

## **Industry and Tourist Trade**

Although most of the colonies possess plants for processing their primary products, they have to import almost all the manufactured products they require. Industrialization on a small scale has taken place in Jamaica, Trinidad and British Guiana, and measures are being taken to increase its scope.

The tourist trade plays an important part in the economy of the island colonies, especially the Bahamas, Jamaica, and Barbados, whose favourable climatic conditions attract thousands of visitors each year. Many airlines, including Trans-Canada Air Lines, contribute their share to the development of this trade, although the bulk of the traffic continues to be carried by the various steamship companies, including the Canadian National Steamship Lines, which serve the region.

## **Political Evolution**

The British Caribbean colonies have a lengthy political history, and their legislative assemblies have long maintained the parliamentary tradition of Westminster. Some of these institutions date back a century or more, and Barbados has had representative institutions since the 17th century.

Before the Second World War many statesmen, both in the United Kingdom and in the colonies, believed that the political evolution of the colonies was too slow, and asked for wider constitutional reforms. Slavery had been abolished as long ago as 1838, when the Emancipation Act was enforced; but electoral franchise had been granted only to a minority. Moreover, legislative assemblies were in practice reduced to the role of critics and exerted little real influence on the conduct of public affairs, power being wielded by the governor and his executive council. Protests against the political conditions reached their peak during the years immediately preceding the Second World War. The colonies at this time still felt the effect of the depression of the thirties; the standard of living was too low and wages were inadequate. These factors generated political discontent, which in turn gave rise to a series of strikes, demonstrations, and riots.

## **The Royal Commission**

To meet this emergency and to deal with the various requests of the Colonies for political and social betterment, the United Kingdom, in July 1938, appointed a royal commission to investigate and report on local social and economic conditions of the Colonies.

In December 1939, the Commission submitted a report recommending action to improve social services and economic conditions generally. With regard to constitutional reform, the Commission recommended that representatives elected by the people be admitted to the executive councils, and that a universal franchise be adopted either immediately or gradually. While stating that political union was not in itself a solution for the Colonies, the report indicated that it was nevertheless an ultimate goal. As an experiment, the Commission proposed the federation of the Leeward and Windward Islands, in order to find out the advantages of such a union.

## **Carrying Out Its Recommendations**

In order to carry out the recommendations of the Royal Commission, the Government of the United Kingdom set up, in September 1940, an organization for the development and welfare of the British West Indies, under the direction of a controller responsible for preparing and submitting plans to extend social services. The United Kingdom Parliament, under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act—1940, also voted the credits required to carry out a comprehensive programme of technical and financial aid to the Colonies. (Later, in 1945 and 1949, Parliament voted supplementary estimates to cover increased requirements.) While all the