

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Wednesday, 5th September, 1945.*

The Council met at 2 p.m., His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon Lethem, K.C.M.G., President, in the chair.

## PRESENT:

The President, His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon James Lethem, K.C.M.G.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. W. L. Heape, C.M.G.,

The Hon. the Attorney General, Mr. F. W. Holder. (Acting).

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

The Hon. E. G. Woolford, O.B.E., K.C., (New Amsterdam).

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

The Hon. J. A. Luckhoo, K.C. (Nominated).

The Hon. H. N. Critchlow, (Nominated).

The Hon. M. B. G. Austin, O.B.E. (Nominated).

The Hon. Percy C. Wight, O.B.E. (Georgetown Central).

The Hon. J. Gonsalves, O.B.E. (Georgetown South).

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

The Hon. C. R. Jacob, (North Western District).

The Hon. J. W. Jackson, O.B.E. (Nominated):

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River.

The Hon. A. M. Edun (Nominated).

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

The Clerk read prayers.

## ACCURACY OF MINUTES CHALLENGED

Mr. JACOB: In the minutes of the last meeting of the Council it is recorded:

"Mr. Jacob spoke to the motion and on conclusion asked leave to withdraw."

I do not think that is strictly correct, sir.

The PRESIDENT: What wording would you prefer?

Mr. JACOB: It should read:

"Mr. Jacob spoke to the motion and, before concluding his speech, asked leave to withdraw."

I think that would be more correct, sir.

The PRESIDENT: I was not in the chair, therefore I have to ask the Deputy President.

Mr. WOOLFORD: One's recollection can never be depended upon absolutely, but I am quite positive that the hon. Member had concluded his speech, intimating that he would speak again at some future time. I then told him that he could not speak again on the second reading of the Bill, but he might do so in Committee. He then sat down. I would ask that the Hansard report of the proceedings be consulted. Of course any Member can say what his recollection is, but I have no doubt in my mind.

The PRESIDENT: The Deputy President's opinion is that the hon. Member had concluded his speech, but the hon. Member asks that the words "before concluding his speech" be substituted for the words "on conclusion". Is it the opinion of Members that the minutes be amended accordingly?

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: My recollection also is that the hon. Member had concluded his speech, but intimated that he might speak again at some future date. He was told by the Deputy President that he would not be allowed to speak again on the second reading, and he decided that he would speak again when the Bill was in Committee.

The PRESIDENT: The actual record of the reporters reads:

"Mr. JACOB: I think, sir, I have had enough to-day, and I am going to take my seat. I will speak on the various clauses in Committee."

The Attorney-General's notes on the debate indicate that the hon. Member had concluded his speech and intimated that he would speak on the various clauses of the Bill in Committee. It seems to me that the record shows that the hon. Member had concluded his speech.

Mr. JACOB: Before the point in the debate when I said "I have had enough to-day" a little higher up on the type-written page of the report of the proceedings it is stated:—

"Mr. JACOB: I can speak until 5 o'clock on this matter and I won't repeat myself."

"The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The hon. Member asked to reserve his right to speak again and sat down."

"Mr. JACOB: I am exceedingly conscious of my rights here but I am always courteous to the Chair. Immediately the Chair begins to speak it is my duty to take my seat. When these debates are read it will be seen—"

So it went on. The Deputy President interrupted me on several occasions and I thought it was the best thing not to continue in that strain, so I said "I have had enough today," but I did not conclude my speech.

The PRESIDENT: I must take the feeling of those Members of the Council who were present. I was not, I therefore put the question that the minutes as circulated are a true and faithful record of the proceedings. If Members think that we should amend the minutes as suggested they will say "No" and if the majority is in favour we will proceed to amend the minutes.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on August 31, 1945, were confirmed.

COLONIAL SECRETARY WELCOMED BACK.

The PRESIDENT: I would just like to record that we welcome back today the Colonial Secretary from his leave in England which we hope has been both pleasant and beneficial. The acting Colonial Secretary, Mr. Laing, has come off the Council, but on the Local Government Bill, in which he is immediately concerned, he will continue to speak for Government although not a Member of the Council.

## ORDER OF THE DAY.

### WEST INDIAN FEDERATION

The PRESIDENT: I would just like to say that I propose to take the motion standing in the name of the hon. the Fifth Nominated Member (Mr. Critchlow) and allow a good deal of today's time—an hour and a half or perhaps two hours—and see how the debate is going. Then for more reasons than one, I would like to adjourn the debate to a future date. I particularly do not want to put

the question today because, as I said at a previous meeting, I have had not a little to do with the wording of the despatch, and I should like to make some observations before putting the question. in the light of the speeches made by hon. Members.

One point I should also make clear is that the hon. Nominated Member is moving this resolution by his own wish. It is not a matter of Government asking or seeking out any particular Member to move the resolution, but the Member asked that he should be permitted to bring it up and move it himself, because I understand this very question is engaging the attention of his trade union colleagues both in the West Indies and in London. Those were the reasons for his particularly wishing to be the mover of the motion. I therefore call upon the hon. the Fifth Nominated Member to move the motion.

Mr. CRITCHLOW: Sir, I have the honour to move the following motion standing in my name on the Order Paper:—

Whereas the inhabitants of the Colony of British Guiana in their resolution to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies dated 7th February, 1938, and signed by (a) The Heads of the Religious Denominations with a single exception, by the Local Authorities, viz., The Mayor and Town Council of (1) Georgetown, (ii) New Amsterdam, and (iii) The Village Chairmen's Conference, as well as by the Trade Unions and the principal Social Organisations, asked for a Royal Commission and report upon the social and economic conditions in all of these Colonies and for the Commission's Recommendations of an Imperial Policy and settled plan of development of British Guiana to bring about its prosperity and ability to provide for settlements therein of the surplus populations of Jamaica, Barbados and other British West Indies, sorely in need of relief;

And Whereas the development of British Guiana in the past has been hindered because of the paucity of its population;

And Whereas the Rice, Timber and Cattle Industries of the Colony now in course of development, will need more markets abroad and much larger population within for production;

And Whereas the inhabitants of the British West Indies and British Guiana are of the same source and/or sources, and free movement among them will be beneficial to all of them alike;

And Whereas Federation of British Guiana with the British West Indies will provide more and greater facilities for exchange of their products among them:

And Whereas experience has proved the great advantage of the West Indian Court of Appeal to be followed by a West Indian Civil Service, University and General Education;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable Legislative Council express its appreciation of the far-sighted recommendations of the Rt. Honourable Secretary of State for the Colonies in his Memorandum on Federation of these Colonies, and declare its approval of the said recommendations to be pursued and given effect.

This question of West Indian Federation, in which we include British Guiana, was discussed by the British Guiana Labour Union and the West Indies Unions since 1926, in England, and in this Colony in 1944, and it was for that reason, sir, that I expressed the desire to move this motion. Some people say that the problems of this Colony are entirely different from those of Trinidad, Barbados and other Colonies of the West Indies. That is quite true, but we must remember that Great Britain had those same problems. Her Dominions and Colonies were separated miles from one another with different problems, but those problems were solved and the British Empire of which we are all proud was founded.

The resolution sets out the benefits to be derived from federation between British Guiana and the West Indies. First of all it is felt that if these Colonies were united self-government would be achieved much quicker than if they remain as separate units. However difficult problems may seem we believe that they were made to be solved by human beings. It has been said that British Guiana has not the necessary population to develop the country. With

federation we would be able to get population from Jamaica and Barbados to assist us in that development. We depend wholly and solely on the West Indian Colonies for the export of our rice, cattle, and other produce.

It is said that a section of the community would like to see the establishment of a West Indies University, while another section would like an interchange of civil servants between this Colony and the West Indies. Perhaps the Chamber of Commerce would welcome a Customs Union. The whole world is looking forward to co-operation and unity, and I think it would be a good thing if we accepted federation with the West Indies. From the political standpoint I am sure we would achieve self-government earlier by federation than we would if we stand alone.

Another important aspect of the question is the economic and social standard of the West Indies and British Guiana. Federation would give these Colonies what individually they lack—economic stability. There would be great saving if such public services as Education and the Medical Service were unified. The leaders of Labour in this Colony have studied the question of federation with the West Indies with a view to the improvement of our standard of living and social conditions.

