

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

FRIDAY, 12TH 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. V. Roth (Nominated).

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

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

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

The Hon. Capt. 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 Thursday, 11th March, 1948, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

ORDER OF THE DAY

CLOSER ASSOCIATION OF B.W.I. COLONIES.

The 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. KENDALL: Sir, in rising to add my contribution to this debate I would like, with Your Excellency's permission, to remind some of my colleagues that any country that thinks more of its ease and comfort than of its freedom will sooner or later lose both. Everywhere in the world today there is that urge towards freedom and independence, and in like manner the British Labour Government is extending to its Colonies a form of government which will give them a fuller share in the government of their country. It is the system of administration for which all subject races have been clam-

ouring for many years, and to fight against political federation is to battle against a tendency which history has proved to be inevitable.

Some of the Members here have secured their seats because of an assurance given that they would advocate that the rights and privileges of the electorate would be increased by some form of representative self-government, and I think this timely gesture of His Majesty's Government is a step towards the fulfilment of those wishes and aspirations. I think if this is accepted it will pave the way in giving us an opportunity to have a say in international conferences for the furtherance of world peace and world prosperity. Without a Government of that form we would be placed in a position of having to accept certain measures from the Home Government without having a say in them. I will cite the air and naval bases in this Colony. It is true we have nothing to say about that measure but I think it would have been better under a different form of government if the people in each Colony had an opportunity to decide in that particular instance.

It was very disappointing to listen to Members talking about the continental destiny of British Guiana after reading despatches and communications coming to us through the Colonial Office — despatches which prove that it is unwise and inopportune to give the separate units of the British Caribbean area self-government—and in view of that I agree that British Guiana should join the other West Indian Colonies in federation. There is a belief that in joining a federation of the West Indies we would receive no benefit, but it was suggested by previous speakers that they agreed with all the other forms of closer union except political federation. I am persuaded to believe that unless we have political federation there would be no safeguard or guarantee of the various Customs Unions and Currency Unions that may be suggested from time to time.

I am very suspicious of the attitude of certain interests when they oppose a form of government that would be of a progressive nature to the people of this Colony and other parts of the Caribbean

area. I am wondering whether they would like to see the Union Jack torn from the flagstaves in this and other Colonies and replaced by the emblem of some South American Republic. If Members would realise that British Guiana is bounded on three sides by foreign countries whose languages are unknown to us, and that it would take another generation to overcome that disadvantage they would not think so easily of having British Guiana as a separate entity. On the other hand it must be borne in mind that the West Indian Colonies, their language and cultural forms are allied to ours, and that for many years we have traded with them and received equal benefits. There is a particular industry in this Colony on which we have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars. I refer to the rice industry, and I am satisfied that if there is no central form of government to maintain that premium, and if British Guiana isolates herself from the West Indian Colonies she will not receive those benefits.

With your permission, Sir, I will read from the *Daily Gleaner* of September 15, a portion of the speech made by Sir Eustace Woolford at the Montego Bay Conference. Before doing so I would like to say that it is suggested here that the Press opinion of the three local dailies is against federation. Although that is true I am satisfied that if the Press had given the public the various forms of government suggested by the Colonial Office, and the advantages and disadvantages in those forms, the public would have had a better opportunity of coming to a correct decision. I now quote from the *Daily Gleaner*:—

“Sir Eustace concluded by disclosing that public opinion in his Colony, as expressed by the three daily organs, had been against the idea of federation or even closer union to some extent.”

This also applies to the Chamber of Commerce and to the capitalist interests in this Colony, but I do not think that in their views they are expressing the wishes of the people. One Member suggested that in our continental destiny we are on the threshold of great development in British Guiana, but that is something we have been hearing of for a long time. I am wondering whether those individuals

who speak that way have faith in British Guiana to the extent of developing its industries. In point we have the Case reports. They were presented to the Chamber of Commerce, but I am yet to see the financiers of this Colony getting together and forming companies in order to see the further development of British Guiana enhanced. All the development of this Colony within recent years in the main has been contributed by outside capitalists.

Mr. RAATGEVER. To a point of correction! That is not correct.

Mr. KENDALL: I purposely said "in the main." It that is not so I am yet to be told the truth in a tangible manner. I have here a pamphlet issued by the B.P.I. on "Thoughts on West Indian Federation." With your permission, Sir, I would like to read a passage from page 37 under "Caribbean Industrial Plan." It reads as follows.

"It may be, too, that we Guianese have in mind the development of secondary industries in our interior, or from the natural resources of our interior. Whether we do so with the West Indian or other units of human machinery, we may as well make sure that the industries we are creating are not in wasteful competition with similar industries located in other countries in the Caribbean area. The first West Indian Conference in 1944 paid much attention to this point which is of vital importance to those colonies which have industrial potential. This orderly allocation of industrial development between colony and colony **does** seem to be essential, and it would be only prudent for British Guiana to make sure whether such industrial allocation is practicable without a central Government."

I say that such an allocation would not be practicable. We were told in the Finance Committee that a certain gentleman had left this Colony for a better job in Jamaica in connection with rice cultivation.

I am satisfied that if we agree to all the other forms of federation without political federation the other units would create industries which would compete with ours, and we in turn, in spite of our potentialities, would not be able to make the profits we have in mind. It must also

be borne in mind that while it is the desire of many Members that local people should be given priority as regards employment we have been told in the past that the Secretary of State has to decide on such employment, but in the new form of government suggested by His Majesty's Government I am persuaded to believe that the decision would not rest with the Secretary of State but with the Central Government. It is therefore my considered opinion that if this country is to progress, and if we are striving after development we must ally ourselves to Colonies which are able to give us the necessary support.

As regards the talk about continental destiny, I take it that Members are aware that the potentialities of the South American countries on our borders are the same as ours, and that their resources are more developed than ours, so that reciprocal trade can in one way assist us. On the other hand, if we are to improve on our secondary and minor industries we must have a guaranteed market, and that market can be found on the West Indian islands.

One hon. Member suggested that it is not right to bring West Indians here because it is feared that they would take away from the Colony all the money they received by way of wages. That is nothing new. We have had other colonists coming here and they have sent most of their earnings abroad.

It must also be borne in mind that we must take into account world affairs, and I have a suspicion that sooner or later the Venezuelan Government will demand certain territories on our borders as theirs. If we are to isolate ourselves as suggested, our first duty must be to provide ourselves with military protection. I am yet to be convinced that 370,000 odd thousand people can provide themselves with sufficient military protection as a separate entity in the Caribbean area.

We must also bear in mind that the great potentialities we speak of cannot be developed overnight, and if we are to make progress—we must at some time or another be prepared to make certain

sacrifices in order to reap benefits in the years to come. One hon. Member remarked that we gave up our Constitution in 1928 but got nothing in return. He further stated that through lack of foresight we lost the opportunity of a railway to the interior. That Member did not tell us the reason why. It was the old disease of fact blindness in the Legislature, or self-interest, which caused that railway proposition to be thrown out—fear that labour would be taken away from the sugar estates and attracted to the interior. I think the hon. Member should have known that when he made his remarks, and I say that the same thing would happen again if we refuse to accept the kindly and generous offer of His Majesty's Government to help to bring about a federation of the Caribbean area, because that is the first step towards Dominion status through which we would have a voice in international affairs.

It has been suggested by one hon. Member that we are not yet able to produce men who are capable of representing us at international assemblies. However true that may be, I would ask the hon. Member when would we be able to do so if we are not given an opportunity to gain experience in a higher form of government? In that way we would have the necessary practice to fit ourselves for international conferences—the ultimate goal of the proposal put forward by His Majesty's Government.

