

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THURSDAY, 11th MARCH, 1948.

The Council met at 2 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. 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. T. Lee (Essequibo River).

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. J. P. Coghlan (Demerara River).

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

The Hon. J. Fernandes (Georgetown Central).

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

The Hon. Dr. 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 Clerk read prayers.

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday the 10th of March, 1948, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HEALTH SERVICES

The COLONIAL SECRETARY on behalf of the Colonial Treasurer communicated the following Message:—

Message No. 6

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council,

I have the honour to inform you that in replying to questions regarding the British Guiana Tuberculosis Society asked in the previous Council by the Honourable J. B. Singh, O.B.E., Government undertook to pursue the matter of providing for the Health Visitors employed by the Tuberculosis Society superannuation benefits to the same extent as similar employees of the Medical Department on the ground that the work of the Society is officially recognised as an adjunct to the Colony's public health machinery.

2. After investigation and with the advice of Executive Council a Committee was appointed in November, 1945, with the following terms of reference:—

"To consider the question of the organisation and control of the Health Services at present provided through the agency of the Society for the Prevention and Treatment of Tuberculosis and the Infant Welfare and Maternity League; and the status, qualifications, salaries and other conditions of service of the employees concerned".

3. The Committee reported in May, 1946, and its conclusions and recommendations are contained in paragraphs 30 and 31 of its report, a copy of which is attached as Sessional Paper No. 2/1948.

4. This report has been considered by me in Executive Council and the Council has advised approval in principle of the Committee's recommendations, with the exception of the recommendation that Government should consider initiating a contributory superannuation scheme for the benefit of subsidized midwives employed by the Infant Welfare and Maternity League—a proposal which was felt to be impracticable.

5. It will be noted that the Committee's proposals are designed to ensure some degree of uniformity in the qualifications, status and remuneration of health visitors engaged in the various branches of public health work; and that the Committee recommends that the best interests of the public health would be served if the health visitors at present in the employment of the Tuberculosis Society and the Infant Welfare and Maternity League were absorbed into Government Service and were then assigned duty with these bodies. It is proposed to take action to implement this recommendation by making the necessary provision for these new posts in the Estimates for the year 1949 with an appropriate consequential reduction in the annual subventions to the Society and the League.

6. With regard to salaries it is proposed that the salary revisions recommended by the Committee should become effective from the 1st of January, 1948, but that the employees concerned should be placed at the points in the new salary scales to which they would have attained on that date had these scales come into operation on the 1st of January, 1946. The immediate cost of implementing this proposal in respect of salaries and cost of living allowance is estimated at \$3,928 in the current year.

7. With regard to the provision of superannuation benefits for the employees concerned, consideration will be given, in consultation with the Georgetown Town Council, to the legislation and procedure necessary to implement the Committee's recommendations in this respect. The Town Council have, however, brought to the notice of Government three cases of

Municipal Health Officers with previous service under the Infant Welfare and Maternity League, who have recently retired, and the Town Council have requested that consideration be given to the grant by the Government of superannuation benefits in respect of their services under the League. It is accordingly proposed to make appropriate superannuation awards in these cases in advance of the enactment of the proposed enabling legislation.

8. I invite the Council to approve of the adoption of the Committee's recommendations subject to the reservation indicated in paragraph 4 above and of action being taken in accordance with the proposals as outlined in this Message.

C. C. WOOLLEY
Governor

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
British Guiana
11th March, 1948.

PAPERS LAID

The COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the table the following:—

Report of the Committee on Health Services at present provided through the agency of the Society for the Prevention and Treatment of Tuberculosis and the Infant Welfare and Maternity League.

The fifty-seventh Annual Report of the Chamber of Commerce of the City of Georgetown.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

HEALTH SERVICES

The COLONIAL SECRETARY on behalf of the Colonial Treasurer gave notice of the following motion—

That, with reference to His Excellency the Governor's Message No. 6 of the 11th March, 1948, this Council approves of the adoption of the recommendations of the Committee on Health Services provided through the Society for the Prevention and Treatment of Tuberculosis and the Infant Welfare and Maternity League subject to the reservation as indicated in paragraph 4 of the Message and of action being taken in accordance with the proposals as outlined in the Message.

NOTICE OF QUESTIONS

TRADE UNION AFFAIRS

Mr. LEE gave notice of the following questions—

1. That in view of the Speech by Mr. W. M. Bissell, Commissioner of Labour, in this House on the 26th February, 1948, will Government state how many registered Trade Unions were operating in British Guiana at the end of 1947, what is the total membership of each Union from the years 1940 to 1947, what sums were collected as entrance fees, and subscriptions from each Union, and for each of the years 1940 to 1947, each year and each Union separately?

2. How many Trade Unions have signed agreements with employers' organisations, giving the names of the Unions, copies of the Agreements together with the membership of the Unions concerned from the dates of the agreements, each year separately?

3. How many Estates Joint Committees were operating at the end of 1947, giving the names of the members of each Committee, the number of workers represented by each Joint Committee on each Estate, with the number of workers who are members of each Trade Union on each Estate in Demerara and Berbice, each County separately?

4. How many workers were employed by each of the Sugar Estates during the years 1945 and 1946, and if figures are available, for the year 1947?

5. How many water-front workers were employed by the several Companies each year, giving the number employed by each Company during the years 1945, 1946, and 1947, and the total workers who are members of the Trade Unions that are operating in the interest of the workers, each Union separately?

6. How many workers were employed by the Demerara Bauxite Co. Ltd., during the years 1945, 1946 and 1947, and of these how many workers are members of registered Trade Unions, giving the names of the Unions and the membership of each?

ORDER OF THE DAY

OFFENCES COMMITTED AT GENERAL ELECTIONS

Mr. ROTH asked and the COLONIAL SECRETARY laid over replies to the following questions:—

Q. 1. What action, if any, does Government propose taking against the two hundred and seventy-nine persons who, at the recent General Elections, voted at more Polling Places than one?

A. 1. Government proposes to prosecute all persons for offences committed at the recent General Elections wherever it is considered that sufficient evidence to

support a prosecution is available. Two such prosecutions have been successfully undertaken to date.

Q. 2. If none, why?

A. 2. This question does not arise.

CLOSER ASSOCIATION OF B.W.I. COLONIES

Council resumed the debate on the following motion by Mr. Seaford:—

“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.”

Mr. THOMPSON: Before the debate is resumed on the motion before the Council, I would like to have clarified for my own benefit the point as to what is the true position of the motion. I intended to ask yesterday for some clarification because the motion as I see it points to a discussion on closer relationship, but I find that most of the discussion has been directed towards federation. Hon. Members have been treating the motion that way and the public is looking forward to them for guidance in the matter. I mention this because I do not intend to present any opinion on the question of federation until I have had an opportunity of sounding out the various villages and getting their opinion. I would therefore like to know whether we are dealing with the matter at this time from the viewpoint of closer association or from the viewpoint of federation. I would not like to give an opinion now on the question of federation, because as President of the Village Chairmen's Conference I think it would be right for me to go around the various village districts and get their opinion before I do so.

The PRESIDENT: I am not sure I appreciate the point made by the hon. Member. Certain Resolutions were passed at the Montego Bay Conference at which representatives of this hon. Council participated, and we were asked to express an opinion on those Resolutions. The motion

by the hon. the First Nominated Member is to enable us to do so, and therefore the issue before the Council, I think, is quite clear. The hon. the First Nominated Member has made, or suggested, a distinction between closer union and federation but the dividing line between those two phrases is not altogether clear to anybody because nobody is quite sure or seems to know in this Colony what federation would mean. I rather gathered yesterday that that was why many hon. Members hesitated to express an opinion until they know more about it. There is a motion before the Council and it is being debated, and when the hon. Member speaks he can say exactly what he thinks. If he does not believe he ought to vote either "for" or "against" the motion; he is entitled to do so as much as anybody else.

Mr. THOMPSON: I have been hearing a lot about things like "lust for power" and so on—from the Press and elsewhere—and because of the comments being made in that strain I want to know whether we are discussing federation altogether.

The PRESIDENT: We are discussing the motion before the Council and the hon. Member can express his views as he thinks fit.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Perhaps it might help the hon. Member if I invite his attention to the wording of Resolution 1 to which the motion by the hon. the First Nominated Member refers. Resolution 1 says:—

"Resolved: 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.

The PRESIDENT: I think the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara was speaking when the Council adjourned yesterday.

Mr. DEBIDIN: Before I proceed with the debate, I beg to lay over an amendment to the original motion following upon the observations made by Your

Excellency yesterday. The amendment reads as follows:—

"That this Council reserves judgment on 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, until it has had an opportunity to consider the practical implications thereof in the light of the report of the Standing Closer Association Committee and agrees to participate in the deliberations of the said Committee as proposed in Resolution 6.

