

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

(Constituted under the British Guiana
(Constitution) (Temporary Provisions)
Order in Council, 1953.)

FRIDAY, 25TH MARCH, 1955

The Council met at 2 p.m.

PRESENT :

His Honour the Speaker, Sir
Eustace Gordon Woolford, O.B.E., Q.C.

Ex-Officio Members :—

The Hon. the Chief Secretary,
Mr. F. D. Jakeway, O.B.E.

The Hon. the Attorney General,
Mr. F. W. Holder, C.M.G., Q.C.

The Hon. the Financial Secretary,
Mr. W. O. Fraser, O.B.E.

Nominated Members of Executive Council :—

The Hon. Sir Frank McDavid,
C.M.G., C.B.E. (Member for Agriculture,
Forests, Lands and Mines).

The Hon. W. O. R. Kendall (Member
for Communications and Works).

The Hon. G. A. C. Farnum, O.B.E.
(Member for Local Government, Social
Welfare and Co-operative Development),

The Hon. G. H. Smellie.

The Hon. R. B. Gajraj.

The Hon. R. C. Tello.

Deputy Speaker :

Mr. W. J. Raatgever, C.B.E.

Nominated Officials :—

Mr. W. T. Lord, I.S.O.

Mr. J. I. Ramphal.

Nominated Unofficials :—

Mr. T. Lee.

Mr. W. A. Phang.

Mr. L. A. Luckhoo, Q.C.

Mr. W. A. Macnie, C.M.G., O.B.E.

Mr. C. A. Carter.

Mr. E. F. Correia.

✓ Rev. D. C. J. Bobb.

Mr. H. Rahaman.

Miss Gertie H. Collins.

Mrs. Esther E. Dey.

Dr. H. A. Fraser.

Lt. Col. E. J. Haywood, M.B.E., T.D.

Mr. R. B. Jailal.

Mr. Sugrim Singh.

Clerk of the Legislature—

Mr. I. Crum Ewing.

Assistant Clerk of the Legislature—

Mr. E. V. Viapree (acting).

Absent

The Hon. P. A. Cummings (Member
for Labour, Health and Housing).

The Speaker read prayers.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Thursday, the 24th of March, 1955, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

Mr. Speaker: Some Members are out of town and may not resume their seats today. At any rate I think I announced that it was expected that the debate on Federation would be concluded today, but I do not now think that this is possible.

DEATH OF MR. J. L. H. W. SAVARY

Mr. Speaker: Before proceeding with the business on the Order Paper I would like, with the permission of Members, to move the following resolution :—

* "Be It Resolved:

That this Council records its profound regret on the death of Mr. J. L. H. W. Savary, later Speaker of the Legislative Council of Trinidad and Tobago, and a former Judge of this Colony.

This Council further desires to express its deep sympathy with his widow, relatives and His Honour the Deputy Speaker and Members of the Legislative Council, and directs that copies of this Resolution be forwarded to his widow and relatives and to the Legislature."

I was reminded by an hon. Member of this Council that it was our common duty to pass such a motion. I had heard of his death and had seen reference to it in the newspapers and also in the Supreme Court of this Colony. I perhaps know more of him than almost anybody in this Chamber, I knew some of his antecedents in the Colony of Trinidad, and I can testify that if ever there was a careful and painstaking practitioner and an equally careful Judge, it was the deceased. Some Judges, and indeed all Judges, have their idiosyncrasies,

but there was one distinct attribute possessed of the late Mr. Savary that was not always reproduced by some Judges on the judicial bench, and that was his abundant patience when presiding over trials. I had the pleasure and the honour of appearing before him in a case which lasted 26 days. It was an election petition — one of those cases where personalities abound— and the necessity arose for exercising some control of feeling by the presiding Judge, who had to listen to much adverse comment being made on the conduct of would-be candidates seeking election to constituencies, including men who had served in the Legislative Council in the past. I can say that at no time through his conduct of the trial was there any unpleasantness or exhibition on his part of any political bias, and it was, I think, that fact which made him succeed on the judicial bench.

I think it would be helpful both to practitioners and Judges alike if they get hold of his note-book, his *vade mecum*, which he took with him on the bench, and when any difficulty arose in a case he looked at it. He had started such a Case Book from the time he was a young man—I am sorry I did not do so myself—and thus, except in very rare cases, did he ever have to impose any strain on his recollection of previous decisions and hearing on the issues then before him. He had a ready answer to cases cited before him.

I am glad to know that on the three or four visits I paid in recent times to Trinidad I had the great pleasure of seeing him preside over the Legislature there. I know that he might have had some unpleasant moments at times, as every Speaker has wherever feeling runs high on some matter under discussion, but I do not remember any occasion when he was not quite able to control the situation.

I am sure that hon. Members will join with me in supporting this resolution and in agreeing that our condolences be sent to his widow and relatives. I have not referred to his presence amongst us in a private capacity, but I do know that both his wife and he usually were very prominent in the social life of this Colony. He was a fairly good left-handed tennis player. He was diminutive in stature but very accurate in placing. At that time of his life it was one of the games he enjoyed. I am sure that many of us around here will miss his company and that of his wife, with whom, I am sure, we should all like to condole and extend our sympathy to her in her sad loss.

The Attorney General (Mr. F. W. Holder) : Mr. Speaker, may I on behalf of the Members of this Council, and also on behalf of the Bar of this Colony express our profound regret at the passing of the late Mr. Savary. He was for some years a Puisne Judge of this Colony, and I know from the records of his judgments and also from what I gathered from time to time from practitioners in Trinidad, that he was a lawyer of great eminence and erudition and, as you, Sir, have quite properly said, he was a Judge of great patience and understanding. As the Speaker of the Legislature of Trinidad from 1950 when the new Constitution was introduced in that Colony, he displayed the same patience, tact, and understanding in what might be described sometimes as a difficult debate.

He served not only in Trinidad and British Guiana but in the Gold Coast, and then he returned to Jamaica where he was also Puisne Judge. He was indeed an eminent West Indian, and we in this Colony where he served, wish to place on record our deep appreciation of those services. I am sure his life and work must provide an

inspiration and a guide to other West Indians, both those who practise at the Bar and those engaged in politics. Here, indeed, was a man who thought and worked in the interest not only of the Colony to which he belonged but of the West Indies and, indeed, of the Empire. I heartily support the resolution which, Mr. Speaker, is an expression of the sympathy of this Council.

Mr. Speaker: I would ask hon. Members to rise.

With Members standing, the question was put, and agreed to.

Motion carried unanimously.

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT CONFERENCE

Mr. Carter: Mr. Speaker, before the Order of the Day is proceeded with I would like to make a statement. I think it is time that the hon. Member, Mr. Gajraj gave us a report on the findings or of the proceedings of the Freedom of Movement Conference in Trinidad. I am aware that he was not appointed by this Council but, nevertheless, he attended as an observer a Conference vitally related to the subject of West Indian Federation under discussion.

Mr. Speaker: His appointment as an observer was not made by this Council, but he was nominated by His Excellency the Governor to attend the Conference as an observer. I am afraid I cannot ask the hon. Member to answer your question, but if and when a report has been submitted to His Excellency I have no doubt that His Excellency will let this Council know something about it.

Mr. Carter: Yes, Sir, but I feel Members debating this subject should by now, before the debate is concluded, have an idea of what took place.

Mr. Speaker: I am afraid I cannot make the hon. Member release a statement. I think what appeared in the newspapers must have been furnished to the Press by someone who has some knowledge of what took place at the Conference, and I have no doubt myself that it is an accurate account of its proceedings.

Mr. Carter: Are you prepared to accept that statement?

Mr. Speaker: I do not think that I should be called upon to answer that question. I can only add that I cannot make the hon. Member report to His Excellency; but I have no doubt that he will do so.

Mr. Carter: I say, it is time we got a report.

Mr. Speaker: I sympathise with you in thinking so.

The Attorney General: I am sure the hon. Member who attended the Conference in Trinidad as an observer on behalf of British Guiana will, before the debate is concluded, make some reference to that Conference so far as it is proper and practical for him to do. I think, Sir, you will give him an opportunity to do so, if he wishes to avail himself of it.

Mr. Raatgever: I think this discussion is entirely out of order. This Legislative Council did not send an observer. It was not even aware, not even treated with the courtesy of being informed that an observer was being sent to the Conference. I do not see how we can listen to anybody who left the Colony without the knowledge and without the consent of this Council. Again, I feel this is entirely out of order.

Mr. Gajraj: Mr. Speaker, may I join the discussion at this stage and assure hon. Members of this Council that it is my desire, and has been since my return, to seek Your Honour's permission at some suitable stage in order to speak again. Members will recall that before I left this Colony to go to Trinidad for that very momentous Conference I had to shorten my speech, because it seemed to me at that time there was a possibility of this debate finishing before my return, but had I realised the debate would not have been ended when I came back I would not have been in such a hurry.