This is a matter on which, in my opinion, we should take some time in arriving at a decision. The motion submitted by the hon. the First Nominated Member gives us an opportunity, after we have sent delegates to the various conferences, to say whether or not we will agree to participate in any union. I do not agree with the amendment proposed by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Raatgever, that we should send observers and not delegates. In my opinion observers would be there like dummies; they would have no say in formulating policies, and when the delegates from the other Colonies have contributed to the debates and arrived at a decision then British Guiana will say that she will come in. We would then have to accept

certain measures without having had an opportunity of expressing our views on them. Therefore I am in agreement with the motion, and I would like to see representatives from this Colony taking part in the various discussions under Resolution 6, and coming to a decision which I believe will be that we agree to federation with the West Indian Colonies, as suggested by the Colonial Office. †

Mr. SMELLIE: I should like, subject to reservations which I shall express later, to support the motion which has been so ably moved by the hon. the First Nominated Member. I am mindful that the hon. Member was present at the Conference at Montego Bay in September last year, and therefore he is better acquainted with the trend of the discussions and the personalities and views of those who took part, than most of us here. I do not think I would be going too far in saying that we are indebted to him that we are not already committed in respect to Resolution 1. I agree with him that we should not commit ourselves to that Resolution until, in the light of the recommendations to be made by the Standing Closer Association Committee which is to be set up under Resolution 6, the implications of federation become clearer. At the same time I am inclined to wish that the hon. Member had gone further in his motion. The Secretary of State in his despatch to you, Sir, dated the 4th of December, 1947, said that in many respects Resolution 6 was the most important of all the Resolutions.

To my mind, Resolution 6, so far as British Guiana is concerned, is the king-pin. It is only in the light of the recommendations which the Standing Closer Association Committee would make that we should find ourselves in a position to make the right decision not only with regard to Resolution 1, but also with regard to several of the other Resolutions standing between 2 and 14 and which are likely to involve the Colony in financial commitments. More than one hon. Member, I think, is of the same opinion and two of them have tabled amendments, but I am afraid I cannot agree with either of the amendments which have been tabled. I am very sorry, Your Excellency, to complicate matters still further, but I feel it is my duty to move yet another

amendment and I have prepared one which I will hand to the Clerk to be handed to Your Excellency, after which, with your permission, Sir, I will read a copy which I have here. I move, Sir, that the words "Resolutions 2 to 14 of the Resolutions" in the first and second lines of the motion be substituted by the words "Resolution 6", and that the words "Resolution 1 of the said Resolutions" which appear later in the motion be substituted by the words "the other Resolutions". The motion as amended will then read:

"That this Council accepts Resolution 6 passed at the Conference of the Closer Association of the British West Indian Colonies held at Montego Bay, Jamaica, in September 1947, but reserves judgment on the other 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."

Can we, Sir, with our 10-year plan for development and with the modern emphasis which we are placing on education and social services as reflected in the increased estimates of expenditure which this Council has recently passed — and which, as hon. Members are aware, total a sum of over \$16,000,000 — afford to involve ourselves in larger financial commitments in the sphere of economic collaboration? Can we afford to forego the revenue which we derive from Customs duties? I do not say that we cannot, but I would like to be sure. The problem of federation, as I see it, is not confined entirely to the political aspect and my advice is that we should wait until the Standing Closer Association Committee has reported.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not like to interrupt the hon. Member, but I certainly think I should point out that there is a defect in his amendment in that some of the Resolutions which it suggests we should not consider until we have had the Report of the Standing Closer Association Committee, involve immediate discussions which will take place long before the Standing Closer Association Committee has reported. For instance, the Committees for a British Caribbean Shipping Pool, the Conferences of Primary Producers,

and the Conferences relating to the Unification of the Services, all these things, I think it is intended, should be proceeded with at once — contemporaneously with the work of the Standing Closer Association Committee. Therefore, if this amendment is accepted we would have to postpone them, as I see the situation.

Mr. SMELLIE: I am grateful to the Col. Secretary for having pointed that out, but I still maintain that the whole subject is bound up with Resolution 6 and that if we accept the other Resolutions we would be committing ourselves to certain expenditure.

Mr. SEAFORD: I do not think this Colony and this Council would be committed in any way whatever.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I endorse that. It was not my intention to give any other impression. I was pointing out that immediate action is necessary under some of the Resolutions which this amendment would defer if accepted.

The PRESIDENT: I think, for instance, the matter of British Caribbean shipping is quite important and hon. Members would agree that quite apart from federation or closer union, the West Indian Governments should get together and a Committee should be appointed to try and hammer out a solution. Similarly, of course, there is the proposal of the Montego Bay Conference that we should have conferences of the primary producers in the Colonies. I think it is a good thing to have, but it does not follow at all that if we participate in it we are going to accept federation. There are several of these Resolutions which are important to us and which call for early action on our part. I think that is what the Col. Secretary is saying; he wants to say that there is no real objection to pursuing some of these desirable objects until the Standing Committee has met and produced some practical plan for federation. I think that is the point.

Mr. SMELLIE: Thank you, Sir. I would like to say that it was my impression that the amendments moved yesterday by two hon. Members practically

covered the same points I made, with the exception that the amendment moved by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara postulated self-government first, and the amendment moved by the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member urges a rejection of Resolution 1. All I have done, Sir, is to cover what I think is inherent in both amendments. The point is that it is not only Resolution 1 that we should reserve judgment on, but the other Resolutions as well. As I was saying, Sir, that the problem of federation as I see it is not confined entirely to the political aspect, and my advice is that we should wait until the Standing Closer Association Committee has reported and in the light of that report — when it is clear what the practical implications of federation are going to be — we will then be in a position to decide whether it is possible for us to participate in economic closer union. Now, Sir, if we can do that I do not see that there will be any need for federation. If we cannot do that then the whole thing becomes a business proposition.

I was impressed by some of the points made in the speech made by the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice, especially with regard to the good intentions of His Majesty's Government. I agree with him there, but I would like to say that we shall have to be very careful in spite of those good intentions before we commit ourselves. If we find that the implications of political federation are too dangerous we may have to withdraw altogether from the whole movement, but before doing that, Sir, we want to be quite sure as to the wisdom in treading a path of splendid isolation to our problematic continental destiny. At this stage, Sir, I think it is somewhat premature to adopt fixed and unalterable ideas against federation. Some people are against federation because they think it will retard self-government, and in this connection the Trinidad Legislature spent a great deal of time in discussing Resolution 2. I think the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara holds that point of view. Others are against federation because they suspect the British Government is using federation as a cloak under which to divest itself of financial responsibility towards the West Indies. I think both of these arguments are fallacious and I do not agree with either of them.

I am against federation at the present time because I do not know where it is going to lead us. When the Standing Closer Association Committee has reported and if I am able to judge from that Report where federation is going to lead us, I may still be against federation. On the other hand, I may not be. I cannot overlook, Sir, certain obvious advantages which this Colony would derive from federation and which it would not derive if it pursues a policy of isolation. A federated West Indies would possess a greater bargaining power than individual units and it would be able to make its voice heard effectively in the Councils of the world on matters affecting trade and commerce such as allocations and quotas for imports and exports, and Imperial Preference. Also, there would be a wider opportunity for promotion in the Civil Service. These are only two points. I do not think that even a federated West Indies would be strong enough without outside aid to protect themselves against aggression by anybody but, at the same time, unity is strength not only in a material sense and the recent happenings in British Honduras and in the Falkland Islands would appear to point to more than one moral.