Some of our Members and some members of the community are of the opinion that we have not had sufficient time to discuss the question of federation, but I would remind this Council that some 40 years ago the late Hon. Gideon Murray foresaw that federation would come to the West Indies and British Guiana. The question has been discussed from time to time, but some people in this Colony do not worry to discuss any matter until it has been decided, and then they say they had not been given time to consider it. I am certain that many

members of this community have had the idea that federation would come some day. The great nations have got together in order to win the war. Why is it that we cannot get together with the West Indies in order to secure better social and economic conditions for this Colony as a whole?

Some Members are of the opinion that this matter is being rushed, but I can assure them that it is not my intention to press for a vote on this motion today. As a matter of fact I would like to have the debate adjourned in view of the fact that delegates from this Colony will shortly be leaving for Barbados to attend the West Indies Labour Conference, at which the question of West Indian Federation will be discussed. Some of those delegates happen to be Members of this Council, myself included, and I would be grateful for an adjournment of this debate until the return of those delegates, as we may be able to arrive at some decision at the Conference which may be helpful in our discussion on this motion.

I do not propose to speak at any length on the motion, because I know that some Members of this Council have made a greater study of the question than I have been able to do, and I would like to hear their views. I will conclude by saying that it is a serious problem and I am asking Members to give it serious consideration before they decide against it.

Mr. AUSTIN: I would like to second the hon. Member's motion but I think some clearing of the air is very necessary before we enter into a serious matter of this nature with the Caribbean Colonies. I refer especially to the third preamble of the hon. Member's motion, in which he refers to the rice, timber and cattle industries of this Colony. There can be little doubt that there is a certain amount of enmity against this Colony on the part of the West Indian islands, and with your permission, sir, I would like

to quote an expression of opinion by Sir Frank Stockdale which I propose to communicate to Your Excellency and the Rice Marketing Board. Sir Frank Stockdale expressed the opinion that the export price of rice was ridiculously high, and said he had so informed the members of the Rice Marketing Board whom he told that they had not a single friend in the West Indies; that they were only waiting for Burma to come on the market to drop them altogether. He also said that this Colony had been blamed for having taken advantage of war-time conditions to "bleed other Colonies white."

With that frame of mind in the Islands and the enmity which exists, is it worth while pursuing a matter of this sort before conditions become normal? There can be no doubt that we are not at all popular in the West Indies, and the reason is, as Sir Frank Stockdale has stated—and he ought to know—that it is felt that we have taken advantage of the war situation to put up the price of our rice in the various islands which have to purchase from us.

My feeling is that very few of us in this Colony have really visualized federation with the West Indies in its full sense, and as an old Member of this Council I think we should endeavour to get together with the West Indian islands, through conversations or conferences, before we enter into a federation which might give us, as we have now, the wrong end of the stick.

Dr. SINGH: Recently we have been reading quite a lot about the Atlantic Charter, the Four Freedoms, and the New Order, so that this motion on the question of federation of the British West Indies with British Guiana is, I believe, in keeping with the New Order. I believe the moment is opportune to consider the question of federation, and there are some important factors in favour of the

proposal. For instance, one reason why federation of the British West Indies with British Guiana can be made possible and workable is because of the important fact that the populations of these Colonies speak one language—the English language. Secondly, the populations embrace one religion, the Christian religion, except for some small percentage of Hindus and Mohammedans, and thirdly, the indigenous populations are no longer in the West Indian islands: they are still in the interior of British Guiana.

There are other reasons. We have telecommunications and air services which bring us into close contact with various parts of the world, and one nation with another. There were times when it took 35 days by steamer to cover certain distances. Today those distances are covered within a week by fast air services. It is said in some quarters that British Guiana being a continental unit we must think in terms of countries like Brazil and Venezuela. That may be true because we have the land and its potential value, but what about our population? We have too meagre a population to be able to do anything worth while in this Colony, and we may be in that position for another 50 or 100 years. With a little amalgamation between the West Indies and ourselves there would be opportunities for us to improve our position. As the mover of the motion mentioned, we may enter into a Customs Union, with possibilities of free trade with the West Indies.

With regard to the question of rice it must be remembered that Burma is again in British possession and will be able to resume her export of rice to the West Indies which would buy that rice if its price is lower than British Guiana rice, but if we have federation with the West Indies they would think twice before they purchase rice from Burma. In that event there would be some protection and encouragement to the people of this Colony to grow more rice which would find its way into all homes in the West Indies.

Another advantage of federation would be a unified Civil Service. At present members of the Civil Services of the various Colonies are more or less confined to their respective Colonies, but with a unified Civil Service officers would be transferred from one Colony to another, gaining experience and having a wider field for the improvement of their intellectual ability. The result would be a general improvement of the Civil Service in these Colonies.

As regards education, instead of primary education we may be able with federation to provide free secondary education so as to make the standard of intelligence of the people of the West Indies and British Guiana even higher than it is at present. With a higher standard of education the natural corollary would be less crime and better citizens. People would think less of committing some of the heinous crimes which take place in this Colony at the present time.

Another benefit of federation would be a unified Medical Service which is essential in order to combat tropical diseases. There is also the question of a unified Militia Force for the protection of the West Indies and British Guiana, and in the event of the Mother Country being engaged in war there would be a military force available for despatch to any theatre where it was wanted.

There would be a Central Government with perhaps a Governor-General, and instead of having a Governor in each Colony as at present there might be Lieut-Governors or High Commissioners in the various Colonies. A Central Government, wherever it may be set up, would result in great saving in the cost of Administration of these Colonies. I would suggest Barbados as the seat of the Central Government. I make bold to suggest Barbados as the most suitable place for health reasons. A Central Government would be a saviour to the West Indies and British Guiana. Large sums of money would

be saved in administrative expenses which could be utilized for the benefit of the general taxpayers in the Colonies concerned.

The peoples of the West Indies and British Guiana have proved their loyalty to the Empire during the war. They have given of their best, and they desire now to be given some kind of responsible government. With federation it is only natural that we would have Colonial self-government. The people of the West Indies and British Guiana are loyal to the British Crown; they are proud to be a unit of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and for that reason they would cherish some form of self-government. For the reasons I have given, and many others, I am prepared to support the motion for federation with the West Indies.

Mr. ROTH: Sir, in spite of Your Excellency's remark in Council on the 29th of last month, that the opening of the telephone service with Barbados might be considered a happy augury to this idea of federation of the West Indies, I regret I do not find myself in a position to support this resolution as it stands and I most earnestly ask hon. Members to give it very careful consideration, before lending their support to it in its present form. This House is being asked to approve in principle, the federation of British Guiana with the West Indies. On what grounds? Is it because that course has been suggested by the Rt. Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies? Surely, we are not a flock of sheep bound, willy-nilly, to follow whither the bell-wether leads. Is it in order to obtain that accretion of population we so earnestly desire? That can be obtained without federation. Is it in order to obtain a Customs Union? That too, can be obtained without federation. Eighty odd years ago, the Zollverein—the Customs Union of the independent German States—was a success long before the unification of Germany. Is it to obtain a unification of the Civil Services? Surely, that also can be

arranged without federation. This being so, what are the advantages to be gained from federation with the West Indies? In my opinion, frankly, none. All the offered advantages can be obtained without political federation which, despite the fact that geographically we could lose the whole of the West Indies in a couple of our major rivers, undoubtedly, would relegate us to a third or fourth place in any such federation. Can anyone honestly assert that our past association with the West Indies has been to our lasting benefit? Always, it is the West Indies and, as an afterthought, British Guiana. Nor must we forget the campaign of vilification carried out by some of the islands, *sub rosa* it is true, for years against this country, to prevent visitors coming here.

No, sir, British Guiana, developed as we are trying to do, to the full extent of her vast natural resources, will prove herself an entity of greater economic importance, than can any possible Federated West Indies. With few exceptions, her problems are greater and of an entirely different nature from those of the islands. The future of British Guiana lies to the south and the east—continental, not north and insular. If we must be federated, let us federate into Dutch and French Guiana and thus form a United States of Guiana with close on 200,000 square miles rich in forest and mineral resources,—the natural northern outlet to the great area of the Rio Negro. Already we are known as the Land of the Six Peoples; let us be the Land of the Eight Peoples. This is no wild dream. Differences of language need form no unsurmountable obstacle. Witness the Helvetic Republic of Switzerland,—the oldest and most successful working federation of three different nationalities known to the world.