"And as to resolution 1, rejects same 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."

This, Sir, I think would meet the case. It is a clear amendment and it suggests that instead of the word "accepts" as stated in the original motion with regard to Resolutions 2 to 14, the words "reserves judgment" should be substituted. In so far as Resolution 1 is concerned, the amendment merely asks that no federation be undertaken until such time as British Guiana and the other Colonies concerned have self-government. This amendment seems right and proper in view of the observations made yesterday during the discussion on the early part of the motion; that is, there should be no federation of these Colonies unless they become self-governing units. I hope this amendment would meet with the approval of the majority of the Members of this Council.

The PRESIDENT: There is a motion before the Council and the hon. Member can seek to amend it in two different ways—either by moving the deletion of certain words, or by moving the addition of certain words, or both. The hon. Member's amendment is still an alternative motion as it makes no mention of the motion before the Council, but that can be settled later on.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I quite appreciate the observations made and I thank Your Excellency. The object of the amendment appears to be clear from the wording but, as pointed out by you, Sir, it does not

appear that full effect could be given to it in the form of an amendment. Just to recapitulate what I said yesterday, I would repeat that for Constitutional, geographical and economic reasons, federation is both inexpedient and impracticable at the present time. I have already dealt with the question of Constitution and the first point I made was that federation pre-supposes independence or self-government on the part of the units federating. This view has been supported by eminent authorities on Constitutional Law and I also cited the cases of Canada and Australia. The federation in these two countries was brought about among states or provinces which had their own self-government, and were already self-determining units.

The second point I made was that in the Constitution of the Colonies in the British West Indies there would be dual control if federation is undertaken at the present time, and I indicated that while British Guiana has a semi-representative Government—and other Colonies have an even less representative form of Government than we have—we would be under the legislative supremacy of the Imperial Government. And since the proposed Constitution for the Federal Government of the West Indies is going to be patterned from that of the present Jamaica Constitution, one would see the point I am making about dual control as we would be under the control of the Federal Government which in turn would be under the control and legislative supremacy of the Imperial Government. When one looks at the composition of the Privy Council and the Executive Council in Jamaica, one sees that the Privy Council is comprised of “such persons as His Majesty may appoint. These are specified in the Royal Instructions as the Colonial Secretary, the Officer Commanding the Troops in the Colony if not below the rank of Lt.-Colonel, the Attorney-General and the Financial Secretary and Treasurer together with two unofficial Members”. When we turn to the composition of the Executive Council we find that it “consists of the Governor as Chairman, three official members (the Col. Secretary, the Attorney-General and the Financial Secretary and Treasurer), two unofficial members who are nominated members of

the Legislative Council and five unofficial members who are elected to the Council by the House of Representatives from amongst its own number.

By reference to this one sees the weakness of the Federal Constitution as suggested in the White Paper since, as stated previously, the federated units would be subject to legislative and other supremacy in the Imperial Government. The situation, I am afraid, would become a wheel within a wheel; I think it was Goldsmith who said “a microcosm in a microcosm”. I prefer to think that we can hammer out our own Constitution and progress towards something which is stronger than that proposed for the Federal Government. The third point I made was that the position would be weaker when we come to examine the composition of the Federal Government, and the fourth point is that British Guiana certainly possesses a better Constitution than the majority of the Colonies suggesting federation. It is true that we have not got a representative Legislature but it is nearly so, and I think it can be called a semi-representative Legislature since we have an unofficial majority here. If the Members of this Council and the other leaders of the people put their heads together with the maximum of unity, I see no reason why we should not achieve greater Constitutional progress and reach the stage of self-government in this Colony before very long. I see no reason why we should have fear of ourselves and why we should think of federating with Colonies which have a far weaker Constitution than our own. We are regarded as not being ripe for self-government—and various reasons have been advanced to support that view—and if that is so we should not be regarded as being ripe for federation.

I will proceed to my fifth point and it is this: Why is it that His Majesty's Government has not carried out the experiment by first bringing about the federation of the Windward and the Leeward Islands? In the Report of the West India Royal Commission, it is clearly stated that that experiment should take place very early. There is a federation of the Leeward Islands, but the Constitution, I think, is somewhat weak in that there is a single Governor and each unit is gov-

erned by an Administrator — something similar to the District Administrators in this Colony.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: To a point of explanation, Sir. Is the hon. Member suggesting that there has been no proposal for closer union of the Windward and the Leeward Islands?

Mr. DEBIDIN: No; I say there has been a proposal but what I query is, why was it not embarked upon.

The PRESIDENT: That is dealt with in the despatch from the Secretary of State on this subject. In par. 8 of his despatch the Secretary of State says:—

“8. I am aware that it has been widely assumed since the Royal Commission's report was published that consideration of the question of closer union of all the British West Indian Colonies would be deferred until experience was available of the working of any closer union of the Leeward and Windward Islands. In view, however, of the indications that public opinion in the British West Indies is now ready to undertake consideration of the wider question, I do not consider that it is necessary, or indeed desirable, to postpone the holding of the Conference which I have in mind...”

Has the hon. Member seen that?

Mr. DEBIDIN: No; will you please help me, Sir?

The PRESIDENT: It is in paragraph 8 of the despatch. Closer union was proposed for the Leeward and Windward Islands and it was accepted in principle, and the Secretary of State says he hopes it would still take place. They would join in the one union to be formed by the Caribbean Colonies.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I am glad Your Excellency has pointed it out because up to the moment federation of the Leeward and Windward Islands is not **fait accompli**. That is my point, nothing has happened. The despatch also states, in paragraph 7, that “... The question of closer association of the Colonies and Presidencies in these groups has now been exhaustively discussed at the Conference held in St. Kitts in January and February, last, which was attended by delegates from each of the Colonies and Presidencies

concerned.” While it is true that the principle of federation was accepted at St. Kitts, the point I am making is not removed by that fact. In the report of the West Indies Royal Commission which visited this Colony as far back as 1939, the following observation is made on page 328, paragraph 12:—

“12. A practical test, on a small scale, of what appear to us to be the advantages of federation could most easily be made by combining all the Leeward and the Windward Islands in one federation on the lines of that now existing in the former group...”

It does seem that if the experiment had been carried out before the Conference took place at St. Kitts, there would have been a practical test or example to show how federation would work in these parts. Even if there is a pious hope that the Leeward and the Windward Islands would still federate and become one unit, one cannot be certain as to what would be the result of the federation. In examining the federal system of the Leeward Islands—the one group which has federated—one sees, perhaps, the reason why it will be found impracticable for the whole of the British West Indies and British Guiana to federate — for financial reasons particularly. I do not think the difficulties are really geographical; I think they are financial, and in this respect I would refer to Appendix III in the White Paper showing the financial position of the British West Indian Colonies at a glance, as disclosed in 1945.

Antigua had a total revenue of £296,536 and an expenditure of £277,987. What I would like to call attention to in this particular analysis is the fact that while they have got in some cases an excess of revenue over expenditure, the public debt of these Colonies make a large sum. The Leeward Islands have a public debt in the vicinity of £102,977, and apart from that public debt the total income is £721,000 and the total expenditure, £782,000 — an excess of expenditure over income or revenue. That is the financial state of those Colonies. (But what is the position of the Windward Islands? Nearly everyone of them shows a deficit — St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Dominica. The total public debt is £559,166; The total revenue is £1,086,200 and the

total expenditure is £1,162,523. Not a small fraction, to my mind, of the revenue is the Public Debt. I venture to think on reference to all this, the Leeward and Windward Islands have found it impracticable to amalgamate for financial reasons. Probably they have reached saturation point in so far as development is concerned. It follows, therefore, if there is a wider amalgamation or federation of the Colonies of the Caribbean area those Colonies with potentialities for development will have to bear the burden of these Islands.

✓ The same can be said of many of the other Islands seeking federation. I am not going to dwell upon that, lest it be said that the larger Colonies lack generosity for the small ones, but at the same time I would say that where British Guiana, as has been mentioned by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Roth, geographically is outside this group I would expect as a first step some amalgamation of those Colonies where it is more practicable than the wider experiment being embarked upon. Shall I crystallize that point with this statement? Whatever the reasons for the lack of attempt earlier to amalgamate the Leeward and Windward Islands, I feel, that should be good grounds for our hesitancy in amalgamating with the other Colonies in the Caribbean area.

