

*West Indies*

topic of discussion every time one encountered a student who came from that beautiful part of the world. They were living in exciting days; there was great promise there, and it has always been a matter of regret to me, as it has I am sure to other members of this chamber, that this dream was so rapidly destroyed shortly after it had been realized. In the event, it stands as an example to all democracies in the British tradition not to refer to referenda in attempts to stabilize situations. The federation split up and was destroyed.

There are still some parts left over, in a sense, and the hon. member for Hillsborough was referring to some of them. It is a temptation to a country such as ours to look south occasionally. I was here as a member of parliament in an earlier parliament when the sugar beet producers of Ontario and Alberta were seriously pressed and when they made repeated applications to the Liberal government of the day for a national sugar policy. Had such a policy been developed it would have done more for the Caribbean than anything we could have done in the way of aid or special programs or gifts. In addition, in recent years it could have saved us a considerable amount of currency when sugar prices went wild. But we had no national sugar policy and no long term agreements in effect. That was the time, too, when we might have acted with vigour and initiative to aid the islands of the Caribbean.

I believe the hon. member for Lafontaine-Rosemount (Mr. Lachance) was a bit hard on the proposal and on the remarks of the hon. member for Hillsborough. I do not really see any hint of annexation. There have been many periods in the development of this country and of the Commonwealth, formerly the British Empire, when areas of the world have asked to be attached to Canada or to the Empire because of advantages inherent in the form of government. Annexation is too harsh a word.

I have word of caution, however, to direct to the hon. member from Prince Edward Island. The proposal will be hard to sell in the west, particularly in British Columbia. I am sure a good many of my voters will see it as a plan to lure people from British Columbia to Toronto. One can imagine all manner of fly-by-night travel agencies being formed, charging a very low rate for trips to the Turks and Caicos Islands, and going bankrupt just when the 747 lands at the airport outside Toronto. Would-be tourists would then find themselves obliged to spend their hard-earned money in Toronto and substitute a holiday there for what they had planned.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** A holiday?

**Mr. Johnston:** The alternative which I suggest to the hon. member for Hillsborough is that he find a comparable group of islands in the South Pacific. I am sure members from British Columbia will insist on a trade-off which will make it possible for them and their constituents on the Pacific coast to enjoy the summer sunshine, too, in the middle of winter. I do not know where he would find these islands as he looks south. I do not think Alcatraz would be available, and Easter Island is a little remote. It might be possible to work out some arrangement with the marvelously beautiful island of Fiji, but that would certainly be harder than developing an understanding with the Turks and Caicos islands. It is late, now, to ask for the return of

[Mr. Johnston.]

San Juan, though if the hon. member could arrange that with our neighbour to the south I am sure we in British Columbia would all rejoice.

I hear someone mention Vancouver Island. Well, we are hoping that the federal government will eventually do something about transportation links to the mainland of British Columbia. There are dreams of a bridge. The time may come when the government in Ottawa—I do not think it will be a Liberal government—will appreciate the value of the islands off the Pacific coast of the nation. So, although I support the interesting proposal put forward this afternoon, I must warn the hon. member for Hillsborough of the difficulties we shall face in British Columbia, and suggest to him that a good many people might favour the transference of the islands which are being built either in the Arctic or in the northern seas to a latitude which would provide the same number of hours of sunshine as he envisages. Some such arrangement might satisfy those of us who live on the Pacific side of this great nation.

**Mr. Maurice A. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi):** Before beginning what I have to say on the interesting motion before us, Mr. Speaker, I might tell the hon. member who has just finished speaking that should it prove impossible to transport one of those northern islands to the Pacific we might be able to transport him to one of those northern islands.

● (1650)

In his motion the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie) touches upon a subject which has been of long standing interest to many Canadians and, I think I may safely say, especially to the residents of the Atlantic provinces. The trading links between Canada and the countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean are much older than Confederation itself and represent one of the earliest manifestations of Canadian commercial enterprise. Within the last century this relationship has developed and expanded to include substantial Canadian investment and, during the last 15 years, a high volume of Canadian development assistance. In fact, taken as a unit, the Commonwealth Caribbean has received the highest per capita level of Canadian aid of any region in the world.

There is also an intimacy of association based on the existence of many shared traditions, including the heritage of the British legal and parliamentary systems. Many Caribbean leaders have been educated in Canada, as the hon. member has said, and some are veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces. The long-standing friendship between the Commonwealth Caribbean and Canada has most recently been re-emphasized by the visit of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) to Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, and Guyana, before his attendance at the Commonwealth heads of government meeting in Jamaica.

Given the multiplicity of the ties between Canada and the Commonwealth Caribbean, it is not surprising that the possibility of some form of constitutional linkage has from time to time been suggested as a possible evolution of this relationship. About the time of the first world war, serious consideration was given to the concept of Canada's assuming Britain's responsibilities in several of the dependencies in what is now called the Commonwealth Caribbean. More recently there have been expressions of interest by