with a view to reduction of the same in order to afford relief to the inhabitants of this Country.
- (2) The Government take steps to introduce for consideration by this Council a MINIMUM WAGE BILL in order to secure from industrialists and other employers of labour a living wage for unskilled workers in every branch of Industry in this Country.

Mr. PETERS gave notice of the following motion—

WHEREAS this Honourable Legislative Council is charged with the great responsibility of shaping for the better, the destiny of our Colony, and,

WHEREAS it is expedient that every Member of this Honourable Council be given the fullest opportunity to obtain first hand information on any and all matters affecting the Welfare of our Colony, and,

WHEREAS in the last analysis it can be well said that every Member of this Honourable Council is, in a peculiar sense, ALWAYS ON DUTY for the good of our Colony and,

WHEREAS the Government of this our Colony is in the fortunate position of possessing and operating its own system of transportation;

BE IT RESOLVED by this Honourable Council that its entire personnel shall severally enjoy at all times the privilege of travelling free of charge on any and all means of transportation, owned and/or operated by the Government of this Colony.

ORDER OF THE DAY

CLOSER ASSOCIATION OF B.W.I. COLONIES.

Mr. SEAFORD: I beg to move the following motion:—

“That, this Council accepts Resolutions 2 to 14 of the Resolutions passed at the Conference on the Closer Association of the British West Indian Colonies, held at Montego Bay, Jamaica, in September, 1947, but reserves judgment on Resolution 1 of the said Resolutions until it has had an opportunity to consider the practical implications of Federation in the light of the report of the Standing Closer Association Committee proposed in Resolution 6.”

It is with full knowledge of the importance of the occasion and of the responsibility involved that I have risen to move this motion, and I would ask hon.

Members of this Council to give every care and every thought to the meaning and the implications of the Resolutions before coming to any decision. I would ask them, Sir, not to make use of any pre-conceived ideas which they may have gained from outside. I would ask them, Sir, not to come to a decision based perhaps on any undertakings that may have been given which may be based on false premises. This motion, Sir, and the duty we have before us to-day may affect the future of this Colony for many many years to come. The future of the Colony, the future of our children and our children's children, may depend on the decision which we arrive at to-day. As I said, I would therefore ask hon. Members to come to no decision without the most careful and close examination and scrutiny.

The motion I have moved, Sir, reflects the views expressed by the Colony's Representatives at the Conference which was held at Montego Bay in Jamaica. As I have said here in this Council and also outside of it, the views there expressed are in no way binding nor can they be binding on this Council or the people of this Colony. They were the views we came to, and we considered it wiser and safer to accept no definite decisions until we knew what the implications of Federation may mean. It will be noted, if reference is made to the despatch of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, that we were asked to deal with Closer Association of the British West Indian Colonies, and paragraph 9 of the despatch of the 14th February, 1947, gives the terms of reference "to consider the formulation of proposals for Closer Association." Now, Sir, what do we find? The Conference met; we heard some of the most eloquent speeches, inspired speeches, and the result was that, in our opinion, the Conference went further than the terms of reference, because in clause 1 hon. Members will see that it has recommended the principle of Federation. Federation, Sir, goes a good deal further than Closer Union. I could not help feeling when listening to the speeches of the Representatives of the various Colonies that they were inspired not so much by Federation or the benefits of Federation. I feel they did not understand the implications of Federation. We never got down to the fundamentals and, in my

opinion, they did not understand fully the meaning of Federation, so much so that although they accepted the principle of Federation they decided to set up a Committee to go into this proposal and what it meant. The very fact of doing that showed that they had not the least idea of what they were asking for in principle. I feel, as I said, they were guided by the idea not so much of Federation as Self-Government. I think Self-Government was what they had in mind — their ulterior motive — and it was with that object that they decided to have Federation. They felt that by having Federation they were more likely to get Self-Government, although the Secretary of State for the Colonies has stated that rejection of Federation in no way prejudiced an increasing measure of responsibility when it was justified. With the permission of Council I shall read what I said an increasing measure of responsibility

"Listening to some of the speeches of the Delegates for the last two days, I could not resist forming the impression that certain Delegates were rather making use of Federation, or Closer Union — call it what you will — in order that they might get self-Government. I think Self-Government ranked with them before any Federation or Closer Union at all. Let us call a spade a spade. If we are to discuss the formulation of proposals for Closer Association, let us deal with that subject and the other may follow on in due course, but let us say straight out what we feel about it and what we mean."

I am not therefore saying anything in this Council that I did not say to the Members at the Conference. The Representatives were leaders of their Parties in the various Islands, and I could not help also feeling that what was behind it was a thirst for power, political ambition which seemed to dominate the aspirations of people's leaders. We know what this thirst for power has meant in the world in the last few years. Let us try and put it away, put it aside. Let us get together and work together for the good of the people and cast aside our personal interests. There were further points which we made at the Conference and, perhaps, it would not be out of place for me now to let this Council know of certain points that were made by its representatives. I started off by saying — with Your Excellency's permission I will read from the report —

"I have not been sent here by the people of British Guiana to express my personal views. I am sent to express their views and I am prepared to do so. It is not as easy a matter as it may appear to be, because I will be quite frank and say that there are a large number of people in our Colony who on account, perhaps, of the lack of the meaning and significance of Closer Association — I prefer the term Closer Association to Federation and I see it is used in the terms of reference — on account of the lack of knowledge of the full meaning of it, they are very anxious not to do anything which they feel might let them in for more than they bargained for. They are not sure of the advantages or disadvantages which might accrue from Closer Union. There is one thing that they asked me to convey to this Conference — that they will not be dragooned into anything at all — they will not have regimentation. If they enter into any Closer Union with the Islands of the West Indies and British Honduras, it must be of their own choosing."

In the speech by the Secretary of State for the Colonies he did say that it was not the intention of His Majesty's Government that the will of the people would be disregarded. I stated that I appreciated that and I was in the happy position to take back to my people that news which would be most satisfactory to them. I went on to say:

"There are many people in British Guiana who feel that they are a little bit nervous of Closer Union because they feel that our Colony is on the threshold of large development. We have already three large mining concerns which have come to the Colony and have settled to work there. We have other interests who are feeling their way, and I am sure it will not be very long before economic industries will be developed. They feel that if they adopt Closer Union at this time and with it the political federation which might arise, a certain amount, or, may I say, an element of insecurity might be introduced which might adversely affect the development work that is being planned."

I went on to say:

"It has been mentioned here that development in the Colony might be assisted if we were able to settle people in the Colony, but I cannot see why, it is not possible to settle people in the Colony unless you have Closer Union. We have at the moment a Commission in the Colony headed by Sir Geoffrey Evans which has gone there for the specific purpose of selecting people from the Islands of the West Indies and, perhaps, others if conditions permit of settlement.

We feel, Sir, that there will be no difficulty in getting population. It was also mentioned here, Sir, that we have had these potentialities for 200 years and that nothing has come out of it, but that can be easily explained. The great difficulty in a Colony like British Guiana with its large resources, extensive lands and gigantic rivers has been transportation; but now, Sir, we have been developed in the Colony a Company called the British Guiana Airways which has six planes and I am satisfied, Sir, with the aid of flying that our development will progress much more quickly. We are able to go to places which we could never attempt to reach before. It may be of interest if I mention here that there are already 29 landing strips in our interior."

All that, Sir, is correct and conditions in the world to-day have opened up new channels and offered conditions which did not exist before, and by the opening up of the interior by the B.G. Airways, people can get about the country and take advantage of what it offers. And we were satisfied that that would accelerate development here. I went on to say:

"We have listened here to some very fine speeches, as I have said, and inspired orations, but I do feel and I must say that we have not got down to fundamentals. I cannot help feeling that there has been a lot of wishful thinking and pious hopes but, Sir, that will not satisfy me nor the people in the Colony which I have the honour to represent. We must, as I say, get down to fundamentals. We have been told that if we accept this political federation with responsible Government all our difficulties will disappear. It seems that it is considered by some that this political federation is the panacea for all ills."

I stated that we should get down to fundamental economic issues that will have to be dealt with before we can say it is a government we desire. Then there was the question of finance, and in the Secretary of State's despatch it is mentioned that it would be important that such a federation should have the requisite financial stability and aim to carry on its administration without recurrent financial assistance from outside. I further said:

"It is not possible for a committee of this Conference to attempt to settle the question of a Customs Union. It would require men of more experience in such matters. The people want to know if we join in what is it going to cost us. Is it going to increase the cost of living? Is it going to decrease it? Until

we get our experts down to considering this it would not be wise to jump in."

I went on to say:

"We have been told here that we at this moment hold the destiny of the West Indies in our hands; that may be so but I ask the Delegates to think very clearly, to give much more mature consideration to the means of getting to the end. It is no good fighting and saying we can get there, we have got all the people, we have got all the necessary conditions and everything else. We must think of the means of getting there. It is all very well to get into a motor car and to drive off but you will get nowhere unless you have got somebody to drive that car for you. We, I feel, Sir, have not the experience yet to deal with world conditions as they are to-day, and I do feel that, with all due respect to the opinion of others, we will have to say that we prefer to remain outside."

When we came to the final day of the Conference, the Chairman was the Permanent Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Seel. A motion was moved that the resolutions be accepted as a whole, and after a little discussion Mr. Gomes moved that the matter be put, and Mr. Bustamante seconded. I then got up and said:

"Before this matter is put, I would like to state that we are unable to accept this resolution on behalf of the Colony of British Guiana. I feel that we might be considered a little difficult in being the only dissenting voice, but I am sure my fellow delegates understand the position and will give us the credit of being honest in our purpose. We feel that we have been sent with the idea more of listening and learning than anything else and I shall certainly, when we get back to the Colony, convey the feelings of all the delegates here assembled to-day. Further than that I cannot go."

Mr. Hannays said something, and I replied:

"I am afraid, unfortunately, Mr. Hannays was not here last Saturday when I then stated that I was not expressing my personal opinion, I was expressing the opinion as far as I could gather of the people of the Colony. It is not my personal opinion at all."

Mr. Seel, the Chairman, then said:

"I would like to make clear the position of the British Guiana Delegates. You may take it, I hope, that they accept the resolutions except Resolution 4."

I replied: "We accept all other resolutions".

The Chairman then said: "You are accepting the Resolutions, but you are in fact still reserving your opinion pending the results of the work of the Standing Closer Association Committee."

I replied: "That is correct".

That is the substance of the motion before this Council to-day. I now propose with the permission of Council to deal with the various resolutions which were passed at that Conference and which I am asking this Council to consider now. Resolution I —

"That this Conference, recognising the desirability of a political federation of the British Caribbean territories, accepts the principle of a federation in which each constituent unit retains complete control over all matters except those specifically assigned to the federal government."

