

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

WEDNESDAY, 17TH 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. the Colonial Treasurer, Mr. E. F. McDavid, C.B.E.

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

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

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

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

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River).

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. G. H. Smellie (Nominated).

The Clerk read prayers.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 12th of 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:—

“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 judgement 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.”

The PRESIDENT: When we adjourned the hon. Member for Central Demerara was speaking!

Dr. JAGAN: If I may be allowed to recapitulate very briefly what I said on the last occasion, I pointed out that to my mind Closer Union or Closer Association and Federation were one and the same

thing. It was merely the view as held by three different interests. I fully pointed out the view as expressed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and I further went on to point out that the view as expressed by the vested interests and the Capitalists was one which merely wanted what I will term "Confederation", a very loose union in which a federal body will have very little powers and most of the powers will be left to the various units. This was the familiar line of argument which took place in the United States of America nearly 100 years ago when the thirteen Colonies were about to be federated into one area. There were those who wanted a strong federal union, and there were others who wanted a loose confederation arguing that the States' rights should have precedent over the federal body. I further pointed out that such a body, as is the desire of the vested interests and the Capitalists, will in no way change the basic economic system of the Colonies and, Sir, if I may be allowed, I would like to point out briefly some of the reasons which they have put forward against a strong federal government.

One of the objections which were stated was that the areas to be federated — British Guiana and the British West Indian Island — are not contiguous and, therefore, it will be very difficult for such a federation. I would like to refer, Sir, to the countries which are today federated and are separated by oceans. I have in mind the Republic of the Phillippines which consists of over 7,000 islands. 462 of those islands are less than one square mile in area. Five islands, which are the major areas, differ in area from about 40,000 square miles to about 3,000 to 4,000 square miles, and those areas are all separated and are not contiguous territories. I come also to the Indonesian Republic, and I find that that Republic which was constituted lately is made up of islands which are widely separated by waters of the Pacific Ocean. It does not appear to me that the question of whether the areas to be federated should be contiguous or not is the point. The point to be noted is whether the areas can be within easy reach. I would like to point out that nearly 100 years ago when the thirteen American Colonies

were about to be federated into the United States of America, geographically communication was more difficult with those contiguous territories than today with areas which are not contiguous, as for instance British Guiana and the British West Indian Islands which are separated by waters. Even in British Guiana it is very difficult to go from one part of the country to another by land. It is just as difficult for one to go from one Island to another and from one Island to British Guiana. So, Sir, to my mind the question of distance, separation of the various areas, does not in any way hinder a federated government.

The second point which was stressed was the question of the cultural difference between British Guiana and the British West Indian Islands. To my mind I do not think that there is that great difference or variation between the cultures of the people of British Guiana and the people of the various Islands which are to be federated. In fact I would go so far as to state that even if there were differences in culture that should not matter very much. If I may be allowed to make reference, I should like to point to the United States of America. When the thirteen Colonies were federated they were made up of peoples who came from different countries and had different national backgrounds and culture. As we know, it was because of the fact that they were seeking freedom from religious and cultural persecution and economic exploitation the peoples of Europe migrated to America and settled there as Colonists. From 1845 to 1855 one-and-a-half million people came from Ireland after the Potato Famine. In 1830 and 1848 when there were revolutions in Europe the people migrated to America to get away from political insecurity and settled there. They settled in different parts of America, having different cultural backgrounds, and were able to build up a strong federal government after the American war of independence, and today the United States of America is one of the greatest nations of the world. If I may point to Canada, Sir, out of a total population — I quote the figures for 1941 given in round numbers — 11,000,000 people no less than 5¾ million have a cultural background which may be said to

happening in the minds of the masses are really out of touch with the population. All of us who were candidates at the last general elections and who kept our ears to the ground know that the people are intensely loyal, but there is much material ripe for subversive influences. We all know that. The cure for that situation is to give the people more and more responsibility within the Commonwealth and I want to emphasise that as early as possible. When we see what is going on in the rest of the world can we not realise, as the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice hinted, that time is against us and that we must act now? One of the great merits of these federation proposals is that they do offer this Colony and other West Indian Colonies an opportunity to achieve responsible government in the shortest possible time. We have been accustomed to hearing from some of the higher authorities in this country about the red tape of beauracracy and that if we have the people in Downing Street holding us back how would we be able to develop this country. Now that we are on the verge of enjoying responsible Government, however we are saying "no, do not even let us consider it." I shall not follow other Members in discussing whether we are fit for the responsibility. All I shall say is: Look at Ceylon which in 1928 had the same Constitution as British Guiana and today is a Dominion!

It is difficult to reconcile opposition to closer political association with the fact that the Settlement Commission is about to report in favour of settling Jamaicans and Barbadians in this country. That is the report we are going to get, and those hon. Members who are lawyers might tell me whether these settlers will be nationals of the Dominion with a Consul or High Commissioner in British Guiana, or whether they will be told to renounce their Dominion citizenship, for I have read somewhere that every Dominion has not only its independent Dominion nationality but its British nationality as well. There are a hundred and one little difficulties of that kind that will arise if British Guiana, a Crown Colony in these parts, insists on staying out of political association with the Dominion of the West Indies but at the same time wants to derive all the advantages of close non-

political association. In other words, we would like to get other people to carry the machinery of a Federal Government, and we in British Guiana are to stay outside and enjoy all the benefits of closer union, etc., with the Dominion of the West Indies. In this particular instance we will leave our motto — *Damus petimusque Vicissim* — "We give and take in return" — behind us. In this instance, we would want to give nothing but take all. Perhaps this is a sample of the business acumen of my friend, the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member who moved the amendment — to stay out of political association but enjoy all the benefits of economic association.

