

In the West Indies, which includes the Bahamas, Jamaica, the Leeward and Windward Islands, Trinidad, British Guiana, and British Honduras, the population is roughly one and a half million; almost entirely negroes or mulattoes, the bulk of whom speak English as their only language.

In Fiji, out of a total population of some 108,000, only about 3,000 are whites, the rest are Fijians or Tongans, conquerors in the old savage days from the neighbouring Tongan Islands.

And in all these colonies there are of course numerous half-castes.

Now, whether rightly or wrongly, we have annexed all these places and have administered them, except Fiji, for periods varying from seventy to over two hundred years, we have introduced our ways of government, our justice, and to some extent our civilization, and, as regards the negro population of the West Indies, our language and religion: we have overthrown the old native government, where such existed, and broken in on many of the old customs; we have governed them of late years at least, on the whole, wisely and well, but we have rendered them unfit to govern themselves on the old lines, if they ever had any; and we have not been able, we can hardly be said to have tried, to render them fit to govern themselves in the newer ways; if, therefore, we gave them up now, we should leave them a prey to social disorder and misrule among themselves, or easy victims to the next comer. If that comer was another civilized nation, France or Germany for instance, they might not suffer by the change in the long run, but they assuredly would for a time, and, when things settled once more, they would find themselves at least no better off than under our rule, therefore, and for their own good, we are, I conceive, morally bound to hold them as part of the Empire.

But besides the native population, we must not forget our own countrymen—planters, merchants, investors, and others, who have spent many of the best years of their lives in opening out estates, or building up businesses, or have invested large sums of money in one or another of these colonies. Lands have been bought and houses built, and numerous works carried out by these our fellow-subjects, under Crown grants, or with direct Crown sanction and encouragement, given expressly to assist the development of the colony, and it would be a distinct breach of faith and a cruel desertion on our part were we to leave this energetic—if small minority, which is so indispensable to the commercial prosperity of