That I prefer to deal with later, if I am allowed to do so. With regard to Resolution 2, it reads:

"That this Conference believes that an increasing measure of responsibility should be extended to the several units of the British Caribbean territories, whose political development must be pursued as an aim in itself without prejudice and in no way subordinate to progress towards federation."

We accepted that because we felt that it was in line with the natural political aspirations of the people of this Colony. Therefore, in view of what the Secretary of State has said (I will read once more), that "the rejection of federation would in no way prejudice an increasing measure of responsibility when it was justified" we felt justified in accepting that, and I commend that to this Council now.

Resolution 3 states:

"Resolved: That this Conference believes that the provision of adequate inter-Colonial and external shipping services and other communications is essential if progress is to be made towards federation, and recommends that in the meantime, and until a federal authority exists, a British Caribbean Shipping Committee should be set up as recommended in paragraph 27 of the Report of the Fact Finding Meeting on Shipping held in Barbados in July, 1947."

We agreed to that because we felt that whether we had federation or not, or

whatever else we had, inter-colonial communications and also communication with the outside world needed very great improvement. We are at the present time partly cut off from the rest of the world. We had a Committee which sat in Barbados and dealt with the subject and I think there is no Member of this Council who will not agree that our communications with the rest of the Caribbean require improvement. I do not think there was any question about this Resolution.

The PRESIDENT: I would like to draw attention to the Secretary of State's comment on that point in his despatch which is before hon. Members, in which he suggests a slight modification. He states:

"I suggest that, if this Resolution is approved by the Legislatures, the proposal contained in paragraph 27 of the Report of the Fact-Finding Meeting on Shipping, held in Barbados in July, 1947, should be varied by assigning the organisation of the projected British Caribbean Shipping Committee to the Chairman of the Standing Closer Association Committee, the appointment of which is recommended in Resolution 6, instead of to the Comptroller for Development and Welfare in the West Indies. The Legislatures might perhaps also agree each to appoint one representative to the Committee and to provide upon an appropriate basis of contribution any funds which it may require."

Mr. SEAFORD: I considered that point but I feel that if we are going to hand the matter over to that Committee it may mean that the Committee may not report until 2, 3 or 4 years, and I do feel that we require some amelioration of the shipping conditions in this Colony as early as possible, and that we would be very much more likely to get some decision earlier by not handing it over to the Closer Association Committee. But if it is so desired by Members, and if we can get the Closer Association Committee to deal with the matter immediately, I personally would have no objection.

There is one other point which Members should consider, and that is that the Committee consists of representatives of the various colonies. I feel that the representatives of the Colonies on the Closer Association Committee would be more political gentlemen than perhaps businessmen who have had to deal with shipping, and that the Comptroller for Development

and Welfare would be better able to appoint members of the Committee who understand the shipping position of the Colony — persons who know what they are undertaking rather than those who would consider the matter from a political angle.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: To a point of correction. I think the Secretary of State only intends that the Chairman of the Closer Association Committee should be responsible for the organisation of the British Caribbean Shipping Committee. He does not say that the two Committees should have the same membership.

Mr. SEAFORD: I am afraid I misunderstood it. In view of what the Colonial Secretary has said I am prepared to accept that.

The PRESIDENT: I only felt it desirable to bring it to the notice of the Council while you were speaking.

Mr. SEAFORD: I will now deal with Resolution 4 which reads:

"Whereas progress toward federation will be accelerated by putting agriculture in the British Caribbean area on a more secure economic basis than now exists,

"Resolved: That this Conference recommends that immediate steps be taken for the setting up of a central body of primary producers (representative of all British Caribbean Colonies) with a view to accelerating the development of agriculture throughout the area on a sound economic basis, and urges the respective Governments to ask the Comptroller for Development and Welfare to convene a conference as soon as possible for that purpose."

We felt that there could be no great harm in this although, from our point of view, we did not see that any great good would come out of it, but at the same time it could do no harm, and that the more we got together on these points the better it might be.

I will not read Resolution 5. What the Conference felt was that these Colonies would be very much better represented if we had a Trade Commissioner resident in the United Kingdom, who would be always available to represent our interests

on the other side. The Council will remember that there was a Conference at Geneva a short time ago, to which we sent special representatives. There was a previous Conference at which we were represented by gentlemen from the Colonial Office. The members of the Conference felt that we should get much better representation if we stood on our own feet. As it has happened in the past, we are apt to be forgotten. To this day we do not know what happened at that Conference at Geneva, and we do not know what is going to happen to our Customs Tariff, or what is going to happen to the preferences we give or those we receive. We felt that by having direct representation we would be much more in touch and would be able to have our case represented in a much better manner.

It is suggested in the Resolution "that H.M. Government should accord to the British Trade Commissioner the fullest possible facilities for representation at Commonwealth conferences and discussions affecting the trade and commerce of the British Caribbean, on the lines of those accorded to the High Commissioners of the British Dominions in respect of trade affecting their territories; and should use their best endeavours to secure fully adequate representation for the British Caribbean Trade Commissioner at international conferences." We felt that our interests might be better served, and I believe hon. Members will agree with that.

Resolution 6 is the crux of the whole question. It reads:

"Resolved: That this Conference recommends:—

- (1) the immediate constitution of a Standing Closer Association Committee composed of delegates appointed by the Legislatures of each unit in the British Caribbean area, not exceeding the numbers specified in the schedule to this Resolution, and of Chairman and Secretary appointed by the Secretary of State;
- (2) that the terms of reference of the above Committee be to consider and make recommendations in relation to:—
  - (a) the assimilation of:—
    - (i) the fiscal, customs and

tariff policy of the British territories in the Caribbean area, so, however, that the Committee shall have regard to any recommendations in relation to these matters which may previously have been made by any Commission constituted for this purpose subsequent to the nineteenth day of September, 1947; and

- (ii) the legislation of such territories;
  - (b) the unification of the currency of such territories;
  - (c) the unification, so far as may be practicable, of the public services of such territories, so however, that the Committee shall have regard to any recommendations in relation to such unification which may previously have been made by any Commission constituted for that purpose subsequent to the nineteenth day of September, 1947, and to which effect may not previously have been given;
  - (d) the form of a federal constitution and federal judiciary most likely to give effect to the aspirations of the people of such territories; and
  - (e) the means of financing the operation of all federal services, regard being had to all proposals in relation to this subject made to the Conference in Closer Association of the British West Indian Colonies, held at Montego Bay, Jamaica in September, 1947.
- (3) that the headquarters of the above Committee be in Barbados;
  - (4) that the Committee above referred to be requested to report to the Governments of the British Caribbean territories not later than the 30th June, 1949.

#### SCHEDULE

BARBADOS	..	2
BRITISH GUIANA	..	2
BRITISH HONDURAS		
JAMAICA	..	2
LEEWARD ISLANDS		
ANTIGUA	..	1
MONTSERRAT	..	1
ST. KITTS	..	1
TRINIDAD	..	2
WINDWARD ISLANDS		
DOMINICA	..	1
GRENADA	..	1
ST. LUCIA	..	1
ST. VINCENT	..	1
Total	..	17

As I have said, this is the most important Resolution because it provides for the setting up of a Committee which would go into the various aspects. I claim, and I maintain, that until this Committee has gone into all those points and reported we cannot know and do not know the meaning and implications of federation. Therefore I say that it would be entirely wrong for this Council or the people of this Colony, or those of any of the other Colonies in my opinion, to come to a decision on federation until the Committee has reported and we know what the effect of federation will be. There can therefore be no doubt that if we are anxious to know how we would be effected we must know what would be the result of any closer association. I therefore hope that Members will not disagree with the appointment of a Committee to go into the various details.

+ Resolution 7 states:

“Resolved: That this Conference recommends the appointment by the Secretary of State of a Commission to examine, in consultation with the Governments of the territories in the British Caribbean area, the question of the establishment of Customs Union, and to make recommendations, with special regard to:—

- (a) ensuring uniformity in administration and Customs practice;
- (b) the selection and training of the necessary staff (including the staff for an adequate statistical service);
- (c) the preparation of a suitable tariff, having regard to the fiscal problems of the Governments whose revenue would be affected by the introduction of a Customs Union; and
- (d) the special needs of the British Virgin Islands.”

Hon. Members will note that this Resolution recommends the appointment of a Commission to examine the question of establishing a Customs Union. It does not recommend a Customs Union but merely the examination of the question, and I do not think anyone can object to such an inquiry. I know that when the Associated Chambers of Commerce of the British West Indies met in St. Kitts a year ago they were against a Customs Union. Representatives of our Chamber of Commerce were not present at that meeting but I think the opinion of this Chamber of Commerce is favourable to-

ward the establishment of a Customs Union. That, however, does not affect the point because the Resolution merely recommends the appointment of a Commission to examine the question.

Resolution 8 reads:

“Whereas the recommendations made in paragraph 21 of the Fiscal Sub-Committee’s report have been accepted,

Resolved: That this Conference suspends judgment on the remainder of that report in so far as it relates to Customs.”

That follows on Resolution 7.

Resolution 9 states:

“Resolved: That this Conference recommends that the Governments of the British Caribbean territories should appoint a small regional committee to study and report upon matters of common economic significance, and to advise upon the merits of plans for economic development.”

I am sure that no Member would object to the appointment of a Committee which would advise on the merits of economic development in this area.

Resolution 10 reads:

“Resolved: That this Conference endorses the recommendations made in that part of the report of the Fiscal Sub-Committee which deals with currency.”

This Colony has already agreed to a unified currency, and your representatives felt that they were well justified in accepting this proposal.

Resolution 12 reads:

“Resolved: That this Conference recommends that His Majesty’s Government should be invited to examine the possibility of effecting changes in the methods of Treasury control of grant-aided Colonies.”

That, fortunately, does not affect this Colony at all.

Resolution 13 states:

“Resolved: That this Conference recommends that His Majesty’s Government should be further invited to consider, as an experimental measure, the advantages of substituting a block grant for three years to aid such territories



and freeing them from direct year to year budgetary control through the three-year period covered by such a grant."

There again that does not affect this Colony.

Resolution 14 reads:

"Resolved: That this Conference recommends:—

- (1) the immediate establishment of a Commission to enquire into and make recommendations in relation to the unification of the public services of the British Caribbean area;
- (2) that the terms of reference of the Commission be so framed as to permit of the Commission considering all branches of such public services;
- (3) that the report of the Commission be laid before the Legislatures of the respective territories in that area with the minimum delay, unless a Standing Closer Association Committee shall have sooner been appointed, in which event the report shall be referred to these Legislatures through that Committee; and
- (4) that the Commission be constituted in the manner suggested in paragraph 15 of the Secretary of State's draft despatch dated May, 1946, circulated to the Conference.