One of the things that has filled me with the greatest dismay in listening to the speeches of my hon. colleagues is the derogatory references made to our friendly neighbours in the West Indies. We who know the people in the West Indies rather better than through the untruths told about British Guiana by a very small fraction of West Indians, have been amused to hear slighting references to the cultural, economic and financial standards of people with whom we have and we hope always to have constant social and commercial intercourse.

The PRESIDENT: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Member, but is the hon. Member reading his speech?

Dr. NICHOLSON: Not all of it. I am asking your permission, Sir, to look at some notes which I have.

The PRESIDENT: I cannot give the hon. Member permission to read them, but he may look at the notes.

Dr. NICHOLSON: Thank you, Sir. I was saying that we make rather slighting references to the people of the West Indies — and some of us do not desire to have political association with them — but those of us who know the people of the West Indies better have been amused to hear these references. With all our famed scholars of whom the present Acting Attorney-General is a shining example, we have still to produce a Dr. Lewis of St. Lucia in the field of Economics, a Dr. Williams of Trinidad in the field of Sociology, a Dr. Greenidge of Barbados in the field of Astronomy, or a

Dr. Moody of Jamaica who rose to the eminent position of Chairman of the London Missionary Society, to mention only a few. I ask hon. Members to believe me when I say that if the West Indies have something to gain and something to learn from us in the cultural field, we too have something to gain and to learn from them. The Oxford Union, highlight of cultural life of Britain, has had two West Indian scholars to adorn the Presidential Chair, the one a Trinidadian and the other a Barbadian. British Guiana has still to be fortunate to have in that Chair one of her sons. I do not narrate these facts in any attempt to detract in any way from the ability of my own countrymen, for British Guiana has produced its maestro in Rudolph Dunbar, and its classical scholar in Dr. Rankin—the first African scholar and the first member outside Oxford on the Committee of three to revise the Oxford Latin dictionary. Almost every week, however, in taking up our newspapers we find references being made to the ability of West Indians and I would ask permission to read this excerpt from the **Guiana Graphic** of March 14, last, in that respect. This is what it says about an outstanding West Indian:—

“One of Canada’s outstanding younger scientists, Dr. Kenneth A. Evelyn, formerly of Jamaica, and now Associate Professor of Medicine at Mc Gill University and Director of its newly formed Institute of Biophysics, will be heard in an interview on the CBC programme “West Indians at Work and Play in Canada” today.

“The 36-year-old scientist, already recognised internationally for his important contributions to the science of biochemistry and to aviation medicine, recently began a long-term research project aimed at finding the basic causes of certain widespread diseases of the heart and blood vessels. While on the staff of Harvard University during the past two years, Dr. Evelyn devoted his attention to diseases of the heart.”

Dr. Evelyn is a Jamaican. How then can we speak slightly about West Indian culture? But aren't we late in the day in our discovery that British Guiana possesses the higher culture in these parts when, as is our wont, we look

to the Islands for the men to fill every other important professional or cultural post in this country? Your Excellency has not got to go far to find instances of this. You have only to go to Queen's College and you will find the Staff filled with men from Barbados. The late Deputy Principal is a Barbadian and the present Deputy Principal is a Barbadian. In the Medical Profession we have men from the Islands and in the Teaching Profession we find the same thing. The Principal of the Teachers' Training Centre is a Barbadian, and yet we sit here and say that our culture is higher than that of the West Indian Colonies. What do we know about the West Indian Islands — those of us here — except what we have heard from a small group about their efforts to belittle British Guiana? And do not let us fall into the temptation of belittling their financial structure either. Our pride in our swollen revenue must be amusing to economists in the other islands — I beg your pardon, Sir, I should have said in the islands. Are we forgetting that in the years long before the War when British Guiana showed a deficit year after year Jamaica, Trinidad and Barbados showed surpluses?

The wealth of a country does not rest only in its size, in the number of trees it has or in the number of its coral beaches or white sands or pitch lakes or gold and diamond mines. The wealth of a country rests chiefly in its people, and that is why I regard — and I hope this Council sees with me — any slighting reference to the West Indians in this Chamber as unfortunate to say the least. It is people that British Guiana needs. The problem of the development of British Guiana has long been the problem of population. Sir Geoffrey Evans lately told us so, and in considering this question of population let us not forget the wisdom of having West Indians in this Colony. For instance, do you know what happened in the years 1944-46? Jamaican farmers working on the farms of the United States of America remitted home the sum of \$46,696,000 in those three years. That gives one the idea of the value of having West Indians in this Colony to populate the country. Marryshow's visit to British Guiana during the General Elections was an

example of the way progressive West Indians are thinking of each other's problems, each other's troubles. Men like Manly and Marryshow and Gomes, men with the comprehensive outlook which many of us know the late Capt. Cipriani and our own Webber possessed, would always feel that way when any one unit of the Caribbean is in trouble or is in need of their wiser and more mature political experience. I cannot imagine that we are going to say, "Let us have no contact with those people." We speak of them in a very belittling manner, as if they are hooligans. We have good and bad everywhere. We have rabid politicians everywhere, and we have men with saner and wiser counsel everywhere. I think it is relevant and proper that this Legislature, as one of its first contributions to West Indian political harmony, should repudiate in the strongest possible terms the completely false attack made on the reputation of Mr. Marryshow as leader of West Indian Labour and a Member of the Executive Council of Grenada.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I object to the hon. Member's remarks

The PRESIDENT: I would ask the hon. Member to leave that subject alone. I had asked the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara to do so and he did so. I do not think it is a matter this Council wants to hear about or to discuss!