Then I must observe — and this is where I make my sixth point—the large Colonies of Bermuda and the Bahamas are keeping out, and the question one has to ask is why. I begin to feel that here is the breakdown in the whole idea of Federation. If we are going to have amalgamation of the British Possessions, and that is how I see it, when you ask British Guiana to amalgamate with the Islands in this zone, it seems to me that it is a prerequisite, something strongly desirable, that all the British Possessions in these parts should amalgamate, but when Bermuda and the Bahamas keep out of it, then it seems to suggest that something is wrong or it lends to suspicion which must be removed. Bermuda is very far away and, I think, I should state at this stage that Bermuda and the Bahamas have a better constitution than British Guiana has, in that they have full representative legislatures. It is not the best

they would want, I am sure, or we would want to see them have, or we would want to have, but at any rate they are one step ahead of us and, therefore, all the more they should be with us. If I am to find a reason—we do not know what the reasons are for their keeping out—Bermuda is by distance very far away, but the same reason is why we should also not join in the amalgamation, taking the point made by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Roth, that we are separated from the other extreme limits by a distance of not less than, as he said, 2,000 miles. Again I repeat, whatever the reasons for those Colonies keeping out of federation, they should be the reasons for our hesitating to enter upon federation. As I would like to point out, and it has been repeated already, we have much more to know of what this federation means. Why is it those Colonies — the Leeward and Windward Islands — did not amalgamate in the fullest sense of the word, and why the Colonies of Bermuda and the Bahamas are keeping out? There is one little point that can be made about Bermuda. Bermuda has a very strong tourist trade and, it seems to me, when we come to consider the question of what one colony can offer to another, if any colony can offer anything to the West Indian Islands it is Bermuda; not that it will give what tourist trade it has but it certainly will have a stimulating influence. If we federate with Bermuda the possibilities are that tourist trade would trend towards British Guiana with the help of Bermuda. That may be a small point, but nevertheless it is one that can be observed.

(I said there are three main heads under which I do not agree with Federation. The second is the geographical reason. The first point I would make, and this follows very closely the constitutional point made, is the question of contiguity. If we were to study the constitution and the geographical position of the Dominions now existing, we would find that the units are very close to each other and, in the majority of cases, they are on one mainland. There are advantages in this, and some of them are as follows: It will make for better control by the Federal Government where you have all the units closely together or very contiguous; there will be an immediate control by the

Federal Government. In matters of taxation and other measures they can be easily controlled. Then there will be a better appreciation by each State of the needs and aspirations of the other States. In the case of the West Indies, had we not been geographically separated it would have been found that we would be able to understand the needs and aspirations of each other Colony. As it is now, because of distance, of this tremendous separation, I venture to say that the people in one Island do not know or do not have the same aspirations of those in another Island not very far off, and I happen to know there is a great degree of insularity. There was a letter written to a member of my family by an African boy in Grenada in which he complained bitterly of his attempts to open a business there in order to make two ends meet and his inability to do anything more than what they have already got, as if he struck out on something new they would close him down by combining against him. That is a clear indication of how the people of one Colony think of the people of another Colony, and it must be borne in mind that we have our own traditions in each Colony — political traditions, social traditions and so forth—and it would be very difficult for the people of one Colony to appreciate fully those conditions in another Colony. In the case where you have, as in the Dominions already existing, the States very close, the advantage is, there is a unity of culture and tradition both political and social. Another point, and that had been referred to by Sir Eustace yesterday, is that by being closely together you find that the Federal Government can go much faster to the aid of any State in an emergency like a sea defence breach in this Colony. As Sir Eustace rightly pointed out, it would take a long time before you can get in touch with the Federal Government and that Government to agree to expend any large sum of money to mend that breach.

We have to consider when we deal with the question of communication, although there is a great movement for better communication and although the prospects are that communication will be much easier and quicker, yet I rather think that it will be a very long time to

come before we can move so fast that we will be able to have a complete organised interchanging of the people of one Colony with the people of another Colony and also that type of fast communication which will help the general administration of the entire area. I say that communications have yet to be improved to that extent. It is far from being efficient for our embarking upon the federation of this particular area divided by distance as it is, and it will certainly be a factor which will increase in no small measure the cost of administration of the Federal Government. On the same question of the contiguity of the Colonies, this lack of it will be a difficult problem in regard to defence measures which will not help British Guiana and the West Indian Islands in any federation. I want to think that it is going to be of immense cost to them to have adequate defence for the area by this Federal Government, and I prefer to say that such defence can only be one by the British Government for and on behalf of this area, for where would it be convenient to have our units of defence placed? Are we going to have the Air Force in British Guiana, the Army in some other Colony and the training ground in another Colony? It will be a difficult job indeed so far as practicability is concerned, not that defence is not necessary for the area, but I say when we come to deal with the question of defence it will cost us a tremendous amount in order to be able to have an independent defence system and to have independent defence units for the the West Indian area. What will make it somewhat impracticable is that between the West Indian Colonies seeking federation there are Islands belonging to other nationalities, and it will make a great difference in regard to sufficiency in so far as defence is concerned.

The second point, I would like to make under the geographical head, is that geographically British Guiana is not in the West Indies, nor is it in the Caribbean area. I have searched in vain on all the best maps I can find to discover whether we do come within the Caribbean area, and I have failed because the Caribbean area, as the geographers will agree, is bounded on the North by the Greater Antilles — Cuba, Haiti and the Bahamas — on the East by the Lesser Antilles,

which includes the Leeward and Windward Islands and end up with Trinidad, on the West by the mainland of Central America and on the South by Venezuela, Colombia and Panama. The question is whether British Guiana is in the Caribbean area to be participants in a Caribbean Dominion. It is clear that it is not part of the West Indies. I need not argue that. I have had a very interesting experience not very long ago — a matter of a year ago — in the country of Colombia, when I attended there the Central American and Caribbean Olympic Games. Representing this Colony at the Conference held by the Central American and Caribbean Groups, I advocated the entry of British Guiana in that circuit, and none other than the Mexican representative moved the motion. It was being approved by the majority of the other delegates present when to my horror and surprise the Member for Curacao, a Dutch Colony within the Caribbean area, got up and placed an objection on the ground that British Guiana was not in the Caribbean area and therefore could not fall within that circuit. After much discussion the matter was deferred to the next day and, in the interval, I searched in vain in the Spanish atlases trying to find out whether it is in the Caribbean area. I was unable to satisfy that Conference, with the result that the matter has been sent up to the International Federation for decision. All we can claim today is acceptance of membership in the Pan-American circuit. That is where we have been placed. That gentleman, who seemed to have been some teacher, stressed the point that we are not in the Caribbean. There you have a Caribbean Island, while not a British Colony, willing to exclude us although all the others had agreed to our participation as a Caribbean Colony.

Following upon that will arise the point of pride. Would British Guianese be happy to assume the description of a West Indian or a Caribbean in the new Federated Dominion? Are we going to be very happy about that? It is a matter, I feel, some people will not welcome very much, and on the other hand some will not agree to, but certainly, as I stated yesterday, we should have a continental identity. Speaking for myself I prefer to know that British Guiana moves up to a

position of self-sufficiency where we can be self-sufficient and have our own government and be a Dominion. I have that pride to know that we are called British Guianese or British South Americans. I feel there can be much more pride in that than being termed West Indians or Caribbeans. Then again, speaking of the geography of our Colony, there is a point I must refer to. It is this: There is no doubt whatever, apart from the lack of sympathy, that there is a great deal of prejudice and lack of understanding and knowledge of the Colony, its people and our conditions. Mention has been made of there being capable men in the West Indies. I am going to refer to and illustrate what I mean, when I say as a prerequisite to Federation we must have a complete knowledge of and sympathy with each other, if we are going to be united under one banner for the economic happiness of the Colonies as a whole. I will refer to two men who have only recently given us a very trying experience, as I think I would be lacking in my duty if I do not call upon that experience as a point to disfavour our immediate entry at least in this proposed Federation. The two men I refer to are Mr. Albert Gomes of Trinidad and Mr. T. A. Marryshow of Grenada. Although the first-named gentleman has been to this Colony on one or two occasions and has spoken at Labour Conferences held here, what has he said about this Colony? — “It is a malaria-ridden colony.” How are we to expect any kind of development of migration or immigration to this Colony when a man of such repute is going to advance such slanderous statements about this Colony? We have malaria here, yes, but each country is affected with its own diseases or public health difficulty which is being surmounted in one form or another. In this Colony we hope to see the last day of malaria and, happily, it is not far off. But here is a statement made by a prominent Member of the Trinidad Legislature, a Colony so near to us. The other gentleman, Mr. Marryshow, only within recent times has been to this Colony at our General Elections, and what has he done? Although he also had been to this Colony on more than one occasion and spoken to the people relative to their ethnological problems, etc, that gentleman

has come here and accentuated in no small degree racialism.

Mr. LEE: I certainly take objection to the hon. Members's statement.

The PRESIDENT. I do not think the hon. Member's point is suitable in this debate!