But, as hon. Members are aware, according to the rules of procedure, having spoken on the motion, I could not return and speak on it again without Your Honour's permission. But I found on my return that the hon. Member, Mr. Luckhoo, made it very easy for me to get back into the debate, having moved an amendment. I shall, at the appropriate time, use that amendment to make certain observations, though they cannot be termed a report.

The hon. the Deputy Speaker (Mr. Raatgever) said I left here without the knowledge and consent of this Council, a statement with which I do not agree, because the hon. the Chief Secretary mentioned my going to Trinidad, and that I was appointed by the Governor. The hon. Member, Captain Smellie referred to it, and hon. Members showed their appreciation of it by cheering around the table. Therefore, I think it is wrong for any Member to suggest that my appointment did not meet with the approval of the Council, and that I went there without its consent. But at the right time, I shall ask permission to speak.

Mr. Speaker : I will allow the hon. Member to speak under the shel-

ter of the amendment by reason of the fact that Members had expressed their criticism of freedom of movement in general.

It has been suggested by several speakers that there should be entire freedom of movement between the territories included in the Federation. Whether this is to be allowed in the future, or whether it is limited in some way or another the hon. Member should, I think, be at liberty to intervene in the debate to express his knowledge on that subject.

Mr. Gajraj : As Your Honour rules.

ORDER OF THE DAY

BRITISH CARIBBEAN FEDERATION

Council resumed the debate on the following motion by the **Rev. Mr. Bobb:**

“That this Council having noted the steps which are being taken by other Caribbean Governments and by Her Majesty’s Government towards the creation of a British Caribbean Federation, and the statement of the Secretary of State for the Colonies in Parliament to the effect that the constitutional instruments will provide that British Guiana and other territories which might care to do so will be quite free to join the Federation, is of the opinion that British Guiana should join the Federation, and that the question of this country’s participation therein should be re-examined.

This Council further prays His Excellency the Governor to take such steps as he may deem fit to keep British Guiana in close touch with the action now proceeding towards the setting up of the Federation, and to ascertain the state of public opinion in this country towards participation in the Federation.”

Mr. Speaker: Is the hon. Member, Mr. Tello, prepared to resume his speech?

Mr. Tello : Yes, Mr. Speaker, you will be pleased to hear that I spent some time paring down my speech in order to be as brief as possible. At the time of adjournment I was making the point that it is not true that my people are entirely ignorant of Federation, but that they are worried as to the particular part British Guiana would play in a federal set-up. I said that all this confusion and misunderstanding would be easily removed from among the mass of people if an opportunity were given us to negotiate the terms under which this country would be admitted into Federation. But I am afraid people in this country who influence public opinion seem to have a rather convenient attitude even towards negotiation. We find at times there is an impression that negotiations are limited, and the results of them are even further limited. I think most Members of the Legislature have at some time been engaged in some form of negotiation, even if it was done through the forums of debate. I think they will agree that the results or the degree of success resulting from negotiation must be related to the approach to the question, to the self-confidence with which we approach it, the persuasive measures we employ, and the acceptance of the other man’s right as well as ours, and, finally, the acceptance of the presence of goodwill.

Having expressed this view—and I am confident it is also the view of the entire Council today — I want to say how worried I am that a Member of this Council who, I am confident, has some influence on public opinion, and whose experience in the Council is one that we must have some respect for, should make expressions in this Council as recorded in the debate on Dr. Nicholson’s motion on the 16th

[Mr. Tello]

January, 1952. In a speech made by the hon. Member sitting opposite me — I refer again to Mr. Raatgever — he said, and I will quote from column 784 of the *Hansard* :

“It has also been said that if we accepted the principle of Federation we could meet around the conference table and bargain for better terms than those proposed in the Rance Report. One hon. Member was good enough to pay me a compliment in this respect, for which I thank him. He is not in his seat today but my acknowledgement will probably appear in the Press. That is wishful thinking, a pious hope, because even if we had parity with Jamaica and Trinidad — even if we had equality of votes with them, as we should have—our destiny to a large extent would be in the hands of small islands of the Caribbean who not only outnumber us, but could out-vote us to the detriment of this Colony.”

When I read that passage I felt like dismissing it by saying that my hon. friend is a born individualist, and nothing could change or convert him. But how can I say such a thing, and ask others to accept it when I know that he is a member of the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce, a democratic body, as I understand it, which the hon. Member had no fear about joining? Yet I wonder if the thought did not occur to him, a provision dealer, that the possibilities were that the dry goods dealers and the motor dealers in that body might block their votes against him in the Chamber. I am certain that his reason for joining the Chamber was because he had full confidence in his ability to debate his point and to convince the other members. The hon. Member is also one of the oldest Members of the Legislature of this Colony. He was always a nominated Member, but during most of his time there were also elected Members of the Council. Yet he had no fear that the elected Members would vote *en bloc* against him. He

relied on their ability to accept reason, and again I suppose he had confidence in his ability to “put it over” when the time came.

Why should my friend try to “sell” the idea, especially to the informed people, that the legislators of the small islands, as he calls them, have no regard, no respect for reason, no regard for the normal function of democracy, no respect for other people’s opinions, and would vote solidly against the best intentions, the ambitions and the most progressive ideas, merely because they have pledged themselves to vote against British Guiana at all times? My friend, the hon. Member on my right (Mr. Gajraj) has already warned the hon. Member about anticipating ourselves to be always in opposition to the West Indian islands. If no one else can testify to the contrary my hon. friend, Mr. Raatgever, is competent to do so. I am sure that he has had the pleasure of working together with the West Indian leaders, and that he has succeeded in getting them to accept measures sponsored by him. I am rather anxious about this matter, because it is not only in the matter of Federation that we must look forward to mutual understanding. As we live from day to day we desire mutual understanding and amicable settlement of every point on which we vary.

I am also worried about the statements made by the hon. Member’s comrade-in-arms, the hon. Mr. Sugrim Singh, against Federation. The hon. gentleman tried to minimise the importance of our \$9 million rice market. First of all I do not agree with him that we have reached the ceiling point of our market possibilities in the West Indies. In his anxiety to “put over” that point he did not stop to think of the increasing population of the West Indies, and also the ra-

tioning of rice in one of the larger islands. He certainly did not expect this Council to believe that if we federated with the West Indies, Jamaica and Trinidad would continue with their expensive experiment to produce their own rice.

But that is not the point that really worries me. I am worried about my friend's memory. I want to remind him of the very sad day when padi was sold in this Colony at 60 cents per bag. I wonder if my friend is saying that it matters little or nothing to this Colony if we returned to that stage — if we returned to the days when lands were left abandoned because it was not a paying concern to cultivate rice. Or would he like once more to see the anguish of the rice farmers who could not recover even half the cost of production? Does the hon. Member not agree that our policy of expanding our rice industry was a good one, and that it is our duty to increase its expansion and improve the standard of cultivation? There is one point on which I agree with my friend, Mr. Raatgever. Speaking on the Development Budget in this Council on March 19, 1954, he is reported in *Hansard*, column 426, to have said:

"I forgot to say when quoting from the Bangkok Report, that it is proposed by India, Burma, etc. to have 8 million more tons of rice available in 1956-7. What can we do against that? Before the war rice was dumped from Burma into the West Indies. It was brought as ballast in the ships, and this Colony could not compete with it. The rice producers know that, but perhaps they would like to forget it. I cannot forget it because I lost a lot of money in rice due to the competition with Burma. The same thing is going to happen again, and Barbados, Trinidad and the other islands of the West Indies are not going to buy rice from British Guiana if they can get rice cheaper from the East."

Are we therefore on the wrong march when we move forward to

secure this great market? I have heard it said that the lot of the rice farmer in this Colony, secure as it is, is a very bad one. Are we going to remove the little strings that bind their security and make it dangerous for them to cultivate rice? In spite of what the hon. Mr. Sugrim Singh has said, he cannot convince the rice farmer that it is a good thing to keep out of Federation and gamble with our rice market.

The hon. Mr. Ramphal has spoken a great deal about the fears that people of the working class have, and I endorse all he has said. But there was also another fear which was expressed to me which I want to remove from the minds of my people. They complained to me that it had been impressed upon them that the rates of wages in the West Indies are so low that people who are accustomed to work for such small wages, if they came to this Colony, would take a few pegs off the current rates of wages.

Mr. Speaker: Did they indicate the places where those low wages are current?

Mr. Tello: They just referred to the West Indies. I want to say something on it. My friend has all the statistics and he can challenge me if I am wrong. I say that comparing industry with industry in British Guiana and the West Indies, the rates of wages are on par, but where there is a higher rate of wage that higher rate is in the West Indies—not in British Guiana. I am not making any charge against our industries. It is an accepted fact that the cost of production in certain industries in the West Indies is far lower than it is in British Guiana. I make the positive statement that it is not true to say that the people of the West Indies are accustomed to rates of wages much lower than those obtaining in this country, and that they will come here and lower our rates of wages.

