

West Indies

United States, over the various territories they had under their jurisdiction is dwindling away.

There is also the question of the possible reaction of the people of the Commonwealth Caribbean in that case. Mr. Speaker, in the last thirteen years, six countries in that area have become independent: the Bahamas, Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. As a matter of fact, those countries have come to play a very active part within the world community, were it only through their action in the United Nations and their collective action as the West Indies group, and they have definitely managed to draw the world's attention to their needs and their activities. They have developed their own methods and institutions, and work together towards a greater cooperation. I believe that the government of Canada has understood the aspirations of the West Indian people and that, by its development assistance program and by other means, it has tried to meet the objectives they have set for themselves.

While respecting absolutely the right of the West Indian people to determine their own political and economic institutions, Canada has strongly supported the efforts for cooperation in the West Indies. Certain aspects of our modern assistance program stem from our desire to meet the needs expressed by the now-defunct West Indies Federation, a regional unification project which failed in 1962. Since then, even though bilateral assistance has not been neglected, we have always been ready to enhance cooperation at a regional level when the West Indian countries deemed it beneficial.

Canada takes part in the activities of the Caribbean Development Bank in order to promote regional projects and it expects to reaffirm its collaboration with CARICOM, to help them to establish firmer regional institutions.

What would happen if Canada accepted within the Confederation the islands in this area which have not yet gained their independence? What would be the effect of such a union on the other West Indian Islands? These are so many questions which must be asked before the motion submitted by the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie) is resolved in the affirmative.

At first, I let the hon. members make speeches about the neo-colonialism feeling that we would certainly create within the various people of the world. Also, as Canadians, we would certainly have to ask ourselves very serious questions about our hidden or under underlying motives. On the other hand, we must continue to give assistance to the West Indian countries who need it the most. Indeed, I believe that is surely the best way to interfere within an area that is trying to set up its own institutions. I think that the other islands of the Caribbeans would not like us to impose our authority and political institutions upon two small islands such as the Turks and Caicos. Those islands would receive considerable sums of money to try and improve their standard of living and ensure development. Hotels would be built and all sorts of touristic activities would be developed, so that they would contrast with the neighbouring islands, which would disapprove of some 6,000 inhabitants of the Turks and Caicos living according to North American standards, while they themselves would still be at a lower level.

[Mr. Lachance.]

Tourism is very important, but I do not think that our minds, as Canadians, should be dominated by the pleasures we could indulge in, when bathing on the beaches of the Turks and Caicos. For, in summertime, we can do exactly the same on the fine beaches of Prince Edward Island, which are a real marvel and where I had the pleasure to go.

No, I do not think that, as true Canadians, we should take such superficial criteria as a basis to decide whether the Turks and Caicos are interesting territories for Canada to annex. I use a very strong word, I speak of the pure and simple annexation of a territory, which could not impose its conditions of acceptance within the Canadian confederation.

Tourism, as it is presently developed in the Caribbeans, had a considerable bearing on the economic development of those territories. I fear that a great part of the damages currently done in the Caribbeans are the result of tourism and of the almost wild development we have been witnessing in some islands. Let us take for example the case of Puerto Rico, where the central government has shamelessly developed tourism; we now can see on the local population the disastrous effects of that almost wild development which raised the standard of living of certain sectors of the population, which improved the island's economy, but left the people in a state of poverty that is still less bearable.

For all these considerations, I believe the motion moved by the hon. member for Hillsborough is unacceptable as it is. We should rather keep on extending as much credit as possible, through international development assistance, not only to the Commonwealth islands but to all Caribbean islands.

As a matter of fact, the aid extended by Canada during the last five years exceeded our 1962 commitments to the federation, to which I shall refer in a moment, because it now totals \$200 million.

I believe that is the efficient way of helping local populations achieve their objectives. It lets them use the money wisely, according to their own development concepts, and does not impose upon them a development planning concept we are accustomed to but which does not necessarily fit their needs.

There is another way in which we can help local peoples develop, that is trade as such, which does not necessarily use the international development assistance channels. Our cooperation with the Caribbeans is no longer a matter of direct help only, because important trade ties were developed by Canadian industries. I know of many instances where Canadian companies, in cooperation with Caribbean businessmen, launched joint ventures that brought to the islands a transfer of knowledge and, above all, currency. And as everyone knows, currency is an important item in a country's development, because without it trade becomes much more difficult. Lack of currency prevents certain countries such as Bangladesh and other countries which are in the same serious needs, to build a firm basis for development.

So, our trade with some Caribbean islands has allowed some currency transfers which helped to improve the economy of those islands. I believe that is a very success-