Dr. NICHOLSON: What I wanted to say was that I desired to have recorded in the Hansard our repudiation of the fact and our congratulations to the hon. Member for Essequibo River, Mr. Lee, for his defence of Mr. Marryshow.

The PRESIDENT: I must ask the hon. Member not to pursue this matter!

Mr. DEBIDIN: An allegation cannot be made as to the falsity of a statement when I was not allowed to complete that statement. That is what I would like to have recorded in the Hansard.

The PRESIDENT: Will the hon. Member proceed?

Dr. NICHOLSON: In a large measure those are qualities which many of us possess. Somebody made a statement that the

other sections of peoples in British Guiana are afraid of the numerical superiority of the members of the race to which I belong. I want to state this,—and you can take it from me, Sir, I will say nothing to embarrass Government or anyone at my time,—that the people of the race to which I belong have always had that superiority. It is true that at the beginning of federation the members of the African race will be in the majority, though not necessarily forever so, but we have the unrivalled reputation for fairplay to minorities and complete broad-mindedness to our oppressors. Thus federation in its first opportunity will give us that opportunity to demonstrate to the world the high christian quality which we possess and which is lacking in the Nations of today. In a large measure we find those qualities in our Indian brethren, and even India when her internal troubles subside we will find taking her place among the Nations of the world and making her contribution to cultural government, and we can depend on it that the West Indies will do likewise; if you give us our chance we would make that contribution to cultural government and to the rest of the world.

A great point has been made about unequal states. We were treated by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara and the hon. Member for Western Essequibo to learned dissertations of the meaning of true federation and its disadvantages and of federated states which were not culturally and economically equal. Sir, the extracts from legal tomes carefully selected by our Deputy President I have some trepidation to challenge. While I am not a lawyer, however, I can see and understand what is going on in the world around us. We were told that Federation takes place among independent states, but if my hon. friend, the Member for Eastern Demerara, looks back at his question he would find that "independent" there merely means "separate" and not as he thinks "responsible". And as for my friend, the hon. Member for Western Essequibo, he has told us much of the great suffering of the Maritime Provinces. Neither he, nor any jurist, nor any group of economists would tell us what would have been the position of the Maritime Provinces if

they were not federated. We have the same thing coming up from our own county of Berbice as to the disadvantages they have in federating with Essequibo and Demerara, but nobody can tell us, only Almighty God can tell us, what would have been the position of the Maritime Provinces and of Berbice had they not federated. Western Australia is now and then complaining of the disadvantages they suffer from federating with the rest of Australia. The hon. Member asked us why have Australia and New Zealand not federated? He may as well ask us why have Australia and Tasmania federated, or he may have established the *reductio ad absurdum* and told us why the States of Australia, the Provinces of Canada and the States of the United States of America did not proceed to de-federate. Sir, it is simply not the case that those States were co-equal when they federated. They are not co-equal now, nor will they ever be.

I think, Sir, that the case of Newfoundland should be a warning to us in British Guiana. Newfoundland is an island just outside Canada with an area of 42,750 square-miles and a population of 284,872. It possesses a homogeneous population, a very great advantage. But when Canada was considering federation in 1867 Newfoundland perhaps did not worry to send delegates to that conference, and as a result Newfoundland remained out of federation with Canada. Newfoundland got Dominion status, but it was found she could not carry her Dominion status with so small a population to the square-mile, and so her Dominion status was taken from her and she was placed under a government by Commission. Now Britain, who wants to give democracy to all her colonies, could not leave an anomaly like Newfoundland to the world and so Newfoundland is asked to federate with Canada, and this she will do at Canada's terms. The warning is plain to British Guiana. I am not going to proceed to keep the Council long, but if we have any goodwill to the West Indies the least we can do is to adopt the motion moved by the hon. the First Nominated Member.

My friend, the hon. Member for Central Demerara, must accept the bona

fides of the Imperial Government this once. I like the ring of the sincerity of the Secretary of State's despatch. I like the ring of sincerity in his speech at Montego Bay. I think we can very well follow the wise counsel of the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Smellie, who put the question as plainly and impartially to this Council — the advantages of federation apart from the political advantages to be derived, the economical, cultural and social advantages. But, as he advised, there is nothing to be lost by sending delegates to the Standing Closer Association Committee. We may find when the results come back that we will not throw federation overboard but accept federation. On the other hand, when the results come back and we know the implications of federation those of us who are advocating federation may not like to federate. Do not let us slam the door in the face of our neighbours. Do not let us reject the offer of the British Government, but let us like businessmen go into this matter in a business-like manner, and let us for once demonstrate as an example to the other Colonies of the West Indies unanimity of opinion on this important subject which we are discussing. I want to appeal to the Members of the Party to which I belong not to throw out the motion of the hon. the First Nominated Member, but let us accept it as such because we do not close the door against discussion. The door is open. Let us like businessmen get together and discuss the question in its fulness, and let us wait until we know what the implications are. Let us be cautious in every step we take. Do not let us, as the hon. the First Nominated Member said, leap in the dark. It is wiser far to wait and see and act with due caution.

Capt. COGHLAN: Sir I do not propose to occupy much of the time of the Council in reiterating the arguments advanced by the various speakers who have already addressed the Council both for and against federation. I shall endeavour to explore other avenues touching on the political and economic effects of federation with the Caribbean Islands.