It is not apparent to me that the introduction or the infiltration of undesirable influences is likely to be prevented simply by a policy of non-federation, especially in these days of rapid communication and swift interchange of ideas. Before I resume my seat, Sir, I would like to summarise my views on this very important subject so that there should be no possibility of misunderstanding in this Council or outside of it. I support the motion before this Council if my amendment falls through. I feel, however, that the outcome of Resolution 6 should be our guide for future policy not only in connection with Resolution 1 but in connection with the other Resolutions as well. If we can enjoy the privileges of economic closer association without political federation, I say do not federate. If we cannot, there should be a further examination of the question. At the moment the principle of federation should not be rejected *in toto*, neither should it be accepted. We should reserve judgment.

Mr. DEBIDIN: To a point of correc-

tion: I did not want to interrupt the hon. Member who has just taken his seat and cut his trend of thought, but I would like to correct his impression in which he seems to have misunderstood me on the question of self-government. I never at any time contended that if we were to have federation we would not be able to get self-government. Rather, I stated that federation pre-supposes self-government as a preliminary requisite for a federal system. It is stated in the White Paper that if federation takes place the Colonies concerned can go forward towards self-government, but my point is that they should have self-government before they become federated.

Mr. SMELLIE: If I misunderstood the hon. Member I apologise. It is his amendment before me which to my mind suggested the interpretation I put on it.

The PRESIDENT: Before the next hon. Member speaks I would like to point out to the Council that there are now three amendments before us and not one has been seconded. I do not want to hurry the Council but that is the position.

Mr. PETERS: As I rise to take part in the discussion of this very momentous question, I cannot begin other than by paying high and grateful tribute to the sterling — and one might even go as far as to say intriguing — sincerity with which this whole matter has been presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies not only to our own Legislature here, but also to the other legislatures interested in this question in these parts. For my own part I can see no reason why anyone should feel moved to view with suspicion anything that has been said or written in respect of this idea of closer association among the Colonies in the British Caribbean area. As one looks through the various paragraphs of the White Paper one cannot be but impressed with the frank lucidity with which every phase of this colossal problem has been presented for consideration by these various Legislatures. On the other hand, one cannot but again be impressed with the surprising frankness that is so apparent in the very manner in which the entire subject has been presented to us,

and the way in which the Colonies in which we are interested have been described. We look at the White Paper and we note that it calls for consideration of the momentous question of closer association of the British West Indian Colonies. Of course, one does not have to go very far to note the ambiguity in that term — British West Indian Colonies — when one considers that the interest of British Guiana is sought to be coupled in this matter with that of the British West Indies, for geographically and historically we are not part and parcel of the British West Indies as such. British Guiana forms an integral part of the South American continent and whenever we are described as West Indians it is by that token one can see the beginning of confusion — confusion of thought, confusion of description, and one might also say confusion of interest. If it is the intention — and we persuade ourselves that it is the intention — that this discussion should affect only the islands of the British Caribbean area, then it is for us as a portion of the South American continent to say that it is none of our business. We should keep absolutely quiet and say “let them carry on without us.” But, if on the other hand the term is elastic enough to include us — and it is believed that that is the intention in the use of the words — then the time has come for us to be up and doing and to make up our minds as to what we intend to do about the entire question. That is why we are here and that is why we are spending these days in a serious discussion of the entire question. I am glad to have noticed that thus far this Council has certainly not indulged in any fulsome rhetorical effusion or in any protracted variety of pyrotechnics in order to give the world to understand how we feel on this great and all-absorbing question.

¶ If I may summarise before going much further how I feel about the question as posed before us, I should say at once “Affiliation — yes; assimilation — no.” By that I mean that if the call comes to us in British Guiana to embark upon the changes of a new order for working together with the islands of the British Caribbean area, then I would say by all means. If anything has been done already — and many things have been

done — let us continue along such lines whereby we would be able to assure the Colonies of the British Caribbean area that we are seized with the truth and seriousness of the fact that their destiny, to a large extent, is our destiny under His Majesty's Government. But, if it comes to the other question of setting out to allow ourselves to become enmeshed in any plan or programme for political federal relationship between the British West Indian Colonies and ourselves under the proposed set-up, then I would reply again that my stand is "Affiliation — yes; assimilation — no." In the course of this debate it seems as though we have been straddling two horses. On the one hand, according to the motion presented by the hon. the First Nominated Member, we have been called upon to defer final action on the question as to whether we should or should not federate with the islands of the British West Indian area.

We have, however and not without good reason, chosen to give serious thought to the question of federation or no federation, because when all is said and done that ultimately is the big issue in the offing. I am glad to have lived to see this day, for the reason that in the year 1932—if you will pardon a personal reminiscence of mine, a reminiscence in part, I believe, which might be shared by one or two of those who sit around this Council table — it was my privilege and honour when I returned to this Colony after spending a score of years abroad to be invited to deliver the oration at the august assembly of the Negro Progress Convention, as the organization was then known. In that oration I sought to bring to the attention not only of those who sat within the sound of my voice but also of the larger whole of our colonial body politic the great disadvantage from which we suffer in respect of confusion of the term, shall I say, by which we are described abroad. For instance, if you went into the homes of friends in England or in Scotland, as I did, and in certain parts of the U.S.A. and you spoke as having come from British Guiana, there was a pause of short duration, and it was very likely that when your friends subsequently desired to refer to your homeland they would ask you in 70 cases out of 100 "When are you

going to return to British New Guinea?" British Guiana always suffered from the apparent resemblance of its name to British New Guinea. One would also come upon other forms of confusion of thought when folks abroad had to speak about this homeland of ours, or still more when they came to describe us. In many instances we would be described as "Demerarians". As Your Excellency knows, there are other folks than Demerarians who live in British Guiana; you have the Essequibians, if you allow the word, and the Berbicians.

Then again if one forgot that for a moment and came upon some other friends who might fight shy of confusing British Guiana with British New Guinea and would not describe you as "British Guianese" but would say you are a "Guianese", that again might include folks from Dutch Guiana and from French Guiana. And so you have there another phase of confusion of thought and confusion of description. Then again there are places where, as we find here, folks from this Magnificent Province would be described as "West Indians," and certainly as a matter of fact, as I said just now, geographically and historically we are not of the West Indies. Another instance of confusion of thought and description. This certainly calls to my mind what the old astute and illustrious schoolmaster, George Antrobus Roberts, would have described as, in referring to such confusion in describing us, "They have been indulging in an abominable array of terminological inexactitudes". Whatever one might have to say about these various terms by which we have been described and are still being described abroad, we have to come back to this: Fundamentally it seems that, though to the folks abroad so far as we are concerned here in British Guiana there is not much in a name, we might be brought in somewhat guilty for aiding and abetting such an attitude by accepting without protest a description of ourselves which certainly we know is not accurate.