I beg to move the following amendment to the resolve clause of the Resolution:—

Be it resolved that this Hon. Legislative Council expresses its appreciation of the far-sighted recommendations of the Rt. Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies in his memorandum on Federation of these Colonies and declares its approval of the said recommendations in regard to unified West Indian and Guianese services, but does not consider it in the best interests of British Guiana to federate politically with the West Indies.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I beg to second that amendment.

Dr. SINGH: Can I speak on that amendment, sir?

The PRESIDENT: Yes; I think you can.

Dr. SINGH: What I wish to say is that although we are not in the West Indies proper, like Trinidad and Jamaica, those colonies are ahead of us and there should be no feeling that any kind of reform brought forward would result in putting one set of people against another. For instance, I know of a case in which someone was asked: are you going to support federation?—do you realise that the coloured people comprise 80 per cent. of the population of British Guiana and the West Indies and that they would rule if they got federation? I do not want to say more, but it seems to me that there are certain people at the top who want to rule and keep others in subjection and that these are the people who are opposed to federation of these colonies. We are praying for responsible government, sir, and I feel that federation would bring us nearer to it.

Mr. SEAFORD: The hon. mover of this motion, in putting it forward, asked that very careful consideration be given to it. Now, sir, we have been considering this question for a considerable number of years. It has been under discussion since 1926 and I am still trying to find out what are we to gain by federation. It seems to

me that British Guiana may lose by federation with the West Indian colonies and before I say "yea" or "nay" to the motion I should like to know what is going to happen to us and to our local Government in case of federation. Is our Government to remain or would we lose it? If we are to lose it, then what type of Government would these federated colonies have? Are they going to be federal states such as we have in Australia, or are we going to have one Governor-General with just a Colonial Secretary in each colony? In that case, how would each colony be represented? Is it going to be like the House of Parliament, or are we going to sit separately as we are doing at the present moment? If it is intended that there should be a central Government, then what representation would each colony have? Is the representation going to be based on the population or on the size of the colony? What is going to happen to our Customs duties and our Excise duties? Is federation going to increase or reduce our cost of living?

We have in this colony a Bill of Entry tax and this is the only colony in these parts where it exists. That tax brings us about half a million dollars a year, and I would also like to know whether it is going to remain or be taken off. In other words, I would like to know a lot more than what has been stated, before I say "yea" or "nay" to this resolution. I notice that one of the newspapers has asked how many of the elected Members have consulted their constituencies, as that is the best means of finding out the views of the people on the subject. Well, sir, I for one have not consulted anybody, because I am not in a position to answer certain questions that will very probably be put to me. Until I am in a position to say what federation would mean, I cannot support the resolution and am therefore going to move an amendment. I have read the despatch from the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the question, but, as I have already stated,

I would like to get some more information before coming to any definite decision. In paragraph 3 of the despatch, the Secretary of State says:

3. ....I recognise that the existing differences between the Colonies of this area in their historical tradition, social organisation, and political development, combined with the administrative inconvenience which would arise from the present grave difficulties of communication, would make it impracticable to set up immediately a federal organisation....."

I feel, sir, that this despatch was merely intended to sound out our views as to whether federation is practicable or not and how the people of the colony consider the proposal. In the same paragraph (3), the Secretary of State goes on to say:

".....I consider that the aim of British policy should be the development of federation in the Caribbean at such time as the balance of opinion in the various Colonies is in favour of a change, and when the development of communications makes it administratively practicable."

Now, sir, we have a long way to go in this Colony, I am afraid, before our means of communication with the neighbouring Colonies would make federation practicable. As I have already stated, we may have to attend meetings in other Colonies and in that case it would be necessary to have well-established sea and air communication. The Secretary of State goes on, in the same paragraph (3) to say:

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

Does that mean, sir, that if federation comes into being next year or in the very near future, the Development and Welfare Fund would cease to exist and come to an end? I am asking these



questions because I am not clear on the subject. The hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo mentioned certain advantages that would accrue from federation. I think we all agree with him but, as pointed out by the hon. the Seventh Nominated Member (Mr. Roth), those advantages could be gained without federation. I should like to refer also to the question of the purchase of rice from Burma and the desirability of getting protection for our rice industry, here. I feel, sir, that a Customs Union is necessary for giving us protection in the whole of the Caribbean area.

The hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo also pointed out that with federation there might come the possibility of free secondary education, but I am afraid I am unable to follow his point of view. I do not see why if we get federation, we should also get free secondary education. I may mention that Jamaica which we are told so often here is ahead of this Colony has not even got compulsory education for its primary schools, so I do not think British Guiana is lagging behind in so far as education is concerned. I was rather surprised to hear the views of certain other Members in support of federation and I am afraid I cannot share them. I feel that we in British Guiana should stand on our own legs and remain a British Colony—and a loyal Colony at that. I feel, sir, that we are quite ignorant of the advantages or the disadvantages that would accrue from federation and that the words of the hon. the Colonial Treasurer used in connexion with another subject, would apply equally to the present one, when he pointed out that he could not commit himself “without sufficiently full information on the points to be considered carefully, on the advantages and disadvantages that would result and on problems that would require solution.”

I think that before we deal with this larger question of federation, we should first of all try to establish a Customs

Union in these Colonies and that if possible we should set up a Commission of some kind to go into the question. It has already been discussed in this Council, sir, but unfortunately, full consideration was not given to the position of some of the smaller Colonies. I think it should be discussed again, however, now that conditions in various Colonies have improved and that it should be discussed before we decide on it. We know that an Economic Adviser is coming to the Colony shortly and that another such gentleman is attached to the Development and Welfare organisation at their headquarters in Barbados. I think that if these gentlemen get together, they would be able to put up some scheme for a Customs Union between the West Indian islands and this Colony. That would give us certain facts to work on and when we know our position—exactly how we may be affected—I think it would be time for us to consider the question of federation. I therefore beg to move the following amendment to the resolve clause of the motion:—

“BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable Legislative Council express its appreciation of the views of the Rt. Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies in his Memorandum and recommends that a Committee of this Council together with representatives of the leading bodies in the Colony be set up to consider the question of West Indian Federation and to make recommendations thereon.”

Mr. PEER BACCHUS seconded.

Mr. EDUN: Sir, I have listened carefully to the mover and the seconder of this motion and I think that they are half-hearted and have not properly made up their minds. My view is that this whole question of federation ought to be shelved and considered a few years hence. I was reading, recently, a book written by an American who said that it was the policy of the British Government to overhaul its political machinery in the Colonies after every war. I think I have to agree with that writer, because that was done after the

first World War. It was in the year 1928—a few years after the end of the first World War—that the Constitution of this Colony was changed, and if one could look back into the pages of history it would be found that the same policy was made applicable throughout the British Colonies. Previous to the year 1928, this Colony had a Constitution which was unique in itself. The power of the purse happened to have been in the hands of the people, while legislative matters were dealt with by the Court of Policy. It was the Combined Court which had the power of the purse within its hands but, strange enough, the Constitution we received in the year 1928 was based on the policy that the British Government ought to govern.

I was looking very far into the reasons for this new entanglement of federation which is being brought into these Colonies so soon after the end of another world war, but after having read what this American writer has said, I have seen the light. I think the policy now is that instead of widening the scope for self-government on the part of the British Colonies, there should be this entanglement—this idea of frustration. I have read something of the history of the federation of the United States of America and I am of the opinion that federation ought to be for free peoples. When I say “free peoples” I mean people with a Constitution in which they are the ruling factors. I do not believe in a policy of federation of slaves. If this policy is carried on, then I think this great Commonwealth of nations in which all peoples take pride—and an infinite pride at that—will be soon divided into two different sections, one section being a federation of free peoples and the other a federation of Crown Colonies. Such a state of affairs would be inimical to the interest of the Colonies concerned and having seen the policy in this new light, it is the duty of every hon. Member of this Council to oppose it strenuously,

because we ought first to be a free people before we think of federation. We ought to have self-government first, beginning with District Councils, then to County Councils, and then to the Legislative Council and so on. That is exactly what the Secretary of State for the Colonies intended when he said in paragraph 6 of his despatch that:

6.....“I attach particular importance to the development of village councils and community work on the lines already recommended, by the Comptroller and his Social Welfare Adviser, as a step towards the growth of social responsibility.”