If we should accept federation with

the West Indian Islands, it would mean that—

(a) We would be reducing our status from a first to a third class colony, since the new Federal Union would be presided over by a Governor-General who very likely would reside in Jamaica (or some other of the Islands), and here we would have an Administrator, who would be subservient to the Governor-General and would automatically revert to the position of Colonial Secretary whenever the Governor-General visited the Colony, just as what obtains at present in St. Lucia and St. Vincent when visited by the Governor of the Windward Islands whose seat of Government is Grenada.

(b) We would be further removed from the Colonial Office and thus deprived of our present existing right of personal contact with the Secretary of State on all matters concerning the interests and welfare of our Colony.

(c) It would mean that our destiny to a great extent would be in the hands of and dependent upon the small Islands of the Caribbean, whereby we would be outnumbered and outvoted at all times, much to our detriment. Not only would we no longer control our own destiny, but whatever hope we may have of enjoying Dominion status in the future would be completely shattered, as the West Indian Islands could always stand in our light and effectively debar us as long as they did not want it themselves.

These small Islands would be a millstone around our necks, like so many anchors, to submerge us politically and economically. For instance, if we should request that Dominion status might be extended to us, we would naturally be told that the other Colonies or Dependencies in the Federal Union do not wish it, therefore we cannot have it as we are a unit of the newly formed Federal Union.

There is no question of loyalty or disloyalty, as some people would like to make you believe. Loyalty like charity should begin at home. It is essentially a question of business pure and simple, and I would ask you, what prudent businessman would ever enter into a business partnership with another who has no financial stability? As far as I can see it, this Colony would be carrying the financial burdens of all the small islands in the Caribbean, who have nothing to offer us but such things as we could very well do without at such a price. Why were not the Leeward and Windward Islands federated as was recommended by the Secretary of State and the Royal Commission—why? Because it would necessitate a very large permanent grant from the Home Government to achieve this end, and rather than incur this expenditure it is more politically expedient for the Home Government to foist them on to us.

We have heard of potential wealth—therefore, we must pay the piper while others will call the tune. Why are the Bahamas and Bermuda refusing to federate with the other Caribbean Islands of which they form a part, while we do not? We are on the mainland of South America and cannot be geographically or otherwise included with the Islands of the Caribbean. With your permission, Sir, I have made out a list of the various Caribbean Islands—also of British Guiana—giving their areas in square miles, their population, revenue and expenditure, public debt, exports and imports, to show the relative economic and financial stability of the various islands of the Caribbean which, it is suggested, we should federate with. A study of these figures will give you a correct mirror of the position, and clearly indicate that it would be an act of madness to contemplate such an alliance.

Colony	Area	Population	Revenue	Expenditure	Public Debt
Bahamas	4,375	68,846	£ 671,397	£ 625,743	£ 245,000
Barbados	166	203,500	1,147,060	1,008,257	605,360
Bermuda	21	33,500	815,657	836,129	875,000
British Guiana	83,000	375,819	3,135,021	2,930,320	4,039,290
British Honduras	8,867	64,327	523,036	513,288	—
Jamaica	4,720	1,249,871	8,064,546	7,467,272	8,654,047
Leeward Islands	350	104,254	659,592	724,163	95,130
Trinidad and Tobago	1,862	558,045	5,873,975	6,916,864	5,732,655
Windward Islands	868	281,580	863,357	803,482	470,609
Totals	104,229	2,939,742	£21,753,541	£21,825,518	£20,717,091

We come now to the most important point—Trade.

Colony	Exports	Imports
Bahamas	£ 432,202	£ 1,806,019
Barbados	2,870,231	3,470,727
Bermuda	143,267	2,444,472
British Guiana	4,993,126	4,662,264
British Honduras	1,268,107	1,534,274
Jamaica	4,472,853	9,040,833
Leeward Islands	1,090,511	1,287,494
Trinidad and Tobago	4,399,770	13,548,108
Windward Islands	1,226,918	1,583,759
Totals	£20,896,985	£39,377,950

↓ These figures are taken from the Colonial Office List of 1946. Now with reference to a Customs Union, I would further crave your Excellency's indulgence to refer to the evidence of the Comptroller of Customs, Mr. D'Andrade, who testified before the West India Royal Commission in 1939. In response to a question by the Vice-Chairman asking if any advantage could be secured to this Colony by such a Union, Mr. D'Andrade said:

"I think myself that a full Customs Union may be impracticable. I believe in a free exchange of products between the Colonies except in respect of those products which are ordinarily excisable, such as spirits, tobacco and mineral oils — petrol and luminants. A Customs Union would have to employ a uniform Customs tariff, but at every Conference when the question was brought up we could not come to any agreement. We found the difficulties insuperable. The revenue requirements of each colony are so different."

In respect of that matter, a statement was made out of the Customs Returns showing that what Mr. D'Andrade said obtains at the moment. The loss at the Trinidad rates on articles imported into this Colony would be approximately \$43,000 on Apparel and Hosiery, \$10,000 on Butter, \$4,000 on Boots and Shoes, \$192,000 on Flour, \$215,000 on Tobacco,

\$48,000 on Cordials and Wines, \$98,000 on Canned Fish, etc. So it would be seen that it would be very hard to reconcile a Customs Union without going very deeply into the matter.

With regard to the exports from these small Islands, I have had a list made out as to what they have to give us—

"Barbados — Cotton, sugar, rum, molasses;
Grenada — Cocoa, nutmegs and spices (limes, cloves and pepper);
Jamaica — Bananas, cocoa cocoanuts, coffee and oranges;
St. Vincent — Rum, cocoanuts, copra and arrowroot;
St. Lucia — Limes, sugar cocoanuts, and bananas;
Dominica — Cocoa, cocoanuts, copra, rum and lime juice;
Antigua — Charcoal, salt and phosphates of lime;
Trinidad — Cocoa, cocoanuts, coffee, rubber, sugar, and its greatest export is oil."

