

British Colonies took advantage of these credits, the British Caribbean Colonies had a large share of them, and plans for development have already been approved for Jamaica (including Turks and Caicos Islands), Barbados, St. Vincent, British Guiana, Grenada and other colonies.

The British Government did not limit its action to the economic field. Various measures granting the British Caribbean Colonies a greater degree of self-government have also been put into effect since the end of the Second World War. These measures have varied according to the needs and aspirations of the colony concerned. Jamaica and Trinidad now have universal franchise, while in most of the other colonies the franchise has been enlarged. There has also been a reduction in the number of "official" appointments to the legislative assemblies, and in Jamaica and Barbados members of the assembly are now elected by the people. In certain colonies, members elected by the people are now admitted to the executive council. This has for some time been the practice in Jamaica and Barbados, and was extended this year to the colony of Trinidad and Tobago. Jamaica and Trinidad now have new constitutions, both much advanced in the direction of self-government; Barbados also has a modified form of responsible government.

The Montego Bay Conference

Beginning in 1945, the United Kingdom gave the various colonial legislatures an opportunity to discuss the plan of political union brought up by the Royal Commission, and to express their views. As a result of these discussions, the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Creech Jones, convened a meeting of the representatives of all the Colonies at Montego Bay (Jamaica), on September 11, 1947, for the purpose of discussing officially the proposed plan for federation.

The conference, presided over by Mr. Creech-Jones, lasted until September 19. The Bahamas were the only colony not represented. Most of the delegates were in favour of the broad lines of the federal scheme, but claimed more extensive powers for each of the local governments prior to the establishment of a federal government. The conference also proposed the establishment of several committees to study the problems involved in the proposed union, in particular the unification of customs tariffs and of public utilities and shipping services, the establishment of one currency for the whole region and the setting up of a federal constitution.

Standing Closer Association Committee

The most important of all these Committees was the Standing Closer Association Committee, whose members were selected by the legislature of each of the Colonies and whose chairman and secretary were appointed by the Colonial Secretary. This Committee, the first to be organized, held meetings at Barbados in November 1948, at Trinidad in March 1949, again at Barbados in July 1949, and finally at Jamaica, in October 1949. Sir Hubert Rance, present governor of Trinidad and Tobago, was chairman. On March 10, 1950, the Committee published its recommendations in a lengthy report.

The Rance Report

The report first notes that the establishment of the Standing Closer Association Committee was the result of a resolution adopted by the Conference held in Montego Bay, and then outlines the proposed federal structure. After stating that financial stability is essential to achieve real political independence, the Committee concludes that the economic stability and, as a result, the political independence of the British Caribbean Colonies can only be achieved through federation. For even if the financial situation of the region is now relatively good, a closer analysis shows that the economy of the Caribbean Colonies remains highly vulnerable. Some colonies still depend