In that oration to which I just referred, I made bold to coin a composite word, and when I coined that word by which I thought we might be described I was also frank and generous to say "Take it or leave it." I felt if we were casting around to find a new name by which we

can be correctly described even to the point of avoiding the terminological inexactitude of Demerarian for folks living in Berbice, Essequibo and Demerara, or the other terminological inexactitude of Guianese for folks living only in British Guiana and not in French Guiana and Dutch Guiana, then the time had come for us to have the word "Briso-American," a composite word made up of the first syllable in the word "British," the first two letters of the word "South" and the word "American." There you will have a name for British South American. We are not discussing that here to-day, but I just recall a historical fact. I am saying all that points to the fact that up to that time and may be up to the living present we have been passing through a phase of, shall I say, political gestation. British Guiana was seeking to find its Colonial soul, its territorial *esprit de corps* and, it seems to me, Sir, that in this laudable gesture upon which His Majesty's Government has embarked by suggesting to us that we should seek, if we so desire, to federate our Colony with the Colonies of the Caribbean Sea, His Majesty's Government began to feel that very soon a Colonial soul would be born in British Guiana if nowhere else. I am here to say that it seems to me too that what has been done has acted as a sort of galvanic shock upon us and at last the baby is born, at last the soul of British Guiana has come to life. I say the soul of British Guiana because in the past to a large extent we displayed, and we are proud of it, laudable loyalty to the Throne to which we owe allegiance. But that loyalty to the Throne was not much supported on the other hand by a corresponding patriotism to the sacred soil which we call our habitat in this Magnificent Province.

Now with the birth of our Colonial soul, our territorial *esprit de corps*, we are seeking by our discussing the *pros* and *cons* to match our Colonial or territorial patriotism with our national loyalty to the Throne to which we owe allegiance. And so to-day, Sir, we are faced with these two issues—to be or not to be. Are we going to make up our minds to become West Indian Federationists or Briso-American Isolationists? We have to join one or the other. I think, Sir, on entering upon so momentous a discussion as this, one should divert oneself of every vestige of terri-

torial superciliousness when it comes to the question of thinking of the weal or the woe of the Colonies of the Caribbean area. We want to assure them that we are in profound sympathy with them, and when I use the word "sympathy" I do not give to it its mere morbid connotation. I use it in its strictly etymological sense, in that we want to assure them that we feel at one with them, that it is our desire here in British Guiana to see them make the progress that we desire and believe we deserve ourselves. But, Sir, when we speak of the prospect of federating with the West Indian Colonies, we have to consider just what is the challenge that confronts us. We are being called upon to link up in part our resources, link up in part our services, link up in part our political entity and link up in part many other of our Colonial interests with those Colonies of the Caribbean area. I have had the good fortune of visiting nearly all of the Islands that are under review, the Islands of the Caribbean area. I know Trinidad, Barbados, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Dominica, St. Kitts, Nevis, Montserrat, Antigua, and, if I may be permitted to include it, Bermuda. I had the privilege of visiting and of remaining ashore for varying periods those several Islands that I have enumerated, and I cannot but feel that there is a great deal to be done in order to enhance the progress of those Colonies. But I am conscious of the fact too, that there is a great deal to be done in order to enhance the developmental prospects of British Guiana. Our Colonial soul, as I ventured to state, has just come into being, shocked as it were by the galvanic fact super-introduced by the call for this Conference. We are merely toddlers, if I may say so. How can we hope to make much plasmatic progress if we link our forces, our resources with other toddlers less able, one might say, than we ourselves are?

Of course, Sir, to a large extent when one is called upon to evaluate the relative importance politically of these various territories, one cannot but begin by laying one's finger upon two important tests—(1) the test of area and natural potentialities and (2) the test of population. All along it seemed as though those who stood in a position to decide upon, as they thought, the worst evaluation of the rela-

tive status of these Colonies would begin by looking here for resources that have been already developed as in the case of Trinidad with its oil potentiality and there on the question of numbers as in respect of Jamaica. In these parts, as Your Excellency is well aware, the Imperial Government has its College of Tropical Agriculture in the Island of Trinidad. One cannot but persuade oneself that the oil resources of that Colony formed a great argument in favour of locating the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture there. When it came to the question of locating the proposed University for the West Indies, Jamaica has been chosen as the site for that University. Despite our vaunted pride in respect of our continental integration we still are being regarded as a lesser fry among the Colonies of this area. Notwithstanding the fact that we know, and we persuade ourselves that heaven knows, that when the resources of British Guiana will have been developed, as we believe they will be fully developed, these Colonies of the Caribbean area can never hope to hold a candle by the side of ours, we have been retarded. One is not going to pause here to lay blame anywhere in respect of the matter of the development of our natural resources in this land. The people of British Guiana, as such, have not had the fullest opportunity to bring to the market of the world the resources with which Nature has been pleased to endow us. We have not started yet as a Colonial group to scratch deeply into our own soil here in order to know the extent of what we have to offer to the world.

I say, Sir, at this time we should be actuated, dominated, motivated by an overmastering thought, purpose and ambition, and that overmastering thought, purpose and ambition should be that we are going to see British Guiana developed and developed on its own hind legs, if one is permitted to use personalities in respect of a colony. I am one of those who will always speak confidently, if it may be imputed to me as speaking also blatantly and I shall have no apology to make, of the high continental destiny of this Magnificent Province of ours. If you will allow the expression, the Almighty knew what He was doing when He set us apart on this continent, and if there is anything that should engage our attention at this time it should be the great question of what

shall we do, now that our Colonial **esprit de corps**, has come into being, in order to let the world know that we are aware of our continental contacts, we are aware of our territorial potentialities and that we are prepared to do all that lies in our power to see that our resources do not remain hidden in the hinterland of this great country of ours. It is also, Sir, my considered opinion that the time is fast coming, and the more speedily the better, when this Colony of ours should whip itself towards the point of deciding whether or not — it should consider the question seriously — it should embark upon a period of mercantile and commercial relationship with our neighbours whatever may be their national plan. Why is it we are to reside here as the only British Possession on the continent of South America and we should be so grievously dense as regards the political life, the culture, the economic aspirations of the peoples whose territories are contiguous to ours?

I remember, and some of you will remember too, that not quite two years ago I took upon myself to fly from this Colony to the U.S.A. We got to Trinidad and there we began to come into contact with the Trinidad **patoir** and the serious Spanish spoken there. I say "we" because my wife travelled with me. We were at a loss to develop anything of a common **esprit de corps** save only being in Trinidad. We got to Puerto Rico and there we were worse off; although they have the American culture yet the Spanish language still dominates there. At Cuba it was the same thing. All along, however intelligent and how erudite we considered ourselves when we left home, we felt as so many dunces travelling among people who were able to exchange thoughts one with the other and we were no bit the wiser. Returning home we touched at Cuba and Haiti, a French speaking colony, and there again we could not but find ourselves separated from the body politic of thought and expression in so far as the folks of that country were concerned, because while they spoke French, and spoke it very fluently, as the language by which they carried on current conversation from day today, we were among those people and yet we were dunces among those who came into contact with us.

If one had to speak factually about the relative advantages and disadvantages of federation he should enumerate some of the arguments for federation. First of all, through federation we may hope to enjoy the privilege of international contact; our voices would be heard in the Councils of the world. Another advantage would be Dominion status as an integral unit of the British Empire. Following upon that we may hope to gain that fleeting and sometimes very nebulous thing we call political prestige, social halo, by being governed by a Governor-General. Another advantage would be a Customs Union and other forms of reciprocity with the other Colonies, and a unification of the various public services. Then another advantage would be the removal of the headquarters of the control of our political destiny from Downing Street. There may be other advantages but I enumerate those few for the purpose of my argument.

I will now deal with the disadvantages. The first is that we shall certainly lose our territorial freedom and independence. As soon as we shall have got into this proposed set-up of federation we shall to that extent voluntarily surrender some of our freedom. We shall be creating to our detriment a new political hurdle over which to climb, if there is any desire on our part to get to Downing Street—a sort of colossal administrative humbug mechanism by which our progress towards Downing Street for the consideration of any matter would certainly be very much impeded. That I regard as another of the disadvantages from which we would suffer if we joined this federation set-up.