Now, sir, is it that the growth of social responsibility is the aim of the British Government towards the Colonies? Why not political responsibility also? Between 1928 and 1943 the British Government handled the affairs of this Colony in accordance with the Constitution set out in the Order in Council, but in the course of those 15 years this Colony was handed right into the lap of the British Treasury—a bankrupt Colony. Prior to 1928 this Colony had a unique Constitution in which the people were responsible for the spending of money, but from 1928 to 1943 we have had the Government governing and bungling the whole situation. An upheaval from one end of the country to the other was so overwhelming that a Royal Commission was appointed to enquire into the affairs of the Colony during those 15 years, resulting in a change of the Constitution in 1943. We are not yet a self-governing unit, neither is Trinidad nor Barbados, or any of the other British West Indian islands. That means that we would be nothing but a federation of Crown Colonies, which in itself is something to abhor, because no set of economic slaves would be capable of carrying on a federated Government. Therefore I say that this direction from the Secretary of State for the Colonies is a very premature one, and I agree with

the two amendments which suggest that this matter should be examined fully in the light of experience gained in self-government.

I agree with the hon. the Seventh Nominated Member (Mr. Roth) when he said that all these wonderful ideas about Customs Union and free trade could be achieved without political federation, because those things are the result of business initiative. We should not let go of the substance of the wider vision of this great continental country expanding itself, in order to grasp at the shadow of federation with the West Indies. As I examine the whole framework of the despatch from the Secretary of State I see that we would gain nothing tangible by federation. In the history of this country it will be found that after slave labour on the plantations had come to its majority the slaves were given their freedom. Attempts were made to encourage West Indians to come to this Colony. People came from Jamaica, Trinidad, and Barbados, not as producers to settle in the rural districts but (I do not want to use the word) as a parasitical community living in the City and in the towns and doing no productive work. Do we want people who would help to increase our production or a type of people like the Syrians? The Syrians are excellent and peaceful citizens, but they are simply traders living off the substance of the producing elements of our population. You will not find them on sugar estates producing sugar. They do not plant rice or rear cattle. If we want to flood this country with that type of people let us open the door as quickly as we can to West Indians.

This country needs population but it needs the right type of people. We want people who would be able to sense the possibilities of the industrialization of our potentialities. Let us have Europeans if they would come here and settle down. Let us have all the people

who would come here, especially those who would be productive and not parasitical. The disadvantages would be greater than any advantages we would get from federation with the West Indies. Already the West Indies and British Guiana are importing manufactured goods from the United Kingdom, Canada, and the U.S.A at prices based on the higher standard of living in those countries, while we are exporting our products—sugar, bauxite, rum, balata, gold and diamonds—at prices based on a low standard of living, so that the balance is overwhelmingly against us. For years we have been drained of our substance in this way, and until we achieve self-government in order to stabilize our economy we should not think about federation.

His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies is very eager to know the reaction of public opinion on this matter. Your Excellency has heard the views of those Members who have spoken so far against the motion, and I do not know whether you have taken cognizance of the temper of the Press—the *Daily Argosy* and the *Guiana Graphic* this morning, the *Labour Advocate* on Sunday, and the *Peasantry*, all showing the trend of public opinion against a move of this kind, which is considered nothing short of an entanglement, something to attract public attention and make us forget our immediate problems of drainage and irrigation and a balanced economy. If we allow ourselves to be drawn into this entanglement we will go straight back into the hands of the Imperial Treasury, and gone would be the great ideal of self-government. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Roth, suggested that we ought to think of federation with our sister Colonies of Dutch and French Guiana. Sisters we are because we are continental in design.

Mr. ROTH: I rise to a point of correction. I did not use the words "sister Colonies." I said "French and Dutch neighbours."

Mr. EDUN: That is my own term. Perhaps the day will come when we may cast our glances in that direction. What would federation mean when we consider the plan to spend 180 million dollars? We would be just a mere figurehead; we would have to go to the Governor-General in Barbados. If the West Indian islands want federation let them have it. British Guiana happens to be one of the highways for air traffic in the future, and it is suggested that we should swop that future for the mere name of federation. As the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Roth, has said, we could put the West Indian islands in the expanse of our rivers. We are tackling the problem of our coastlands and you, sir, have laid out a practical programme for the development of the interior. All those things would be held over at the whim and caprice of perhaps the Governor-General in Barbados.

As a Guianese I take pride in this country, and it makes me feel proud to hear other Guianese speak well about it. We are being offered free movement among the inhabitants of this Colony and the West Indies. Is there any restriction of movement between the people of these Colonies? We have seen people from those islands coming here by the thousands. I remember that Barbadians came here and made a row on the sugar estates, and we had to send them away. Do we want Jamaicans—the Bustamante gang? (laughter). I think our industrialists would fear that. I honestly believe that the destiny of this country lies south. We want to go down there on a big continental railway. With an Administrator of Your Excellency's type, and with self-government in our hands what could we not do? We could do a lot for this Colony and tell the West Indian islands: "We can be very good friends, but you keep together among yourselves. If you want federation, have it. We will be your best friends and neighbours and exchange products with you. We will take your gasolene and give you our

rice, but it must be on a reciprocal basis. You cannot expect to get our rice at a cheap rate while you sell us your gasolene at a high rate."

The problem is such a huge one that we should stop talking about it in this Council now and defer it until we can examine it later. I agree with the hon. mover of the motion that the trade unions are thinking about federation. It was mooted and discussed in years gone by, but surely the trade unions did not want a federation of slaves. They wanted a federation of self-governing units. Whenever we have federation within the British Commonwealth of Nations there should be equality of status. For that matter we might federate with Canada, but let us be self-governing first. That is the logical sequence of the whole Caribbean problem. Why should we be a homogeneous mass ruled from Downing Street?

We should postpone this discussion and tell the Secretary of State that this despatch is a very good one: it has a fair amount of reading matter and it reads very well, but that we cannot think of federation until our Constitution is founded on more democratic lines and this Legislature is a self-governing one. Your Excellency should be the man at the top helping us on to that greater goal, that greater vision of Guiana. You have preached it so often and it has become so contagious that every Guianese is singing the song of Guiana. Must we swop that great vision just for the entanglement of federation with the West Indies?

Mr. JACOB: I must express disappointment after listening to the six speeches I have heard this afternoon which lasted about an hour and a quarter. I do not know how long Your Excellency proposes to allow us to debate the motion, but I think we should finish off the motion today whatever the result is, whether it is carried or not, and proceed with the business on the Order Paper. To say that the motion has not been given

sufficient publicity to enable hon. Members to consider it is to say something that is not strictly correct. The motion was on last week's Order Paper, and now that it is before us I think the Council ought to decide on the question one way or another. I do not know how many more Members will speak on it, but I think it should be debated and concluded today. I propose to say at the outset that I am wholly in favour of this motion, and I trust it will be carried.

I agree with the principles that have been enunciated by the Rt. Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies, but I cannot say that I agree with the methods that have been adopted, or are being adopted now to achieve the end in view. It is a pity the hon. mover did not consult his colleagues in this Council before he tabled his motion. I do not know that he consulted anybody at all. I do not like its phraseology, but that does not matter. The resolutions expresses to a large extent what I have in mind, and therefore I propose to support the motion. The history of federation is a long one, as the mover has said, but I think the matter came to a head when the Royal Commission visited this Colony and submitted their recommendations. In paragraph 27 they state:

27. Political federation is not of itself an appropriate means of meeting the pressing needs of the West Indies. Nevertheless, it is the end to which policy should be directed.

If the last speaker would study those few words he would agree and support this motion. No one will say that political federation would give us all we want, or the self-government we desire, but it is the means to that end, and unless these Colonies are federated Heaven knows what would happen.