[Mr. Tello]

As regards the "dumping" of people from the West Indies in this Colony I think the suggestion was simple and childish. I did not expect to hear such a suggestion in a Legislative Council. The mere mention of it was ridiculous.

I will now pass on to the go-slow attitude which it has been suggested we should adopt towards Federation. The hon. Mr. Luckhoo and I have worked together in the Trade Union Movement, and one of the things we were always opposed to was putting off for tomorrow what can be done today. We have impressed on the workers that today is the day to seek and share federal protection in the Trade Union Movement, and trust it not to tomorrow. It therefore surprises me to read in my friend's speech that he thinks that in the matter of Federation it is safer to postpone. The mere suggestion of postponement is an admission that Federation is inevitable, and it is indeed a weak attitude. I am constrained to use even a stronger word, following on what my hon. colleague, Mr. Smellie, has said. It is a reactionary attitude. It is a strong word but I feel just as strongly about it. It is indeed a reactionary attitude towards something progressive. What excuse can my friend have for standing in the way of progress? How can we in one breath preach the value of closer association by unions and societies, and shrink from the more important association of a federal body?

I said earlier that I was supporting this motion because I was convinced from the depth of my heart that my people have accepted the principle of Federation. I propose to offer evidence in support of what I said. Several speakers have referred to the various bodies with which we have already federated, but I want to say that Federation between British Guiana and the West Indies already exists in other phases of

our life, and without repeating those which have been mentioned, I would like to refer to the important and respectable profession to which you, Mr. Speaker, belong. Is it not true that the Bar Association of this Colony is federated with the body known as the West Indies Bar Association? And is it not true that some of the leading lawyers have already attended conferences of that Association?

In the sphere of industry we have here what is known as the B. G. Sugar Producers Association. Have the sugar producers of this Colony not provided themselves with collective security in the British West Indies Sugar Producers' Association? Is it not true that those people who are certainly not asleep as regards the interest of the local sugar industry, see the necessity for further protection in the form of a West Indies Sugar Association? Another industrial association is the British West Indies Citrus Growers Association. In commerce too we have the Associated Chambers of Commerce of the West Indies, with their head office in Jamaica.

In sport we have the West Indies Cricket Board of Control. My hon. friend said yesterday that if neither of our boys was picked to play in the West Indies team against Australia he would feel sorry. I join in that sorrow today, and I agree with him that it is the obligation of the Selection Committee to select the best team suited to represent the West Indies, but I want to say that those of us who can find the time to listen to the broadcast of the matches would have no less interest in the struggle between our West Indian cricketers against those of Australia, even if this Colony's candidates are not in the team.

I come now to Closer Association—an association that taps a very large number of people. I refer to Labour.

First we have the Federation of British Civil Service Associations in the West Indies. That entails a federation of very responsible workers, people whose behaviour can influence the success or failure of any Colony with which they are associated. Then we have the Caribbean Area Division of the Inter-American Regional Organisation and the International Federation of Free Trade Unions. The first two affiliates of the I.F.T.U. in this Colony were the British Guiana Labour Union and the Man-Power Citizens' Association — the two unions, I think, with the greatest influence and the largest number of members.

I want to say, in commenting on this matter of labour federation, that yesterday I spent an hour talking with the President of the Man-Power Citizens' Association. I expressed the opinion to him that he had not acted quite fairly to the large number of people whose following he commands. I told him that it was not fair to that large army of workers to invite them to follow him in a federal body, the International Federation of Free Trade Unions have them supporting him there, expressing his willingness to attend their conferences, and in the same breath sending a telegram to an important body abroad rejecting political federation of British Guiana with the West Indies. Sir, my friend told me that when he read arguments for and against Federation it left him in some degree of confusion. That makes the issue even worse. He should have had his mind free from anxiety or any confusion, and free from any misunderstanding before committing such a grave error, as I call it. Sir, I am happy to say that my friend agreed with me that our people are willing to accept the principle of Federation, but what they are in doubt about—and he himself was in doubt—are the terms of Federation.

Mr. Speaker: I think you should make it quite clear what you mean by the assertion "our people."

Mr. Tello: When I said, "our people," I meant the masses.

Mr. Speaker: I thought you were speaking of the Man-Power Citizen's Association. They are all our people.

Mr. Tello: I continue by mentioning Education. The hon. Member, Mr. Ramphal, also mentioned it. I want to mention the organisation known as the Caribbean Union of Teachers. The Press is also federated. I know there exists the Caribbean Press Association. In spite of what is being written in one department of the Press, if I remember correctly, the Editor of that particular paper was one of the delegates from this Colony who attended one of the conferences of that federal body and, if my information is correct, he is also the Vice President of that federal body. I refer to the "Daily Chronicle."

Now we come to Religion. I would like to mention just two bodies that I know are federated. I refer to the Provincial Advisory Council of the Methodist Church of the Caribbean Area. That is one body that is federated. I want to refer to that particular body because you can safely say the followers of that faith are more non-Indian descendants. But there is also the other body,—at least there is a resolution to organise another body—and (using my hon. friend's favourite phrase) subject to correction, I understand that several Indian organisations met in Trinidad, representing Trinidad, British Guiana and Surinam, and resolved to organise a federal body. My information is that one of the organisations taking part in that resolution is the Hindu Maha Sabha which is led by my hon. friend, Mr. Sugrim Singh.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: I wish to rise to a point of correction! There is no question (I ask the Government spokesman to permit me to speak) of a federation of Hindu organisations. There has been an international conference, and we are for Closer Association. That is in keeping with our views, but as to Federation, that is another matter.

Mr. Speaker: I do not see the point in referring to the activities of these various bodies. I do not think it is at all happy to refer to the federation of these religious organisations in connection with the subject matter of the motion, which is not the kind of federation under discussion.

Mr. Tello: I thank my hon. friend for so enlightening me, but he has not enlightened me on the point on which I want to be enlightened. My information is that they resolved to organize such a body.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: That is not so.

Mr. Tello: The hon. Member much prefers to call it Closer Association. But call a rose by whatever name you like, it is still a rose. Sir, I quite agree with you that those bodies are not truly the sort of federation we are speaking of today, but I quoted them only to let you know that my people are so inclined. The fact that they have entered into a federation in a limited way shows that they are so inclined. But I think it is my duty to proceed and fulfil my promise in convincing this Council that I speak with the assurance that my people are with me in the acceptance of the principle of Political Federation.

Mr. Sugrim Singh : A definition should be put on that term — “my people.”

Mr. Tello: All right. The people of British Guiana.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: I congratulate the hon. Member.

Mr. Tello: Sir, on entering on this aspect of my speech on Federation I want to go back a little into history, not so far as my friends who are historians but just to 1951. I want to read a motion that was moved in this Council Chamber by the Hon. Dr. Nicholson. I am simply doing this so as to refresh the minds of those who have heard it read. I am reading from *Hansard*—

“That this Council accepts in principle the proposed Federation of the British Caribbean Colonies and agrees to consider in a Committee of all the Unofficial Members of the Council the recommendations of the Closer Association Report.”

I do not want to speak any more on this, but I just want to read the results of that motion. I do not propose to quote any portion of the debate, but I would like to mention the result of the division.

Mr. Speaker: We have already had that. It is on record.

Mr. Tello: I am glad to hear that. Possibly it was mentioned when I was absent.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: The hon. Member was not here.

Mr. Tello: I would like to say that when the motion was put, as I see it recorded here, it was lost, four voting for and seven against. But there still was a desire to have a motion carried by the Council, and so a second motion was put up. It was moved by the Hon. W.O.R. Kendall and reads:

“That this Council, while unwilling in the present circumstances to commit British Guiana to acceptance of the proposed Federation of the British Caribbean Colonies, agrees that this Council should participate in the discussions and recommendations of the Closer Association Report.”

This motion was also lost, three voting “for” and thirteen “against”

Mr. Raatgever: I do not like to interrupt the hon. Member, but I do not know which *Hansard* he is reading from. I have in my hand the *Hansard* of the 16th of January, 1952, where the result of the voting is recorded as 18 against to 4 for. The motion was lost by 14 votes. I am going to speak at length on this. That was the motion before the Council, and none other. That was where the majority of Elected Members voted against. That was the point I made in the newspaper, for which I was criticized.

Sir Frank McDavid : I have already dealt fully with it in my opening—the subsequent motion and the amendment. I would suggest to the hon. Member, if I may—

Mr. Speaker : It was a critical analysis by the hon. Member who has last spoken. I do not think you should refer to this point any further. You have the assurance that those who have spoken mentioned it.

Mr. Tello: I thank you for your advice, sir, but I have a reason for quoting it. I am just developing a point.

Mr. Speaker: If you have some inference that has not been drawn, you are quite in order.