Then as regards the administration of the Laws of our Colony we have it that a Federal Court would probably replace all existing Supreme Courts. On this point I will quote from the White Paper on page 13, paragraph (vii) which says :

“(vii) A Federal Court which would possibly replace all existing Supreme Courts.”

Then we would be called upon too, and necessarily so, to make a major

sacrifice of our fiscal powers. We shall have to face, as we have been told by the Secretary of State, even the prospect of enduring a major sacrifice in respect of the carrying on of the machinery of the Federal Government. Then again we may be superseded in importance as regards the location of the machinery for the running of the Federal Government, because we may be told that our population is too few, our resources are still undeveloped, and still more, perhaps, that we are too far South. We would then find that we are relegated into the background in spite of what we might have to offer to the world.

If I were asked to state in a few words some of the subjects to which British Guiana, having found its colonial soul, should address its investigation, I would say the issue of exploration, the issue of exploitation, the issue of industrialisation, the issue of population, and contingent upon that, the issue of free immigration. I venture to suggest that if British Guiana would address itself to those issues and others of kindred importance, and would see to the enhancing of the general prospects of our Colony along those lines, the time might come when we might be of great assistance to the Colonies in the Caribbean area. The time might come when we, on our part, with the argument of our developmental progress, might dare to ask the Imperial Government, if they were too short-sighted to see it themselves, to consider the question of granting us Dominion status

If the Islands in the Caribbean area desire to federate among themselves, and if they would like to ask us for some advice as to whether they should, I for one would suggest that we say to them, in one loud chorus: “Go ahead, good luck, God bless you.” On the other hand, on the question of our stepping into the proposed federal set-up, which I consider the most effective administrative humbug machinery that we could at any time hope to set up and foster, my last word is that if it is a question of a closer union of sorts, anything short of federation with the West Indian Colonies, I would say let us investigate, and where we consider it wise or necessary let us join in and be one

with them. But as regards political federation I would say let us remain South American isolationists. By all means affiliation; by no means assimilation.

Mr. FERNANDES: I am going to try to put in as few words as possible my position on this motion. I am going to do so for three reasons: (1) that it is my duty not to take up too much of the time of the Council, (2) that the longer I speak the bigger the bill for printing the Hansard is going to be, and (3) the shorter my speech is the more the saving of paper is going to be. Paper comes from hard currency countries and is in short supply.

First of all I am going to accept and support the motion before the Council that we accept Resolutions 2 to 14 but reserve judgment on Resolution 1 until we have had an opportunity to consider the practical implications of federation in the light of the report of the Standing Closer Association Committee. I am not going to throw aside any opportunity offered to British Guiana to federate; nor am I going to accept on behalf of my constituency something of which I am not too sure, something of which I do not know —the financial implications, the political implications and, as a matter of fact, all the other implications. I will not be a party to either throwing it aside or accepting it by myself or by expressing my own opinion. On a matter of such great importance I would first have to obtain a mandate from my constituency before expressing an opinion, or before voting for or against federation.

I have asked the hon. the Attorney-General whether acceptance of this motion would bind us in any way as regards our final acceptance or refusal of federation, and on his advice that it would not I am going to accept the motion.

I have listened to quite a few speeches and I would like to say that there is no one in this Council who looks forward more eagerly than I do to the day when we will have self-government in British Guiana, but by postponing our acceptance of federation now I do not think it would hinder us in any way

from obtaining self-government, because Resolution 2, which we propose to accept, clearly states:

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

As postponement of our acceptance of federation would not hinder our progress towards the attainment of self-government, I will not deal with the merits or demerits of federation until such time as the entire facts, as will be found by the Standing Closer Association Committee under Resolution 6, are put before me. When that is done I shall put those facts before my constituents and advise them as far as possible where the benefits are and where the pitfalls are. I will then abide by their decision and vote accordingly in this Council.

Mr. PHANG: I rise to support the amendment moved by the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member (Mr. Raatgever). I find myself in agreement with all he has said.

The PRESIDENT: I do not think that amendment is yet before the Council, for the reason that it has not been seconded. Nor has the other amendment been seconded.

Mr. PHANG: I will second the hon. Mr. Raatgever's amendment. As I have said, I find myself in agreement with all he has said, and I want to emphasize that it would not be fair to the West Indian Colonies to keep them in doubt as to what we are going to do about federation. As far as I am concerned I do not want federation. In my opinion there is very much to lose and nothing to gain by federation. Instead of our colonial expenditure being reduced I think there would be an increase in our expenditure. As it is we are finding difficulty in meeting our commitments now.

I also agree with the hon. Member that observers, not delegates, should be sent to the meetings of the Standing Closer Association Committee be-

cause delegates may commit us when we would like freedom of action. This country is on the verge of large scale development. Lack of population and inadequate transport facilities have been two major drawbacks to our development, but we will soon tackle those problems and overcome them. I represent the North-West District which has been long neglected. I think it is very shameful that a magnificent district like that should only have a steamer service once a fortnight. When I think of the North-West District and its limitless possibilities of oil, gold, timber, balata and rubber I cannot think of federation at all. In addition to that I agree also that there would be a curtailment of the powers of this Legislative Council if this Colony became federated with the West Indies. For all these reasons I am against federation

Mr. McDOOM: I did not expect that I would have had an opportunity to speak today, but I will speak on the question of population and markets for our rice. I will deal first with the question of population because that was the main point urged in favour of federation by some of the previous speakers. We are endeavouring to mechanize our rice industry as early as possible, and when that has been accomplished I venture to say that we will have a very large amount of labour available in this Colony. In fact I do not think the sugar industry, which is our largest industry, will be able to assimilate all the labour that will be made available as a result of the mechanization of the rice industry. To illustrate my point I will quote some figures.

The PRESIDENT: Is this relevant to the motion before the Council?

Mr. McDOOM: I will merely say that I believe that capital is being made of the idea that we need labour, and I want to give some information to show that we do not need any labour as far as the rice industry is concerned, and that when the rice industry is mechanized much labour will be released for use in other directions. For instance, with every unit of machinery introduced into the rice industry 14 out of every 15

workers will be made available for other forms of employment. I am referring to machinery used for ploughing and the cultivation of rice. In regard to the harvesting of rice, for every four persons who are employed today we will only need one. Therefore, in the harvesting of rice 75 per cent. of the labour at present employed will be available for use in other industries. In the case of ploughing and cultivation of rice 14 out of every 15 workers will be available for other employment. When it is taken into consideration that 80,000 acres are under rice cultivation it will be found that 8,000 workers would be available for labour in other directions at one period, and at another time about 7,400. I speak subject to correction, but it does seem to me that the sugar industry would not be able to absorb much of that available labour. I happen to know that the sugar industry is being mechanized, perhaps to a greater extent than the rice industry, therefore I do not think that because we are offered labour from the West Indian islands is any reason why we should be persuaded to accept federation.

On the question of markets I wish to say that today we know that we can sell all the rice we produce. We have contracts with the West Indian islands and there is no fear of losing them. I therefore do not see any reason why the question of the marketing of our rice should play any part at all in this question of federation, because I feel that with the mechanization of our rice industry we will be able to reduce the cost of production to such an extent that we would be able to face competition from all-comers, whether they are British or foreign competitors. I have no fear about that. I have figures which I can give the Council. All I say is that we will be able to produce rice at such a price as to be able to meet any competition.