Mr. DEBIDIN: I refer to these incidents so that Members of this Council should consider what is a very important point in the debate. I want to make this perfectly clear. I am dead against racialism in this country, and I am appealing to Members that it is no use our seeing something which is a cancer and not using the pruning knife. I venture to join in the attack against racialism and to state that we would be lacking in our duty as public men if we do not call attention to some of the things which may impede progress in this Colony, if we are seeking progress whether constitutionally or otherwise. I venture to say that in so far as this Colony is concerned we need greater understanding and greater approach to the question of relationship between the various sections of the Colony, and I want to point out that I am one of the Founders of a Labour Organization of which the hon. Member for Essequibo River is one. One of the main reasons for the formation of that Party is the elimination of any question of racialism, and one of the reasons of its policy as set out is to encourage racial amity among the peoples of the Colony. That is the reason why today I have got up not to preach or encourage racialism but to break it down. That is why when we talk about federation, Members should not be so sensitive and touchy, because when you do so you are only looking at the mere surface under which there is the root of a cancer. I am saying that when we are determining whether we can sit in a Council and discuss the affairs of our respective Colonies with calmness and sympathetic understanding, we must know the men with whom we are going to be associated. That is the reason why I attack the attitude of a man like the Hon. T. A. Marryshow, who is one of the leading men in Grenada today. I pay him the compliment in say-

ing that he is one of the avowed Labour Leaders in the West Indies. Yet you find, however, that I was an official candidate of the Labour Party for a constituency and that gentleman went on the platform of my opponent who was not a Labour Member.

Mr. LEE: I object!

The PRESIDENT: There should not be these personal references. In my opening address in this Council I told the Council what I thought about racial feeling and I expressed the hope that it would finally disappear in this Colony. I think such references are liable to rekindle this flame which we all hope to see go out and go out finally. I ask the hon. Member to go on with his speech.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I quite appreciate the sentiments expressed by Your Excellency especially in your speech at the opening of the Session. It was a wonderful appeal, and Your Excellency said you would not like to see rekindled anything of that kind. I quite agree with you, but it seems to me that the very opposition to a statement of fact which is true is a genuine attempt at rekindling. I will not further refer to the activities of those gentlemen. I was merely making the point that if we are going to join the federation we would be associating with men who should be of the greatest integrity, and not only possessing great knowledge of economics or political science. That alone is the reason why I have referred to those instances, and I think it is idle for anyone to protest against a true statement of fact. Rather than that Members should welcome my stand and try to remove and blot out what seems to me to endanger the progress of this Colony.

The point, I have been making, is that we have to be cautious in entering upon federation because it will not only take us into realms financial and political but into a realm which, in my opinion, is just as important, if not more important, and that is the question of unity of thought and purpose. Unless we have unity of thought and purpose in the West Indies and a clear understanding of the problems of the respective Colonies, and of the aspirations of the peoples in the various

Colonies we cannot hope for any successful federation where they are divided by distance and sea. On those grounds I feel that federation should be embarked upon with the greatest hesitancy and caution. We have to consider those points dispassionately. We must not come here with preconceived ideas.

As regards the suggestion that the question should be taken to the villages, I wish to say that we must not approach this matter from the point of view of sentiment or mere belief. To base our decision on sentiment might take us in the wrong direction. It must be based on hard facts, something concrete, and if any Member of this Council proposes to go to any part of the Colony I am asking him to be fair to the people and take every scrap of information he can get from the White Paper and the debates along with him. He should spend days with the people and make them understand the meaning of federation before any plebiscite is taken, otherwise it would be useless to ask for a plebiscite of the Colony.

I turn to the third head — the economic head. This Colony is on the threshold of great development, and unless we know what would be our financial commitments under a federal system, do we not run into great danger of this Colony toppling over so far as its ambitions in regard to development are concerned? We have no bar against immigration to this Colony. People can come here from anywhere, so long as they are of the right type. Experience has proved that we must have the right type of people to colonize. I venture to say that none of the Colonies seeking federation has any great possibilities of development as British Guiana, except perhaps Jamaica. I think that all of the other Colonies have reached saturation point as regards development, and even in Trinidad I think there is fear that her oil resources may run short. What else can she turn to? On the other hand, British Guiana has vast resources of wealth and opportunities for development, as the geologists have told us. The Colonial Treasurer's Budget Statement shows that our volume of trade in 1947 was approximately \$73 million, with imports at \$40 million and exports at \$33 million. We have reached the stage when

our revenue is about \$17 million, and that revenue will be multiplied when the vast wealth of the Colony is being turned out. Paragraph 24 of the White Paper shows exactly what we would come up against. It reads:

"24. The question of the division of revenue and financial responsibility between the Federal Government and the constituent territorial Governments would require careful consideration. The ideal arrangement would be the adoption of a customs union (or a common customs tariff) and a common income tax in all the Colonies, the receipts from which should in the first instance go to the Federal Government, which would administer the customs and income tax as joint services. It is appreciated that these two services represent something like one half of the total revenue of the Colonies, and that the proposal would thus entail a major sacrifice of their fiscal powers by the constituent Governments."

That is something which gives food for thought. Half of our revenue in Customs and Income tax is to be taken away, and although it is stated in another place that if there is a surplus it would be redivided and given back *pro rata* to the Colonies from which it is derived, I cannot visualize any surplus in the early stages of federation. As this Colony is on the eve of big development we will need our revenue to buttress our 10-year development plan. Already we have earmarked part of our surplus funds to supplement what we will get from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund to carry out that plan. Therefore, if half of our revenue is to be taken away by the Federal Government it does not require any argument to prove that it would retard the impetus towards development of this Colony.

On the question of the cost of administration of the Federal Government, as I see it, only about three Colonies would be in a financial position to carry the burden of administration, and British Guiana would have its full share of that burden. As a Guianese I do not accept that. I have every belief, and I agree with anyone who says that there is a great deal of sincerity in the part now being played by the Secretary of State,

Mr. Creech Jones, for federation. I believe he is anxious about it, and because he is a Labourite (I happen to have seen him in action at the time of the West India Royal Commission before whom I gave evidence) I have every confidence that his sincerity would ensure to the benefit of our Colony, and that he would continue to show the same interest in British Guiana if we decided not to enter the federation.

As regards unification of services I am strongly of the opinion that we could with a great deal of success embark upon unification of such services as Medical, Legal, Research, Currency and so forth. Those are things which are practicable without federation, and already there is an interchange of Judges, Law Officers and other officials. But even as regards unification of services we do not know how far we would participate in that in the future if we do not enter the federation. It is for that reason that my amendment suggests that we should reserve judgment. I feel that we can do no better than wait until the Closer Association Committee has reported, and if perchance there is sufficient disclosed by that report that I am convinced. I would be the first to come here and advocate that this Colony should federate. Until then I feel that we need to learn far more than what is barely given in skeleton form, what are mere hopes so far as federation is concerned, without any real practical details as to how we could amalgamate with the West Indies.

We are on the threshold of big things in this Colony. Constitutionally we are not very far behind self-government, and I am looking forward to the day when we in this Colony will march on hand in hand and in real fellowship and mutual understanding, without hate or without prejudice; and when all that is done I feel sure we will attain that goal which we want for ourselves—self-government and Dominion status. Then it would be our pride to know that British Guiana would be able to claim her place among the other Dominions of the British Empire, and in the councils of the world. I believe in the destiny of British Guiana, and because of that belief I am where I

stand in support of the amended motion which has been handed in.

Mr. FERREIRA: We have listened to very interesting, impassioned and exhaustive speeches, as there should be when we consider that the motion before the Council is perhaps the most important that has come before it for quite a few years. It must be borne in mind that the decision arrived at as a result of this debate will affect the destiny of our Colony, and for that reason this question should be thoroughly ventilated. Members should appreciate what federation really means, and I think it is right that the people of the Colony should also know the true implications of federation. Considerable discussion took place in the old Council on this question, as a result of which three delegates were sent to the Montego Bay Conference, but with specific instructions that they were merely observers. They went there and I think we are all agreed that they played their part very ably. In fact I think I would be quite right in saying that they were an example to the other delegates.

It does strike one as almost incomprehensible the great ignorance of so many of what the word "federation" means, and, like several others, I was surprised yesterday when Sir Eustace Woolford told this Council that there was more misunderstanding in the minds of the delegates as regards federation than he could picture to this Council. He added that one of the delegates actually remarked "I did not think federation meant that." That coming from delegates to the Conference from the various Colonies it is not surprising that many of our people here are not fully aware of the implications of federation.

We have heard a lot spoken since this debate started, but I am yet to be convinced that British Guiana stands to gain one iota by political federation with the West Indies. The hon. mover of the motion gave a very frank and honest portrayal of the case, and I am prepared to be guided by his remarks and to vote accordingly. I have also listened to the speech of the hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo (Dr. Singh) who was also a

delegate to the Conference, but he is yet to convince me. He suggested that it would be easier for this Colony to raise loans if we were federated. That I seriously challenge, bearing in mind, as I do, that we would be federated with Colonies which, without intending to be rude, I would describe as bankrupt or in receipt of aid from the British Treasury.