Mr. Tello : I am sorry. I can see I am taxing the patience of my hon. friend. I can appreciate his patience being exhausted by this lengthy debate. At column 28 of the same *Hansard* to which my hon. friend referred, I see this :

“Mr. President: Now I shall put the first amendment moved by the hon. Member for Central Demerara which reads: “That this Council accepts in principle Federation of the British Caribbean Colonies with Dominion Status.”

This was a motion moved by Dr. Jagān who was a Member for Central

Demerara. I am just making the point here that this amendment for the acceptance of the principle of Federation had the widest support of the Elected Members. I have just heard that the hon. Member, Sir Frank McDavid, has covered it. Thanks very much for that, but it would do no harm if I emphasized it.

Sir Frank McDavid: I do not want to have much conflict. I think the hon. Member, Mr. Raatgever, is going to reply critically.

Mr. Raatgever: I am only going to point out the facts. I am not going to be personal. I am never personal in my remarks.

Mr. Tello : What I was going to point out was that the feelings of the Elected Members of the Legislative Council on the 16th January, 1952, were for acceptance of the principle of Federation. At that time they voted more solidly and more together than on the second amendment and the original motion.

Mr. Speaker: I may be wrong, but may I just say that we had references made to a decisive agreement come to on certain resolutions of the Legislative Council of 1951, but that Legislature was one in which the entire electorate was represented. What is the good of trying to draw the same inference that we have all heard from other speakers? The hon. Member may not know, but we have heard of all this before. I thought he was going to bring some new light on it. The moment he does not, he comes within the repetition clause. I know that in his own circumstances he does represent a large body of public opinion. Why be a critic of something that really does not apply to the present situation?

Mr. Tello : The point is that our people were always willing to accept the principle of Federation. Those who

[Mr. Tello]

were elected by the people on a restricted franchise expressed themselves in no uncertain manner.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member has already made that representation. Why repeat it?

Mr. Tello : I want to move on from 1952 to 1953.

Mr. Speaker: Please do not take up much time with repetition.

Mr. Tello : In 1953 for the first time British Guiana went to the poll on universal adult suffrage, the most liberal franchise ever granted to the people in these parts. I was involved in that election. I moved around the people a great deal. I came into contact with many of the candidates who were contesting seats, and also with a large body of the electorate. I am putting it to this Council, and I want Members to accept it as true, that I made the saddest mistake of my life in not being open and frank in this matter of Federation. Here is my manifesto. If one looks through it, one would see I was silent on the matter of Federation — because I accepted the advice of experienced local politicians. I collected my due and suffered an ignominious defeat. I got only 9 per cent. of the valid votes. To this day I regret it, and I think it is a monument and a reminder that I should never again commit such an error, and that I shall always be a federalist.

Mr. Speaker: It was a plank in the P.P.P.'s platform. Why they never made it a feature of their proposals in the House is something I have never been able to understand. It has been mentioned before by four speakers, and I think you can pass on.

Mr. Tello: I said before that this ignominious defeat will never be erased

from my memory. It is true, Sir, that my deposit is still in the Treasury.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: Sir, my friend is not singular in that respect.

Mr. Speaker: Is your case an unpaid balance or a forfeited one?

Mr. Tello: A forfeited one. I know my friend (Mr. Sugrim Singh) knows I intended to refer to him. In those days he was a little plainer than I was. Here is his manifesto, which says:

“When you vote for Sugrim Singh, you vote for the Champion (a) to fight our daily foe, Communism, to fight against Federation as proposed to us to take away what should be ours.”

He approached the electorate and offered himself as a champion to fight Federation, and what was the result? Did he receive that mandate to go to the House of Assembly to fight against this Federation? No, Sir; like myself he suffered an ignominious defeat. Because I was silent I obtained 9 per cent of the votes, but my friend collected 3 per cent.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: The hon. Member has done some research.

Mr. Tello: However, what both of us are rather grateful for is that our deposits are still in the Treasury to further the cause of Federation. The people who were in favour of Federation had the backing of the electorate who voted on the most liberal franchise ever given to this country. We all recall my good friend, Mr. D. P. Debidin, a champion anti-federalist. I am sorry he is not in his seat in the lobby, but because this is a historical fact I must make reference to it. He too, made a great mistake in carrying on his fight against Federation. All along he has been a champion and he offered his championship to the electorate. At one time he assured Members sitting in this same Chamber that he had gone out of his way to obtain a cross-section of opinion,

and in several places resolutions were passed against Federation. He walked out of these doors confident of the support of the people against Federation.

I want to refer to his speech made on the 16th January, 1952, but I will read from the *Hansard* of 30th November, 1951, at column 411 :

“Can we say that the desire for federation in the West Indies is spontaneous? I have had the privilege of travelling from one end of this country to the other—from Charity to Skeldon—and have held meetings at 18 important centres. It is true that they were only centres, but the number of meetings in each County was sufficient for me to get a cross-section of public opinion. At each meeting, including the one in New Amsterdam, we had a very mixed audience. The hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Kendall) was present at the meeting I held in New Amsterdam, and as at the other 17 meetings, a resolution was unanimously passed disapproving of the idea of federation of British Guiana with the West Indies.”

As late as December, 1952, Mr. Debidin was giving assurance to Members of the Council that he had got a cross-section of opinion and the people were against Federation. He presented the electorate with this lovely, decorated manifesto, but if one reads through it, one will see that he too was silent about Federation, his silence suggesting that he was against it. But what he was in favour of was aiming at and working toward eventual self-government for British Guiana. We know the results. He did better than I, for he collected 16 per cent. of the votes, but he was not given a mandate to go to the House of Assembly and continue his fight against Federation. I think I can safely say, with all my respect for him, that the people turned out to reject him and to pay last tribute to his Party. His manifesto says:

“I am still President of the United Farmers and Workers Party.”

Since the 27th April, 1953 I have not heard of that Party, and it seems

to me that it was safely buried on that day.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: Federation or no Federation, you lost your deposit.

Mr. Tello: I have done a little research to show hon. Members the people's attitude towards those candidates who were diametrically opposed to the principle of Federation.

I am sorry my friend (Mr. Kendall) is leaving now, as I am just about to examine the people's attitude to the candidates who were federalists, or supporters of Federation (*Mr. Kendall returns*). First we have the case of the hon. Member, Mr. Kendall. In his own amendment, when the original motion was before the Legislative Council, he sought the acceptance of the principle of Federation, and he certainly joined in supporting Dr. Jagan's. This certainly won him the continued respect of his constituency, and he was returned with a 56 per cent. majority of the votes cast. He never failed to make it clear that he was a believer in Federation, and at every opportunity placed at his disposal he carried the fight against anti-federalists to bring about a Federation of the West Indies as quickly as possible.

Now I come to something that might not please many people, but whether we like it or not it is historical fact. In 1952 Dr. Jagan said he was strongly in favour of Federation. I would prefer to read what he himself said.

Mr. Speaker: I do not think I can allow you to do that — to read what a Member of the past Legislature published in a paper.

Mr. Tello: It is not published in a paper.

Mr. Speaker: Allow me, I am trying to make you understand this: what a Member of the Legislature has said, whether it is contained in his Party newspaper, in his manifesto, or in the

[Mr. Speaker]

Hansard — I assume you are going to quote the paragraph *in extenso* — is not the opinion of the Members of this Council, and it does not carry any weight in this Council.

Mr. Tello : Sir, I —

Mr. Speaker: You must allow me to rule that I am not going to allow it. We have already had references to his manifesto; we know what his opinions are. What is the good of reading it — all that is repetition. I shall have to enforce the rule, and I am sure you do not wish me to do that. Where are we going to stop? I really cannot allow you to do it, and I have told you so already. My personal opinion of you is as good as any one else's. You are in a position to speak for your organisation, and your organisation is one which is composed of large numbers of people. The question before this Council, is that the Members of this Council, should endorse the principle of Federation. I base my ruling on the ground that no Member is allowed to repeat in his speech matter that has been already dealt with by Members in this Council and by himself, and you are doing it all the time.

Mr. Tello : I disagree with you that I am repeating. I deliberately steered away from repetition. But with your permission I will read from the *Hansard*.

Mr. Speaker: No, I cannot allow it.

Mr. Tello: Not from the *Hansard*, Sir?

Mr. Speaker : No, we have already had it. We all know what Dr. Jagan said. We know what his Party did. Why do you want to repeat it? I am sure other Members will endorse what I say. It is repetition.

Mr. Tello: Sir, I will bow to your ruling.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, I shall be glad if you will do so.

Mr. Tello : I will continue to say that I was anxious even to satisfy you, because you mentioned that whatever happened in 1952 did not reflect the opinion of the majority of people in view of the restricted franchise and the fact that there were so many appointed Members. I was just trying to show you what was the result of the choice of people who were allowed to vote—

Mr. Speaker : We have already had reference made to that *ad nauseam*. Your opinion is most valuable, and everyone here respects it. Let us have your own opinion on the matter. There is not a man here who does not want to hear what you have to say. What more do you want?

