

My wife and I have had the pleasure of visiting the Turks and Caicos Islands on two separate occasions. We went there on our own initiative. I was not able to attach myself to a parliamentary committee! However, the important thing from my point of view was that I was able to go to the islands and become acquainted with the situation there. When representatives from the Turks and Caicos Islands came to Canada, I was greatly honoured to meet with them in the company of Senator George McIlraith. I think all of us who have had the privilege of knowing Senator McIlraith over the years will agree with me that he is a man with a very practical and constructive outlook. When Senator McIlraith supported an association between Canada and the Turks and Caicos Islands, that suggested to me that, then as now, I was travelling in very good company.

I had the privilege to visit the islands in 1978. At that time Liam Maguire, who may be known to some of you, was a minister in the islands. He was also a pilot and he had a little plane and invited me to go along on a flight. We touched down at all of the airports—approximately six of them—on the various islands, and in a very short time I was able to get a pretty good idea of the population and the economic situation on the various islands.

This is an area of the world with a long history. The people in the Turks and Caicos Islands think there is good reason to believe that Columbus touched there for the initial discovery. In any event, the Spanish explorer, Ponce de Leon, came to those islands in 1512. He was, of course, the explorer who discovered Florida.

This is a wonderful place in many ways. The Turks and Caicos Islands cover only a small area amounting to some 166 square miles. The climate is as near perfect as one could order, because, as far as I could tell, every single day of the year was a really good day, certainly as far as temperature was concerned. We stayed at the main hotel on Grand Turk Island. They probably have air conditioning now in the majority of the rooms, but when we were there there was no air conditioning and no artificial heat. Our room had doors on both sides. There were a couple of little fans in the room, and the room was very comfortable both day and night. The temperature varies between 70 degrees and 90 degrees fahrenheit consistently, both winter and summer. I remember talking to a citizen of the islands and asking him if he had ever experienced any cold weather, and this is what he said: "Yes, I have been here when it has been really cold. I remember a time when the temperature went down to 60 degrees." So, compared to Canada, or even Florida, I suppose that would really be a paradise, weather-wise, because the temperatures are excellent.

In recent years there has been a major improvement in airport facilities. The islands now have three airports that can accommodate Boeing 737 jet aircraft. I am informed that the L1011 can also land at these airports. In earlier times when I was there, only turbo-prop planes landed on the islands, so that has been a major step forward.

[Senator Argue.]

The Turks and Caicos Islands are small. The population is nearly all black. They are a very pleasant and hospitable people. On Grand Turk Island, which has the largest population of any of the islands, the children go to school clean and attractively dressed, and it is heartwarming to see the Canadian flag flying, just put up there in an informal way by some of the school children or some of the townspeople. The people in those islands think Canada is really something special, and there is a great deal of goodwill towards our country.

The industries, of course, are limited. There is a lobster industry, and the production and sale of conch is important. A standard soup on the island, which is really delicious, is conch chowder. There are no forests.

● (1540)

There is a little, but not a great deal of, agricultural production. The main industry, if one can call it that, is the tourist industry. That has been increasing. There have been reports of up to 20,000 visitors annually in recent years. It seems to me that it is an area one could look to for great and important developments in the future.

The Senate, in a limited way, has had some dealings with people from the Turks and Caicos Islands. On February 16, 1978, Senator Perrault stated:

Honourable senators, I know you will wish to join me in extending a warm Canadian welcome to two distinguished visitors in our gallery today. I should like to introduce the Honourable C.W. Maguire, Minister of Tourism and Development of Industries and Resources, Turks and Caicos Islands, and his colleague, Mr. Herbert Been, Vice-Chairman of the People's Democratic Movement, Turks and Caicos Islands. These gentlemen are on an informal visit to our capital. We are delighted to have them with us.

I added a few words in welcoming them and in recalling that I had been to the Turks and Caicos Islands and had had an opportunity to enjoy the hospitality of those islands.

Mr. Liam Maguire, who was a leading member of the Turks and Caicos Islands administration at that time, came to our home in Ottawa one evening to show us a film he had of the Turks and Caicos Islands. Max Saltsman, M.P., who had a bill in this regard before the House of Commons, was invited. We had a rather pleasant evening with Mr. Maguire and his colleague, Mr. Been.

On March 15, 1973, the State Council of the Turks and Caicos Islands passed a lengthy motion pointing out the advantages they saw from a close association with Canada. If honourable senators agree, I ask that that motion be printed in *Hansard* at this point. I think honourable senators will find that motion interesting. It is too long for me to impose a word-by-word reading of it on honourable senators at this time. If honourable senators agree, I would ask that that be done.

**The Hon. the Acting Speaker:** Is it agreed, honourable senators?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.