I wonder how many hon. Members have studied the population figures. I propose to give those figures, but I am not going to be too

long about it. I have in my possession a return ordered to be published by the House of Commons, dated 2nd November, 1938. I think the immediate object in view, which the Secretary of State stresses, is federation of the Bahamas, Barbados, British Guiana, Jamaica, and Trinidad. I think those are the five Colonies being considered, as the Leeward and Windward Islands are already federated. According to this return the populations of those five Colonies are: Bahamas, 66,908; Barbados, 190,939; British Guiana, 337,039; Jamaica, 1,102,528; Trinidad and Tobago, 456,006, making a total of 2,203,420. The populations of the two Colonies already federated are: Leeward Islands, 135,797, and the Windward Islands, 233,131, a total of 368,928. These figures are based on the estimated populations in 1937.

Now, sir, these five Colonies have a population of 2½ million people—let us say they have 3 millions today. We have been told by the hon. the Seventh Nominated Member (Mr. Roth) who is an experienced colonist, and by others, that this Colony should federate with French and Dutch Guiana, or with Brazil and Venezuela. What are we heading towards? What would be the effect of federating with Brazil and Venezuela, or other countries of different nationality? Are we going to isolate British Guiana with its 400,000 people from the other British Colonies in these parts and just keep on saying that we have a continental destiny? What are we going to do with our 90,000 sq. miles of territory when we have only 400,000 people? As stated by the hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo, certain influences are at work to prevent this thing—this federation of the West Indian Colonies. I have in my hand here, the *Guiana Graphic* of today's date and dealing with the subject of Federation it states:

"What does British Guiana stand to gain by federation with the West Indies? Precisely nothing."

We know this newspaper. I have already stated that it is owned and controlled by the big vested interests—sugar. Maybe, that will be disputed but the fact remains. I have in my hand also the *Daily Argosy* of today's date and it says practically the same thing. It says:—

“. . . whether Mr. Critchlow is acting on behalf of Government or on his own behalf makes no difference to our well considered and irrevocable opinion that the federation of this Colony with the British West Indies will be a damnably retrograde step”.

Then, the article goes on to say:—

“This Colony stands to derive more far-reaching benefits from a closer commercial and even cultural association with Brazil and Venezuela, for example, than it does from any system of federation with Trinidad, Barbados and the remaining West Indian Colonies, not excluding Jamaica.”

This is the kind of advice the public gets from the *Daily Argosy*—a paper reputed to be one of the leading, if not the leading newspaper in British Guiana and of which one hon. Member of this Council—the hon. Member for Central Georgetown—is the principal owner. The hon. Member for Western Essequibo—a member of the Executive Council—also has some interest in this newspaper, while another Member of the Executive Council has an interest in the *Guiana Graphic*, that member being the hon. Member for Georgetown North.

Mr. PERCY WIGHT: I rise to a point of correction. It is an absolutely misleading statement to say that the hon. Member for Western Essequibo has an interest in the *Daily Argosy*. It is absolutely untrue.

Mr. JACOB: I understood so. The hon. Member for Central Georgetown, however, holds the largest material interest in the *Daily Argosy*. He is interested in the *Daily Chronicle* too if my information is correct, and that newspaper is also definitely

against federation. We find, therefore, all three of the leading newspapers in the Colony against federation.

Mr. SEAFORD: To a point of correction, sir, I have been informed that the hon. Member for North Western District stated that I have an interest in the newspaper called the *Guiana Graphic*. I would like to inform him that I have not got the slightest interest whatever in that newspaper.

Mr. JACOB: I understand the statement.

Mr. SEAFORD: Thank you.

Mr. JACOB: The hon. Member for Georgetown North says he has no interest whatever in the *Guiana Graphic*. We understand each other Your Excellency. I was saying that all of these newspapers are against the proposal by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, that British Guiana should be federated with the West Indian Colonies. Well, sir, I have always been accustomed to calling a spade a spade; some people might call it a shovel because it does practically the same work. The *Daily Argosy* goes on to say:—

“So far as we are aware, in not a single case has a representative sought a mandate on this important subject from his constituents.” And in so far as Nominated and Official Members are concerned, will they express their own views or the views of Government?

“It seems to us that in the light of this situation, any decision which is reached cannot be accepted as a mandate from the community. And in these circumstances we cannot see what beneficial purpose will be served by the debate.

“Certainly, the result of the division when taken cannot be forwarded to the Colonial Office as the majority decision of the people of the Colony.”

Well, sir I have not consulted my constituency recently on this question of federation, but I consulted

them years and years ago and, best of all, I was able to convince a good many people not only in my own constituency but in other parts of the Colony—and particularly the labour leaders—that by federation the working people of this Colony would be better off. In 1938, the hon. mover of this motion, accompanied by another labour leader and myself, went to Trinidad to attend a labour conference and we formally agreed to what was called a federal constitution for these Colonies. On account of these representations, the West India Royal Commission made the statement I read a few minutes ago, in paragraph 27 of their recommendations. When this federal constitution was advocated in Trinidad, Members of the Barbados House of Assembly and the Trinidad Legislative Council, and one Member of this Council—your humble servant—were present, and the three Colonies approved the scheme of federation of all the West Indian Colonies. Therefore, I would like to say that while the *Daily Argosy* might be correct in saying that Members of this Council have not consulted their constituencies on this motion, their representatives and members in labour organisations have been consulted, and the Colony, by a large majority, is in favour of federation.

There is to be a conference in Barbados sometime this month and this question of federation will be discussed again. I also have a recollection that we discussed the question in the Town Hall here, in 1944 when it was approved—at a meeting in February, 1944. The mover of this motion, the hon. Member for Essequibo River and myself are hoping to visit Barbados in order to represent the people at the Conference to be held there. We all agree that this question of federation should be discussed and approved, but to say that it has not been discussed by the labour organisations would be to say something that is definitely untrue. There has been no dissentient voice, whatever, as far as the labour organisations are con-

cerned. I think that answers the stand being taken by the three daily newspapers and by one or two Members of this Council.

Now, sir, I do not mind saying that I do not like the motion as it is worded, for instance, the second pre-amble states:—

“AND WHEREAS the development of British Guiana in the past has been hindered because of the paucity of its population;”

I would have liked to see the words “and non-planning by the Government” added to this pre-amble. It is not only the paucity of population that has hindered development in British Guiana, but the fact that there has been no planning. Fortunately, we have some kind of planning at the moment and I think it will be pursued. Providing the Secretary of State for the Colonies does not change his views and upset our plans, I think British Guiana is going to benefit by federation with the West Indian Colonies. We will get the surplus population of Barbados, Jamaica and other places, and it will not be necessary for Jamaicans to go to the United States, or for Barbadians to go anywhere else, if the questions of population and wages could be settled. And, with the new outlook I have, British Guiana ought to be able to pay proper wages to all workers. As regards the third pre-amble of the motion which says:—

“AND WHEREAS the Rice, Timber and Cattle Industries of the Colony now in course of development, will need more markets abroad and much larger population within for production;”

I am surprised that the draftsman of this motion did not include gold, sugar, bauxite and other industries as being in need of development. I should certainly like to see gold production double or treble itself, bringing greater prosperity in that direction, and I should certainly like

to see this Colony producing half a million tons of sugar annually. Perhaps this statement will startle some of my hon. friends, but I would like to see the working people with a greater hand in the production of sugar. I want to see a co-operative system whereby cane-farming would be extended among the villagers and I want to see the surplus population of Barbados coming here and planting 5 or 10-acre plots and selling the cane to the sugar factories. I do not think the sugar estates should be allowed to control labour as it suits them for the manufacture of sugar. I want to see the sugar industry developed, as I think it would be a great thing for the West Indies and the British Empire as a whole. I want to see the bauxite industry further developed and I want to see minor industries improved. I want to see 200,000 or 300,000 tons of rice produced annually for export, and not 20,000 tons as at the present time.

I think the time is also ripe when we should have a unified system of Customs tariffs, a unified West Indian Civil Service and such other things. Are we to leave all these things alone and merely say that we have a continental destiny? I do not know what those words mean. I am a practical man and I do not want to think of British Guiana as a continental nation or a continental country, when there is little or no progress—when we have only three or four people to the square mile, and things like that. The last pre-ambule in the motion reads:—

“AND WHEREAS experience has proved the great advantage of the West Indian Court of Appeal to be followed by a West Indian Civil Service, University and General education;”

I want to see a unified Social Welfare Service, and not only a Court of Appeal and so on. I want to see all these services extended and not confined to a particular part of the West Indies. These are the means whereby British Guiana will progress and not remain backward as she has done in the past.

