

*Trade with Caribbean Federation*

some time before they will be able to do so, but because of the heavy nature of Great Britain's commitments across the world in bringing dependencies to the point where they are ready for independence; because England has been reluctant, and rightly so, to cast off many of these heavy responsibilities before the areas concerned are ready for stable independence, and because England has been unable to devote as much time and money to the development of areas such as the eastern Caribbean as would perhaps be necessary, I would reiterate what I had occasion to say in England. I said that if we in Canada are to believe at all in a future role for the British commonwealth, and in our participation in the commonwealth, if we see this commonwealth as being an organization which, with the growth of African and Asian countries toward prosperity, can be a major force economically and politically in the world, then there can be no better way for us to participate in the development of the commonwealth than by being willing to take on some of the responsibilities for the development of the West Indies area, an area with which we have had long and close relations.

The port of Halifax has long been the central point for shipments to and from the West Indies. I am told by the secretary of the port of Halifax commission, Ray Marsh, whom I see in the gallery at the moment and who has always shown great interest in the West Indies area, that the port of Halifax probably handles more tonnage to the West Indies in general than any other port in Canada, and possibly more than any other port in North America.

We have seen a lot of people coming back and forth between those islands and Halifax over the years. There is an awareness in the maritime provinces, that is not common across Canada, of the importance of the West Indies area. If the West Indian islands were not developed properly under the guidance of other portions of the British commonwealth, they could well end up in communist hands, because geographically they are very near to Cuba, and if that happened it would not be any great help to the security of North America.

We have a very vital interest in the West Indian area. These islands have had a British connection. Their citizens want to remain within the commonwealth, and surely it is Canada which can show the lead and help Britain in keeping them inside the common-

wealth as they develop to independence. I am not an economist, but I have suggested upon another occasion that there might be considerable merit in having at least a portion of the area proposed, or perhaps the entire eastern Caribbean federation, brought into the area of the Canadian dollar and have them eventually leave the sterling block. At present we send many tourists south in the wintertime to escape the rigours of our climate, and whether they go to Florida or the West Indies this constitutes a drain on our international exchange payments. If the West Indies were operating on Canadian dollars this would be a great advantage to us as regards that drain.

We in the Halifax and Nova Scotia would like to see the development of direct flights by T.C.A. to improve communications between the maritime area and Bermuda, the Bahamas and the southern area of the British West Indies. I hope T.C.A. will be able to do this in the not too distant future.

**Mr. Caouette:** Air Canada.

**Mr. Regan:** Excuse me, Air Canada; and I may say I think this is a much more suitable name since the air line operates more than trans-Canada now. But returning to the subject, while an air line connection in itself does not do too much for developing trade, nevertheless contacts between businessmen and citizens in general normally result in an increase in trade. In the West Indies area there is a great friendship for Canada. The island of St. Kitts, in particular, has many citizens who for a long time have wished for very close ties with Canada. The same is true of Dominica, the Virgin islands and other areas.

While this motion cannot be fully discussed in the short time left today, nevertheless I hope the government will recognize that the hon. member for Queens (Mr. Macquarrie) has done a service in bringing this matter to the attention of the house. I hope it will be a signal for increased attention to the development of the West Indies area as regards relations, economical and cultural, between that area and Canada in the years ahead. I have some more remarks I would like to make on this subject but it appears to me, Mr. Speaker, that the hour of six o'clock has arrived and I shall have to wait until another occasion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Batten):** The hour for the consideration of private members' business has expired.

At six o'clock the house adjourned, without question put, pursuant to standing order.