

Prime Ministers' meetings later in 1964, and again last year when there were some exchanges on this subject between the Prime Minister and Dr. Williams and Mr. Sangster. There was also a number of informal occasions when it was discussed among officials. We had an interdepartmental group working on this from the latter part of 1964.

When the Prime Minister went to Trinidad and Jamaica last November and December the proceedings really got under way. We had a meeting with the West Indians at the official level in January of this year, and we tried to work up an agenda. Five departments were represented at that meeting, namely, External Affairs, Finance, Trade and Commerce, Citizenship and Immigration, and for the purposes of these statistics we will regard the External Aid Office as a separate department.

We then came up with an agreed set of recommendations for an agenda. Then the West Indian leaders met a little over a month ago in Barbados in order to have a preliminary canter at it among themselves, and to attempt to arrive at a common point of view. This they did very well, I think, and believe that all these preliminary preparations had a good deal to do with the successful outcome of the conference.

The proceedings are quite well summed up in the final communiqué. I say this not because I was a member of the drafting committee, but because I think it does sum up the main points of the conference. It does not emphasize very much what I consider to be an important circumstance, and a circumstance to which the Prime Minister drew attention in his remarks when he opened the conference, namely, that this was a particularly appropriate time for a meeting of this description. Since 1962 there has been a very substantial change in the constitutional situation of the territories of the West Indies. Beginning in July and August of 1962 when Jamaica and Trinidad obtained independence there have been successive constitutional changes, and they are not complete yet. At the end of May of this year Guyana became independent.

There has been a series of constitutional discussions in London in recent months, some of them with the Windwards and Leewards. There were three such conferences; one for Antigua, one for four other islands, and the other one for St. Kitts. Then, just at the end of June—finishing on June 30—immediately before the conference, there was an independence conference for Barbados. Barbados will become independent at the end of November of this year. For six of the Windwards and Leewards, omitting Montserrat, there will be a new constitutional status attained next year, but the timing depends upon the British legislative process. They will then acquire what is described as associate status, which is pretty close to independence. They acquire complete financial control which is something that at the present time they do not have, but Britain will retain responsibility for the conduct of their external affairs and for their defence.

Senator RATTENBURY: These are for the islands other than the larger ones?

Mr. CAMPBELL: These will be Antigua, St. Lucia, St. Kitts, St. Vincent, Grenada and Dominica—that is, the Windwards and Leewards other than Montserrat, which was not interested in these propositions.

Although these islands and Barbados are still in a transitional period, at least we have now reached the point where their future status, or, at least, their status for a very long time, is clear, and it is accordingly possible to discuss our future relationships with them in real, rather than abstract and theoretical, terms. I think this put the whole conference on a much firmer basis than would have been possible had it taken place last year, even after the Guyanese independence conference which was held last November. So there was a sound constitutional background for these discussions.

It was also by way of being an interesting coincidence that the proceedings opened on July 6. The last such conference had signed a document on July 6,