Mention has been made by one or two hon. Members of the very excellent despatch from the Secretary of State for the Colonies on this question of federation. Now, sir, I have criticised—and criticised most strongly—in the past, the attitude of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, but when the time comes to give him some praise I think it is my duty to do so. I think this is an excellent despatch—the principles are sound and it is only the practical thing that he has left to be done. Let me examine the document for a moment. He begins by saying:—

“I have recently been considering the question of constitutional policy in relation to the Colonies of the Caribbean area considered as a whole. The declared aim of British Policy is to quicken the progress of all Colonial peoples towards the ultimate goal of self-government and I take this opportunity of re-affirming that basic aim in relation to the Caribbean area.”

Now, sir, if the Secretary of State for the Colonies is sincere in this expression, what more do we want? I should like to see self-government within a specified period. It is not good enough to say “quicken the progress of all Colonial peoples” and leave it there. I should like to hear that self-government would become a reality 10 years from today. In the second paragraph of the despatch, the Secretary of State for the Colonies states:—

“...Indeed the trend of post-war development, under the stimulus of greatly improved air communications, may well show a marked impulse towards a closer political and other association.....”

Now, sir, the hon. Member for Georgetown North quoted certain passages from this despatch, but did not quote the beginning which deals with the very important question of communication. He quoted the third paragraph which is somewhat conflicting with the second. It is clear that when this despatch was written the war in Europe was still going on; but the war is now finished and it is time that we draw the attention of the Secretary of



State for the Colonies to this despatch and tell him we desire federation otherwise the people would not be satisfied. That is the attitude I am adopting and that is the policy I think this Legislature should put into effect. In the second paragraph of the despatch, the Secretary of State for the Colonies went on to say:—

“...I consider it important, therefore, that the more immediate purpose of developing self-governing institutions in the individual British Caribbean Colonies should keep in view the larger project of their political federation, as being the end to which, in the view of the Royal Commission, policy should be directed.”

It is quite clear from this despatch that the Secretary of State for the Colonies had in mind the recommendations of the West India Royal Commission which, in a few words, state exactly what is wanted. The hon. member for Georgetown North quoted one portion of paragraph 3 of the despatch, but I am going to quote another portion which says:—

“...Moreover, in spite of the desire which has been expressed in certain quarters for a West Indian federation, it may be that public opinion generally would not be ready to accept a federal constitution and His Majesty's Government would not wish to enforce such constitution against the wishes of any large section of the community.”

Now, sir, I am satisfied that a large section of the community in the West Indies is in favour of federation and I challenge any hon. Member of this Council to make a statement to the contrary and back it up with facts. As I have already stated, the question was considered by representatives of the working people in Trinidad, Barbados and British Guiana, and there was not a single voice against it. Perhaps it would be said that the capitalist group was not represented at any of these conferences, but that group represents a very small minority. In paragraph 4 of the despatch, the Secretary of State for the Colonies states:—

“...In particular the fullest possible use should be made of every unifying influ-

ence, as circumstances permit, by the development of joint West Indian services, joint conferences, and through the organisation established under the Comptroller for Development and Welfare.”

Now, sir, it is clear from these words that the Imperial Government favours the development of unified West Indian services and conferences. I think there should be a unified Administration, Customs tariffs, markets and social and other services. Then and only then would we make some progress in British Guiana. I think the majority of the Members of this Council would agree that we have been bringing officers to this Colony with little or no West Indian experience. They have to come and learn and in most cases they do not learn the right thing or prove to be the right type of people. I say that very definitely and very emphatically because certain administrative officers have no opportunity of learning anything except through the Executive Council and probably certain Members of this Council. Let us take for instance, the Colonial Secretary, the Attorney-General, the Colonial Treasurer and officers of that type; they have no one to consult but the Executive Council and certain Members of this Council. I base my remarks on 25 years of study of the work of this Council as well of that of the Executive Council, and I am satisfied that the atmosphere is not the best. Let us examine the personnel of the Executive Council.

The PRESIDENT: Is this really related to federation?

Mr. JACOB: I think so, sir. We are considering the services. I am not going to be too pungent in my criticism; I am just going to examine the Executive Council. We have not really got representatives of the Colony or of the people in the Executive Council. Your Excellency selects, with the approval of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, advisers—

The PRESIDENT: I really think you should go on to something touching the motion. You said you wanted to get it finished as fast as possible.

Mr. JACOB: One minute, sir; one minute only. I am just showing that on the Executive Council we have certain people who are not very familiar with what goes on. In fact, they make it their business not to be and so I say we need unified West Indian services, particularly an Administrative service. We want a West Indian service really—not an African, European, or other service, the Executive Council of the Colony remaining as the chief administrative body. The Secretary of State for the Colonies goes on to say, in paragraph 5 of the despatch, that:—

“In stating that the aim of British policy should be the fostering of a sense of West Indian unity, and the establishment of federation at the appropriate time, I wish to make it clear that I should not regard the wide question of federation of the area as a whole as debarring in any way closer association between the existing groups.”

Now, sir, certain hon. Members have expressed the view that we should not have association with the other West Indian Colonies, but that is what the Secretary of State says we should do. Let the association continue—let it be extended, let it be augmented, let there be unified services and so on, for all these are preliminaries to West Indian federation. Therefore, the amendments moved by the hon. the Seventh Nominated Member and the hon. Member for Georgetown North really have no effect. The principle of this motion is sound and I trust that when the time comes for voting everyone would vote for it, so that these things could be done. To say that these things should be done but there should be no political federation, would be just playing with the subject. If the hon. Members had read this despatch carefully, they would not have moved these amendments. Looking at paragraph 6 of the despatch, it would

be seen that the Secretary of State for the Colonies laid special emphasis on the desire for what he calls “political development in each Colony”. I shall read a portion of this paragraph which says:—

“...Much could be done in that direction by the development of institutions of local government which, even in the form they would have to take among the less advanced sections of any community, should give valuable experience in committee work and so forth, and might be expected, therefore to lead in time to more participation by the people in the work of the central government.”

Now, sir, what has this Government done towards the realisation of this excellent principle, as suggested by the Secretary of State for the Colonies. I say again that the Executive Council must be blamed. It is not good enough just to read these things, talk about them and then leave them there. Action must be taken. Immediately after this motion is debated, the Council will proceed to take the second reading of the Local Government Bill, 1945. The Council will then go into Committee. Therefore Government cannot conscientiously say that it has done a single thing towards bringing local self-government within the reach of the villages during the last 25 years. What is more, within the last five years Your Excellency's Government has made promises to do certain things, but has failed to do those things. In a letter signed by Mr. G. D. Owen and dated 21st July, 1941, your Government stated:—

“I am directed to refer to your letter of the 5th July, 1941, enclosing copies of Resolutions passed at public meetings held in the North West District and, with regard to Resolutions Nos. 7 and 8. I am to inform you that the request for the extension of the terms of reference of the Franchise Commission to include Municipal and Local Government Franchise has been communicated to the Franchise Commission who have been informed that it had always been intended to set up a separate Commission subsequently to deal with these matters after the Commission on the General Franchise had reported. The

Franchise Commission have been asked for their views as to whether it is preferable that the question of Local Franchise should be dealt with by the same Commission as the General Franchise with the necessary additions to its membership.

As is stated very clearly in his despatch, the Secretary of State for the Colonies is desirous of giving the people an opportunity to learn the principles of self-government, beginning from the villages, but this Government has done absolutely nothing. I lay emphasis on the words "absolutely nothing" during the last five years, although strong representations were made to the Royal Commission, and although when its attention was drawn to it Government wrote saying that it was always its intention to go into the matter. If these Colonies are backward whose fault is it but the Central Administration? The Secretary of State for the Colonies must be pinned down to the fact that Government has made certain promises and is expected to fulfil them, otherwise we will put no credence in promises made by Government or what Government writes.