The hon. Member also made reference to freedom of travel. Surely freedom of travel could be obtained, as in other parts of the world, by possibly a closer union or by mere agreement. Reference was also made to unified currency, something which is already in being. I am yet to see what this Colony can achieve by federation when we can get all we want by closer union or mutual arrangements. I quite agree with such things as a Customs Union, unification of public services, shipping, communications and defence, but surely we do not need political federation to achieve those things. I say without hesitation that if the people of British Guiana were aware of the full implications of federation they would not permit it to be foisted on them. I am satisfied that, knowing as they do that we are on the threshold of great development, they would not be prepared for us to take in tow Colonies which have seized every opportunity to malign this Colony in one way or another. The future of this Colony is ours, and it would be wrong of any Member to support federation in its full form as envisaged in Resolution No. 1 of the Montego Bay Conference. I say that at this stage it would be unwise, if not foolhardy, to commit ourselves to something which, for the most part, we are ignorant of. I am prepared to support the mover in his motion that we should send delegates to the Standing Closer Association Committee to see what is happening and arrive at any decision that may be to our mutual benefit, but certainly and most definitely I am totally against federation.

Mr. LEE: I would preface my remarks by replying to the statement made by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Debidin) regarding certain gentlemen who attended the Conference

in Jamaica. I say that if the hon. Member had worked along with the gentlemen whose names he mentioned he would have found the true West Indian spirit in them, and I could not sit here and allow my hon. friend to say anything against them. I happen to know that they worked very hard at the Caribbean Labour Congress in framing a Constitution acceptable to the workers in the British Caribbean area.

As the President of the Cosmopolitan Workers' Union, which is a member of the Caribbean Labour Congress, I attended several Labour or Socialist Conferences in Barbados, British Guiana and Jamaica, and I found no difference of opinion among the delegates from the various Colonies when we were discussing the wider question of a Federal Constitution for the whole Caribbean area, including British Guiana and British Honduras. After many hours and days of discussion we formulated a Constitution which was submitted by the Socialist delegates to the Montego Bay Conference, and I desire with your permission, Sir, to read the text of that Constitution, which was read at the Montego Bay Conference, in order that it may be recorded in the Hansard of this Council. It reads as follows:

"The Federal Constitution shall provide for—

- (a) A Governor-General for the Federation and Lieutenant-Governors for the Federal units, islands or territories which desire to form groups for the purpose of sharing between them one Lieutenant-Governor to be allowed to do so.
- (b) A Federal single Chamber Legislature wholly comprised of persons elected on the basis of Universal Adult Suffrage.
- (c) Each territorial unit to be allotted seats on the Federal Legislature on a sliding scale proportionate to the population, each unit to decide by what method its allotment of seats will be filled, provided that they be filled by popular election.
- (d) A Federal Cabinet of Ministers appointed out of and responsible to the Federal Parliament with complete executive authority

over the affairs of the Federal Administration, the Governor-General to act only in accordance with the advice of the Federal Cabinet.

- (e) The Chairman of the Federal Cabinet, who is to be the Prime Minister in the Government, to be elected and removable by a simple majority of the members of the Federal Parliament.
- (f) Other members of the Cabinet shall be elected and removable by the Prime Minister himself from out of the members of Parliament.
- (g) Parliament to be dissolved —
 - (i) by the Governor-General on the advice of the Federal Cabinet.
 - (ii) on a vote of no confidence carried by a simple majority of the Parliament.
- (h) The Governor-General to have a veto power exercisable only on the advice of the Cabinet.
- (i) No Administrative officials of Government are to have a right of seat in Parliament."

B. The Conference recommends the creation of a Federal Civil Service Commission under the Statute of the Federal Parliament setting up a unified Caribbean Civil Service with authority to contract the services of experts. The extent to which such unified services might embrace not only the Federal Service but also the higher levels of the local Civil Services is a matter requiring detailed and expert consideration.

C. Powers of the Federal Government.

(1) The general principle shall be that the powers of the Federal Legislature will be stated and specified and all other powers shall remain in the local Legislatures, the Constitution to provide for amendment as and when necessary.

(2) It is not considered advisable to state in detail what the specific powers of the Federal Parliament shall be since this is a matter requiring detailed study with the assistance of Experts.

(3) Broadly speaking the following matters shall in principle be considered as within the province of the Federal Parliament :—

- (a) Trade and Commerce.
- (b) External relations.
- (c) All services that can advantageously be unified for the territories as a whole.
- (d) Matters relating to social security and affecting labour and

the general welfare of the people as a whole.

- (e) Regional planning and economic development.

NOTE: While it will be necessary in considering the details to refer to the provisions of the Australian and Canadian Constitutions and the matters dealt with in the Memorandum on Closer Association (C 20197) special regard must be given to local needs and the particular circumstances of the Caribbean area.

D. LOCAL CONSTITUTIONS.

Local Constitutions shall provide for —

- (a) Lieutenant-Governors for territorial units, or groups of units.
- (b) Each unit to have
 - (i) A single Chamber Parliament wholly elected on the basis of Universal Adult Suffrage.
 - (ii) Each unit to determine the number of its members and the method of their election.
 - (iii) A Cabinet similar to that of the Federal Government.
 - (iv) No Administrative Officials of Government are to have a right to sit in Parliament.

APPENDIX I.

BASIS OF REPRESENTATION.

Representation of the various units to be on a population sliding scale as follows :—

- (a) First 25,000 two members
- (b) Second 25,000 two additional members
- (c) Over 50,000 one additional for every 50,000 up to 250,000.
- (d) Over 300,000 one additional for every 100,000 up to 500,000.
- (e) Over 500,000 one additional for every 250,000.

Provided that the right to additional members accrues whenever a unit has not less than one-half the qualifying number for which the addition is allowed."

That is the Charter which the delegates to the Caribbean Labour Congress worked out in Kingston, Jamaica, to be submitted at the Montego Bay Conference. These delegates simply wanted a Federal Government in which each unit would be a self-governing unit with representation

by popular election, all other principles to be decided by the units themselves in two Chambers, one a Legislative Council and the other an Executive Council. When one looks at the White Paper one sees that the Colonial Office is not in any doubt whatever as to what it is putting forward for the consideration of the British Caribbean area, and that is closer association of the British West Indian Colonies. It is not attempting to force a Federal Government down the throats of these Colonies, but has left them free to consider whether closer association would be beneficial to them. There is the United Kingdom Act of Parliament which would be of assistance in guiding all of us in this matter. If after careful consideration we feel that we should not have closer association with the British West Indies under a Federal Government, we should tell the Colonial Office what we want and the kind of freedom we desire. In doing so, however, we would have to go further and enquire the reason why the White Paper has been sent to us in this manner, since it only speaks of closer association under a Federal Government. We would have to go into the history of the Colonies in order to arrive at some conclusion.

The British West Indies were once colonial estates owned and controlled by people in England, some of whom were Members of the British Parliament. They occupied those estates and endeavoured to benefit from them, and what do we find? In order to carry on the estates they had to get people to do the manual work and, therefore, they introduced slave labour. No one questions whether they were right or wrong, but there came a time when the British people themselves realised that the form of slavery existing in the British Colonies was a blot on their administration of Colonial outposts and we find that British people themselves—Englishmen—stood up and fought for the freedom of the slaves. They did not know the conditions under which slaves were ruled in the Colonial Empire, but when they found out they abolished slavery because it was a blot on their administration. Many of the people who were freed, however, were left under a form of economic slavery which has proved to be almost worse than what they were experiencing before, and these

conditions continued until the voices of the people in the West Indian territories clamoured for the visit of a Royal Commission to enquire into the conditions under which they existed, and to see that their standard of living be raised to one which would entitle them to be respected in the world. The Royal Commission came and it has stated in no uncertain terms that the economic and social conditions in the British West Indies were a blot on the governments in this part of the Colonial Empire. The Royal Commission has also recommended that the aim of the British West Indies and British Guiana should be towards federation and that when this goal is reached the people should be able to enjoy the standard of living they are demanding. I think the Caribbean Labour Congress is indicative of the progress being made in the British Caribbean area and that it is the dawn—only the dawn—of freedom. I think the dawn of freedom also lies in the fact that we should have wholly-elected legislatures in these Colonies—Members of the Executive and the Legislative Councils being wholly elected by the people—and whether that is achieved through the Members of this Council or not, I think it would be a good thing for the people of this Colony. It would be a popular demand and the voice of the people, as stated in Britain and also in the United States of America, should be the voice of the Government. The Secretary of State for the Colonies does not say he wants us to accept federation; he says he wants us to accept closer association with the West Indian Colonies as set out in the White Paper as a guide. If we look at par. 21 of the dispatch we will see all the details mentioned for closer association among the British West Indian Colonies, and are we going to tell the Secretary of State that these are the terms we want or are going to say that we are in favour of other terms? Colonel Oliver Stanley has also expressed the view that federation would be to the benefit of the British West Indian Colonies.