As regards this Resolution we were aware that the Civil Service Association of this Colony had asked for a unification of the public services. We knew that it was felt that it might be a good thing for this Colony, therefore we felt safe in agreeing to the appointment of a Commission to inquire into and make recommendations in relation to unification. It does not mean that we will be bound by the recommendations of the Commission. The report of the Commission will be referred to this Council to decide whether it will accept the proposal or not, and it will enable us to know whether unification will effect a saving or will cost us more. At present we do not know, and I think the Council would be justified in accepting this Resolution as it stands.

I will now deal with Resolution 1 on which hon. Members will remember I asked to be allowed to reserve my remarks until a later stage. At the Conference we asked that decision be reserved on Resolution 1 until we had had an opportunity to consider the practical

implications of federation in the light of the report of the Standing Closer Association Committee proposed in Resolution 6. I am quite sure that that part of my motion will appeal to this Council. It seems to me the only logical course to adopt because, if we were to say "Yes, we accept federation or the principle of federation", we would be more or less bound by it. I repeat that until that Committee reports we do not know where it is leading us. The motion does not turn down federation altogether; it only asks that the matter be deferred until such time as we have had an opportunity to consider the implications of federation.

Members have read Resolution 6 and are aware of what it calls for — consideration of a vast and varied number of items in every detail, whether fiscal, financial, Customs, Civil Service or anything else. The Standing Closer Association Committee will have to go into every detail and report. Until that report comes into our hands it is, in my opinion, quite impossible for us to come to any decision as to how federation or even closer association is likely to affect us. We do not know the financial implications. We do not know whether it will mean that we will have to increase our taxation, whether it will cost us a lot of money, or whether there will be a saving. How then can we say that we agree to it? We may be undertaking something which we may be quite unable to support when we know the true facts. We do not know what effect it will have on the cost of living, and even a Customs Union may affect our cost of living. Would it be wise for us to say that we accept federation when we do not know what our commitments are likely to be?

As regards the unification of the public services we also do not know what the position is likely to be, and we must await the Committee's report before we come to a decision. If we accept unification what would be our liabilities in respect of the other Colonies? Is there any Member of this Council — there was certainly none at the Conference who was — able to tell us what our liabilities would be? Certain of the Colonies are still under Treasury control because they are unable to meet their commitments. The Secretary of State has told us that

“One important responsibility of any federation would, therefore, be to show that federal administration can be carried on without requiring recurrent financial assistance from outside.”

I trust that hon. Members will appreciate the meaning of that. It may mean that we may have to contribute to a pool for the assistance of those Colonies who are unable to support themselves. The Secretary of State further comments in his White Paper:

“The ultimate aim of any federation which may be established would be full internal self-government within the British Commonwealth. But it will no doubt be generally appreciated that financial stability (which is of course very different from economic self-sufficiency) is an essential accompaniment of full self-government, and that the latter cannot be a reality without the former.”

I would like hon. Members to consider that very carefully. Are we at this moment sufficiently advanced for self-government? Have we got representatives here who are sufficiently experienced and knowledgeable to take their places in the councils of the world or the great powers to-day? With all due deference to the most brilliant people in this Colony I say that that is a position which can only be gained by working up to it and by experience. I feel that we have not got such people yet, although we are improving very rapidly. We have not anybody to-day capable of representing us at a conference of the great powers. Again, if we are to have federation and to be one of the Dominions in the British Commonwealth of Nations, would it not be necessary for us, as pointed out by the Secretary of State, to have financial stability? Would it not be necessary, as the other Dominions do, for us to maintain an Army, Navy, and an Air Force? Are we going to pretend to stand on our own legs as a Dominion and at the same time pass the hat round for help? The other Dominions are supporting themselves in that way, and they are advancing.

I am afraid that we are not in a position to do that, and we may not be for a very long time to come. I do not think we should lose sight of what is happening not very far away from us in British Honduras and the Falkland Islands. If we are to have federation we must be

prepared to look after ourselves, and I feel that we are not in a position to do so. It may be said that we have seen other examples of federation in the United States of America, Australia and such places. That is perfectly true but those countries are not quite like ours. Furthermore they are all on one Continent while this Colony and the West Indian Islands are separated from each other by many miles of ocean which can never be as good as land communication. Before we can think of federation it seems to me that we would have to improve our communications very rapidly, which would cost a vast amount of money.

There is another point which I think we should not lose sight of, and I think that it is of direct interest to the people of the Colony. I will, if I may, again read from the Secretary of State's despatch. With reference to the results that might be expected from Federation he says:

“These results would, however, be secured only by the disappearance of the existing Legislatures with their individual traditions and close contacts with the peoples, and it is very doubtful if British West Indian Opinion is yet ready for such a solution.”

I agree that with federation our Legislature would disappear and we would lose touch with our people. That might be all very well when we become a nation, but we know very little of what is happening in Jamaica and the islands closer to us. Our association would have to become very much closer before we could get any benefit whatever from federation.

I would like to point out one other thing, and that is that the non-acceptance of federation at this moment would not prejudice in any way our chance of joining such a federation if we decided to do so at some future date. There can be no question of federation until the Committee has reported, and if we decide to day—and I sincerely hope we will—to postpone our decision it would in no way prejudice our chance of coming in at any time if we so desire, and I am sure the other members of the federation would always welcome us with open arms. I observe from the newspapers that in another Colony they were most anxious to know whether we are coming in or not,

because they feel that this is the one place where there are opportunities for big development. I think that they realize that they would have to rely on this Colony for a good deal of the benefit they expect from federation.

The motion I have moved is very simple. All I am asking is that we should be left free to do what in the future we consider best for this Colony. We do not know that now. When the Committee has reported will be the time for us to say whether we will federate or whether we will not. By not accepting federation now we do not prejudice in any way the future of this Colony, or the future of our children and our children's children. All I ask hon. Members to do is to hesitate before they take a leap in the dark. I am afraid I am not an impassioned speaker or an inspired speaker; I have not got that in me, and I do not wish to be one to-day. All I have done is to put before Members the plain facts as I see them, and what I feel in my heart of hearts is the plain duty of this Colony. The decision lies in the hands of Members of this Council as to the future prosperity of this country. I am asking hon. hon. Members that they should not at this moment, by agreeing to federation, commit ourselves and prejudice our future through lack of information or lack of knowledge of the implications of federation. I would ask hon. Members to give their very very careful consideration to this matter and I repeat once more that the future of this Colony depends very much on the decision we make to-day.

Dr. SINGH: I rise to second the motion relating to the Resolutions discussed at the Montego Bay Conference in Jamaica. I wish to say at this stage that those resolutions are the findings of the Conference and it is unfortunate that hon. Members of this Council have not had an opportunity to read the report of proceedings of the Conference because that would have assisted them in arriving at a decision in this matter. It would also have shown or indicated to hon. Members what happened at the Conference before we arrived at a more or less unanimous decision at the end. This question is indeed a very important one; it involves the future of British Guiana and therefore, Sir, as a delegate to that Conference I think it is my duty to

indicate to hon. Members of this Council some of the important features of the proceedings. That being so I would ask your forbearance, Sir, and suggest that you do not limit our speeches as provided by the Rules of this Council, but that Members be left free to speak at length in the debate on this motion.

The PRESIDENT: I quite agree with the hon. Member. I agree that Members may speak at length on this motion.

Dr. SINGH: Thank you, Sir. The Conference met on September 11, 1947, at Montego Bay, at a place called Fairfield, where the house—or the hall—was filled to capacity. There were present representatives and citizens of Jamaica; representatives of the Press from the United Kingdom, the United States of America, South America and the British West Indian Colonies. There were also present three delegates and two advisers from each of the Colonies—Barbados, British Guiana, British Honduras, Jamaica, the Leeward Islands, Trinidad and the Windward Islands. Also present were His Grace the Bishop of Jamaica, the Custos, Governor and Lady Huggins, Mr. Seel, Mr. Samuel McIntosh, Mrs. Creech Jones and the Rt. Hon. Creech Jones. After prayers by His Grace the Bishop of Jamaica, the Rt. Hon. Creech Jones declared the Conference open in a pleasant atmosphere and in a colourful scene. He introduced His Excellency the Governor of Jamaica and Mr. Seel—the Permanent Under Secretary of State for the Colonies. His Excellency, Sir John Huggins, then said:—

“Right Hon. Secy. of State for the Colonies, Your Grace the Archbishop Hon. Custos, Hon. Gentlemen, Ladies and Gentlemen:—“The duty which I have to perform this morning is a very pleasant one. I wish first of all on behalf of the people of Jamaica to extend a very hearty welcome to the Rt. Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies and Mrs. Creech Jones. (Hear, hear). Jamaica was greatly honoured when it was decided that this all-important and historic conference should be held in Montego Bay, but it was doubly honoured, Sir, when you decided to preside at the conference. (Applause). We in Jamaica were particularly delighted when you found it possible to come to Jamaica sufficiently in advance of the conference to enable you to see something of the conditions under which we live. I understand that in certain quarters there was some apprehension that you might be shown only the good and none of the bad. I think you

will agree with me that during the past week you have seen a good deal of both. Indeed, it could not have been otherwise. I, on the one hand, was naturally anxious that you should see conditions for the improvement of which we are seeking financial assistance from Colonial Development and Welfare funds. On the other hand, they do not know you, Sir, who fail to realise that you are determined to see the bad as well as the good. Nor has it been a question of seeing only. Wherever you have gone you have never failed to listen to all the accounts of their difficulties which all classes of people have poured into your ears, and as most of you here to-day know the West Indies extremely well, you will realise that there has been no lack of fluency in expressing to you what the people have in their minds. Mrs. Creech Jones has also been a very keen observer of conditions, and I for my part will say that her powers of observation, her energy and the lively interest which she has taken in everything which she has seen has been a stimulating influence for all of us. (Hear, hear). . . . .

"I also wish to welcome this morning the distinguished Legislators from other parts of the Caribbean and British Guiana who have come to represent their countries at this Conference. Many of you are well known by name to the people of Jamaica, and we are all delighted to meet you in the flesh and to extend to you the hospitality of our country. (Hear, hear). I also extend our greetings to the official advisers who have come with the various delegations, to those who come as observers, and to the members of the Press who are gathered here to-day. My third and last duty is to wish all success to this Conference.