What is the actual position as regards local self-government which the Secretary of State desires the people to achieve? We have 25 villages in which the people do not elect all of their councillors, and there are 70 other villages in which the Local Government Board nominates or appoints the councillors. There are other districts governed by the Local Government Board. Is that progress? Is that the way the Imperial Government expects progress in these parts? I say that that is solely the responsibility of the local Government, the Governor in Council. If the Governor in Council had shown some initiative, as has been emphasised by the Royal Commissioners progress would have been made, and I am sure one hon. Member at least, the Sixth Nominated Member (Mr. Edun) would not have opposed this motion in the way he has done. I

believe that he is not satisfied that something will be done to give this Colony self-government. If that was assured I am confident that the hon. Nominated Members would support the motion whole-heartedly. This is what the Secretary of State says in paragraph 7 of his despatch:—

"...If all those Legislatures were then to declare themselves in favour of the aim of federation, the next step would be the consideration of the means whereby proposals could be drawn up for such closer association between West Indian Colonies as may prove immediately feasible. One possibility is that a conference of West Indian delegates should be held at a later date, either in the West Indies or in London, to consider the formulation of proposals for that closer association".

What more assurance does the Sixth Nominated Member or the Member for Georgetown North want?

Mr. SEAFORD: What the Member for Georgetown North wants is a statement of what it means before we accept it, sir. I think that is very very plain. What is it going to cost the Colony?

Mr. JACOB: My friend is really cornered. It would be well to read his speech when it is written. I am disappointed with this debate; I really do not know what is worrying hon. Members. They really want to have their own way; to have a party or a clique to control this Government as it has been controlled all these years, or is there some other object? Here we have a most statesmanlike despatch from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to this Legislature and to the Legislatures of the other Colonies. Some of us want this Colony to be federated with Brazil, Venezuela, and the other Guianas. Others want to know what it will cost, while another Member talks about enmity between the Colonies.

If it is the intention of the Executive Government to press for these

things as stated, I can see no reason for not accepting the motion as framed, but if it is the intention of Government to do nothing but simply allow the Secretary of State's despatch to be pigeon-holed and forgotten, we would be pursuing a policy of frustration which would lead us nowhere. My purpose here is to do something or to get out of it. It is not my purpose just to look on and mark time, or to do the things that will give me personal benefits. That is not my object here. My object is to see the Colony progress. Whether I remain here or not is another matter.

It is quite clear from the Secretary of State's despatch that we are to declare whether we are in favour of the aim of federation, and the next step will be the consideration of the means whereby proposals could be drawn up for such closer association between this Colony and the West Indies. I have named those Colonies and I think some practical step should be taken. The Secretary of State goes on to state:—

"One possibility is that a conference of West Indian delegates should be held at a later date, either in the West Indies or in London, to consider the formulation of proposals for that closer association."

I suggest that that is the answer to the speech of the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford)—not a Committee of this Council. I have known Committees of this Council and what we have got from them. I know all about the Franchise Commission. I am wholly against his suggestion, and I think that on further consideration the hon. Member will agree that it is futile to have a Committee to go into this matter to consider what it would cost this Colony.

Mr. SEAFORD: Is the hon. Member suggesting that a Committee be set up in the West Indies to consider the matter after the question of federation has been accepted? He does not

recommend the setting up of a Committee to consider the question of federation. That is quite a different thing altogether.

Mr. JACOB: I would suggest that my hon. friend read the despatch again. When the matter was discussed in Trinidad in 1938 it was felt that it would cost the Colonies a great deal less. There would be no need to have three first-class Colonies with three first-class Governors, but one Governor-General with double pay, thus saving the pay of a third Governor, and possibly other Administrators in the smaller Colonies. With improved communications I am sure it would be a practical step towards a more contented people in these parts. My friend, the hon. Member for Georgetown North, is fully aware of what amalgamation or centralization means. I hope he will not deny the statement that he is one of the principals of the sugar producing companies, and he knows the number of sugar factories he has caused to be dismantled. He knows what it means to amalgamate several sugar factories—reduced administrative and other expenses.

Mr. SEAFORD: Production is different.

Mr. JACOB: It is not possible to argue with my friend because he will not reason. The fact remains that amalgamation, centralization or unification of the several Colonies and services would lead to greater prosperity for all concerned. I will wind up by saying that I have considered this matter somewhat carefully. I have visited several of the West Indian islands, and I have been in communication with the leaders in several of them: I have visited Antigua, St. Kitts, Grenada, Barbados, and Trinidad. I have visited Trinidad at least four times and I am in constant touch with the majority of the Labour leaders in those islands.

I am confident that those people are

in favour of West Indian Federation. I do not know whether there has been a landslide, but up to recently I am satisfied that the majority of the people in the Colonies would be in favour of federation, provided the details are properly worked out. There may be differences of opinion as regards details.

In conclusion I wish to say that it is to be hoped that British statesmen, not merely one Secretary of State, should avoid the use of terms which are vague, particularly on constitutional and administrative matters. It would lead to greater co-operation if the statesmen in charge of these Colonies, particularly the Crown Colonies, would be a little more explicit and let the people of the Colonies—the subject races as we are called—know exactly what they mean and what promises they make. It is not enough merely to make vague statements, and it is to be hoped that the technique which has been used in the past as regards promises to these Colonies will not be repeated, and that from now on we will have a well defined policy with the set purpose of the development of the Caribbean, including British Guiana.

The PRESIDENT: I originally said that I proposed to adjourn the debate on this motion after an hour and a half, but as things have gone I think it would be useful to go on and hear as many Members who care to speak.

Mr. LEE: The hon. Member for North-Western District has referred to some of the points in the Secretary of State's despatch on which I had intended to speak. I cannot conceive of any Member of this Council, who has the progress of this Colony at heart, opposing this motion. Having supported the recommendations of the Royal Commission in every detail I cannot conceive of Members turning down this suggestion of federation

with the West Indies. The hon. the Sixth Nominated Member (Mr. Edun) stands for adult suffrage as the basis of self-government, yet he says he is not in favour of federation. I am positive that had he read the despatch he would have seen that the Secretary of State is directing the Legislative Council to pursue a policy with the aim of federation. That is what we are here for—to direct Government policy. Members talk about a Unified Colonial Service, a West Indian University, and a Unified Medical Service. Aren't those things a step towards self-government?

The motion suggests that there should be free movement of people among the Colonies. Your Excellency knows my views regarding these vast agricultural schemes. It is my opinion that the population of this Colony is too small to permit of the lands so improved being beneficially occupied, and unless there is a substantial increase of our population this Colony will certainly revert to Treasury control. Have Members read Dr. Benham's report with regard to the rice industry? What are we increasing our rice production for? Isn't it to supply the West Indies? If we do not federate with the West Indies where will we sell our rice? The Canada-West Indies Trade Agreement raised a barrier and the Imperial Government said it could not interfere in trade relations between one British Colony and other. Have we a sufficiently strong voice to tell Downing Street that we have a Colony of potential wealth, and that we want the Imperial Government to spend money to develop it? We have tried over and over and failed, and it is only since the advent of Your Excellency that an attempt has been made to spend some money on this Colony. What is 108 million dollars to a Colony like this with such vast mineral wealth? If we are going to develop hydro-electric power in this Colony are we going to depend upon Canadian capital to do so?

If Members have read the Secretary of State's despatch carefully they would have seen that he does not suggest that we should embark upon federation tomorrow. He suggests the economic policy we should pursue in order to reach that goal. If the Imperial Government is putting its hand out to help us we should accept it. We could abandon federation at any moment; any Colony would have the right to secede from it. If we find that federation with the other Colonies is burdensome to us we could leave them (laughter). Members may laugh but it is so stated in the despatch. I am appealing to hon. Members to reconsider the matter and support the motion.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO: There is undoubtedly a cleavage of opinion on this motion, and one has to go very warily before making up one's mind to cast his vote in favour of the motion as it stands or against it. I have read the Secretary of State's despatch on this point, a despatch which is full of excellence, as the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) has admitted—something which is very strange to us in this Council—and he has given much credit to the Secretary of State, the sincerity of which, however, is somewhat doubtful (laughter). The despatch in essence really asks for an expression of opinion as to the aim of federation. It does not suggest that we should bring federation into practical effect at once. It merely suggests that we should consider whether federation is good for the Colonies of the Caribbean and the Colony of British Guiana on this mainland.