Mr. ROTH: To a point of enquiry: Does the hon. Member mean to infer that we must do what the Royal Commission desires us to do and not what we desire?

Mr. LEE: I would like to answer the hon. Member. I have already stated that the Caribbean Labour Congress has

demanding from the Secretary of State for the Colonies what the workers of the British West Indies desire for their freedom, but let us go further. Let us look at the Memorandum on Closer Association of the British West Indian Colonies and we will see in Appendix 2 the Constitutions of all the British West Indian Colonies which desire to join in the Federal Government. It has not been stated, however, that it is the desire of these several British West Indian Colonies to accept closer union. It gives the Constitutions of both the Executive Councils and the Legislative Bodies in the Colonies and it shows in no uncertain terms that the voice of the people is not being properly heard in each of the units. As regards Appendix III which deals with the "Financial Position of the British West Indian Colonies", we will find that the annual revenue of the Colonies which are likely to be in this set-up of closer union totals £21,300,000 and the expenditure about £26,314,000 while the public debt of the whole group is £19,584,679. The point I would like to make is that the set-up in par. 21 of the despatch gives one the idea that the control of the whole federal group would still be in the hands of the Imperial Government and, therefore, if we take over financial control from the Imperial Government we will have a deficit of £630,000 per annum and a national debt of some £19,500,000. In other words, we are being told in the despatch that before we accept the terms contained in par. 21—the set-up of the Federal Government—we must realise that this would be our liability including our national debt. Federation brought a wider exercise of power in Canada and Australia. They were each given a Constitution with Dominion status. Now, gentlemen, are you going to consider this set-up as being—

The PRESIDENT: The hon. Member must address his remarks to the Chair.

Mr. LEE: I beg your pardon, Sir. I was just—

The PRESIDENT: The hon. Member must address his remarks to the Chair. You are not speaking to the gallery.

Mr. LEE: This despatch speaks in par. 21 of the composition of the Federal

Government but it does not give us the power we want. We can take an example from our own Council here; we have 14 Elected Members, 7 Nominated Members, and 3 Ex-Officio Members, with the Governor as President. Can we say that this Council is sitting with a popular vote? When we look at this proposed Constitution for the Federal Government we cannot get away from the fact that the power would lie in Downing Street, and therefore Resolution 1 seeking approval of federation should be considered in the light of the Constitution we want and not what has been suggested in the White Paper.

As regards the two amendments moved by my friend the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara, I know that certain West Indian politicians like Gomes and Marryshow have been standing firmly for this measure—federation, but we have to look at Resolution 1 and find out whether in carrying out this idea of closer association with the British West Indian Colonies we would get a Council or Parliament with a popular vote. I do not think we would and, therefore, we cannot accept the Constitution as proposed in the despatch. This White Paper has been sent to us, Sir, for careful study and we have to do so because the Imperial Government is throwing the responsibility upon us to accept federation and we would be blamed for the balance of our lives if we do not demand what is right and proper for democratic peoples. If we cannot accept the Federal Constitution as proposed here—in the despatch—then it is for us to say so; the Imperial Government goes further and says we should study the Resolutions as they stand here and take part in the discussions relating to them. If we accept the Federal Constitution as proposed, we would find each unit of the Federal Government being dragged into expenditure over which it would have no control. The Royal Commission unanimously agreed that the economic and cultural standards of the West Indian Colonies need advancement and the Imperial Government voted £10,000,000 to be expended in these Colonies along these lines but what do we find? We find that except the vote came to the Legislative Council and we were told that it was money from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund it would not be approved by the

Imperial Government. At one time many of us thought that it was Imperial Government money and that they had a better knowledge of what we required because of the visit of the Royal Commission. We find, however, that some of the money has been expended without any benefit to the Colonies concerned. Further, we find that proper investigations were not made in detail to find out the particular kind of advancement required in certain Colonies and the money is being uselessly spent. I agree that the Imperial Government is trying to remedy its mistakes in this respect because I notice that in the present set-up financial assistance amounting to £10 per head is being provided for British Guiana and the West Indian Colonies concerned. British Guiana and British Honduras were not considered, however, for development whereby the standard of living of the people could be raised. Assistance equivalent to £10 per head has been voted for the people here, but the Colonial Office and not the people in the Colony will control the money. Of what use is it now? In Jamaica there is a "white elephant" scheme—the Reservoir Scheme—which has cost £1,000,000 and here in British Guiana there are such things as the Mackenzie Airport, on which money has been wrongly spent by the Imperial Government.

The PRESIDENT: Does the hon. Member think that that is relevant to the motion before the Council? He is making another Budget speech.

Mr. LEE: No, Sir; I am trying to show all this in order to prove that in the Legislatures of the Federal Government, all the Members should be elected by popular vote so that men who know the Colonies intimately would be able to decide how money given to them by the Imperial Government should be spent. I am also trying to show that the money given to these Colonies from the Col. Development and Welfare Fund was not spent in the best interest of the people and as intended by the Royal Commission and, therefore, the idea of the Secretary of State for the Colonies that we should accept federation or closer union in the form suggested would not result in benefit to the people in the Colonies concerned. The idea would benefit the Imperial Gov-

ernment however, because if it is accepted as it stands the Colonies concerned would be mulcted with a deficit of £630,000 per annum plus a national debt of roughly £20,000,000. I cannot see how the Imperial Government could expect us to accept the proposals contained in this White Paper. If we fall into the trap we would regret it in many ways.

Mr. SEAFORD: I think I must rise to a point of correction here. I think it is my duty to say that I was present at the Montego Bay Conference and that the Secretary of State in his opening remarks definitely stated that it was entirely up to the Colonial Legislatures concerned to choose what they wanted and that the Imperial Government was not trying to push federation or anything down their throats. He made it clear that it was entirely up to the Colonies to ask for and get anything they wanted.

Mr. LEE: That is what I am saying, unless my argument or logical reason has gone further than I can put it in words. I am saying that if this Federal Constitution is accepted as it stands in the despatch or in any other form, the federated Colonies including British Guiana would fall into a trap and would have to meet a liability of over £20,000,000 in the form of a national debt. This £20,000,000, as Mr. Bustamante has stated, however, is nothing for the British West Indies to have by way of a national debt.

Mr. Bustamante said: "If the Imperial Government desires us to accept such a closer union let the Imperial Government guarantee to us that freedom of popular election and a loan of £700,000,000, and we would be able to get out of the rut that we are in now". There is no gain-saying the fact that several of the units are a charge on the Imperial Government, and when you speak, as I have spoken, to several of the men coming down here they say some of the West Indian Islands are a liability on the Imperial Government, and unless some of the bigger Colonies help them out they do not know what they would do with them. They are a liability, but are we not all the same British Colonies? Are we not from the same stock, from the same homes that develop the British West Indian Colonies, possessions of the people in England? If

that is so, do not let us because we have an imaginary magnificent province leave them behind us. Each unit of the West Indian Colonies can with certain expert directions be a self-sufficient unit. Let us take Jamaica with all its surplus population. If they allow socialistic ideas and the lands to be divided among the people, you would find there no unemployment. But it cannot be done with autocratic people. Let us take Barbados. If they allow the lands to be possessed by the people they can beneficially occupy them. Let us take St. Lucia. It is the same thing. The administrative expenditure of these smaller units is too high, and the Secretary of State has directed our attention to that and that they may be joined together to make their administrative cost less. It is only a question of directing it. Then if we are to direct it, are we to do so under the pen from Downing Street or it must come from the people in the Colonies who know what they want? I say we, the people, should direct it. That is why as a member of the Caribbean Labour Congress I speak on behalf of all those members who unanimously demanded of the Secretary of State for the Colonies such a Constitution or nothing at all,

Let us review the other Resolutions. They are good resolutions aiming towards the advancement of the British West Indian Colonies. But when you look closer into them, you have the Caribbean Commission which comprises British, American, French and Dutch representatives, to study what can be done for the development of each unit. If we go beyond this Commission that is set up, if we in the several units can exercise our powers and send our own men to that Commission instead of having other people there, we would find that we would progress quicker under that Caribbean Commission. If we therefore have several governments looking after the interest of the areas and for the benefit of the areas and not for the benefit of owners in America or Canada, or England, or France, or Holland, must we not fight for that goal which will give us the kind of government we demand on a popular vote? They will tell they want democracy, they want election by the people, yet we find we are not going to get it. In

tary of State for the Colonies, there is no such recommendation.

