

various individuals within the Commonwealth Caribbean in the idea of some form of constitutional relationship with Canada. Nothing, however, has developed to the stage of a formal request for association, although a petition suggesting that association with Canada be explored went to the British government from the Turks and Caicos Islands in the winter of 1974.

As is well known, last winter much interest was attracted to the bill sponsored by the hon. member for Waterloo-Cambridge (Mr. Saltsman), in which he called attention to a proposed association between Canada and the Turks and Caicos Islands. Certainly the proposal was not without its attractions and, with a predictably effective assist from the Canadian winter, many of us were moved to ponder favourably the prospect of a salubrious winter climate within the boundaries of Canada. Why not, it was even suggested, establish a winter capital in this tropical paradise?

**Mr. Johnston:** We should move it to Victoria.

**Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi):** You do not need another Pacific island there. Some unkind newspapermen were moved to suggest that any form of constitutional association was bound to demand the attention of parliamentary committees, which would most certainly require the attendance of members of this House to assess the climate of opinion within the territory itself. I have not heard any of them suggest they would want to accompany that committee.

However, like so many wonderful illusions, the prospect of this happy association could not withstand the hard light of critical analysis. In a statement tabled in April, 1974, by the then Secretary of State for External Affairs, the reasons for the Canadian government's position on the subject of a possible association between the Turks and Caicos and Canada were set out, and they are reasons which can be projected to include other countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean.

As hon. members may recall, it was pointed out that any association of this nature would inevitably produce a variety of complications. It was emphasized that the Canadian government attached high priority to ameliorating the disparity of wealth between the rich countries and poorer ones. However, the absorption of one small country into Canada, which in any event might be represented as an act of neo-colonialism, would not be in keeping with the pursuit of this objective. It was concluded, therefore, that there was no evidence that the association would be of greater mutual benefit than the already existing friendly relations between the Turks and Caicos and Canada; that Canada should not seek to alter its present boundaries; and that, in view of the foregoing, the Canadian government did not intend to pursue the question of a constitutional association with the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Among the problems created by the establishment of a constitutional association between Canada and the Turks and Caicos, or any other Commonwealth Caribbean state, would be the likelihood of pressures developing in other non-independent Commonwealth Caribbean countries for a similar arrangement. It is undoubtedly true that the small non-independent states of the Caribbean are con-

fronted with something of a dilemma as to their future status.

I am sure hon. members will agree that it is for the Commonwealth Caribbean countries to work out their own destiny, and Canada's role must be confined to that of a good friend. If Canada were to establish a constitutional relationship with one of these countries it would inevitably mean that we would become drawn into Caribbean affairs and Caribbean politics in a manner which could prove to be an embarrassment. Inevitably the perspectives and interests of Canada with regard to a number of issues are not always the same as those of the Caribbean countries. Yet, if small Caribbean states were to join Canada, the capacity of their populations to influence Canadian policy would be small.

This might then mean that an initial enthusiasm for association with Canada would eventually give place to a sense of frustration and consequent alienation. Additional problems might also arise if a large number of Canadians chose to live in the territory, thus swamping the local population. For example, the entire population of the Turks and Caicos Islands is very small, so it would require that only a minuscule proportion of northern Canadians take up residence in the islands to overwhelm the local population completely. I submit that such a development would be most unfortunate and would almost certainly provoke a bitter local reaction when it was realized that the entire composition of their population had been changed through the movement of Canadians from continental Canada to their islands.

It would also seriously weaken the prospects for greater Caribbean unity if Canada were to appear to entertain seriously the prospect of detaching some of these countries from their Commonwealth Caribbean associations and integrating them into the Canadian system. May I call it five o'clock, Mr. Speaker?

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#### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McCleave):** Order, please. It being five o'clock p.m. the time allotted for private members' business has now expired. Is the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton rising on a point of order?

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** I just wanted to say, Mr. Speaker, if I may, that it is nice to see you gracing the chair today.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** I am only sorry that you have had to witness yet another example of talking out an opposition motion, but perhaps those are the breaks of the game. May I ask the acting House leader for the government to confirm that we will in fact be dealing with Bill C-58 on Tuesday?

**Mr. Reid:** That is correct. May I take this opportunity of saying that it has been a vintage day in the House of Commons on a Friday afternoon, the first time in the history of the Canadian parliament when there have been