"When I arrived in Trinidad for the first time in 1938, there was some talk of federation in anticipation of the visit of the Royal Commission which had been appointed to consider conditions in the British West Indies, but although there was talk I soon discovered that there was practically none of the spirit of co-operation at that time. Each island seemed to think and feel that it was a law almost unto itself and that it had little need either of advice from or co-operation with its neighbours. Indeed I think it may almost be said that insularity reigned supreme at that time. I remember that on one occasion when I paid a visit from Trinidad to another island I had the temerity to remember the Trinidad point of view on a matter which was of that time engaging the attention of those islands. I was at once politely but firmly reminded that the island had been managing its own affairs extremely successfully for some centuries and that no advice from Trinidad was required. Indeed, although Trinidad had been in existence as a Colony for some 140 years at that time it appeared that it was still

regarded/as some sort of upstart which had not yet cut her wisdom teeth.

"After the Commission had left discussion on the subject of federation became somewhat desultory and intermittent, and nothing that was really constructive emerged beyond the Bill which was prepared about the year 1940 by the Hon. Grantley Adams who is now representing Barbados at this conference; but although discussion on the question of federation languished a distinct trend developed in the direction of greater co-operation and during the past eight or nine years we have seen many organisations set up which cover the British West Indies and British Guiana generally. I have in mind the Incorporated Chambers of Commerce which, I think, was one of the earliest; the West Indies Sugar Association, the Federation of British Civil Service Associations in the Caribbean area, the British West Indian Lime Oil Sales Company, the West Indian Conference which is held under the auspices of the Caribbean Commission and the Caribbean Labour Congress, to mention only a few. In the last year or two during which air communications have improved and world economic conditions have deteriorated, force of circumstances have resulted in the calling of many West Indian conferences. Indeed it is becoming the practice now to call such conferences on a very wide range of subjects. I might mention the recent conference held regarding the supply of oils and fats to the Caribbean area, also the Conference held in Barbados recently to discuss the question of shipping affecting the West Indies. The West Indies were permitted to send a deputation to the International Trade Talks which took place earlier this year. To my mind that is a good example of what can be done as a result of closer association, for the British West Indies as a whole were strong enough to obtain representation which could not have been granted to any individual colony. It will be seen then that the current is now running strongly in the direction of greater co-operation, collaboration and consultation. It is opportune therefore that at this time you should meet in conference here to decide whether that current of closer co-operation should be directed into the channel of closer association. The task which you have before you, gentlemen, is an extremely important one, but I know that you will approach it with that high degree of statesmanship of which you are capable and with the interests of the people whom you represent at heart. I wish all success to your deliberations." (Applause).

The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Creech Jones) then asked Mr. Seel, the Permanent Assistant Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, to

acknowledged the very warm greetings which His Excellency had conveyed.

Mr. Seel said :—

“Your Excellency, ladies and gentlemen, the Secretary of State. You have asked me, Sir, as the senior United Kingdom Civil Servant here to say a few words to express our appreciation of the hospitality of the Governor of Jamaica at this Conference. In one way at least I am in a very good position to do so. For the last five weeks I have been travelling around the various West Indian colonies and have had evidence of what West Indian hospitality can mean. I will not say I have been overwhelmed. I have managed to stand up against a profusion of food and warmth which I did not believe could have been extended to a stranger coming into your midst. I have had quite an experience and I have seen enough of the West Indies to assure myself that the Conference will be an event in its way. It is not my business to anticipate the results of the Conference but to express appreciation on behalf of the United Kingdom delegation especially, and I hope on behalf of all the members of this Conference to the Government of Jamaica.....”

The Rt. Hon. Creech Jones, on this historic occasion, then said :—

“Your Excellency, Your Grace, ladies and gentlemen: It gives me great pleasure to have this privilege of presiding over this historic conference. We meet in a place not only of great beauty but of historic interest, and with Mr. Seel I would wish to join in acknowledging our indebtedness to His Excellency the Governor and the Jamaica Government for the hospitality they have provided and the arrangements they have made for us to confer at this important meeting. Our thanks are not merely a formal expression but His Majesty's Government would like to acknowledge the very great help which has been afforded them by Jamaica — by the people and by the Government — in providing the facilities necessary for our meeting. Therefore, I want most warmly to thank His Excellency for his gracious remarks passed this morning to the delegates who are assembled, and also to myself and my wife whose pleasure it is to be with you this morning. I want also to express to Conference the very best wishes of His Majesty's Government in London. I want if I may, to convey their profound interest in the well-being and progress of the West Indies. I have come at a very difficult time in the affairs of the United Kingdom. Our economic problems are acute but we are determined to work our way through our present difficulties and to emerge with a greater sense of our international responsibilities and a deeper consciousness of our obligations to the peoples which history, by its legacy, has given us. (Applause). We have in Britain

a very difficult road to walk but I am sure that experience will forge closer links between Great Britain and the far-flung Colonies inside the Commonwealth.

“Now, this Conference has met to consider the formulation of proposals for closer association of the British West Indian Colonies. It is in the nature of things a Conference of representatives of West Indian legislative bodies and their advisers, and we are conscious that this conference could possibly be more complete if certain of the Constitutions of the territories in the West Indies had reached a more advanced stage, but of that I shall say a word in a moment. We are here to see whether the time is ripe, and I believe it is, for a new step to be taken in the political life of the West Indies — not only a new step, but a step which has been long hoped for by well-wishers both inside and outside the West Indian Colonies. I need not emphasise to you this morning the very considerable interest which will be shown in your deliberations in most parts of the world—that interest is not peculiar to the people of the West Indies. It will be an interest in the United Kingdom, throughout the Commonwealth and throughout America.

“Federation has been a dream—something long hoped for — and those who have often wished for it have been obliged to fall back into the narrow parochialism of their own colonies. But the opportunity at last has come to us who are assembled at this conference to-day and we sincerely hope — because of the future and all that is important — we are not going to let this opportunity slip. We are charged with a responsibility that will tax all our statesmanship, our qualities of leadership, our tolerance and all our ingenuity. We are to make decisions and recommendations of the greatest importance to the peoples we represent. We must not fail, for if we do, we hurl a blow of the greatest consequence to the West Indians in the next few decades, and we shall suffer a setback for generations to come. Each of us brings to the conference table his own experience of life — his conception of how life should be lived. Each brings his knowledge of the hopes and conditions of the peoples he represents—his views as to how Colonies should be ordered—and Government has to secure and realise the hopes of the peoples we all represent. We have heard men who have been trained in the hard life of the Colonies, men who have been trained in trade and commerce, men from the labouring masses of the territories and peoples in the fields, professional men and advisers, administrators and technicians, and I hope that we shall debate the problem before us without prejudice. We shall talk frankly with the utmost sincerity and the fullest integrity. We must try in this conference to integrate our own deep interest in our separate territories in the development of the life of the West Indies as a whole.

"His Majesty's Government in London is determined that the same liberal spirit which has characterised its social and economic work at home shall be expressed in its relations with the Colonies for which it carries the same responsibilities. This is not the time or place for me to discuss with you the policy pursued by Great Britain to-day in relation to the Colonies, nor is it the time and place to discuss the fluctuating policy of Britain in regard to the West Indies in particular, but I want to say that the disturbances which occurred in the years before the War, the Commission of Enquiry which was held, and the Royal Commission into the affairs of the West Indies, all these marked an important turning point not only in British Colonial history, but also in the history of social and economic development in the West Indies. We have moved as a nation from a conception of Colonies as provinces for material exploitation for the benefit of alien interest to a conception of Commonwealth in which that Commonwealth shall include free nations living out their own lives and all co-operating for the good, the stability, the peace and the happiness of the world. It is our task as a British Government to create, so far as we can, the conditions which are essential for good nationhood in all the territories under our control and we have, therefore, latterly, at a very great pace, been trying to apply these liberal principles in all the territories inside the Empire. It is not only a problem of political change, but also of creating conditions of social and economic development in order that sound foundations for the function of democracy shall be laid. It is not only by modifications that representative Government shall be achieved, but also that responsibility shall pass increasingly from London to the peoples of the territories themselves. That is demanded of the modern world; if we delay then disaster overtakes us. We have, therefore, in planning ahead as a Government in London, to take what the more cautious amongst us call risks; but I am aware—and I have this experience as I have looked at conditions throughout Jamaica—that it is not only essential that when people ask for bread you give them bread, but it is essential that if they are to get the fullness of living they should have a value in the political life which can only come from representation, and a voice in the affairs of their Government.

"Our conception of all the Constitutions in the Colonial Empire to-day is that these Constitutions have been granted and have been given, and if they are not to be of a static kind they must devise organisations which can be adjusted to the changing needs and development of the people until they fill the bill of requirements of the people. We cannot stand in the way, nor would we if we could, of a people who are stretching out for the responsibility and control of their

own affairs, but while we are trying to meet the needs of the separate territories, we are conscious that we cannot bring them realisation of their hopes unless there is developed between these separate territories, collaboration and co-operation, and some kind of original organisation through which by a pooling of knowledge and resources you can help raise standards of living and help to give the people the more adequate living that they are demanding, so that there must be simultaneous development of the responsibility of Government in the separate Colonies alongside of original organisation for the completion of the hopes of the people. . . . . And it is of interest to note that in the larger world this conception of regional collaboration is growing. Already under the . . . . . of the British Empire regional growth for the pooling of knowledge, for the co-operation of technicians for tackling some of the basic problems of poverty, ignorance and disease, regional machinery has become absolutely necessary if progress must result at all. We have, therefore, in Africa for instance, the beginnings of the East African inter-territorial organisation; in Central Africa, the Consultative Council for the same purpose. In West Africa, the West African Council secured the collaboration and co-operation of West Africa. . . . . In South Africa and in other places which I could mention under the Colonial Empire, the necessity for the basic facts . . . . pressure, the economic needs. All these things are beginning to show that regional co-operation, collaboration and organisation should be created if the individual territories are to come forward. And in the case of the West Indies, the idea of federation has a very long history and the difficulties, of course are very real. ✓

"The various stages of political and social development, the variety of peoples in some of the territories, the differences with respect to resources, the fact that some of the territories are not and cannot do would seem to make themselves absorbed; problems of transport, the fact that the British West Indies are not comprehensive of the whole of the West Indies; all these are difficulties and problems which exist for us to overcome to-day. I am not going to repeat the arguments that are advanced in the White Paper in my dispatch and the papers attached to that dispatch, the advantages and disadvantages are well known to us all, but I submit that this problem has now to be considered in the light of our experience in this post-war world. In the light of our modern needs, in the light of modern conditions, whatever be those difficulties we have, if we go forward at this speed and meet the social pressures of our people, if we are to satisfy their legitimate clamour for change, for reform and for material needs, then some conception of federation must be realised at the present time. I know of course that

there is a wide recognition of the economy of the Colonies and the efficiency which can be gained as a result of closer association. And I am not unmindful too of the facts which His Excellency, Sir John Huggins, has directed your attention to this morning — of the movements already taking place for greater co-operation between the territories in this region of the world.