The question of federation is of very great importance. It has depth and great width, and while the aim of the Imperial Government at this stage of world reconstruction is to set a policy common to the administration of all of its Colonies, it seems to me that the stratum for it must be founded on a common basis before one

could usefully consider the federation of Colonies in this part of the world. I think, sir, it would be well for these Colonies to consider partial federation at this stage—the unification of certain services and social amenities—before embarking on the wide vista which the despatch aims at. The problems of British Guiana are not similar to those of even the larger Colonies in the West Indies and there is no feature that is so common that these problems could possibly interdigitate. We have to go gradually and it seems to me that nothing short of a commission—comprised not only of local men but of men who have made a special study of matters like Customs duties, political questions and the constitutions of these various Colonies—should be appointed to go into the matter very carefully and advise us what to do in the circumstances.

It seems to me, however, that we might usefully discuss the motion and give our views which Your Excellency will, in due course, transmit to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. British Guiana, unlike the other Colonies in these parts, is an undeveloped Colony and we are now carrying out certain schemes like irrigation and drainage, and development of the interior, which are not common to any other Colonies. It seems to me therefore, that for some considerable time we would have to look after our own affairs and do certain things which we consider necessary for the development of the Colony. I think we should reach a certain stage of development—a certain stage of self-sufficiency—before we could think of harnessing our resources, more or less, to those of the other Colonies concerned.

In so far as the motion is concerned, I think we could express, briefly, our desire to approve—not presently—of a scheme whereby the Colonies in these parts could work harmoniously together, for the benefit of all

concerned. The hon. Member for North Western District has spoken for nearly an hour on this motion and has quoted several passages in the despatch from the Secretary of State for the Colonies and also from the recommendations of the West India Royal Commission. I desire, however, to stress one important point in paragraph 2 of the despatch, where the Secretary of State for the Colonies states:—

“I consider it important, therefore, that the more immediate purpose of developing self-governing institutions in the individual British Caribbean Colonies should keep in view the larger project of their political federation, as being the end to which, in the view of the Royal Commission, policy should be directed.”

Mr. JACOB: To a point of correction sir. The recommendations of the West India Royal Commission disclose that they considered the question and that there was not a single dissentient voice against immediate federation.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO: I do not agree that they investigated the question fully. They have thrown out a hint—a mere hint—but the question is not an easy one. One might speak for hours and hours on it—and some of us are prone in that direction—but it is not because the Royal Commission recommended federation that it could be adopted immediately. There are important details which must be considered before we decide to throw in our lot with the other West Indian Colonies.

Mr. JACKSON: The hon. the Fifth Nominated Member is a brave man and I admired his calm complacency in moving this motion. I also admire his simplicity and I have no doubt that at the bottom of his heart today, there is a strong desire for federation and a strong desire to have the question discussed in all its phases. We have had quite a good deal of latitude in connexion with the debate here today and perhaps you

will pardon me, sir, if at this stage I congratulate the hon. Member for Essequibo River on his fervid eloquence—his enthusiasm and his zeal—in the cause he espoused. When Your Excellency mentioned at the outset that it was not your desire to take the vote on the motion today, I considered it a very wise pronouncement indeed. Everyone knows that the question is an exceedingly difficult and serious one, and I do not think the Council should be led away by the eloquence of the Members who have already spoken—by their stressing of the benefits that British Guiana would derive from federation—but rather that the question should be considered fully and carefully, in all its bearings, so that when a pronouncement is made it will be a well-considered and mature judgment of this Legislature. Federation with the West Indies may sound well and good, but are we satisfied that all that has been promised by those Members who spoke in favour of its immediate adoption would be realised?

There is no doubt that this Colony is one of very great potentialities and there is every reason to state that we require population in order to have its resources developed. But, sir, will federation bring to us the necessary population as certain hon. Members have stated so glibly? My own idea is that if we tackle the resources of this Colony—if we make it evident that we have room for the profitable occupation of people outside—we would get the necessary population from those islands that are overpopulated. I do feel, sir, that what should be carried out at the present time are those schemes and projects which have been planned to make this possible,—to receive population from outside the Colony and to offer inducement to others to come in and work. I think that when we have been able to execute those plans, we could then sit aside for the time being and concentrate on the question of federation with the West Indies.

There has been a good deal of talk about the educational advantages that we may derive from federation with the West Indies and there has also been a good deal of talk about the possibility of improving our social amenities, and other benefits that we might receive, but I think those who have visited these islands and inquired into their social amenities as well as the general conduct of their own affairs, will tell you that we in British Guiana have very little to learn from them. I do feel, sir, that if given proper opportunities, we in this Colony of British Guiana would be able to rise to any height and excel, perhaps, all the other Colonies within the West Indian group, not only in education, but in other fields of achievement. I do not agree, sir, that federation would give us all we require. I do not agree that it would benefit this Colony from the point of view of education, and I do not agree that the contacts we have been making with interests outside the Colony will benefit the West Indian islands as well as ourselves.

To me, it is mere "clap-trap" to talk of selling our products in the West Indian islands if we federate with them. They will buy the rice we produce because they cannot produce it themselves, but we must be certain that an inter-change of products will be carried out—and carried out sincerely—if we federate. Your Excellency, I repeat that this matter requires very careful attention and very careful planning, and I do not think that at this moment we should conceive the idea of having federation. I would suggest, sir, that the hon. Member for Essequibo River—and perhaps others also—should welcome the opportunity to make this question of federation a plank for his platform at the forthcoming general elections. That hon. Member referred to the fact that if it was known at the general elections that certain Members did not vote for federation, their chances might be hampered.

Mr. LEE: To a point of correction; I never said that.

Mr. JACKSON: I think, however, that if the question is made a plank for his platform at the general elections, we might have an opportunity of judging the desire of the people for federation, by the result of the elections. I would ask Your Excellency that a vote be not taken on this motion today, since I do not think it would be wise for us to dismiss the motion altogether, or to accept it. I think we could leave it and see what result it would have on the general elections.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I am, sir, not against the idea of federation, but I am also not in a position to say that I am in favour of it. I was hoping, sir, that the hon. mover of the motion would have convinced me of the benefits we would derive from federation with the West Indian islands, but I have not been so convinced by him or by the hon. Member for North Western District who has made such a fine speech in support of it. All the hon. Members who supported the motion told us benefits we might receive from federation, but I do not think they would go so far as to say that we would be denied those benefits if we could put up a reasonable case to the Imperial Government for assistance. I do not hold that any such application for assistance would be denied by the Imperial Government because we are not federated with the West Indian islands, nor do I think that that is a threat being used by those who supported this motion.

When the hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo stated that Barbados would probably be the best place for the seat of the Governor-General in the event of federation, it flashed through my mind that British Guiana might then be reduced to the status of a sort of District Council, and if we are going to place ourselves in that



position, that alone would entitle me and the majority of the Members of this Council to vote against the motion. I, sir, cannot agree that by having one Governor-General some Lieut.-Governors and some District Administrators perhaps, which might result in a reduction in the cost of administration, we would be justified in reducing our status and feeling that we would derive much benefit from federation. We cannot even tell what would be the position as regards the cost of administration for the federated Colonies—whether more money would be taken from the larger Colonies than from the smaller ones, or whether revenue from one Colony would go to make up any deficit in another. I feel certain that after federation the various Colonies would not pool their resources but that each one would have to stand on its own legs. That being so, I feel that this Colony would not receive the same consideration from a federated Government as it receives from its own Administration at the present time. Therefore, sir, I regret that I cannot give my support to the motion as it stands.

I have supported the amendment moved by the hon. Member for Georgetown North and I would add that I would like to see a committee even an Intercolonial Committee—appointed to go into all the details of the question, so that not only this Council but the

Colony as a whole would be in a position to say whether we should vote for or against federation.

The PRESIDENT: Does any other Member wish to address Council on the motion? I understood the hon. mover to say that he would prefer us not to proceed to take the vote until after the Barbados conference; is that so?

Mr. CRITCHLOW: That is so, Your Excellency.

The PRESIDENT: There might be something very useful in that, so I do not propose to put the question now, or to call upon the hon. mover to reply to the various speakers, until a later date, possibly the end of this month—after the return of the delegates from Barbados. I think the Attorney General would wish to speak on the motion and I should like to make my own comments before putting the question because, as I have already said, I had a good deal to do with a part of the despatch while in London, last October. I have been looking at the file here and I have some correspondence between myself and Colonel Oliver Stanley, which I think would be useful for the information of hon. Members. I think we should now adjourn until 2 o'clock tomorrow.

The Council adjourned accordingly.