✧ From this it would be seen that those Colonies have very little to offer us that we would require, whilst we have sugar, rice, gold, diamonds, bauxite, timber, etc., and 83,000 square miles of potential wealth which has not yet been explored. That is too much to exchange for bananas, sweet potatoes and spices, which we can very well do without. So that, looked at from a business standpoint I contend that

it is not necessary to have federation in order to have free trade between the Colonies.

There has been talk about unification of public services. That would likewise be very difficult to adjust right away. We have to take into account the fact that the salaries in the various small Islands bear no relation to those in the larger Colonies. For instance, the Attorney-General of the Windward Islands gets only £800 a year, whereas the Attorney-General of Jamaica gets £1,600, and the Attorney-General of British Guiana £1,650 plus £60 a year cost of living allowance. The Chief Justice of Jamaica gets a salary of £2,200 while the Chief Justices of Barbados and the Leeward Islands get £1,400 each. It will be seen that it would be difficult to interchange officers among the various Colonies where the salaries are so very different, except of course on promotion from the smaller to the larger Colonies, but that would not necessitate unification of services, it could go on just as it is being carried out at present.

The hon. the First Nominated Member said we must look before we leap. That is a very wise precaution, and that is why I have dealt with the matter, not from the point of view of sentiment but as a business proposition. Sentiment should not enter into this matter at all, and it is better that the question be gone into thoroughly before we consider whether we should or should not accept Federation. Personally, for the reasons I have given, I would be completely against federation.

We have recently had a communication from Sir Gordon Lethem, Your Excellency's predecessor in office, in which he expressed the view that Federation of British Guiana with the West Indies was certainly not a good thing for British Guiana, at the moment. Taking everything into account, I say that there should not be a repetition of what happened in 1928. I think it would be a very wise precaution to have a referendum and let the people of the Colony decide for themselves. Let the tribunal of public opinion be the judge; the privilege, the duty and the responsibility

should be theirs. We could then carry out the wishes of the people.

Mr. RAATGEVER: Since the adjournment last Friday I have discussed the motion and my amendment with many hon. Members of this Council, and with citizens in every walk of life, and the consensus of opinion is that we should make some endeavour to arrive at unanimity in this matter. As hon. Members are possibly aware, there is a majority—a small one, it is true, but definitely a majority—definitely against federation with the West Indian Islands, but I think the great majority of Members, possibly all of them, are in favour of some form of closer association. I myself am in favour of closer association with the West Indian Islands, and Mr. Seaford and I got together and discussed the matter to see what could be done to get, if possible, a unanimous decision. The result of that discussion is that I am going to ask your permission, Sir, to withdraw my amendment, and Mr. Seaford has given me his undertaking to withdraw his motion. I would like, therefore, to move the following motion in the place of the original motion and my amendment:-

‘Be it resolved—That, with reference to the Resolutions passed at the Conference on the Closer Association of the British West Indian Colonies held at Montego Bay, Jamaica, in September, 1947, this Council appreciating the desirability of closer association of the British Caribbean territories declares its willingness to consider appropriate measures to this end, and

That this Council records that it does not endorse the Conference Resolution No. 1 in so far as concerns British Guiana, and further reserves judgment and full freedom of decision on all aspects of closer association as envisaged by the Conference, but agrees that British Guiana should, without prejudice, participate in the Committees and Commissions recommended to be set up in terms of the Conference Resolutions Nos. 2 to 14.”

I am asking Members to support this motion so that it could be unanimously carried by this Council today. As you will see, Sir, this motion commits this Colony to nothing. It is simply what I said on the previous occasion — we will send representatives, delegates, observers, or whatever we want to call them, to these

Committees and Commissions to take part in the discussions and report to this Council. We will then decide what should be done, as we are deciding now what is to be done in connection with the Resolutions passed at the Montego Bay Conference. You, Sir, will remember that before the delegates left the Colony for Jamaica I asked you to inform them that they could not commit this Colony to any course of action, and Your Excellency did so. I mention that again because many Members who have spoken thought that the delegates on their own did not do that. The position is that they had no mandate to do so; they had no authority to go there and commit this Colony, so that they could not do so. Therefore it was not due to any graceful attitude on their part that they did not commit this Colony. It was their duty, and in the same way the gentlemen we will send to represent us at these Conferences will have no authority to commit this Colony, and we are saying definitely that we are against federation.

Mr. ROTH: I beg to second the amended motion.

Mr. LEE: I cannot accept the amended motion just moved by my friend on my right. His last sentence indicated that he is against federation, and that he is against committing British Guiana to federation. If the proposal was that the Committee should consider steps towards federation or the kind of Federal Government envisaged by the Caribbean Labour Congress I would certainly agree to that, but the amended motion says:

"That, with reference to the Resolutions passed at the Conference on the Closer Association of the British West Indian Colonies held at Montego Bay, Jamaica, in September, 1947, this Council appreciating the desirability of closer association of the British Caribbean territories declares its willingness to consider appropriate measures to this end."

That end is towards closer association as envisaged by the White Paper issued by H.M. Secretary of State for the Colonies, the cover of which bears the title "Closer Association of the British West Indian Colonies," while paragraphs 21 and 22 of the document indicate the kind of Federal Government that this closer association

will lead to. We cannot accept that because, under the Federal Government as envisaged in paragraph 21, the Colonies would still be under the control of Downing Street, and there would still be Nominated Members in the Legislative and Executive Councils.