“In the discussions by those engaged in the Departments of Labour, the conferences by those engaged in the Medical Services, the conference by those engaged in commerce and trade, all indicate the need for closer collaboration. There is the emphasis which has been shown by the Caribbean Commission on the research and the common requirements of all the West Indies in order to help social progress alone... Now, His Majesty's Government is anxious that results shall follow from this Conference because experience has taught us as I have already said, that many of our problems can only be tackled effectively if some wider association becomes possible. It is our experience — it is the experience of the Comptroller and his staff and I am sure that it has been the experience of you who are representatives of the people — that you cannot hope within the limits of your own economic resources, within the narrow boundaries of your own Colonies, to stand up effectively to the social measures which your own people are demanding. We believe that their wants in the field of education, of housing, of health and of community life cannot possibly be met on the narrow basis of the individual Colonies. (Applause). If you as representatives are to face the responsibility of office for the building up of the standards of living of the people you represent, then there must be some new fundamental conception born if satisfaction is to come to your work. Now, I do not want for a moment — by the slightest suspicion — to convey the idea that His Majesty's Government is urging closer union in order to unload its own responsibility on the West Indian territories. What we would seek to do is to create the conditions whereby the transfer of responsibility can be made effective by giving the territories the tools to tackle properly the problems which confront them. There is no suggestion that His Majesty's Government should withdraw its aid — that it should cease to make available the central services which at the moment it is busily creating under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act since March, apart from the monies spent under the 1940 Act up to March 1946. No less than £15,500 has been made available on a 10-year basis for West Indian development. Further, we are creating in London a series of central services under which the individual Colonies and the region can share. The University — the field of higher education — is but one instance of these services. A great deal of research into

some of the problems of health, of plant disease and so on — a great deal of that research is being organised and His Majesty's Government is spending no less than £1,000,000 per year in order to further that work. There are, in addition, arrangements being made for the training of administrators and technicians in the British Universities, drawn from the Colonial Services. I hope, as I said before, that I shall be able to secure from Parliament in the next few months, a Bill for the Development Corporation whereby beneficial researches and other services can be made available for the encouragement of enterprises, of public utilities, private undertakings and helping the growth of expansion and production in the territories.

“I doubt if any of us would seek to prostitute the idea of Federation for narrow political ends. The suggestion has been made, but I do believe that all of us here approach this problem with integrity, sincerity and confidence, and that somehow or other some way is going to be found. I said just now that the Government in London was anxious for the success of this conference because of the advantages which, in their judgment could not otherwise be secured for the West Indies, and perhaps in our deliberations during the next few days we will see that if the whole idea is not within immediate accomplishment, at least some progress can be made along the roads concerned with fiscal policy and taxation, with the improvement and organisation of communications the penal administration, defence and unification of a number of important services in the Colonies concerned. We are all convinced that some of our territories are not getting anything like the expert advice and the technicians of the right quality that they should enjoy, and some of the territories in spite of their anxiety to mobilise their resources as effectively, as economically and as efficiently as possible still find themselves under Treasury control. This is a bugbear which afflicts a number of Colonies and I am sure it is a condition which, if you want responsibility and genuine freedom, certain of the Colonies in the West Indies must be allowed to get away from. Federation, as I see it, need not interfere with the identity and individuality of the separate Colonies. (Applause). It need not be derogatory of the autonomy — the legitimate autonomy — essential for responsibility in the individual territories. Nor need federation subject any of the territories — any single territory — any one of them — to the domination of any other territory. (Hear, hear!). But some surrender of individual authority does become necessary if the small units of the West Indies are to maintain full and complete independence in all aspects of their Government. The continuance of the small autonomous units, the continuance of the small territorial units, is becoming rapidly an anachronism in the modern world, (Hear,

Hear!) and the only effective way of preventing domination and obtaining security is with local autonomy within the individual territories establishing federation and full internal self-government within the British Commonwealth. (Hear, hear!). Now this must be the aim of our conference. How can we provide authority and responsibility in the individual territories consistent with full responsibility and government by a federation which can go forward to full self-governing status inside the Commonwealth. I do not think that Britain would hesitate—once federation is realised and a machine which is responsive to popular needs and demands throughout all the territories is created—to concede this measure of full responsible Government inside the Commonwealth. (Applause). That must be our aim and our purpose, and the steps along that road ought to be taken as a result of this conference now meeting.

“The position as set out in the White Paper—in the memorandum in par. 11—in which we in the Colonial Office said: “Possibly the most important reason of all for the view that closer association is necessary lies in the fact that it is clearly impossible in the modern world for the present separate communities, small and isolated as most of them are to achieve and maintain full self-government of their own. It is not, for example practical politics to suppose that communities of 200,000 souls, or in some cases less, should play an independent part in international discussions. On the other hand, a community of well over 2,000,000 people in the Caribbean area, with much that homogeneous in their culture, could reasonably hope to achieve real self-government and be strong enough to stand against economic and cultural pressure, and to formulate and carry through a policy and way of life of its own

“This Conference will not make final decisions, of course. The peoples must be fully consulted after this. I do hope that the delegates, when the conference is over, will show responsible leadership in this connection; but I reiterate that federation must be our aim and that this conference must hammer a road to it. (Applause). Our difficulty, at least at the beginning, can be met by the applying of our experience and the acknowledging by the members of the various problems and the financial implications that are involved in the federation ideas. The question of how the important services must be more effectively run—where some departure can be made in regard to taxation, customs, etc., is one in which some new growth can be won. I know that all of you here to-day studied this problem over a long time, and many of you have been in deep consultation with your colleagues about it. I only want to emphasise that in our conception of federation no one section of the West

Indians must be put in a position to dominate any other section. (Applause) . . . and I want to emphasise that in the interested enthusiasm which His Majesty's Government is putting behind the conception of federation, we have no desire nor will we seek to escape the responsibility for the giving of whatever assistance we can to make this idea real. But finally, I assert that if democracy in the British West Indies is to realise itself, it can only do so by the laying of a sound economic foundation to the help of all the Colonies inside the British Commonwealth in this part of the world. Associated services are absolutely essential; the people demand that there shall be a raising of their standards of living. Democracy, however much it clamours, however much we seek to create a spirit of democracy in all our political foundations it cannot be realised until we have achieved some wider political basis—some new political organisation and a wider political liberation. . . . We know that it is essential to the progress of the West Indies and we should go along this road as rapidly as we can.” (Applause).

Following the speech by the Secretary of State for the Colonies there was a pause of 15 minutes' duration then Conference resumed. When order was called for, Sir, I was the first speaker. My speech is also here, but I will not read it. Then the next speaker was Mr. Cuke of Barbados. He said—and I shall only read certain portions of his speech:—

“The general aim of His Majesty's Colonies is to think in terms of a federated group of islands taking their place in the British Commonwealth of Nations. That, I think, Sir, is the aim of this Conference.”

Then he went on to say:—

“We have had to purchase all these years our manufactured products from Great Britain, the U.S.A. and Canada, and we have had to do so at a very high price. When we come to market our products, however, we are up against this awful question—dumping. . . . Up to now the general economic progress of these Colonies has been kept down year after year. . . . We do have a quarrel in the West Indies—the question of dumping has not been given consideration and we have been kept in poverty all these years. . . .

“We feel, Sir, that that part of our relationship has not been as happy as it should be because we feel that when it comes to selling to us we must pay prices in competition with Canada and the United States, but when it comes to buying from our Colonies it means buying in the cheapest market. I think it is fundamental to any federation of these islands that that principle should



be made a fundamental one for whether we have a confederated West Indies or not, unless that aspect of the economic situation is given most careful consideration all the political federation we may have can only end in disillusion. Men are not made happy merely by having political rights; they want food, better housing, etc., and unless we are prepared to face that fundamental issue all our work here to-day will end in disillusion. Therefore, as a starting point I think we have to remember that if we are to become units of the British Commonwealth of Nations, there must be a fair exchange of labour...."

Then he went on to say :

"I feel, Sir, that the Home Government should endeavour as a beginning, a fundamental, to broaden the representation of the Government of all the Islands, to give greater representation of their own Island, not only within their own legislative scope, to federal administrative scope and having set a deadline of so many years in the future, start off now by granting a more representative Government to each individual Island in a form to be decided..."

The PRESIDENT : The hon. Member may give the substance and not read the whole report.

Dr. SINGH : What, I think, we are being asked is to consider the passing of sentence without knowing the facts of the case. Having not read what took place at the Conference it is very difficult for Members to come to a reasonable decision. However I shall not proceed further because there are other factors I wish to deal with. I wish to say that Federation had been discussed for many years in this Colony before the Montego Bay Conference. In 1938 the British Caribbean Labour Conference at their meeting at the Town Hall passed a resolution advocating Federation as the present goal for the British West Indies. I believe that Federation will be beneficial to the British West Indian Colonies. The apprehension is, that one community may dominate over all the others. I do not feel so. It is felt the African communities and their descendants will predominate if there is Federation. I do not think so. I emphatically say so from what I have observed. The tendency to-day is that the different units are trying to be friendly, and in the next 20 years the problem will be solved. There will be no question of different units as there will be a common understanding. His Majesty's Government

is offering us Federation. Must we refuse it? Must we refuse a thing that is being offered to us? It is the basic aim of British policy to quicken the progress of all Colonial peoples towards the ultimate goal of Self-Government. Now we have seen that in a tangible form. Responsible Government was offered to India and, we know, to Burma and Ceylon also. What we have to remember, Sir, is that other people have paid for their improved form of government by making sacrifices, bloodshedding, imprisonment and so forth. But we are offered that to-day without any shedding of blood. However prosperous we may become in British Guiana, with 300 or 400 thousand people we cannot have a say in international discussions, but with Federation with 3½ million people we will surely be considered in international affairs. With Federation it will be easier for us to raise loans. We shall be able to pool our resources and those resources can be applied to those areas that are suitable for development. Take for instance British Guiana: We have the sugar industry, diamonds, gold, timber, but we cannot develop the rice industry to a high standard. It is true that we have not the population, but rice can be developed to such a very high standard that we can have enough rice to supply the whole of the Caribbean area as well as to sell our surplus outside. And there is Trinidad with her oil resources. Her oil can supply the whole of the Caribbean area as well as outside. Then we have the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture that can be developed to do research work. The Windward and Leeward Islands can produce all the cotton to be manufactured into textiles to supply the whole of the Caribbean area. We have Jamaica, a very prosperous Island; they can do the processing of many of our articles.