Mr. Tello: Very well, Sir; I bow to your ruling, but I must say that I am referring to a Member who is present, and who, during my speech, was very anxious to know if I would state what was the position of other candidates. I state this as my personal opinion, and I want to warn my friend that his only saving grace at the time of the election was the fact that he supported the amendment which accepted the principle of Federation, and he voted for it.

Mr. Lee : To a point of correction. I accepted the principle of Federation with Dominion status.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to say most firmly that there are at least four Members of this Council who are converts to Federation. Are they not entitled to take a different view now? I again wish to impress upon the hon. Member that, in my judgment, his opinion is more valuable than those of any of the other Members he has been referring to. If the hon. Member persists in making reference to speeches made by

other Members on a previous occasion I shall have to ask him to discontinue his speech.

Mr. Tello : Very well, Sir.

Mr. Speaker : You have said that three times before.

Mr. Tello : But you will not allow me to say anything more.

Mr. Speaker : I shall have to ask you to discontinue your speech, and call upon the next speaker.

Mr. Tello : I want to go on to state that the motion prays that His Excellency take steps to ascertain the state of public opinion in this country towards participation in Federation. The hon. the Chief Secretary has made the statement that while we cannot anticipate what is in His Excellency's mind, there are two principal ways of obtaining that information — by plebiscite or referendum, or by the appointment of a Commission. It is not the intention of this Council to impose Federation on the people, but we are anxious to know their attitude towards it. I accepted, for my personal guidance, the support which has been secured by those people who were in favour of Federation from 1952 onwards, and using that as a yardstick to measure the people's attitude towards Federation, I feel confident that those of us who support this motion are expressing the wishes of the majority of the people of this Colony. But in spite of that I am assuming that steps will be taken to ascertain their views, so that I have no qualms about supporting the motion.

We have listened to speeches in opposition to Federation, but who are the people who are opposed to it? We cannot say that the masses are opposed to Federation, because we see evidence of strong support of those leaders who ad-

vised the people and led them towards Federation. We see the abundant support they receive. I am certain that if a few hurdles can be overcome—if the terms of Federation were put clearly and intelligently to the people we would be surprised at the response and the support that would be given to Federation of British Guiana with the West Indies. There is still some doubt in the minds of our people, just as there is in the minds of certain Members of this Council, but there is really no objection to Federation. There is a reasonable amount of doubt which can be removed.

I am certain that if I could tell the two champions of the anti-federationists, Mr. Raatgever and Mr. Sugrim Singh, that British Guiana was assured of as many seats in the Federal Legislature as they thought this Colony was entitled to; that we would have control of freedom of movement, and that it would not affect our economy; that British Guiana was assured of sufficient money for its development; that ways and means would be provided to prevent what my friend, Mr. Sugrim Singh, referred to as "dumping"—I am certain that if all those obstacles were removed and the terms on which we would join the Federation were presented to them, those two greatest opponents of Federation in this Council would join other Members in supporting this motion.

In conclusion I want to thank the Rev. Mr. Bobb for bringing this motion. In doing so I do not think he has ever done a greater service to this country, if I may say so. I am asking hon. Members to vote confidently in favour of the motion. I give them the assurance that if they vote for the motion they would be doing so with the backing of the majority of intelligent Guianese. Their conscience will be free in the knowledge that they are expressing the will of the majority of Guianese, and not

[Mr. Tello]

only will Guianese living praise them but they will win the praise of Guianese posterity.

Mr. Phang : In the previous debate on Federation in 1951 I was one of those Members who opposed it, and I am opposing it again today for the good and simple reason that I do not believe this Colony can afford the \$2 million per annum which it is estimated it will cost to join the Federal structure. For some time past we have been balancing our budget by means of increased taxation. Can we afford \$2 million annually from current revenue to support the Federal Parliament? I say "No." Are we going to federate and go bankrupt? I say "No" again.

It has been said that if we do not join the Federation we would be deprived of certain facilities which are now afforded us, such as the Regional Economic Committee, the University College of the West Indies, and things of that sort. We are paying for those services, and I do not believe that if we do not join the Federation they would be denied us. Two million dollars is a lot of money, and if we can afford it I would like to know what we are going to get for it. Previous speakers who are supporting Federation have not been able to satisfy me that we are going to get something tangible. We are now paying for certain services and I expect we will continue to get them whether we federate or not. Two million dollars will be only the beginning: there will surely be further inroads into our revenue. I am sure of that. On that ground alone I think I would be perfectly right in opposing Federation.

Another thing is that we speak about our increasing population. We

have a large country and we know that on the coasts there are some good agricultural lands, but are we certain of the quality of the lands in the interior of this Colony? In the North West District, and in the interior generally, there are large areas of infertile land, and large portions which are lacking in minerals, like lime, potash, iron and so on, and cannot sustain cultivation. Before we can do anything to allow West Indians to come into the country and share our lands with them we must be satisfied that we have adequate lands for our own people. The best way to do so would be to send a soil survey expedition into the interior so as to be satisfied that we have suitable lands for settlement there.

In 1932 a Commission was sent to the North West District to select areas for land settlement. I think Mr. Follett-Smith was the Soil Chemist at the time, and he reported that the North West District was unsuitable for land settlement. In more recent times we had two Soil Chemists from the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture who surveyed an area extending from the Yarakita to the Amacura region, and they also submitted an adverse report. My view is that if we want to settle people in this Colony (and they are welcome) we must first secure adequate lands for our own people. This is an aspect of the question which we should not forget. We must have sufficient land for the people of this Colony. There is no objection to a proper scheme of immigration being arranged.

We have heard a great deal of argument that if we do not join the Federation we would lose our rice market in the West Indies. I do not subscribe to that view at all. British Guiana can produce rice at a cheaper

cost than it is possible to produce it in Trinidad and Jamaica, and so long as we can continue to do so I do not think we need have any fear of losing our market. I cannot imagine anyone cutting off his nose to spite his face. I do not think the people of Trinidad would be so narrow as to try to hamper us if we do not federate. But if we do not federate and they cease to buy our rice, we could retaliate in some measure, although our retaliation may not be very effective, as we do not import as much from them as they do from us. But we do import cement, fruit juices and things of that sort from Trinidad and Jamaica. I have no fear that the good sense of the people of the West Indies will not allow them to boycott our rice.

Another point is that during the last five years there has been some amount of prosperity in this country. Our sugar and rice industries are progressing very well. We also have our bauxite and timber industries, and gold and diamonds are being exported. In addition we have discovered tantalite-colombite and manganese deposits which show good prospects. An area of 7,350 square miles in the North West District is believed to contain large deposits of manganese. It staggers the imagination to visualise what would be the benefit to this country if that area was properly developed, and I am happy to be able to tell this Council today that there is scientific and orderly development going on now by the North West Guiana Mining Co. which is operating in that area.

Monday, 21st March, 1955, should be an eventful day in the history of this Colony. On that day I was invited by the hon. Member for Agriculture, Forests, Lands and Mines (Sir Frank McDavid) to witness the signing of the lease granted to that Company, which took place at Government House Annexe. I attended. The Governor represented this Colony and

Mr. West and Mr. Rafferty represented the North West Guiana Company. The deed was signed on that day. It was an historic occasion. Very few people, however, seem to realize the importance of it to the Colony. If the people had only known what that meant to this Colony there would have been a lot of discussion on it. That means that wealth untold will be coming into the country; 60 square miles of territory in the Barima-Barama Rivers is to be explored for a period of 33 years with a right of renewal for another 33 years. About \$5 million will be spent on just the preliminary survey. There are to be facilities for ocean-going ships, and 45 miles of railroad. They are going to spend an enormous sum of money in that district.

For a long time I have been pressing in this Council the needs of the North West District. It seems that the North West District has not only come into its own but may become a gem in the Colony's crown. When the Colony gets money like that—money from bauxite and manganese—I visualise that in the next few years there will not only be economic stability but there will be prosperity beyond our dreams. If you ask me years from now whether I would be inclined to agree to Federation, I would say "Yes" because our chances then would be better to bargain for equality of seats with Jamaica, and to even get more. Within the next few years we will have spent \$44 million on the development of this Colony and then we will have this manganese. I am sure that within three years this Colony will be ripe for Federation, but today it is not ripe.

Mr. Raatgever : Sir, I rise with less trepidation after the brilliant speech made by the hon. Member, Mr. Phang, about the prospects of the North West District. As I intimated to you previously, I did not intend to take part in this debate, because it is well known that

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I still adhere to the views I expressed in this Council Chamber in 1948 and in 1952 when I voted against Federation. I still feel the same way, and I made that quite clear in an interview published in the local Press on the 6th of March, which is still bringing me lots of letters and messages from people all over the Colony. I was really astounded at the interest that article aroused. Before I touch on the motion proper, there are one or two points made by hon. Members who spoke in favour of Federation, with which I would like to deal. I do not propose to be personal; I have never been in my life. I will give the facts as I see them, and leave it to Members to decide for themselves.