The PRESIDENT: Is the hon. Member going over the whole ground? If he is opposing the motion on those grounds he can vote against it. This motion does not say that we accept that or any other kind of federation. It says that this Council does not endorse federation.

Mr. LEE: This is an amendment of the motion moved by the hon. the First Nominated Member, and the hon. Mr. Raatgever said that as a result of a discussion with the hon. the First Nominated Member this amended motion is put before the Council. I therefore consider it my duty to explain that this amended motion refers to steps towards closer association, which I cannot accept, and I am trying to point out to the Council that this motion is inclined towards the White Paper, and that what the White Paper envisages is not what we are asking for. I therefore cannot agree to it.

Mr. SEAFORD: In view of what has been said by the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member (Mr. Raatgever), and after giving this matter very careful consideration, with the permission of the seconder of my motion I am prepared to withdraw that motion in favour of the amended motion which has just been moved. I do so for these reasons: I stated in my opening remarks that the object of my motion was to keep the door open; that neither we nor the public of the Colony knew the full implications of federation. The amended motion now before us seems to me to do exactly the same thing. It leaves the door open for consideration. In other words we are not banging and bolting the door against anything that may accrue to the benefit of this Colony. The hon. Member who has just taken his seat feels that he cannot accept the amended motion because, apparently, he gave an undertaking to the Caribbean Labour Congress. I am asking him to put

his obligation to this Colony before his obligation to the Labour Congress.

Mr. LEE: I would like to correct that. I have not given an undertaking to the Labour Congress. I accepted the Federal Constitution which the Labour Congress drafted, and I cannot differ from that.

Mr. SEAFORD: The hon. Member says he cannot differ from that, which shows that there is an obligation. I will ask him once more to give preference to the Colony. In listening to the debate the thing that struck me was that so many Members were under the impression that the Secretary of State has definitely stated that this is the kind of self-government we are going to have. To use the words of the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Dr. Jagan), "the federation Whitehall wants to give us is only a glorified Crown Colony Government." I honestly do not know where the hon. Member got that from. I have read this White Paper through and through trying to find out where it is, but I cannot find it. The Secretary of State has stated in his White Paper the different forms that might be acceptable. On page 15 paragraph 28, he states:

"28. It is emphasised that this memorandum has been prepared to indicate some of the elements in the problem of closer association and that it is submitted in order that the tentative ideas which it contains may help in focussing attention upon the considerations which any scheme for closer association must include."

It is definitely stated that the British Government is not dictating any policy whatever, for in his despatch of December 4, 1947, the Secretary of State has stated: "... and the recommendation in Resolution 2, that the political development of the British Caribbean territories should be pursued as an aim in itself, without prejudice and in no way subordinate to progress towards federation," accurately represents the policy of His Majesty's Government, as I indicated in the course of the Conference."

Mr. Creech Jones laid it down very definitely at that Conference that there would be no dragooning; that it would be left to the people to decide whether they wanted federation. I

stated that here publicly and I repeat it now. It seems to me so obvious from the White Paper, and the despatches. To suggest that the Colonial Office wants to force Crown Colony government upon a federated West Indies is, in my opinion, tantamount to impugning the honesty of the Secretary of State. He has definitely stated that that is not the policy of His Majesty's Government, yet Members say that that is the policy. I presume that they probably know more about what took place in the British Cabinet than the Secretary of State for the Colonies. I may not agree with the views of the Secretary of State but I do believe he is honest in his convictions, and that what he has put forward he considers a good thing for the Colonies. Nowhere has he laid it down that this is the form of government we must have. I think Members should accept that.

There is one other matter I should like to refer to. It has been rumoured that I have moved the original motion because I had given an undertaking to the Secretary of State and to this Government that I would try to push federation through. That is absolutely untrue. I wish to make a categorical public denial that I have done anything of the kind, and I think Your Excellency is in a position to endorse that.

The PRESIDENT: I would like most emphatically to endorse what the hon. Member has said. I am quite astonished to hear that any suggestion of that kind has been made. Hon. Members are well aware of the position I have taken up during the whole of this debate, and I have said that it is a matter for this Council to decide and not for me to influence its decision in one way or another, except to explain and clear up any misunderstandings that may arise. I am astonished to hear that any suggestion of undue influence has been made.

Mr. SEAFORD: The purpose of my original motion was to leave the question of closer association or federation open so that it could be debated at some future time when we know the implications and full meaning of federation. I therefore do not think it is advisable to ask the people

of this Colony to express their views by referendum now, because I am satisfied that neither the hon. Members of this Council nor the people of the Colony know what closer association or political federation is at the moment. I feel that by accepting this amended motion which is now put forward we would leave the whole question open for discussion when we do understand what it means. I would therefore ask hon. Members to give the motion their wholehearted support. We want something to go forward from this Colony showing that we are unanimous in our desire to see something done for the welfare of this Colony. I think everyone who has spoken here has shown that he has at heart the future prosperity of the Colony, and I feel sure that hon. Members are going to support the motion, realising that it has been brought forward because it is considered better to leave the question open for future consideration.

Mr. KENDALL: Before I agree to this substitute motion I would like, with your permission, Sir, to get from the hon. the Attorney-General his opinion as to whether Resolutions 2 to 14 of the Montego Bay Conference hinge on Resolution 1.