There is one other point which I would like to touch upon before going on to British Guiana. The Colonial Development and Welfare set-up for the British West Indies has officers for advancement in every form — economic, cultural — except political. They say as regards politics you inside must decide your destiny. This Colonial Development and Welfare set-up has started schemes which are supposed to be beneficial to the Colonies as a whole. The Imperial Government or Home Government say "We will hand over to you these schemes with experts for your benefit to carry on in your union of the Colonies." What does that mean? It means they are placing the responsibility, which they have through the Royal Commission's Report, on to us without any financial background. Can you say that we must accept such a thing without a written document to the effect that it will be backed up to the tune of so many million pounds (sterling)? It has to be carried on because they know that the West India Royal Commission recommended that the condition in these areas be improved, and they are bound to improve them. They did not lay down the law, I agree, that the conditions be raised to the standard that a man should live. But those conditions are there. Go to Trinidad and you will find they are still there and have not been wiped out. They know the recommendation implies a moral obligation on their part to raise the standard of living in these parts, but they are telling us "If you set up this closer union I am going to hand you over these things and you are to carry on." We are to carry on something that is already a bankrupt concern, if I may put it that way, something that has a deficiency. It is not fair, and I say now, as a British Guianese, I do not agree with any form whatever except as envisaged by the Caribbean Labour Congress. We must select our own men for the Federal Parliament, where we can barter with the world. Can we do so in the several units? They tell us it is a bad policy as we are now proceeding and we must get together. If we are an independent State we can barter but not if we

rule and direction. Here you have the Imperial Government paying to Puerto Rico and Cuba more for their sugar than to the British West Indies. That is a fact that has been stated, and it cannot be disputed. I cannot give the figures. I think it is about £5 per ton more to those independent States where their total exports value is greater than their total imports value. Can you say of any of the British West Indian Islands that their total exports value is higher than their their sugar than Cuba is getting?

Mr. SEAFORD: May I be permitted to interrupt the hon. Member in order to inform the Council that the British West Indian Islands are obtaining more for their sugar than Cuba is getting.

Mr. LEE: I would show my hon. friend the figures if he cares to see them.

The PRESIDENT: What the hon. the First Nominated Member says is quite correct. At the present time it is so.

Mr. Lee: May I say, I attended the Caribbean Labour Congress towards the end of August last and it was not so then!

Mr. SEAFORD: It is to-day, I may inform the hon. Member.

Mr. LEE: Perhaps the representation made by the Labour Congress has caused that, and I am glad to hear that. (laughter). I may further state that the representations made by the Labour Congress have caused the Conference in Jamaica to be held. It was a demand on the Imperial Government that if they want to hold a Conference on Federation it must be held in the West Indies where the members can easily attend and conditions easily seen. Let us get to the crux of it. Let us take British Guiana and see whether British Guiana will benefit at all in a closer union or not. First of all you must compare British Guiana under a Federal Constitution as envisaged by the Caribbean Labour Congress and under a Constitution as envisaged by the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Under the Congress Constitution you will have bartering power, the last word in financial matters. You will have Dominion status and the wealth of the whole Dominion for the

raising of loans. On the other hand the Constitution that is recommended to us by the Secretary of State for the Colonies provides no borrowing power without the sanction of the Imperial Government. We have not that power. We have been all the time under the control of the Imperial Government. Any time we require any money on a loan they are our guiding power. We have to go hat in hand and say it is for so and so. Can we say that we have the men in the British West Indies who can be returned to the Federal Parliament and who can rule this area as a Dominion? That is where I differ from my hon. friend, the First Nominated Member. I do not want to be personal; he knows I mean nothing. Let us take him as an example. Can he not be a member of that Parliament worthy of being a citizen or a British subject in the British West Indies? I say, he can be. Those who know Mr. Manly of Jamaica, can they say he cannot be such a member? Let us take all the others. My hon. friend has met them, men elected by the people who went to the Conference. Are they not men who strive not for self but for the benefit of the West Indies? Those are men when you sit with them you must be impressed that they are men who can represent you on a Federal Government or in any international conference as worthy citizens of the British West Indies. Under the Constitution that is being suggested to us, before we can do any expenditure, before we can do anything Downing Street's approval must first be had. Is that liberty? If the Imperial Government says that is liberty, then I say I do not know what is meant by the words "liberty" and "freedom".

I come now to British Guiana. What benefit will British Guiana derive or can get or demand under either of those constitutions — that suggested by the Labour Congress or that suggested by the Imperial Government? If we take the popular vote here, we can get a Council elected by the people, we can get Councillors in the Executive Council elected by the people around this table, and thereby we will be able to have a voice in the management and administration but not in financial matters, save and except that everything must go to Downing Street for approval. That is not satisfy-

ing to a Colony like British Guiana where there is every prospect of advancement, every prospect of industrialization. Would the people be satisfied? I ask you to ask the Imperial Government that question. The people will rise one day and say "We are not satisfied". They are rising now in some instances. They ask what is the revenue obtained from Bauxite and what is the value of that taken out of the Colony. Similarly they ask about the development of the timber industry. If we get an Elected Legislative Council and an Elected Executive Council, can we say that we will not be able to guide the destiny of British Guiana and make it a success? What will we get from the other side? We will get from the British West Indies their surplus population to settle here. They were our brothers and comrades in the times when we were slaves and immigrants. Are they not entitled to be given first the right of settling in British Guiana? I say that is our first and foremost duty towards the people of the British West Indies—the settling of their surplus population. I ask in all seriousness, if British Guiana is to be developed agriculturally, industrially and otherwise that a committee for immigration and emigration be set up in the West Indies and British Guiana. As a British citizen I feel that the time has come when we should ask for those people. I know their weakness. I know it will be said that they are lazy, but let us think of our moral obligation to them. If they come to us we can demand reciprocal treatment. We can say to the West Indian Islands "You are sending to us your people, take from us what those people are producing." They are going to increase the wealth of British Guiana. In recompense for what we do for them we can say to them "You must trade with us in preference to other people and so join hands in advancing our cultural standard. Where can we go in British Guiana to recoup any loss of energy and strength? Save and except for the breeze of the Corentyne we can go nowhere else at all. Why then can we not use our other Colonies in the British Indies and so demand of them reciprocal treatment? If you go among the people you would find people from St. Lucia and Barbados who have settled here. The moment they start to

do some savings they are worthy of being regarded as thrifty, and as far as my experience goes the persons settling here from St. Lucia or Barbados are the most thrifty people. Out of every dollar they earn they save at least 10 cents whether they have to starve. They are developing the country little by little. They are developing the interior. They are not only developing the country, but they are saving and are sending out money to their people. It only leaves now for the Imperial Government to say to British Guiana "We know that you have wealth in the interior, we know you have vast agricultural areas to be developed, here is money to bring the surplus population of the British West Indies to settle and make British Guiana their home." It will relieve the tension, relieve the anxiety for their economic existence. It is pitiable when you go to the Islands to see their condition. While attending the Conference in Barbados one morning I saw a domestic servant going to work. I formed a conversation with her, and she told me that she had just been employed from the first of the month. I asked her what she was being paid, and she replied that she would not know what her pay would be until the end of the month. That is the sort of thing you will find throughout the West Indies.

The Imperial Government and the advisers to the Imperial Government have realized that within the next 10 or 15 years there must come the time when the British West Indies must send their people away, and the only places near that they can go to are British Honduras and British Guiana. Are we going to say British Guiana will not benefit in a federal set-up as envisaged by the Caribbean Labour Congress? Sitting around the federal table you can say "Antigua, you have an over population, send so many people to this or that Colony for agricultural purposes". It is a matter of brotherly relief, sitting around the federal table and finding out our difficulties. Are we going to carry on with **Downing Street** ruling us all the time? I say "No." Resolutions 2 to 14 must have financial implications attached to them, and the Colonies will have to bear the cost. But why should the Colonies bear it when they cannot afford to do so? The Im-

of
 perial Government's policy is aiming at
 Federation. If in accepting those resolu-
 5 tions I would be accepting a financial
 liability on this Colony, I would only do
 so if I get an assurance from you, Sir,
 that any money spent for delegates to
 attend the conferences would be paid by
 the Imperial Government. Conferences
 are good. Closer union is good. Whether
 the Imperial Government likes it or not,
 whether we like it or not, it started with
 the sugar people protecting themselves
 under one common banner to see that
 they get a price for their sugar through-
 out the West Indies. As we hold these
 conferences what do we find? Other
 aspects included—the establishment of the
 West Indian Court of Appeal, which is
 limited only to certain cases for hearing;
 then, the Chambers of Commerce trying
 their utmost to have conferences in order
 to have one common object; also the
 educational set-up in the Imperial Col-
 lege of Tropical Agriculture and the pro-
 posed West Indian University. Apart
 from those you have on the one hand the
 employers, and on the other hand the
 10 workers, trying to point out to each other
 what is good for their common benefit. I
 was remarkably surprised to learn from
 the Member for St. Kitts at the Labour
 Conference that for social welfare they
 got \$1 per ton for the worker out of the
 bounty given by the Imperial Government,
 while in British Guiana it is only \$2.40 or
 \$2.60. You have the Trade Commissioner
 trying to unify under one head what the
 West Indian Colonies can sell to-day. You
 have the Caribbean Commission looking
 after the economic conditions of the West
 Indian Colonies. You have now a
 Director-General of Civil Aviation.
 All those things are necessary. You will
 soon have a Customs Union. All that is
 leading towards the goal that the Carib-
 15 bean Labour Conference envisages and
 which the people of British Guiana are
 asking to be given—Self-Government.