One more point I would like to make is that if we decide to accept federation we must necessarily accept the principle that the price at which we sell our rice to the other members of the federation must be the same as we charge consumers in this Colony. At present rice is being sold to local consumers at 5 cents per pint, and I happen to know that in the West Indian islands it is being sold at 7 cents per pint

as a subsidized article. I know too that the people of Trinidad have been clamouring that British Guiana should supply them with rice at the same price at which we are selling to local consumers.

Now, Sir, I think that if an argument of this kind is advanced now that there is no federation, it would be advanced *moreso* when there is federation. We find that if we were federated our people would have had a chance — with conditions existing as they are today — to get 7 cents per pint for rice instead of 5 cents as at present. That is one good reason why we should not join in federation and, in my opinion, I should support the amendment moved by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Raatgever. In doing so I feel I am justified because we are not sending representatives from this Colony to the meetings of the Standing Closer Association Committee as delegates but as observers. I have already stated that of the three delegates we sent to the Montego Bay Conference, we find two of them not differing in any way but I am sorry I cannot say the same thing about the other delegate. As far as I can see he has committed us in some form or other in favour of federation.

Dr. SINGH: To a point of order, Sir. I have not committed myself or the Colony but I am in favour of federation.

The PRESIDENT: I do not think anyone has committed the Colony. The delegates went to the Conference with a full understanding and were charged by the Legislature that they were not to commit us to anything, and they could not do so.

Mr. McDOOM: I apologise, Sir. I was told so privately — that we were committed. As that is not the case I am not going to say anything further, but I heartily support the motion moved by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Raatgever.

Mr. WIGHT: I would have supported both amendments moved — the one by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara and the other by the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member — but I un-

derstand that the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara is willing to withdraw his amendment and, therefore, I will support the one moved by the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member. I am not in favour of the motion as it stands, and I am not in favour of federation. The position as I see it is that if we accept the motion as it stands we would be binding ourselves to go through without knowing the commitments with which we would be saddled in the future, but if we go through under Resolution 6 — either as observers or as delegates — we would be able to obtain information as to the obligations which this Colony would find itself under. We have been told that we should unite and we all know that unity is strength, but I would ask — unite for what? It is not a case where all these Colonies are self-governing units — and I would elaborate on that at a later stage. What I would say now is that we should be extremely careful before we think of committing this Colony to any form of political federation. Before we come to such a decision we should have some form of autonomy — some form of self-government. It was the desire of His Majesty's Government to grant self-government to these Colonial territories, but how far have we gone in that respect. They have given self-government to Jamaica, but before we have got it we are asked to federate. One hon. Member says that we should federate in order to give ourselves a better Constitution and to protect ourselves when taking part in the councils of the world, but we should ask ourselves if federation among ourselves — and this is only a matter of comparison — is something to which we should be bound in order to obtain self-government. Why is it that Great Britain herself is not federated? Why is it that Australia and New Zealand have not federated? Are we going to say for one moment that Australia and New Zealand can stand on their own? Are we going to say that for military and other reasons we should federate but they should not?

There is another point that one has to consider — and I hope that at a later stage I would be permitted to read one or two passages bearing on it — and that is, of course, the economic and the legal

sides of the question. Surely we have to consider the question of the physical contiguity of these Colonies and the fact that the seas divide the areas which it is being sought to federate. We have had our own federation in this Colony away back in 1831. There were then three Colonies—Berbice, Essequibo and Demerara—which federated, and we are now British Guiana. I hope to produce evidence to show that even legally there are certain difficulties which must be overcome if there is federation, since that is inherent in a Federal Government. Perhaps it would be appropriate at this stage to refer to the fact—and I know that the majority of hon. Members would agree with me—that we are not satisfied with our present Constitution. We want self-government, and I think that when we were being given this Crown Colony Government which we have that was the time we should have been asked to accept federation. Nevertheless, I hope at some time to move in this Council a motion for a new and better Constitution for this Colony. I would like to adopt the words of an eminent statesman — Lord Ronald — a Liberal Peer who has had much practical experience in Administration and who in the course of a broadcast over the BBC laid the blame for the non-development of the Colonial territories on the Colonial Office. He questions the policy whereby Governors were sent out to these territories with pretty salaries and although they gained experience and got their own conception of problems by meeting the people around a table they were subject, perhaps, to control by somebody with a minute paper in the Colonial Office. He seems to think that the whole thing should be abolished. Surely we can go along by what I might term a similar process to that by which the British Empire has been developed within the last half century, that is, development by free association and free co-operation, but not by federation. It has been recognised that federation involves the surrender to a certain extent of the nation's control and government over its economic structure, and that it has several other inherent fears. We talk glibly about surrendering to the Federal Government certain things—taxation and so on—but those small islands are at the

end of their development in certain cases. They have nothing to develop and would have nothing to contribute towards expenditure generally as far as we know. Are they faced with such problems as irrigation and drainage, sea defences and so on? Those are things which some of them have never even seen or heard of, and we are going to tax ourselves to the hilt internally to enable those Colonies to develop themselves? Those are points which need serious consideration. I think we can achieve the same results—the same co-operation and so on—by free association and a free approach to the Councils of the territories and so on. It is clear that if we can do that we can bring about the same expansion over the whole group of territories without permitting ourselves to be bound by a written federal code which in some cases would not be elastic while in others it would be absolutely fair.

I do not doubt for one moment the sincerity of His Majesty's Government because they have also thrown out an alternative suggestion, but I would crave your indulgence, Sir, to read a few passages from Professor Dicey's "Introduction to the study of the Law of the Constitution". I am not going to read the whole book or a whole chapter, and I can assure hon. Members that I would not be as long as my hon. friend, the Member for Demerara-Essequibo. In this book Professor Dicey says: "Federalism is a natural constitution for a body of states which desire union and do not desire unity." Now, do we desire union with the West Indian Colonies? My hon. friend, the Member for Western Berbice differentiates between assimilation and appropriation—

Mr. PETERS: I used the terms "affiliation" and "assimilation".

Mr. WIGHT: Very well. Are we going to say that we are approximate in wealth to some of the Colonies with whom we are being asked to federate? Do we believe in this Colony's wealth and in this Colony's destiny? If we do not, then let us federate as it would not mean anything, but we have much potential wealth to develop and we are being asked to federate with Colonies which do not approximate anything like ours in size

and destiny. The historical position of these Colonies may or may not be of some similarity, but I do ask hon. Members to consider the question of physical contiguity—where the seas divide us from each other and where we are not just alongside of or bordering on each other. We have seen instances of federation but there are important reasons for some of the cases of which we have heard—those of the United States of America, Canada and so on. If I am permitted I would like to quote the view of some Canadian economists in the book “Engineering and Society” with special reference to Canada, written by Young, Innis and Dales, and published by the University of Toronto Press. This is their view about the development of the Maritime Provinces in Canada :

“The attempt of the Maritimes to overcome the difficulties occasioned by the steamship and railway, by tying their fortunes more closely to the interior of the continent, has hardly been a successful one.... For the majority of the people who still live from the resources of the sea and the forest, that alliance has not been a happy one. The attempt to rebuild an economy by political measures in the face of geographical difficulties is always costly and seldom satisfactory.”

