

(4) Establishment of Canadian banks and financial institutions.

(5) Encouragement of Canadian investment in tourist facilities and industry.

As it is stated in that motion:

(3) As Canadian citizens, the Islands would acquire a completely different relationship with other members of the Commonwealth and the world. They would have the benefit of the Canadian diplomatic services which are well established in the neighbouring countries and they would cease to be unwanted British Colonials and a burden on the British taxpayer.

The motion further states:

These Islands would naturally attract the Canadian winter vacationist and the retirement couples who wish to invest their savings, earned elsewhere, in seasonal homes.

It further states:

The educational system would become Canadian and it should then be far easier to obtain places in Canadian universities and trade and professional institutions.

I think that situation continues today. The motion goes on to state:

Employment opportunities and the spectrum of jobs would increase far beyond those of these small Islands with their small population.

Education in the high schools on those islands today, I understand, goes to grade 11.

They would like to have the Governor General of Canada as the Governor of the Turks and Caicos Islands.

When those representatives came to Ottawa, they said that they wanted to accept the Canadian dollar as their currency. In the meantime, since they were using their native currency, they had hoped the Royal Canadian Mint would produce their currency.

So they are affable people. They are friendly and would like to work with us. I think the possibility that they might, step by step, become part of this nation is very exciting.

One can always raise impediments, objections and problems, but my view of life is that the impediments, the objections and the problems, no matter what they may be, do not constitute sufficient reason to say it cannot be done. Whatever the arguments, objections or problems that may be raised, those can be dealt with and resolved. I believe we can achieve a much higher and more important objective if we overcome those impediments, objections and problems.

This, I think, is a rare opportunity for Canada. The population of the Islands is approximately 8,000 people. In relation to Canada, the cost would not be great. They are still part of the Commonwealth. They are still under the United Kingdom as far as administration is concerned. Their annual grant from the United Kingdom, I am informed, is some \$2 million. Canada's annual budget is approximately \$122 billion, so that \$2 million is not a large sum of money, relatively speaking.

[Senator Argue.]

In recent years there have been additional economic grants from the United Kingdom, one in the amount of \$6 million, to help with infrastructure and to help improve the islands' airport facilities.

When one considers that Canadians spend some \$2 billion annually on tourist travel outside of Canada, it is easy to see that Canadians would bring large sums of money to the Turks and Caicos Islands. This would offer all Canadians an opportunity, if this develops, to enjoy a tropical climate that is part of Canada. We would give those people an opportunity to produce in an economic and constructive way, and the opportunity to enjoy a standard of living a great deal higher than that which they now have.

Others have taken initiatives in this field from time to time. Dan McKenzie, a Conservative Member of Parliament from Manitoba, has shown a great deal of interest in this subject recently. I believe he has recently been to the Turks and Caicos Islands. I have talked with Mr. McKenzie, and he has informed me—and he can speak for himself, of course—that he has a proposal in this regard before the Conservative caucus and before the Prime Minister. He told me that he hoped that a study of perhaps some three months' duration might be made by a caucus committee. He has told me that he hopes the report will be favourable.

I hope, as does Mr. McKenzie and others, that the study that is likely to be made brings forward a positive conclusion and positive recommendations.

● (1550)

I think that we can reach an agreement with the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands. I would think that we can arrive, step by step and by mutual agreement, at an economic and political union that would result, at some point in the future, in the Turks and Caicos Islands and the islanders becoming an integral part of Canada. I see it not only as an economic opportunity for all concerned, but also as a social opportunity in the sense that we would be associating with new people and could work out approaches to our problems that would help both countries.

It has been said in the past that there are dangers, as far as foreign policy is concerned, for Canada to have a presence in that part of the world. I suppose that it would carry with it certain problems and challenges, but it would seem to me that Canada—which has an international view and a record that recommends itself in the international economic field and in the international diplomatic and political field and commends itself and appeals to many countries, many governments and many peoples—would be a stabilizing influence in the international field by its presence in the Caribbean. We would have a presence and a responsibility much further south than our current nation. It seems to me that as you go south in this hemisphere, political problems are more difficult, but perhaps here would be a chance for Canada to have a presence in the Caribbean which would exercise a stabilizing influence in a much larger area, a positive influence for goodwill, good human relations, and the establishment of a stronger peace initiative and accomplishment.