The question will be asked, Sir, why should the prosperous Colonies support some of those Colonies that are not able to balance their budget? Well this Note on Closer Union assures that His Majesty's Government will lend aid to such places. But, Sir, it shall be the duty of the Federal Government, which will be the central body to which experts will be attached for the government of the Federated Colonies, to see that those

Islands are developed and made progressive so as to fall into line with the other prosperous Colonies. The Federal Government will in the first instance take on the Customs Union, but the Colonies will have their own Legislative Councils and will manage their own domestic affairs. As Federation develops we will have to assign some of our powers. I am in sympathy with some hon. Members who stated previously that British Guiana should have a continental outlook, that we should look south, etc. But, Sir, the people in those parts are absolute strangers to us; they have a different language, a different culture, a different currency. Everything there is foreign to us, whereas in front of us to the north-west we have a cluster of West Indian Colonies with people of our own kith and kin, people of one religion, one custom. Unfortunately they have been separated from one another through lack of inter-colonial communication. But, Sir, one of the resolutions of the Conference was on Shipping, that there should be intercolonial communication. By that means there will be free travelling to those Colonies, there will be a better understanding and I will say mutual understanding for trade and commerce. The West Indian Islands are not separated by many miles of water. It is felt, Sir, that we have been estranged, but I repeat that we have been estranged because of lack of communication. With Federation there will be a common Customs Union, a uniform currency, free travelling, which will make us understand the people of the West Indies better and we will not be so estranged.

Mr. RAATGEVER: Is the hon. Member suggesting that if we have Federation we would travel free from one Island to another without any charge?

The PRESIDENT: I do not think the hon. Member means that. He means the people will travel freely.

Dr. SINGH: There will be no Police restrictions, no passports to be used. Hon. Members, we are on a very important issue, and we should ask God's guidance so that posterity will not have an opportunity to blame us.

Mr. LEE: Before any other Member speaks, may I crave a privilege? Your

Excellency, there are only four of us in this new Council who were here when Federation was discussed on the previous occasion. The old Council elected three Members to go to the Montego Bay Conference and, if I am in order, they have not sent in a report for the other Members of the Council to know what transpired at the Conference. Two of those Members have addressed this Council. The other Member, Sir Eustace Gordon Woolford, is here and, if I may be permitted to ask you, he can tell us what transpired there implementing what the hon. the First Nominated Member, Mr. Seaford, and the hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo, Dr. Singh, said. I am of the opinion that hon. Members would be grateful to you, Sir, if Sir Eustace is permitted to give us what has been left out by the other two Delegates to the Conference. This is such an important question that I feel Members who have not had a copy of the proceedings at Montego Bay will be glad to learn from Sir Eustace what actually took place. I have been privileged to be sent a copy of the proceedings, but I am sure several Members have not.

The PRESIDENT: I think the hon. Member's suggestion is an excellent one. If it meets with the wishes of the Council I shall be happy to ask Sir Eustace Woolford to be so kind as to give the Council his impressions of the Conference as has been given to it by the other Members who spoke. Is it the desire of the Council to hear Sir Eustace Woolford? (applause) Sir Eustace, will you be so good as to address the Council? (applause).

Sir EUSTACE WOOLFORD: Sir, I should like to thank you for the honour done me in asking me to address the Council. I have been in public life for many years and I should like to disclaim any view that may be held or any inference that may be drawn that I attended here this afternoon for this purpose. It was purely accidental, and as I heard the hon. Member making the request to you I tried to signal to the Clerk to communicate to you that I think myself it is a privilege that ought not to be allowed. I do not think that I can improve on the very effective speech made by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Seaford. I listened with great care and attention to

what he said, and I then learnt from him for the first time that Members had not been supplied with the Conference Papers. But I do not think in any case he has made any omission in his report of the Conference or in the summary that he has given you. It is a mistake to suppose that Federation—if I may be allowed to express my own views—in the present circumstances will be of any immediate benefit to this Colony. I think myself that opinions like my own which are widely held in this Colony might be changed as the result of the deliberations of the proposed committee, but in any event I would suggest with great deference to Members that they should accept the advice given by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Seaford. Anyone, who has been in public life in this Colony or who has any knowledge of its affairs—whether as administrators or legislators—would, I think, recognise that the administration of this Colony presents problems quite dissimilar to any of those found in the British West Indian units either taken singly or collectively, and I have always felt myself that the future of this Colony in any decision made with respect to that future require the undivided, close and guarded attention of those people who are responsible for the administration of its public affairs. I cannot really conceive that in any Federal Council when important questions affecting this Colony are being considered, it would be within the competence of those representatives in the Federal Council apart from our own to be able to be either persuaded or dissuaded in arriving at a decision. In other words, it is my view that in order to express an opinion about this Colony one requires a very long and intimate acquaintance with the problems of administration in this Colony. Without wishing unduly to delay the meeting at all, I would like to give an instance of what I think and what I fear may be the result of the decision by this Council to become a member of the Federal Government.

We all know that a very considerable amount of care has been taken by the Development Committee in its examination of the needs and requirements of this Colony. I can recall no report which has been more ably considered than the reports of the various sub-committees, and

the decisions arrived at are those which have been so arrived at after very careful consideration and with due regard to the expenditure and otherwise that render them possible. Is there not the prospect, as I see it, of some important decision of that kind being over-ridden by the Federal Government? I cannot help feeling that might be the case. I speak generally. I am not speaking of any individual decision arrived at. In the government of this Colony it is very important that if some cataclysm of nature, as we have had from time to time, visits us as the result of which it may be necessary for this Colony to undertake large expenditure which this Colony may ordinarily, perhaps, have the means to undertake and the willingness and the readiness to do it, and which requires immediate attention to overcome, I can see there may be some delay in having a decision in regard to that, the matter having to be referred to the Federal Council and, perhaps, the expenditure denied or delayed with resultant paralysis to this Colony's progress. I speak as an old man, and I feel that I have good grounds for saying that whatever may have been the attitude of the Imperial Government or the Colonial Office not only towards this Colony but towards the various units of the Caribbean area in the past, that view has been completely changed.

I believe that the oversight of Imperial Administration would be a safer guide and a safer help to maintain than in having it translated to a Federal Government composed of the various elements in the Caribbean area. In other words, I believe that we have far more to gain by remaining as at present under the immediate control of the Imperial Government or of the Colonial Office—as we are accustomed to say. There has been no period of time at which there has been a better understanding of the needs and requirements of this Colony or indeed of any unit of the Caribbean area than exists at this time. It is only the fear that we all think that we may have, perhaps, a better administration of our own affairs that this idea of Federation is being fostered. But I do not believe it. If I had to give my vote in favour of remaining as we are, I should unhesitatingly do so.

I am not going into details as the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Seaford, has dealt with that in every respect, but there is this fear that perhaps exists in the minds of some Members of the Council that if Federation is not supported this Colony would never attain the status of Self-Government. Before I go further let me say at once that is not the proper view to take. It is open to this Colony; when it is free of financial liabilities, when it reaches a position of financial stability, Self-Government will come, but we must prepare ourselves for this and, I think, we are not far away from doing so. I do not agree with the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Seaford, that there does not exist in the personnel of the various constituents parts of the Caribbean persons who are capable of making a very fair and valuable contribution towards Self-Government. I believe that in this Colony we have a large number of sober-minded people who can make a study of administration and who are quite capable of being of some assistance in the administration of the various public departments we have. I believe that we can in that respect, even now without any training, make a better show than, for instance, they do in Jamaica, but that is a matter for the future. I do ask Members not to confuse the idea of Federation with Self-Government, or to make the one dependent on the other. There is just this view I would like to express. I agree with the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Seaford, that there were more misunderstandings about what Federation means and what its results might be in the minds of some of the delegates than I can picture to you now, and frequently at times—Mr. Seaford can support me—individual Members would say “Oh, no; I never thought Federation meant that, and I would never agree to that.” I think that view was expressed by, I think, the honourable representative of Grenada, who, I believe, went there a confirmed federationist. If the records of the Conference were accurately taken—and I have no doubt that they were—I do not think there will be found to-day an adherent to that policy.

On the whole I suggest to hon. Members that they will consider very carefully what Mr. Seaford has said. He given a clear exposition of what took

place at the Conference, as might be expected from a public man of his experience. He emphasized, of course, that the delegates to that Conference expressed diverse points of view. I think myself that it would be dangerous for this Colony or any individual territory to accede to federation without hearing the other man's point of view. There is the greatest ignorance throughout the West Indies of the potentialities of this Colony. They know absolutely nothing about it. As I have said before, I think that applies to Barbados, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Trinidad, right up to Antigua. I do not think I would be wrong in saying that apart from the occasions of cricket and football tournaments we have never had more than a few visitors from those islands spending a few days or hours in this Colony and going away without knowing anything at all about us. I have in the course of my long life seen only one Member of the Legislature of Barbados, in this Chamber, (the Hon. Dudley Leacock) listening to anything that was being said, and I think he has only been here on two occasions. No Trinidadian of any prominence in public life except Mr. Roodal who came the other day, has ever come here. They have not the faintest knowledge of what this Colony is like, or what its requirements are, and I think we would be of far greater assistance to them in what they are trying to accomplish than they would be to us.

I would recommend that we preserve the *status quo* and postpone our decision on this momentous question until the Committee has reported. That is the view I entertain. I do not think I should say anything more. I am grateful to you, Sir, for the opportunity given me of addressing the Council. (Applause).

Mr. ROTH: Although British Guiana was not, is not, nor ever can be geographically one of the Caribbean territories, the Colonial Office undoubtedly means to consider her as such and, accordingly, to be affected by the Montego Bay Resolutions. Therefore, if by any chance we accepted Resolution No. 1 we *ipso facto* commit ourselves to West Indian Federation. Although, for the most part, the West Indian Islands have common problems, possess similar char-

acteristics and similar races, this cannot be said of British Guiana whose problems, characteristics and, to a major extent, races are dissimilar to those of the Caribbean. Therefore, in considering the question of federation with the Islands it behoves us to be canny, walk softly, and think deeply and long.

There are two main aspects of the question of federation—the economic and the political. Let us consider first the possible economic advantages of federation. What are the possible economic advantages?

Firstly—Better shipping facilities, maybe, but these can be obtained without political federation.

Secondly—Better co-operation among primary producers. This also can be had without political federation.

Thirdly—Better co-operation in trading facilities. Cannot this be obtained without political federation?

Fourthly—A common Customs Tariff, of the benefit of which I am yet to be convinced. This does not require political federation.

Fifthly—Unification of Public Services—also quite practicable without political federation.

Sixthly—A common currency, which in any case will soon be a *fait accompli* without political federation.