I would suggest to hon. Members that if we consider this aspect of the geographical difficulties—some of which are similar to those indicated in the case of the Maritime Provinces—we would approach this question of federation with fear and trepidation if we have the interest of this Colony at heart. I do not subscribe to the views of certain hon. Members who seem to think that others would come here and put the interest of the community behind them because they do not want more labourers to be brought into the country. If that was so in the past I think we have overcome that within the last decade and we have a more liberal attitude towards the general progress of the Colony today. Professor Dicey goes on to say : “A truly federal government is the denial of national independence to every state of the federation.” That has caused a lot of trouble, and perhaps the hon. Member for Western Berbice who traversed the United States of America some time in his youth would realise that it caused

trouble in that country and also in Canada. These State legislatures have also caused trouble in Australia, because one gets a hard form affecting the legalism of a federal territory. It is true that the judges do their best, but would anyone suggest that the judges should know how a Federal Constitution would react to any state law, however comprehensive, and whether the demand of the people as repeated by those in power would be able to over-rule the Federal authority by saying “this revenue is wrong, this taxation is wrong”? This learned author—Dicey—also says :—

“If it be placed in the hands of judges, who profess and probably desire to practise judicial impartiality, it may be very difficult to ensure general respect for any decision which contradicts the interests and the principles of a dominant party. Federation, lastly creates divided allegiance.”

I certainly agree with that. We do not know what form of Federal Constitution would be decided on. I certainly do not agree with the suggested one—that we should turn to Jamaica. Is His Majesty’s Government suggesting that the Jamaica Constitution is working satisfactorily? For myself I am not satisfied that that is so. In other words, a man might find himself as a Guianese supporting a certain measure and then find himself up against public opinion in Jamaica with its self-government, if we become federated Colonies. We will get a form of divided allegiance and it can be expected to multiply into several cases. That is one of the weaknesses of a Federal Constitution. This book also says :—

“A true federal government is based on the division of powers. It means the constant effort of statesmanship to balance one state of the confederacy against another.”

When we talk about nations and nationals it is all comparative—it is all a matter of degree. We can be a nation and, as the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member who is not here now pointed out, we can become a Dominion such as Dutch Guiana would become. That is why I suggest that British Guiana should become a nation without federating. I do not desire to be too technical, but I think no one is in a position to state

what a Federal Constitution would mean to this Colony, and I do not envisage that by its acceptance we would be benefitting the interest of the Colony since we would be abandoning our resources to the people of the West Indian Islands. I thought one hon. Member when he was discussing a certain phase of this question would have pointed out that we have just recently had an example of what federation might mean, when in our cricket circles we had so many captains selected for the West Indian teams which are meeting the M.C.C. in these parts, and all that sort of thing. I was rather amused to hear continually in this Council during this debate that the people in this Colony—our own people—are not as good in culture as the people of the West Indian Colonies. I myself have heard it from visitors of all kinds—visitors who have travelled to various parts of the world—that we are—that we are more civil, etc., etc. We should not praise ourselves, but I refer to this point because the fact has been challenged by continual reference. It may well be that while I support the amendment for the rejection of federation, if we become frustrated or disappointed in our dreams and aspirations and lose hope for the development of this country, we might have to turn and become federalists rather than isolationists. I think, Sir, that if we postpone—I do not say reject—consideration of this question we would be doing the right thing, but if hon. Members feel otherwise then let us reject it at this moment. We can always reconsider the question and we can say fairly and honestly that we do not consider federation an immediate project at the moment. I do not want to be a pessimist—I do not want to be a cynic—but there is a great deal of cynicism in this White Paper and there is a great deal of pessimism in it also. While we might say yes and commend His Majesty's Government in putting forward this proposal, we should have been able to say in the same voice that we commend His Majesty's Government for giving us self-government soon after Jamaica. but we cannot say so.

We commend His Majesty's government in asking us to accept federation. but in the White Paper one will find words indicating that they appreciate the

difficulties to be overcome. I quite agree that we should reply to the Secretary of State stating that self-government should precede the question of federation and that it might be all right for Jamaica to consider federation because they have already been granted self-government. One should not expect us to federate with those Colonies which have a greater degree of Constitutional development and a greater measure of self-government than we have, because we would be surrendering our Constitutional rights and prospects to those Colonies in every way. We should ask ourselves what right have they to come in and guide our destiny? Certainly none. Do we really think that having won a greater degree and a greater measure of self-government at the price of their own blood, their own manipulation and everything else—at the price sometimes of the pulling of two pistols—we are going to get the people in those Colonies to turn around and say 'come into federation on an equal footing with us ; you have no further opportunity for development and we are going to give you everything we have'? Surely not. I heard the hon. Member for Essequibo River saying that he desired federation because of the resolutions passed at the Caribbean Labour Conference, but I would point out that some of those resolutions for development are surely being implemented in this Colony. Is it necessary to federate in order to implement those resolutions? I should say not. Why can't it be done around a conference table as so many other things have been done? At the moment I feel it is not in the interest of the Colony to vote for or support a motion which will entangle us in any way or bind us with any particular resolution.

Mr. THOMPSON : I desire to be very short as I always am. I want to say at the outset that I am in hearty agreement with the expression of the Deputy President (Mr. Wight). He has cleared the air and, I suppose, we are travelling along the same line. I am in favour of the amendment moved by the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member, and I am prepared to support that. As regards the question before us, I concern myself with Closer Association and I hope not to mention the word "Federation". I do

not think it comes in here. Much has been said about Jamaica and the West Indian Islands, but I would like to ask the hon. Members who make capital of that, whether the Guianese pride towards his country compares favourably with that of the Islander towards his Island home. I have heard quoted what the Jamaicans are doing to make themselves what they are. Is that the case of the Guianese? Does he remember home when he has gone abroad and made good? Has he thought that his position is not to make a house in Guiana but to make a home? That has been our trouble all along. We start to lose faith in this great country. Guiana has all that we can have, and she is there waiting for development. It is our duty as Guianese to examine ourselves, get nearer home and see wherein we have failed. I have heard read here that the Guianese have accumulated millions of pounds (sterling) abroad, how much has been sent back here by Guianese to invest. The West Indian goes abroad, earns finance and sends it back home. He has that pride for his Island and, believe me, if Guianese can only acquire that pride for their homeland and make it what it should be, I think all this talk about Federation would disappear. Let us set ourselves assiduously to the duty of putting our country ahead. We have to do that by our own efforts. We want population. Let us remove the barriers of immigration, open wide our door and certainly the country will make a leap forward.

Our present troubles are irrigation and drainage. What has been the difficulty in that respect? Works have been started, schemes have been put forward, and the Guianese who know all about the country have had their ideas overlooked. Engineers come in and refuse the advice of those who have been labouring along those lines for years to make the project a success, and as a result there has been failure and when they are gone we have to face the situation. We have asked time and time again that our drainage in the villages should be allowed the co-operation of those on the spot. I am sure that no amount of federation or anything else will be able to get us out of this rut

until we realize our own weakness, until we have a fixed determination to push Guiana forward. What advantage have we to gain that is not within our doors? As I said before, Guianese have heard that the U.S.A. is the land of opportunities, but how many of us have returned from the U.S.A. and made good here. It is to the contrary. Those who are here striving to put things together are criticized by them when they return. We hear from them that this place is not fit for them to remain. They found standards they did not create and brand their own undesirable. Those are the things which keep us in the background all the time. Until we get over that tendency, until we take pride in our country, until we feel it is in our place to make British Guiana what it should be, I am sure that no amount of federation or closer association will lift us one foot forward. It is within our doors, and all we have to do is to get up and get. All we have to do is to follow the lead of those who have some pride in their country. I am sure that it will not be long after that our government will be what it ought to be. I am supporting the motion as amended by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Raatgever, and it is just there I stand.