Sir, when Sir Frederick Seaford moved his motion in 1948 I moved an amendment, and with your permission I will read it. It has not been read during this discussion. I said then :

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

Resolution 1 has been already mentioned. It is to accept the principle of Federation. After hon. Members had the opportunity of expressing their views on the motion moved by Sir Frederick Seaford, I moved a motion as a result of what I heard then. I am making this point, because it has been said that my mind is inflexible, and when I say something I never change. I am saying that is not true. I can change if I am convicted that what I have said is not right. With your per-

mission, Sir, I shall read from the *Herald* of the 17th March, 1948, column 786:

“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—definitely against federation with the West Indian Islands, but I think a great majority of them are in favour of some form of closer association. I myself am in favour of closer association with the West Indian Islands. Mr. Seaford and I got together to see what could be done to get, if possible, a unanimous decision. It is the result of that discussion that I am going to ask your permission, Sir, to withdraw my amendment, and Mr. Seaford has given his undertaking to withdraw his motion. I would like therefore to move the following motion in place of the original motion and my amendment.

“Be it resolved—That with reference to 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, declare 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.”

And so with the carrying of this motion Closer Association was born. The point I want to make is that I am the father of Closer Association between British Guiana and the British West Indian Islands, and it was formed here. Among the Members who spoke in favour of my motion was my very

good friend, the hon. Member for Agriculture, Forests, Lands and Mines (Sir Frank McDavid). He was one of the supporters of the motion which was carried. I will not read what he said at the time, but this motion was carried by 13 votes to 5. And, perhaps, for the purpose of record I may recall the names of those Members who voted for the motion, and those who voted against.

"For—Messrs. Peters, McDoom, Kendall, Gonsalves, Debidin, Farnum, Raatgever, Thompson, Roth, Seaford, Wight, Dr. Nicholson and Dr. Singh.

Against — Messrs. Coghlan, Smellie, Fernandes, Lee and Dr. Jagan—5."

I would like to say that, as far as Capt. Coghlan was concerned, he was not only against Closer Association but against Federation, and got annoyed with me when I withdrew the amendment to allow Closer Association to take place.

Mr. Smellie: I am very sorry to interrupt the hon. Member, but what he has said throws an entirely distorted light on the whole business. Sir Frederick Seaford's motion, which was that this Council reserve judgment, was far more in favour of Closer Association than the hon. Member's motion which says that it does not endorse the Conference Resolution. The fact that the hon. Member is now announcing the names of the Members who voted against his motion merely means that those five Members were in favour of the original motion by Mr. Seaford.

Mr. Raatgever : With your permission, Sir, I will read Mr. Seaford's motion so that Members can see for themselves—

"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."

My motion was an entirely different one, as Members would see from what was read. As the result of the acceptance of my motion by the Administration of this Colony, the Legislative Council was asked to select two observers. In those days the Legislative Council of the day was requested to approve and select the delegates and observers, but today this Council is not asked to do that. I am going to deal with that later, when I am speaking on the motion, to show that we have not got any power. I leave that for the time being.

The Hon. C. V. Wight and the Hon. T. Lee were selected as observers, and they attended the Conference. Mr. Lee has been criticised by some Members, although he was a "dummy" and could not take any part in the Conference. Therefore he could not insist that this Colony be given the same number of seats as Jamaica. Mr. Lee could not speak. I must say that in all fairness to him. Observers can only listen, and after meetings they can have private discussions with the delegates but that does not matter much. Mr. Lee has told this Council what happened at the Conference.

Also, as a further result of this motion of mine, which was accepted by a great majority of Members—there is no question about that—this Colony became a member of the Regional Economic Committee, an organisation set up on the recommendation of the Montego Bay Conference. Perhaps, I may read the functions of this Committee—I am reading from the First Report of the Regional Economic Committee for the years 1951-52 :

[Mr. Raatgever]

"The functions of the Committee shall be—

(a) to act as an advisory and consultative body to the participating Governments in economic matters of regional significance;

(b) to provide for the exchange of information on economic matters between the participating Governments;

(c) to advise on all matters relating to the British Caribbean Trade Commission Service;

(d) to prepare the annual estimates of the Committee's expenditure and submit them to the Comptroller for Development and Welfare in the West Indies for approval on behalf of the participating Governments;

(e) to report annually through the Comptroller to the participating Governments;

(f) to undertake such other economic functions as may be assigned to it."

Each Colony — the British West Indian Islands, British Honduras and British Guiana — was allowed to send one representative, and that representative had one vote. There was therefore a parity of votes—a single vote—and not 17 for one Colony and 20 for another. Whether a Colony was big or small it was the same one vote for each. It is well known that I was this Colony's first delegate to this Committee and, as many Members have said, it did good work. But some Members, who spoke are not aware of the work done by this Committee, and I am just going to say something about it, reading from the Report of the Committee in my hand. I am doing this in view of certain remarks made about my representation.

The first thing that this Committee did, after it was set up and its policy and functions were decided, was to suggest that representatives be sent to one of the most important conferences that was being held — a meeting of the Com-

monwealth Ministers—and the Colonies in this part of the world made history by sending delegates to that Conference. At the second meeting of the Committee held in August, 1951, the Committee was informed—

"That a meeting of Commonwealth Ministers would be held in London in September, 1951, and that Governments had been asked whether they wished to appoint representatives to act as a panel of advisers to the Minister of State who would be representing the needs of Colonial territories. West Indian Governments had agreed that, so far as the British Caribbean area was concerned, representation should be on a regional basis and the Committee was asked to nominate representatives."

On the recommendation of the Committee a delegation consisting of Hon. A. Gomes (as leader), Hon. W. J. Raatgever, C.B.E., Hon. D. D. Sangster and Hon. Sir John Saint, C.M.G., O.B.E., attended the meeting of Commonwealth Ministers. This was the first occasion on which a delegation of this kind had visited the United Kingdom to represent the views of the British Caribbean area as a whole, and taken part in a Commonwealth Conference."

The Regional Economic Committee made history and this Colony had a representative there in London. Mr. Albert Gomes and myself were allowed to address the Commonwealth Ministers on behalf of the area at the invitation of H. M. Secretary of State for the Colonies. It has been said that unless we federate we would not have such a privilege, but we had that privilege, and I was the first Guianese to have the honour, on behalf of my country, to attend a Conference of that kind.

The next Conference that was attended by members of the Regional Economic Committee was the meeting of the Commonwealth Finance Ministers held in London in January, 1952. Again I was selected as one of the delegates from this part of the world, but I de-

clined because I said I could not fly into London on the 5th of January from British Guiana as I did not want to get pneumonia. That is recorded in the Minutes of the Committee which I have with me. Only Mr. Albert Gomes went. As the result of that meeting the Commonwealth Finance Members suggested reciprocal local borrowing in the area on a regional basis. Mr. Gomes reported on the conference when he arrived back, and on my suggestion the matter was referred to the Governments of the various territories. That is also recorded in the Minutes of the Committee, a copy of which I have here.

The matter was sent to the Governments in 1952, and I have noticed in the newspapers quite recently that this Colony's, Financial Secretary, my good friend Mr. Fraser, is going to represent this Colony at a meeting to be held in Jamaica on the matter. It has taken the Governments of the Caribbean area three years to decide what they want to do. For the two years that I was a member of the Committee I enquired at every meeting what action was being taken on our recommendations. It is all recorded in the Minutes. From 1952 to 1955 is a long time.

Then there were the Canada-West Indies Trade Conference and the one held in the United Kingdom which preceded that. Delegates were again sent, and again I was included. The others were Mr. Bustamante, Mr. Grantley Adams, Mr. Albert Gomes, Mr. Robinson (Chairman of the Sugar Producers' Association of the West Indies with which this Colony is associated), and Mr. R. W. Youngman, who was then President of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of the West Indies, and who has been mentioned here by several Members. This Conference was a follow-up to a Conference which was held in London in 1950 when, although the Regional Economic Com-

mittee was not in being, delegates were sent from the West Indies and British Guiana. Those delegates spent ten weeks in London. It was a political delegation to help the Sugar Producers to get a long-term contract and a greater quota than H.M. Government was allocating to these territories. The hon. Member, Mr. Macnie, can say about that.

The two representatives from British Guiana were Mr. Edun, who was then President of the M.P.C.A. and myself. As a result of what happened at that meeting, and as a result of what happened since, a long-term agreement and increased sugar quota came into being. The assistance given by the delegation to the Sugar Producers in London resulted in this Colony and the West Indian Islands getting security for seven years. People in the Colony benefit by greater wages and more work, and the Colony itself benefits by more revenue as a result of the delegations which left here in 1950 and 1951. The delegation which went to Canada in connection with sugar was also successful.