The PRESIDENT: I do not think they do. For example, if the hon. Member reads Resolution 2 he will see that it suggests that an increasing measure of responsibility should be extended to the several units of the British Caribbean territories without prejudice and in no way subordinate to progress towards federation. I do not see that anything hinges on anything else. Even as regards federation the Council is merely being asked to agree to the principle of federation. Even if we agree to the principle it does not follow that we will have federation. A scheme for federation will have to be worked out after we have agreed to the principle of it, and even then we would not have accepted federation, because the scheme worked out might not be in a form which we consider suitable to this Colony.

As regards self-government there is a Resolution referring to an increasing measure of responsibility, and I should have thought that every Member would

have approved of that Resolution at once without any reservations of any kind.

Mr. KENDALL: I agree with you, Sir, that Resolution 1 deals with the principle of federation, but if in the substitute motion we are objecting to the principle of federation, but if in the no merit. The principle is defeated.

Dr. GONSALVES: I am somewhat amazed. I agreed to support wholeheartedly the original motion moved by the hon. the First Nominated Member—to accept Resolutions 2 to 14 and reserve judgment on Resolution 1 until the full implications of all the other Resolutions have been made known to this Council. I am somewhat puzzled by the transformation ~~into~~ this motion. I clearly and plainly wish to support the original motion in spite of the fact that the mover has asked permission to withdraw it. Perhaps I am not sufficiently intelligent to understand what is the real meaning of this transformation, and I would like it to be clearly understood by the Secretary of State that I prefer to support the original motion. I would like that to be recorded in Hansard.

Mr. SMELLIE: I agree with the hon. Member who has just spoken. This substitute motion is not the same as the original motion. It says distinctly that "this Council records that it does not endorse the Conference Resolution No. 1 in so far as concerns British Guiana." The original motion made it quite clear that this Council "reserves judgment on Resolution 1." This is not the same thing, and I agree with what the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice (Mr. Kendall) has said.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I moved two amendments to the original motion which have not been seconded, but even if they had been seconded I would have been prepared to withdraw them. I am of the opinion that the amended motion which has now been introduced certainly represents the general feeling of this Council. The second part of the motion represents the feeling of the majority, while the last two lines of the first part leave the door completely open for that consideration

which those Members who have spoken before me are anxious about. To those Members who would not want federation at all, the last three lines of paragraph 1 of the motion would certainly be objectionable since it states clearly that "this Council appreciating the desirability of closer association of the British Caribbean territories declares its willingness to consider appropriate measures to this end." That will give those Members who have just spoken some relief of their anxiety to this extent; that closer association can mean either political or economic association, and if there is going to be consideration of appropriate measures to that end I see no need for fear on their part at all. I repeat that the amended motion meets the general feeling as expressed in this lengthy debate by both sections of this Council.

Capt. COGHLAN: I agree with the last speaker that those of us who are against federation certainly do not appreciate the desirability of closer association. Therefore we cannot vote for the amended motion which says that this Council "declares its willingness to consider appropriate measures to this end."

Mr. WIGHT: I would like to point out to the hon. the Seventh Nominated Member (Mr. Smellie) and to the hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Kendall) that I do not quite see that their fears are justified, because if they read the second part of the motion they will see that it says that this Council "reserves judgment and full freedom of decision on all aspects of closer association as envisaged by the Conference." That means to me, and I suggest it should mean to other Members, that this Council reserves judgment and full freedom of decision on Resolution 1 and all aspects of closer association as envisaged by the Montego Bay Conference. I do not think hon. Members need have any fear that the amended motion in any way contradicts what they have already said.

Mr. KENDALL: I do not know whether the mover of this motion—the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member—would be willing to delete from the second

part the words "does not endorse the Conference Resolution No. 1 in so far as concerns British Guiana". If he is prepared to do so, then I would support this substituted motion.

Mr. RAATGEVER: I cannot do that because it would mean that I am accepting federation—something which I have been against all my life. I am only trying to get hon. Members to unite in this matter which is most vital to the interest of the Colony. If we are to get Dominion status I think it should go forward to the world that we are united on this question. Let us get together; I have tried to meet all viewpoints by including in this motion the words "this Council appreciating the desirability of closer association of the British Caribbean territories, declares its willingness to consider appropriate measures to this end...", as contained in the first paragraph. I wanted to insert the word "economic" between the words "closer association," but as some hon. Member objected I have left it out. Let us be unanimous; let this be the beginning of the unity with which we would go forward into a new era of progress and prosperity.

Dr. GONSALVES: In view of Your Excellency's explanation, I do not understand why hon. Members would not accept the motion as it is. I am perfectly willing to vote as Your Excellency wishes, but I—

The PRESIDENT: I do not think I asked any hon. Member to vote as I wish.

Dr. GONSALVES: I understand you, Sir, but I do not see any reason why there should be any contention over this motion.

The PRESIDENT: Perhaps the hon. Member is in favour of what I suggested as regards Resolution 2. I should have thought from the debate that every Member of this Council would have supported that Resolution which refers to self-government.

Dr. GONSALVES: I do not understand why the motion moved by the hon. the First Nominated Member has not been

accepted. As I have already stated, my intelligence might not be able to go so far as to make me understand it, but I do not understand the reason for the others that have been moved. I like to humble myself.

Dr. JAGAN: I do not understand what is all this quibbling about federation and what not. We have spent a lot of the taxpayers money in order to send delegates to the Montego Bay Conference in Jamaica, and now we are suggesting that we should send others to Barbados and what not. Why can't we get together here and decide whether we are going to accept the principle of federation or not. If we are going to accept the principle then let us accept all the Resolutions now, except Resolution 14. Why should there be this new motion by the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member? Unless it is some dodge or the other I cannot see the necessity for it. If the hon. the First Nominated Member is not going to withdraw his motion I beg to move that it be put to the vote.