When British Guiana is develope d we
 will have to be very careful at the
 people who come in are loyal subjects of
 the British Crown, because ere are Re-
 publics on our borders. We are all loyal
 British subjects here but the time may
 come when, if we do not get help from
 the Imperial Government, we may have
 to seek it from other people. It is no use

talking about continental destiny when
 we have Venezuelans and Brazilians on
 our borders. My constituency borders on
 Brazil which is just as undeveloped on
 the border as we are.

Mr. ROTH: For the information of
 the hon. Member about his own constitu-
 ency I will say that it is well known that
 the immediate border of Brazil with Brit-
 ish Guiana is very much more developed
 than our own territory.

Mr. LEE: If that is so I cannot see
 why trade is not yet flowing over the
 border. The same applies to our border
 with Venezuela. What can British Guiana
 hope to get from a federal set-up? It
 would be able to export agricultural pro-
 ducts, and when it becomes industrialised
 it would be able to supply the West Indies
 with glass, cement and other things.

We have timber, gold and diamonds,
 and we can supply the world with sugar.
 It has been said that if we have a West
 Indian Federation with Dominion status
 we would have to provide ourselves with
 warships, an Army and an Air Force, but
 it must be remembered that we would
 then become a sort of buffer State to the
 United States who would not stand by
 and see foreign warships invade the West
 Indies. My friend has remarked that they
 might do it themselves, but would the
 other Republics allow them to do it?

It is said that we are on the threshold
 of big development. Yes, we are, but
 why? Can the British Government go to
 India and Ceylon now for the purpose of
 investing money in development
 schemes? No, it has to turn to the
 African Colonies and the West Indies, and
 to British Guiana which is the best target
 because it has what is required most. If
 British Guiana is developed with British
 money would it be right for her to say
 that she will stand alone and not join in
 a federation with the West Indies in the
 defence of Imperial policy? If I vote
 for the motion I will do so with the pro-
 viso that the cost of the proposed con-
 ferences be borne by the Imperial
 Government.

The PRESIDENT: That point is
 dealt with by the Secretary of State

where he says in his despatch that His Majesty's Government will bear the cost of such conferences.

Mr. LEE: In his despatch of March 14, 1945, Colonel Stanley wrote:

"7. I consider that it is desirable that the policy of His Majesty's Government in this matter should be announced and full opportunity given for public discussion of it. I would propose, if you agree, that this despatch should be published in all the Colonies concerned, and it would, I consider, be an advantage if an early opportunity could thereafter be taken to obtain the opinions of Colonial Legislatures by arranging for each of them to debate the issue of political federation in the West Indies. If all these Legislatures were then to declare themselves in favour of the aim of federation, the next step would be the consideration of the means whereby proposals could be drawn up for such closer association between West Indian Colonies as may prove immediately feasible."

I gathered from what Mr. Creech-Jones said at Montego Bay that the British Government is prepared to give financial assistance in this matter, and I say that we should ask for such assistance.

The PRESIDENT: On page 3 of the Secretary of State's despatch of December 4, 1947, he says:

"...I am glad to confirm that all costs of the Committee other than the expenses of the delegates appointed to it by the Legislatures would be borne by His Majesty's Government."

Mr. LEE: If those conferences are held and the reports are made public the people would be able to judge for themselves whether federation was desirable, and they would be grateful to the Imperial Government for what it has done.

Mr. RAATGEVER: I am against federation with the British West Indies because I feel that it would not be in the best interest of the people of our Colony to do so. Having listened to the many eloquent speeches of hon. Members yesterday and to-day I feel satisfied that the majority share my view. I am not satisfied, however, with the motion so ably moved by my friend the

hon. the First Nominated Member (Mr. Seaford), or with the amendment moved by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Debidin), and with your permission, Sir, I would like to move a further amendment to the original motion. I propose in the first line of the motion to delete the words "accepts Resolutions" and substitute the words "reserves judgment on", and in the fourth line after "1947" delete the remaining words and substitute the following: "until it has had an opportunity to consider the practical implications thereof in the light of the report of the Standing Closer Association Committee, and agrees to send observers to the deliberations of the said Committee as proposed in Resolution 6, but rejects Resolution 1." The amended motion will therefore read as follows:

"That this Council reserves judgment on 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, until it has had an opportunity to consider the practical implications thereof in the light of the report of the Standing Closer Association Committee, and agrees to send observers to the deliberations of the said Committee as proposed in Resolution 6, but rejects Resolution 1."

I think that clarifies the whole position. It is no use making the people in the West Indian Islands believe that we will federate with them at some time. We should tell them at once that we have no intention of federating with them; that we are not going to get any benefit by doing so, and it is no use making them believe otherwise.

Hon. Members will observe that I suggest that we should send observers to the Conference it is proposed to hold in connection with Resolution 6. I suggest observers and not delegates because I do not think it would be right for this Colony to send delegates if we have no intention to enter into federation. Let us be quite candid in what we are doing. Let us tell them that we are not going to federate with them, but we are sending observers to listen and come back and report to us so that we would have first-hand information in case we decide to enter into closer relationship with them. I am asking hon. Members to

in the interest of

What have we to gain by federation? Absolutely nothing. Some people believe that it would result in a considerable reduction of colonial expenditure. I am afraid that that is only wishful thinking because, as was pointed out by the hon. the Second Nominated Member (Mr. Roth) in his very eloquent speech yesterday, we would have to carry, in addition to our own high expenditure, a portion of the expenditure of the Federal Government which is bound to be high if we are to have a Governor-General and other high officials. So that we would not be saving any money at all. In other words this Colony would have to find more money by taxation in order to support this federal set-up.

It must also be borne in mind that if representation in the Federal Government to be set up is to be based on population there is the danger of the representatives of certain of the Colonies overwhelming numerically those of the least populated areas, like ours, thus dictating our policy and shaping our future to their advantage. What would our children say of us if we were to pledge this Magnificent Province without getting anything in return? Let us not forget what happened in 1928 when we lost our Constitution and got nothing in return. That is a very important matter. Some years ago when I was a child we were told by a Governor—I think it was the late Sir Walter Egerton—that if we gave up the Constitution of the Colony we would get a railway in return. Certain elements opposed that proposal in this very Council Chamber but the Constitution was taken away in 1928 and the Colony got no advantage whatever. We did not get the railway; we lost the Constitution, and got nothing.

We must not sacrifice our destiny. It is our own and it must remain so. British Guiana, as a part of the great South American Continent, looks forward to development and colonisation on a large scale—colonisation with suitable people, and development of its vast mineral,

forest and agricultural resources on a scale never envisaged by the people of the West Indian Islands. That is very important, and I should like to remind Members that our ex-Deputy President, Sir Eustace Woolford, told us yesterday what would happen to our 10-year plan if the other units in the federal set-up disagreed with us. Our opinion would carry no weight because they would numerically swamp us out. If even we were represented by two, there would be 17 representatives altogether, and we would be hopelessly outnumbered.

It should be remembered that our Colony is as large as the United Kingdom, and with development of the right kind and suitable population, it should be able to support many millions of people. Our destiny is continental, and we must go forward to that destiny so that this Colony would eventually become the Magnificent Province it should be, the El Dorado of Raleigh's dreams, and a land of promise for our children and future generations. We must retain our individual entity. Our aim should be self-government within the British Commonwealth of Nations, and we can attain that by remaining apart from the West Indian Islands, most of which, as one Member remarked, are played out and derelict. I think that was the remark made by one hon. Member yesterday.

My view, therefore, is that our Colony should aim at preserving its continental entity as a part of the British Empire. I say that because, as was said by my friend on my left (Mr. Lee), the people of this Colony are second to none in their loyalty to the British Crown, and in the interest of the people I think our destiny lies and must go hand in hand with that of the Mother Country. We must always be a part of the British Empire, but this Colony being a part of the great Continent of South America, it should retain its entity. We owe it to our children to preserve that entity and hand it down to them.

At this stage the Council was adjourned until 2 p.m. the following day.