I have in my possession letters from various people, including Mr. Harold Robinson, President of the British West Indies Sugar Association, one of the advisers who accompanied Mr. Albert Gomes, thanking me for the part I played. A vote of thanks was also recorded in the Legislative Council, and it is here in *Hansard* for anybody to see. I am sorry to have to mention these things, but one hon. Member (I will not call his name) made it appear that my services abroad were unsatisfactory, and that as a result this Colony got a bad name.

Sir Frank McDavid : I do not know who it was, but it certainly was not me.

Mr. Speaker : The hon. Member for Agriculture (Sir Frank McDavid) rose and said he did not do it, and you have my assurance as well, that this is so.

Mr. Raatgever: I called the attention of my friend on my right (Mr. Ramphal) when it was said.

Sir Frank McDavid: I wonder if the hon. Member will allow me to explain? If his feelings are hurt, I am sorry. I did not mean that at all. At the time I was speaking I referred to the fact that I moved a motion asking the Council to approve Customs Union shortly after the termination of the debate on Dr. Nicholson's motion.

I began by confessing that I had made a strategic blunder, indeed. I went on to say that in the course of my argument I had emphasised the advantageous position of British Guiana in a Customs Union by reason of the favourable balances of visible trade as between British Guiana and the West Indies, and that an attitude of suspicion was created which made people in the West Indies feel that we wanted to come in at the back door and not accept the full obligations of Customs Union, although we wanted to share the advantages of it.

In fact, I have with me the Official Report or *Hansard*. Sir, may I read what the official record of my speech is?

"It was on account of the emphasis which I laid on this fact (for local consumption altogether) that our friends in the West Indies became extremely suspicious of our attitude and eventually they felt that British Guiana wanted to get in at the back door . . ."

And here is my reference to the hon. Member:

"That attitude was aggravated by the hon. Member, Mr. Raatgever, who at that time was our representative on several

committees, including the Regional Economic Committee. He moved around the West Indian Islands declaiming about our "Magnificent Province" and its "Continental Destiny."

In other words I was trying to show how the attitude of suspicion was aggravated by the well-known attitude of the hon. Member about "Continental Destiny."

In fact, I myself endorsed the reports to which the hon. Member referred, as to the value of Mr. Raatgever's services on the Regional Economic Committee. I know he was an extremely good representative of this Colony.

Mr. Raatgever: I thank the hon. Member for what he has said; I accept it. I am proud of my country, and I am glad to be in a position to let people know it is a magnificent country. I am not ashamed of it. I am proud to be a Guianese. People have asked me where I have come from, and when I said "British Guiana," many times they have asked where it is. They sometimes ask, "How is it that you speak English so very well?" and I reply that it is the only language we speak. I do not say I come from somewhere else. I am a Guianese; I am proud of it, and I will do all that I can for my fellow Guianese at any time.

I will say no more, but this: Sir Frank McDavid is my oldest friend. I have known him from boyhood days. From the time we were about four years old we have been friends, until recently. (*Laughter*).

I was the first delegate. I came off the Regional Economic Committee after I had done a lot of work. Mr. Grantley Adams and Mr. Albert Gomes can say what I have done. The Minister for Labour, Industry and Commerce in P.P.P. Government (Mr. Ashton Chase),

went on the Committee and, as Mr. Jailal knows, made this Colony's name mud. I have a letter sent to me after my term of office on the Regional Economic Committee expired. It is dated the 25th of August, 1953 and I will read it:

"Members of the Committee, in full session on the 11th August, expressed their warm appreciation of your valuable services to the Organisation since its inception, and directed me to convey to you their gratitude and best wishes for your success in the future."

It was signed by the Executive Secretary. This was a very nice gesture, indeed, coming from a body of men with whom I was proud to be associated.

I come now to the debate on the motion by Dr. Nicholson. Sir Frank McDavid, who was then Financial Secretary, returned to the Colony in time for the last day's debate. My friend, Sir Frank McDavid, took care to analyse the voting on Dr. Jagan's amendment, and not the substantive motion. The substantive motion before the Council was Dr. Nicholson's. It was only on the last day that Dr. Jagan asked permission to move the amendment, and His Excellency the Governor, Sir Charles Woolley (at column 796 of the *Hansard*) said this:

"What the Council is asked to consider is, in the terms of the motion before us, the Report of the Standing Closer Association Committee."

His Excellency then went on to quote from the Rance Report, which is not relevant at the moment, and continued:

"Really, what we have before us for consideration is the Committee's Report, but it has been put to us by the mover of the motion that we do not declare on it in open Council but that we resolve into a Committee of the Unofficial Members to do so. The hon. Member, in moving his amendment, implies that we do not accept the Rance Report but that we would accept Federation if there was Dominion status."

Dr. Jagan was having fun and games with the Members of the Legislature, as he was in the habit of doing when he was here. He knew very well that the West Indies were not being offered Federation with Dominion status. He knew what kind of Federation was accepted by the representatives at the conferences. He knew that Dr. Nicholson's motion did not have a chance of being carried, and he asked to be allowed to move an amendment. The amendment was moved and seconded, and one or two Members spoke on it. It is all here in the *Hansard* but I will not bother to refer to it. I want to analyse the voting on Dr. Nicholson's motion.

Sir Frank McDavid: I did that very carefully. I mentioned that 4 voted for the motion and 15 against. I gave their names.

Mr. Raatgever: The point is that there were 8 elected Members out of the 14 in those days voting against, and in my statement published in the Press I mentioned that the elected representatives of the people threw out Federation.

Sir Frank McDavid: Unless the Speaker tells me it is a waste of time, I will reply.

Mr. Speaker: One consideration is that if any future examination is to be made to arrive at what public opinion then was, you should have an accurate account of what was the result of the voting on that occasion.

Sir Frank McDavid: The official record of what I have said is quite clear and I do not wish to amplify it, but I must emphasise this point: that while the father of Closer Association be-against and 4 for — in so far as the principle of Federation was concerned, 8 elected Members voted for and 4

[Sir Frank McDavid] against. That is the point, and I was asking the Council to draw from that that it was not fair to say that the elected Members of that day were against the principle of Federation as such. That was the only conclusion I drew. I went a little further and said that if the Official Members had voted it would have been a tie, but that was only a hypothesis.

Mr. Speaker: I still think there is a conflict of views between the two speakers. I am of the opinion, with great respect, that on examination of the Constitution of that day one will find that it hardly helps as a guide to public opinion.

Sir Frank McDavid : That is quite right. I was only trying to keep the record straight.

Mr. Raatgever : I am glad the hon. Member said that, but the point is that we did not have before us Federation with Dominion status; and my friend himself has said that Dominion status is a thing that cannot be conferred, but has got to be earned. He says it was "illogical and fantastic" to expect it, so that Dr. Jagan was talking with his tongue in his cheek, and was moving an amendment which he knew was ridiculous. He knew he was only playing to the gallery. I hope the Press is hearing me.

I am going now to something that could cause a lot of ill-feeling, and that is the question of the "small islands." When I gave the interview to the Press, I went to great pains to pay tribute to Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados and the smaller islands. I said I had met people in the West Indies of various walks of life; I had many friends there whose friendship I value, and that I still receive a lot of letters from West Indian leaders.

I do not want to be ungrateful to a lot of people in the West Indies who showed me kindness, but I am going to give my reasons for not being in favour of Federation. A man must be respected who has the courage to come forward against great odds and say what he feels is right. I want to clear the issue, and I will read from the interview I gave the Press. I said:

"It must be borne in mind that if representation in the federal government to be created is based on population, there is the grave danger of representatives of other colonies overwhelming numerically those of the lesser populated areas like ours, thus dictating our policy and shaping our future to their advantage."

I went on to say:

"Even if we had equality of votes, as we should have, our destiny to a large extent would be in the hands of the small islands of the Caribbean, who not only out-number us, but could out-vote us to the detriment of this Colony. We would no longer control our own destiny. Instead we would not even be masters in our own home and, in addition, the small islands would be an economic millstone around our necks."

Mr. Speaker : What did you say the small islands would be?

Mr. Raatgever: Millstones around our necks. That is what has caused a lot of talk, and made certain hon. Members critical of what I said. All I meant to say was that they would be a burden on this Colony. I have here a copy of the Report of the Conference on West Indies Federation held in London in April, 1953, to which the hon. Mr. Smellie went as an observer from this Colony. On page 10, paragraphs 36 and 37 deal with the financial relationship between the U.K. and the proposed Federation. With your permission, Sir, I will read those paragraphs :

"36 Finally, the Secretary of State described to us the manner in which Her Majesty's Government would be prepared

to assist the Federal Government in meeting the annual deficits of those units which might be unable to pay their way from their own revenues or reserves. This matter, which was further explained and discussed during the course of the Conference, is the subject of the following paragraphs."