These are the six alleged benefits we might get out of federation. But as it obviously is possible to obtain these advantages without political federation, why federate? Especially in view of the great economic and political disadvantages from which we undoubtedly would suffer. Of these disadvantages the greatest, and the one which comes first to mind, is the increased cost of administration. For, argue as you may, I can see no possibility of decreasing our overhead costs of government if we are to follow the path of development and progress upon which we have already set our feet. Added to that would be our share of the cost of the Federal Government which must, of necessity, be comprised of officials on a

higher salary scale than that enjoyed by the officers of the subordinate Governments of the individual units forming the federation.

Students of political economy are agreed—and in this they are supported by historical facts—that for any federation to be an economic success it is a *sine qua non* that its component units must have attained a more or less uniform stage of development, and possess a generally similar density of population.

With regard to parity of development, British Guiana possesses tens of thousands of square miles which, in so far as real development is concerned, have been but barely scratched. Thousands of those square miles are still practically unknown on the ground. Can such a country in fairness be compared with the three highly developed and remaining practically decadent islands forming the British West Indies? I think not.

With regard to the balance of population, the simplest method of demonstrating the absence of this is to imagine a Federal Legislature of a hundred members. Based on population such a Legislature would be constituted thus: Jamaica 45 seats, Trinidad 18, British Guiana 13, Windward Islands 10, Barbados 8, Leeward Islands 4, British Honduras 2, etc. Based on area such a Legislature would give British Guiana 82 seats, British Honduras 77, Jamaica 4, and so on down progressively until little Barbados would have to be content with one-tenth of one representative. (Laughter)

Thus it is obvious that since a balanced federation of British Guiana with the West Indies can be based neither on parity of development, population, nor area, such action would be contrary to all accepted theory and practice.

And there is yet another objection, the geographical one. Is it realised that Kingston lies in an air line 1,350 miles from Georgetown, and Belize a further 750 miles beyond? So that the limits of the proposed federation would be separated by more than 2,000 miles of sea.

Then there are our physical problems. Have any of the Caribbean Islands anything to compare with our sea defence,

drainage and irrigation, and interior transport problems ?

And as to culture, I defy anyone seriously to deny the fact that British Guianese culture to-day is on a higher plane than that of the majority of the Caribbean Islands. The people themselves as a whole are different. Without making any invidious personal comparisons, than which nothing would be easier, it can be pointed out that here the largest section of the population is of Oriental origin. In the Islands it is of African origin.

The inescapable facts of situation, size, topographical character, lack of intensive settlement—as compared with the West Indies—cannot be ignored. Despite certain historical affinities, British occupation and language, with the Islands, our natural affinities are continental, and these fundamental and physical facts will increase in importance as time marches on in the history of Guiana.

However strenuously it may be denied, I am convinced that there is in London an undoubted inclination to press federation upon the Caribbean, the inference being that progress toward self-government can come only through federation. These views, when they embrace British Guiana, can be but due to an abysmal ignorance of our individual situation. We must as Guianese make up our minds that, not being a sea-girt island, we must not be treated as one. We must aim ever at retaining our individual entity as a quite substantial part of South America, with a future economy different from that of the West Indian Islands, and we should develop rather than restrict (and restriction would be a certainty in an island federation) our contacts with the Continent. Such action would in no degree be incompatible with our becoming ultimately a self-governing unit within the British Commonwealth. But allowing ourselves to be roped into an island combine would not help to achieve that end—rather would it increase the potential difficulties.

As a Guianese by adoption I would rather tie my future and my fortune, and those of my children to a Guiana alone, or with the other Guianas, or with South

American contacts, than be tagged on to a string of Islands in an association which must, in its important aspects, political and financial, be irksome to both parties.

During the preliminary debate on this subject in September, 1945, I expressed views very similar to these, and was in consequence dubbed disloyal. If it is disloyal to advocate what one sincerely believes to be the best interests of British Guiana, even if those interests lie somewhat away from the United Kingdom, then I plead guilty to the charge.

Up to the end of the nineteenth century the South American Republics still remembered with gratitude the moral and material support rendered them by England in their struggle for freedom from the Spanish yoke, but a new generation has arisen, and two world wars have intervened, with the result that to-day's trends toward Pan-American unity, common defence, etc. will not permit indefinitely a situation whereby a piece of South America, substantially greater in area than several American Republics, is tacked on to and controlled by a British West Indian Island Federation. Such an arrangement, or even a Dutch Guiana to a Dutch, or a French Guiana to a French West Indian Island Federation could not continue indefinitely without some really serious opposition from the American Republics, and any such attempt would, sooner or later, excite international difficulties and suspicions. Some time ago a high official with much practical experience of the West Indies and Guiana expressed similar views to the then Secretary of State who told him he was raising an international question which did not then come into the picture. But it will come some day, and the federation of British Guiana with the West Indies will bring that day along all the sooner.

Let us be realists and, both for economic and political reasons, continue to co-operate in the economic sphere with what have been euphemistically described as the Jewels of the Antilles, but so long as we have the true interests of British Guiana at heart let us, I pray, keep this wide and fair land free from any political entanglements with what can with geographical accuracy be more properly described as a string of Caribbean excrescences.

Dr. GONSALVES: I rise to support the motion. I was inclined to view with favour the proposal of the hon. the First Nominated Member (Mr. Seaford) that we should adopt Resolutions 2 to 14 of the Montego Bay Conference, but as he continued to speak I became suspicious. When the hon. Member mentioned that the desire for federation was because of a lust for power on the part of the other members of the proposed federation it aroused a suspicion in me that I cannot get over. The hon. Member also remarked that in the event of a closer union he did not believe that there were men capable of representing us in a federal union. I strongly deprecate that remark.

The PRESIDENT: I do not think the hon. Member said that.

Mr. SEAFORD: What I said was that I did not think anyone here had the experience to represent us in the councils of the great powers; not that there was no one with any ability to represent us in any federal council.

Dr. GONSALVES: I thank you, Sir: I take that back. I understood the hon. Member otherwise, and I would then have referred to the Dominions of Ceylon and Burma. I could not for one moment envisage that men with ability like those found in those places could not be found in this little Colony of ours. I support wholeheartedly the Resolutions as presented by the Montego Bay Conference because it is my belief that if ever there was a sincere gesture on the part of the British Government to see us progress by means of closer association with the West Indies, that time is now.

I agree with certain of the observations of the ex-Member of this Council, Sir Eustace Woolford, especially when he said that we should be very careful before we accept all the Resolutions, and advised that we should accept the motion as presented by the hon. the First Nominated Member. I am almost afraid to comment on the remarks of that intellectual stalwart, Sir Eustace Woolford, who was one of the delegates to the Montego Bay Conference, but I think this is the time to give expression to our feelings. I am satisfied that this is the best gesture on the part of the British Government because we are living in an age when we

must march with a progressive step if British Guiana is to avoid the fate of Czechoslovakia. We must also think of what is happening in Belize, a city in which I lived for 10 years, and the effrontery of two Latin-American Republics in claiming that they had a right to British Honduras. I say that if things were different, if they did not feel that Great Britain is not in the position she used to be, or is not enjoying the glory she once possessed, I do not think they would have made the attempt they are making. When I think of the impudence of Argentine in saying that she will not tolerate any colonial possessions on the mainland of South America it makes me think deeply of the sincerity of the White Paper on Closer Association of the British West Indian Colonies as propounded by His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies. It seems to me that the entire embodiment of this proposal is to be found in paragraph 11 of the Secretary of State's Memorandum which states:

"11. Possibly the most important reason of all for the view that closer association is necessary lies in the fact that it is clearly impossible in the modern world for the present separate communities, small and isolated as most of them are, to achieve and maintain full self-government on their own. It is not, for example, practical politics to suppose that communities of two hundred thousand souls, or in some cases even less, should play an independent part in international discussions. On the other hand, a community of well over two million people in the Caribbean area, with much that is homogeneous in their culture, could reasonably hope to achieve real self-government, and to be strong enough to stand against economic and cultural pressure and to formulate and carry through a policy and way of life of its own."

It seemed to me as I continued to read that paragraph (and I have given it fair study within my limited capability) that we have trusted the British Government all these years, and regardless of the trade we might get with the South American countries, the liberty we enjoy to-day and the right to give expression to our feelings are only available in countries practising democracy, such as Great Britain and the United States of America. I am reminded of that great French writer and philosopher, Voltaire, who said "I do not agree with what you say, but I will fight to the death for your

right to say it." That is the essence of true democracy.

What have the West Indies to offer us? What would we gain by federation? Would we lose by it? Would we gain by closer association? Yes, definitely. But before I elaborate on what we would gain by it I would say let us examine the proposal very carefully before we commit ourselves. To throw out the motion, as has been suggested, is a suggestion with which I do not agree in spite of the fine speeches which have been made. It has been said that we would be dominated by Jamaica which would have 45 votes. If Jamaica secured 45 votes she would be entitled to them, because her population is one and a half times that of all the West Indies. But that is not the kind of Federal Government I envisage.

Mr. ROTH: I rise to a point of explanation. I used those figures to demonstrate the disparity of population.

Dr. GONSALVES: I am merely using them to illustrate the point I am trying to make, without trying to cast any aspersion on my friend. I suggest that a Federal Government could be formed similar to those in the United States of America, Canada, and perhaps Australia. In Canada there is a Governor-General, and there are Provinces. The provincial rights are not interfered with by the Federal Government but are protected. In the United States there were two separate countries—the Union of the North and the Confederate South—and these came together. If you have a House of Representatives in this federated territory each state will have representation in proportion to its size and importance. Certain states in the United States of America have 16 members in the House of Representatives but not more than two in the House of Assembly. If we have a West Indian United Council for the Dominion of the West Indies we can follow this practice so that the delegates to the Federal House would have equal representation and we would not be taking away power from our local legislatures. I do not envisage that sort of Government—whereby power would be taken away from the local legislatures. Certain rights are bound to be delegated to the Federal Government, but otherwise

the Colonies would retain their rights in the local Councils just as we are doing here. We would preserve our settled rights and whenever power is delegated to the Federal Government that would be a different thing.

The next point I desire to make arises from the fact that the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Roth, said that this country has a continental destiny. I agree with that, and I think we are all fanatical to see that it is developed as it ought to be. That is my main pre-occupation to-day, but we have been talking for the last—how many years? It is only now, as Sir Eustace has said, that an entirely different view is being taken of the situation and there seems to be a more earnest desire to bring about development. If I am quoting him correctly, he believes that the Colonial Office to-day has a more sincere and genuine desire to see this country developed than it ever had in the past, but that does not prevent us from entering into a discussion as to what should be done. I believe that because of our political geography this country cannot stand alone and instead of saying like the First Nominated Member that we should first seek self-government, I think we ought to embark upon the idea of federation along the proper lines.