Mr. FARNUM: After hearing the various speakers I will not at all change my opinion, and that is we do not want Federation. I am therefore supporting Mr. Raatgever's amendment. Sir, it is surprising to one and a wonder why the people in the West Indian Islands are so anxious to federate with us. I remember not long ago, Sir, when Burma rice was obtainable in the West Indies that British Guiana was unable to sell her rice there because the people in the West Indian Islands preferred Burma rice. That clearly showed they had no use for us. Again, Sir, we cannot help remembering the slanderous statements that have been made about our country by the people in the West Indian Islands. It is only natural that we should remember those things. If we do have federation and we do sit around a federal table where our delegates will be in the minority, what sort of sympathy or co-operation would we get from those of the West Indian Islands? Again, Sir, our

problems are entirely dissimilar from theirs and they will not be able to appreciate them. When we tell them of our ten-year scheme and the possibility of our running a railway to bring out our timbers from the hinterland, that will be something foreign to them and they will not be able to understand. What I do feel is that we should try to live in closer association with the West Indian Islands. We want their markets and we should try to get a unified Customs tariff, and in return we will be able to accept their excess population and be able to give them the right to assist their country.

For years and years this country has been passing through very difficult times. Not very long ago Grants-in-Aid from the Imperial Government had to be obtained to assist us in balancing our Budget. Now fortune seems to be turning in our favour, because there is no doubt that the mining potentialities of our country are attracting wider attention. Speaking to a local gentleman a few days ago he told me that he did not care to make a statement as yet, but he believed that the mining properties of this country and the richness of those properties are going to startle the world. That gentleman is one of influence in this community and someone whom we can depend on. Having undergone all those difficult times and now that fortune is turning in our favour, must we go and bring other people in to share this fortune? I say "No." We are prepared to let the people of the West Indian Islands come along with us and to help them as a big brother. We will stretch out a helping hand to them but not federate with them.

Dr. JAGAN: As I listened to the various speeches, eloquent and impassioned, my mind went back to a book that I once read entitled "The tyranny of words." It goes back still further to the beginning of Western Civilization, to the days of the glories of Greece, to the father of Western Civilization. Socrates, who used to corner his students in the by-ways and say to them "Define your terms." We have been hearing a lot during the last few days about Closer Union and Federation. What is Federation? What is Closer Union? What

is the difference between them? I have in front of me a book entitled, "American Politics" I see on page 10 the author says: "Politics becomes," as Ambrose Bierce said, "the strife of interests masquerading as a contest of principles." As I look upon this question of Federation and Closer Union, in my mind it is only one and the same thing. It is merely a question of degree. It is a question of the concept in which it is held by the various interests. To Whitehall, the Secretary of State, it means one thing, to the vested interests and to the Capitalists it means another, and to the people of British Guiana and the British West Indies, as was pointed out to us by the hon. Member for Essequibo River, it means another. With your permission, Sir, I should like to first of all point out that it seems to me these several interests are each rotating within their own orbits and because of that they have different views on the same matter. Now the concept of Whitehall, as recorded in the White Paper, seems to me nothing more than a glorified Crown Colony, the amalgamation of several units which will carry us no further to Self-Government. In fact the Mover of the motion said, and I quote from the "Daily Chronicle" of Thursday, 11th March, 1948, —

"I felt they were guided by the idea, not so much of federation, as of self-government".

It does not appear to me that what is offered to us by His Majesty's Government is Self-Government, which seems to be the desire of the people of the Colonies. As I look at the White Paper it seems that it is proposed that the model for this proposed Federal Body should be the Jamaica Constitution. If we look in the Appendix at the powers of that Constitution we would find that the Jamaicans today are not satisfied with that Constitution. It has several reservations, and the Governor-General of this set-up will have reserve powers. It will not be a wholly Responsible Government as is usually the type of government in Dominion status. It will be more of a semi-responsible government wherein the Federal Government will only be responsible for internal affairs, and responsibility for external affairs will be left to the Governor-General, the Privy Council and the Executive Council. The Privy

Council and the Executive Council, as presently constituted in Jamaica, are not satisfactory to the Jamaicans, and I am sure such a model will not be satisfactory to the peoples of any West Indian Federation. If I may be allowed to quote from the White Paper, paragraph 22 states:

... It is suggested that provision should be made on the lines now obtaining in Jamaica, and that the Governor-General should be empowered in certain circumstances to act contrary to the advice of the Federal Executive Council in matters affecting public order, public faith and good government, and also, after reference in writing to his Executive Council and a resolution of that body to certify legislation which the Federal Legislature has failed to pass .

According to that statement, the Governor-General will have wide powers. He will be solely the one to judge what is public order, what is public faith, and what is good government. Such a body cannot be satisfactory to the people who are today trying to get Self-Government to determine their own affairs. Again this Federal body as proposed, this parliament, will have a minority of official members who, we are told, will act as spokesmen of Government. Again I beg to read from paragraph 21 on page 13 of the White Paper:

“... In any event it is desirable that there should be provision for a minority of official members so as to enable the Federal Government's policy and measures to be explained during the period until full Ministerial responsibility is attained.”

That is the thing we are trying to fight against even in this Colony, and that is the model which is being proposed by Whitehall, and yet I find Members of this Council saying that Whitehall is very generous to us. I cannot say that what is being given to us is any generosity at all. It is merely an attempt, as I said, for administrative purpose to create the machinery for a glorified Crown Colony. Amalgamation of the Colonies will in no way change the economic set-up of the various Colonies. It will in no way help to ameliorate the miserable conditions in which our people live. The other point about this model is that relative to the

status of the various units of this proposed federation — the individual colonies. If I may be allowed to read from the same White Paper, paragraph 22:

“The Legislators in the individual Colonies would continue as at present, subject to any modifications which might become desirable from time to time, and would control those services and subjects which remained within their jurisdiction.”

In other words, we will continue as we are. Another statement at the end of that paragraph states:

“Except in the sphere allotted to the Federal Government, the position regarding reserve powers in the several territories would presumably remain as at present”

That means, Sir, that the Executive Council of this Colony, which is not elected by this Council, and the Governor with his veto and reserve powers will continue to be as they are at the present time. Those powers will in no way be affected, and so once again I state that from the point of view of His Majesty's Government their conception of what federation is is not in agreement with what my conception of what federation is, and I will not agree with their conception of federation. Now we come to the conception of the vested interests and capitalists. That conception turns in another direction. Let us see certain of the advantages which they say can accrue from our getting together. By that I mean British Guiana and the West Indian Islands. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Roth, pointed out several of those advantages — “Better shipping facilities, better co-operation among primary producers, better co-operation in trading facilities, a common Customs Tariff, unification of Public Services, a common currency.” But, Sir, that conception does not go far enough to the root of the problem, but merely stops at what I consider an organised unification of services. It will help the capitalists in one way or another to increase whatever profits they are making at the present time — to make savings let us say.

I should like to enumerate some of the points which they put out as against federation on the concept as promulgated

by the Caribbean Labour Congress. They point out that for geographical reasons British Guiana cannot be federated with the West Indian Islands. Sir, today we cannot consider the same conditions of geography and the same conditions which brought about difficulty in communication as in the past. Those conditions which existed centuries ago are not the conditions which are existing today. Communication, Sir, has to be regarded under two heads — what the Socialist

calls "Social Distance" and "Physical Distance". Those are two terms which must be taken into consideration.

The PRESIDENT: I take it, the hon. Member wishes to go on for some time, and I suggest that the Council now adjourn until Wednesday next at 2 p.m.

The Council adjourned to Wednesday, 17th March, 1948, at 2 p.m.