"37. The S.C.A.C. Report had pointed out that in a fully independent, financially self-supporting Federation, any charges arising out of grants in aid of the ordinary course of administration of the separate units would fall to be met from federal funds. The Report contemplated, however, that, as an interim arrangement designed to facilitate the transition to the more permanent arrangement outlined above, Her Majesty's Government should make to the Federal Government for a period of, say, ten years in all an annual grant equivalent to the average amount actually issued by way of grant in aid of administration over the five years preceding the establishment of Federation".

This shows that for 10 years H. M. Government will carry the burden. After that, what? It will have to be carried by the larger Colonies in the Federation, including British Guiana, if this Colony decides to join it. I think the hon. Mr. Luckhoo said that some expert had reported on the oil situation in Trinidad

Mr. Speaker : Not an expert. It was the collective opinion of the Companies engaged in oil production. They are very worried over the oil situation.

Mr. Raatgever : In the next 10 years, if that happened, this Colony of possibilities and potentialities will have to carry the burden of the small islands which H.M. Government is now bearing. When I made that statement Sir Frank McDavid took me to task.

Mr. Speaker: Why not say "may" instead of "will".

Mr. Raatgever : We will if we federate, because those islands are overpopulated, and they have reached the limit of their economic expansion.

That is why H.M. Government has to give them doles. This Colony has not reached anywhere near the limit of its economic possibilities — not even a quarter of the way.

Mr. Speaker: The Attorney General is not listening. The hon. Member is directing attention to the fact that he is including the island of Barbados, and that in time to come we will have to support the economy of that island.

The Attorney General: Barbados has never been a grant-aided Colony at any time. It has always paid its way.

Mr. Raatgever : I am coming to that. Barbados has received grants for development. It is all here in this Report. The point I am making is that many years ago this Colony did receive doles from H.M. Government, but it was not because we had reached the limit of our economic expansion, but because of circumstances; it was through the fault of the Administration of the day. It was mal-administration of the finances of the Colony that caused that. That is my view. We have not reached anything like the limit of our economic possibilities. When my friend mentioned that to me he was entirely wrong. He made a remark which I accepted with Christian fortitude in view of his apology. I will say no more about it.

The Attorney General : That is the influence of the Rev. Mr. Bobb.

Mr. Raatgever : But I may tell the hon the Attorney General that here is the Report of Sir Stephen Luke in which he gives the totals of grants and loans by H. M. Government to the various Colonies in 1946-47. Every Colony is mentioned as having received loans and grants. Barbados is the first Colony mentioned. There is nothing wrong in receiving these grants for development.

The Attorney General: But it is the way you said it.

Mr. Raatgever : This is entirely different from receiving doles to balance your budget. They are grants-in-aid for development.

Mr. Speaker: You need not stress it. If you knew Barbados as well as I do you would know that there are many individuals who could have found that money if they wanted it. They really did not want it. I will tell you something — that for a number of years Barbados never imposed death duties on its people, and they became richer and richer. I think it is one place in the British world that did not have death duty until comparatively recently. That is why landed property in Barbados passes automatically from one member of a family to another.

Mr. Raatgever: When I was a member of the Regional Economic Committee applications were invited to fill a very important post in the control of that organisation, and a Committee was appointed, called the Appointments Committee, to examine the applications. I was the Chairman of that Committee. When the applications were examined we did not find among them any candidate whom we could recommend for that important appointment, but when it came to the full meeting the representatives of the small islands (I am not referring to Jamaica, Trinidad or Barbados. I include Barbados among the larger West Indian islands) nominated someone and I refused to accept the nomination. I said that the Committee had already decided that none of the applicants was suitable. We decided to invite the participating Governments to nominate candidates. British Guiana, Jamaica and Trinidad nominated candidates, but Barbados did not nominate anybody. For two years no appointment was made

because the larger islands did not want the nominee of the smaller islands, and the representatives of the smaller islands would not vote for anyone else. Eventually one of the delegates of the smaller islands became the Chairman of the Committee, and the nominee of the smaller islands was appointed to the post. This Colony's representative (I was not its representative then) had withdrawn from that particular part of the Regional Economic Committee's functions. The successful candidate is a friend of mine but I feel that he has not the necessary knowledge for the post to which he was appointed. I mention this to show how we can be out-voted to the detriment of this Colony. It has happened already and it will happen again.

My friend, Sir Frank McDavid, has said that party politics will be developed, and that there will be no question of out-voting. He said that the number of seats did not matter. I beg to differ from him. As a result of what happened at that meeting Jamaica and Trinidad decided that they must have half the number of seats between them in the Federal Legislature. I am repeating what I was told by the representatives of those islands. This Colony will get the thin edge of the wedge if it goes into the Federation, as we are asked to do, even if we get parity. This Colony is more important than all the West Indian Colonies put together. There is no question about that in my mind. I am not a traitor to my country, and I will never allow this country's interests to be sunk at any time. It must stand predominantly in the forefront always.

/// The next point with which I wish to deal is the question of finance, which the hon. Mr. Phang mentioned. I stated in the interview which I gave to the Press, that Federation would cost this Colony about \$3 million per annum at the start. Sir Frank Mc David said it

would cost about \$2 million, and when Your Honour reminded him about the postal revenue he said that would not come into it I agree with him that the contribution from Customs revenue would amount to about \$2 million if this Colony joined the Federation.

Mr. Speaker: It is a percentage of our Customs revenue.

Mr. Raatgever: I will read from the Plan For a British Caribbean Federation agreed upon at the London Conference. In Chapter V—Finance—it is stated :

“63. (1) Until other sources of revenue are allocated to it, the revenues of the Federation should consist of—

- (a) A percentage, not exceeding 15 per cent., of the produce of the customs duties levied on imports into the territory comprised in the Federation; and
- (b) postal revenues as from the date on when the Federation assumes responsibility for postal services;

We have in this Colony postal, telegraph and telephone services, and also a Post Office Savings Bank, and the figures attached to this Report show that we would lose considerable revenue if the Federal Government took over those services and paid the salaries of the staffs. Then there is paragraph (c) which says :

“(c) such other incidental revenues as may accrue to the Federation in connection with any matter within the jurisdiction of the Federation.”

Sir Frank McDavid: Surely we would have to take into consideration our expenditure on the postal services.

Mr. Raatgever: The position is that we would be paying at the outset \$2 million or \$3 million, and we would have to pay that sum until it is doubled or trebled, and these things have a habit of doubling themselves. With \$2 million

this Colony could provide the interest charges on a loan of \$60 million, and with \$3 million a loan of \$100 million could be obtained to “bust” the interior open, or enable us to implement the Hutchinson drainage and irrigation schemes which are estimated to cost \$100 million. The Colony would reap the benefit of those schemes and would eventually cease to pay \$3 million interest, but it would go on paying \$3 million or more annually to the Federal Government and not get anything in return.

It was said here that if we federate we would be able to borrow a lot of money. We would have to pay interest on that money, and I am sure our credit stands higher than that of most of the West Indian islands. That was proved when we floated a lone some time ago. It would be better for us to borrow money to develop this country and stand on our own, rather than join the proposed Federation to borrow money.

To give an example of increasing expenditure in these regional organisations I may point out that when this Colony joined the scheme for the establishment of the University College of the West Indies it contributed \$33,000 per annum in the first three years, but this year we voted \$222,000 I am not suggesting that the money is not well spent; I am only showing how expenditure increases. If we start with an expenditure of \$2 or \$3 million in the Federal set-up we may end up with \$20 or \$30 million. That money can be better used here in British Guiana for the people born here, the people whose heritage is this country and whose future is bound up with the country. It is for us to develop this country for the people, so as to let them have the fruits of the land. When this country is developed, when we get the money to develop its potentialities in the interior, the future prosperity of the Colony is assured. I have been saying

[Mr. Raatgever]

that for 40 years, but I may not see it in my lifetime. The discovery of manganese here is very important. That will be another great asset that this Colony will have, and there are many more. I believe we are going to find oil in this country. I have great faith that oil is going to be found here. There are also columbite, tantalite, gold, diamonds etc.

Sir Frank McDavid: Then I shall return the compliment to the hon. Member.

Mr. Raatgever : The point I was making, Sir, is that this money we are going to contribute to the Federal Government if we federate, could be better used in developing this country and giving our people a better standard of living before we admit anybody from the West Indies or outside. It is due to our people to get the fruits of the land, to get the benefit of their heritage before calling in outsiders. It is for us to decide that, and that is the point I want

to make, and it is a very important point. As long as the capital is brought into the country to develop it, we can get all the population we want. People are going to come here to find employment as the natural result of our development. This Colony need not federate to get millions of people. It is a country as large as the United Kingdom, and there are 50 million people there. If we get 10 or 12 million people we would be able to support them. When this Colony is developed, we could bring people in, and then it would be at our own terms. We can continue Closer Association with the West Indian Islands and let them share in the benefits. Have faith in your own country. The money that we are going to hand over to the federal set-up — what we have to pay as our contribution annually — can be best used in developing our own country. With your permission, Sir, I can best stop here.

Mr. Speaker: Council is adjourned to Tuesday at 2 p.m.