Mr. SEAFORD: To a point of explanation, Sir. I pointed out that the Secretary of State has said that the rejection of federation at this stage would in no way prejudice acceptance of the measure when we think it is justified.

Dr. GONSALVES: I apologise, Sir. To make a long story short, the point being made is that we are too anxious to achieve federation and that we should proceed first to achieve self-government, but I believe that it is through federation that our voices would be heard in the council chambers of the world. It is only natural, Sir, that the voice of the Federal Government would be much more powerful than the voice of this Council representing only the 375,000 souls in this country. We must not only think in terms of British Guiana and in terms of its people. After all, people make a country and Jamaica with its greater population and scope can get further than we can ever hope to get at this stage. We must



not think that this desire for federation is only lust for power on the part of the people. I have been to Jamaica for some little time and I cannot say that British Guiana with its smaller population though greater area can boast of a better culture than Jamaica. In Jamaica you will find an ordinary man walking about and talking with pride of his shares in the Jamaica Producers' Association. That is the sort of thing we want to inculcate in the people of British Guiana and without that sort of thing we would not make very much progress. I think we must get out of our minds the idea that British Guiana's progress should rest only with Guianese themselves. We accept money from the Imperial Government for social welfare and development and we accept it for other things in the same way as the West Indian Colonies, but it is strange and true that we are satisfied to be without federation with them. The West Indian Court of Appeal is a form of federation; the contributions we make to the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad and to the West Indian University, are all forms of federation. and if we have gone to that extent what is the terrible objection that should prevent us from getting political federation. I say again that the geography of this country is one of the reasons why we should think of closer union with the British West Indies, and we should also think of it because of other things that are happening to-day. There should be very careful consideration before we say we are not going to federate.

There is another point which I desire to make. The Secretary of State points out in the White Paper that there are certain units of the West Indies who would not be able to carry their financial responsibilities for the time being and that the Colonial Office through His Majesty's Government would be prepared to carry those responsibilities until such time as those units are able to do so themselves. I do not see, therefore, that these people would be taking any burden upon themselves which they cannot carry, and I ask this Council to let us consider this view impassionately in arriving at a decision on this very important question. What we should not lose sight of is the chance we would have to bring about development. Surely, if the British Gov-

ernment has been fathering us all this time they would continue to be our big brother and lead and guide us until we reach the stage where the Federal Government would mean participation by this Colony without loss of any of our rights and privileges.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I rise to move an amendment to the motion moved by the hon. the First Nominated Member, but before doing so I desire to point out that this Legislature is now being called upon to make one of the most momentous decisions in its history, and that the British Government has embarked upon one of the greatest experiments in Constitutional history. I have given this matter a great deal of thought—and it requires a great deal of thought—because of the manifold implications and issues of far-reaching importance which it involves. After very careful thought and a study of the speeches made at the Montego Bay Conference—from reports published in the *Daily Gleaner* of Jamaica as well as the dispatch and other data contained in the White Paper,—I have come to the conclusion that for Constitutional, geographical and financial or economic reasons, federation with the British West Indian Islands is not expedient at this time. It is both inexpedient and impracticable. The amendment which I desire to move reads as follows:—

“That with respect to the resolutions passed at the Conference on Closer Association of the British West Indian Colonies held at Montego Bay, Jamaica, in September, 1947, this Council:—

× (a) Rejects Resolution 1, until such time as British Guiana and the other Colonies considering federation have attained self-government and until such time as this Colony has had an opportunity to consider the practical implications of federation in the light of the report of the Standing Closer Association Committee proposed in Resolution 6; and.

(b) Agrees to participation by the Colony in the discussions under Resolution 6.”

In effect, this amendment does not fully destroy the motion which has been moved; it merely adds a few safeguards. In other words, if we are to accept the principle of federation at the moment, I respectfully submit that we cannot do more. We should not commit ourselves irrevocably to participation in any active

way within this report and the Resolutions presented to us. It would be observed that the amendment calls for participation in discussions under Resolution 6 alone. This Resolution, as mentioned by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, is the most important and it embraces all the aspects we have to consider as regards closer union and for that reason it seems to me only necessary that we should participate in the discussions under it, and after the report of the Standing Closer Association Committee has been received we should be in a position to deal with the practical implications contained in it.

Before dealing with the three points—Constitutional, geographical and economic—which I have raised, I want to say that I do not believe we have a continental destiny in the way in which it has been expressed. I believe that we have a continental identity which we must preserve. I have great faith in British Guiana and I visualise the time when we would improve our Constitution and go forward towards Dominion status, and from that point of view I am looking towards British Guiana and British Guiana alone. If we have to turn towards federation without self-government, we would be turning towards the Imperial Government to which we are wedded at this moment. I have heard it stated—and I know it is a popular feeling — that the proposed Federal Government would be similar in status to that of Canada or Australia, but I want to say this so that those who think that way would be disillusioned at an early stage. Canada and Australia are comprised of provinces and states which enjoyed their own self-government before they federated, and that is where the whole difference as regards these West Indian Colonies would lie. Those provinces and states had self-determination in themselves and were capable of carrying on their own affairs, and that is why it was convenient to bring about the federation of such units. As one hon. Member has stated, there was a certain amount of similarity and uniformity in Constitution as far as those units were concerned. As regards the White Paper I notice that the Constitution of the Federal Government suggested is set out on page 12, par. 21, and I would ask permission to refer to it. It reads:—

“21. Such a Federal Government might be set up on the following lines:—

(i) A Governor-General with a central Secretariat and separate Departments administering the services coming under of the Federal Legislature. The functions of the organisation of the Comptroller for Development and Welfare could to the extent necessary be taken over by the Governor-General and his staff.....

(iii) An Executive Council on the present Jamaican model, in which the Governor-General would have the same reserve powers as are provided at present for the Governor of Jamaica.”

(iv) A Privy Council, again on the present Jamaican model, which would, *inter alia*, be the responsible authority for the Federal Civil Service mentioned in (vi) below.”

I respectfully say that if the Federal Constitution would not go further than this, then I would prefer to remain under the present Crown Colony system in British Guiana. Here is the danger in the set-up as proposed: We are going to have dual control. We already have control by the Imperial Government which has supremacy in so far as legislation is concerned, plus reserve power; then we would have a Federal Government which would be partly dependent upon the Imperial Government for legislative power while claiming control of this Colony in so far as legislation and other matters are concerned. I think the whole set-up would be untenable and, until we are fully cognisant of all the implications, federation would be a dangerous thing for us to embark upon. In terms of the amendment, therefore, I would suggest to hon. Members that we should reject Resolution 1 until this Colony has had self-government and until we have had an opportunity of knowing fully what the implications of federation are. I think such an attitude would be consistent with the findings of the Caribbean Labour Conference. I have here a report of that Conference as published in the *Daily Gleaner* of Jamaica, and I would like to read from it—taking it with as much accuracy as it can hold—a part of the speech made by Mr. Grantley Adams as Chairman of the Conference. He said:—

“... There should be a federal system of self-governing units, for anything else would be unsuitable.”

As an Executive member of the local Labour Party I make bold to say that that

is one of our objections as well to federation at the present time. We feel that within the next five years we should have self-government and that this Colony is moving fast towards that goal. I can repeat, Sir, what was said by one of our delegates — Sir Eustace — at the Conference on Closer Association of the West Indian Colonies, and it is that British Guiana is in the forefront in so far as the constitution of its Government is concerned. It has not only an Unofficial majority in the Legislature, but it also has an Unofficial majority in the Executive Council. If we can go from step to step, then the next step envisaged by our Labour Party is that we should have an all-elected Legislature; and that is not something without hope of achievement, if we are to have self-government before long and, possibly, Dominion status. I have very much faith in our future possibilities and I feel it would not be right for British Guiana to participate in federation now. In other words, it should be a *sine qua non* that before there is federation the Colonies or units concerned must have a certain amount of self-determination. And there is good reason for that because, unless a state or Colony is sufficiently strong in itself it would be unable to cope with the Federal Government. One knows that a Federal Court would be established and this will deal with disputes between a Federal unit and the Federal Government. Under Federal Constitutions there is a maxim laid down that where there is a conflict in legislation between that of the Federal Government and that of a state, the legislation of the Federal Government should prevail. Here I desire to refer to a passage in **Constitutional Law** by E. G. S. Wade and G. Godfrey Phillips. It is the only book I have been able to find on this subject with a definition of Federation.

Mr. WIGHT: To a point of correction: I cannot allow that statement to go unchallenged. The hon. Member should know that there are such works as Dicey's **Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution** which are available.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I said that this is the only book I can find. I am glad to see

that the hon. Member has also come with a textbook here and I hope he would further illustrate the point I am making. The passage I would like to refer to in my book is contained in Chapter 3 (Third Edition), under the heading **The Dominions**, and it reads:—

“Federation pre-supposes a desire for some form of union among independent states, which, though they desire union for certain purposes, nevertheless wish to preserve their identity and some measure of independence. It follows that a federal constitution must be to a large degree a rigid constitution. There must be a distribution of powers between the federal government and the governments of the several states forming the federation. If constitutional amendments could be made without the consent of the federating states, there would be no safeguard for the preservation of state rights. Thus the legislature of the federation cannot be supreme in the sense that the Parliament of the United Kingdom possesses supremacy. There must be special machinery for constitutional changes, and there must be some authority, normally the courts of law, which can prevent the federal and state governments from encroaching upon each other's powers, and can declare legislation void on the ground of excess of powers.”

This makes the point clear that before we think of federating we should be in a position where we would have a certain amount of independence and bargaining power. As I see it here, the Federal Government of the West Indies would have certain important powers and control over certain important services while British Guiana would be left in the realm of Crown Colony Government, and I think that before we federate under these conditions we might as well scrap this Legislature. I think this passage is very useful in illustrating my point and it should give more force to my amendment. It should be a settled policy that before we federate we should think of self-Government first. If His Majesty's Secretary of State could not consider these Colonies ripe enough for self-government, I would like to know how he could consider them as a number of units ripe enough for amalgamation under a Federal Government. If we are not ripe enough to do so collectively. I certainly think it would be a mistake for us to federate in the present circumstances. I see that we have reached the time for adjournment and I would there-

fore ask permission to be allowed to continue my speech to-morrow.

The PRESIDENT: As regards the hon. Member's amendment I would like him to consider the wording of it because, as it stands, it is really an alternative motion and not an amendment exactly. An amendment should only call

for the deletion of certain words, but as this one stands it is really an alternative motion to the motion proper.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I shall give some consideration to the matter, Your Excellency.

The PRESIDENT: Council will now adjourn until 2 p.m., to-morrow. J