Mr. SEAFORD: I gave the reason for bringing forward my motion, and I think it was understood by the majority of the Members of this Council. What we are trying to do is to arrive at as unanimous a decision as possible in this matter. I think the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member said that there was no commitments at the Montego Bay Conference because you, Sir, as Governor of the Colony, were asked not to let the representatives bind the Colony in any way. I do not think, with all due deference, that as Governor you had a right to do so. Therefore I still claim that position as a delegate to the Montego Bay Conference.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I went to the Montego Bay Conference in the capacity of an adviser to the delegates from this Colony, and this is a somewhat embarrassing situation. I have just risen to say a few words because I think I might explain something about Resolution 1. If hon. Members read it carefully they would see that it 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."

Now, Sir, there was a good deal of argument in Jamaica as to the kind of federation which might be introduced if the Colonies do accept federation at all. Hon. Members would appreciate that this is a particular type of federation. There are some federations in which each constituent unit is the main power and where what is left over goes to the Central Government. There is another type in which the Central Government is the main power and what is left over goes to the constituent powers, and so on. The delegates at the Montego Bay Conference accepted this particular type of federation as the one they desired. I have seen many kinds of opinion by hon. Members on Resolution 1, but I feel as a citizen that it is a little unwise to go so far—whether you want federation or not—to say that you accept that particular Resolution. Therefore, when I read this amended motion—that this Council does not endorse Resolution 1—I regard that as a rather wise thing because if you do not say that, you would not only be accepting federation in principle, but you would be accepting a particular type of federation. Speaking for myself, I think it is a little wiser to accept the words in the second part of the amended motion—that this Council does not endorse Resolution 1. If you do not do that, you would be to some extent tied to this particular form of federation. On the other hand, as I see it the difference between the amended motion as moved by the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member and the substantive motion moved by the hon. the First Nominated Member is that the amended motion opens the door wider. That is to say, in the motion moved by the hon. the First Nominated Member this Council accepts Resolutions 2 to 14.

Now, if you read Resolution 6 you will find that the various terms of federation are to be found in precise language and, secondly, you may accept the basis under which the Committee appointed under this Resolution has to determine these Resolutions. The amended motion moved by the

hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Raatgever, merely says that you reserve decision on all aspects of closer association as decided at Montego Bay, but leaves you free to participate in the discussions of the Standing Closer Association Committee. Therefore, you are not tying yourself down to anything. All you are agreeing to do is to send delegates to the Closer Association Committee's discussions—there are four sub-Committees—and when you get the report of the Committee you will decide finally. Speaking personally and as a citizen of British Guiana I am inclined to accept the amended motion moved by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Raatgever, because it leaves complete freedom for decision without any obligation and, what is more, I think it is a suitable compromise of all the different views I have heard.

The PRESIDENT: The position is that the original motion cannot be withdrawn until the amendment has been disposed of. I shall therefore put the amendment as moved by the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member, and I shall leave the original motion on the Order Paper. If the amendment is passed then the original motion can be withdrawn. I think that is the correct procedure.

Dr. SINGH: I really seconded the original motion because I felt that Resolutions 2 to 14 should serve as a basis for our discussions at the meetings of the Standing Closer Association Committee. Now, however, I am willing to accept the amendment.

Mr. LEE: May I ask whether there are two amendments, or one?

The PRESIDENT: There is only one. There is the motion on the Order Paper and the amendment moved by the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member.

Mr. SMELLIE: Do I understand that the motion moved by the hon. the First Nominated Member holds good if the amendment has been disposed of?

The PRESIDENT: It does not hold good altogether; it stands until the amendment is disposed of.

Amendment put, the Council dividing and voting as follows:-

For:- Messrs Peters, Mc Doom, Kendall, Gonsalves, Debidin, Farnum, Raatgever, Thompson, Roth, Dr. Nicholson, Dr. Singh, Seaford and Wight-13.

Against:- Messrs Smellie, Fernandes, Coghlan, Lee and Dr. Jagan-5.

Did not Vote:- The Col. Treasurer, the Attorney General and the Col. Secretary-3.

Motion carried.

APPROPRIATION BILL, 1948

The PRESIDENT: There are one or two formal matters on the agenda, more particularly the Appropriation Bill, and if we can get them done between now and 5 o'clock I would suggest that the Council then adjourn *sine die*, that is, until after the Easter holidays.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I beg to move that the following Bill be read the first time:-

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

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Motion put and agreed to.

Bill read the first time.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I now beg to move that this Bill be read a second time. As hon. Members must be aware, this is the final act of the Legislature in authorising expenditure for the services of the year 1948. We have, of course, already approved of the Estimates but it is necessary that the authority to expend the money as approved in this Council on the Estimates be embodied in the law. Consequently, this Ordinance authorises the Government to authorise the Treasury to pay sums of money in accordance with the Estimates. Part of the services included in the Estimates is, of course, already authorised by special standing law and, consequently, the appropriation will only relate to that part of the expenditure that is not so covered by law. Hon. Members will recall that the

total expenditure voted for the year 1948 is \$18,187,338. The amount which is to be now authorised or appropriated is shown in the Schedule to the Bill and it is \$16,411,983. That is the amount, Sir, which the appropriation will cover and I am asking the Council to pass this Bill accordingly.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Motion put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Council resolved itself into Committee

and considered the Bill without amendment.

Council resumed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: As it is important that this Bill be enacted early, I beg with the permission of this Council to move that it be now read the third time and passed.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL seconded.

Motion put and agreed to.

Bill read the third time and passed.

The PRESIDENT: Council will now adjourn *sine die*.