

ZANZIBAR

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—[Mr. Barber.]

9.52 p.m.

Mrs. Eirene White (Flint, East): It is some time since the affairs of Zanzibar have been discussed in this House, and I am, therefore, happy to have the opportunity once more to raise certain matters which concern that small but very delightful island.

I had the great pleasure of visiting Zanzibar for the first time a few months ago, and I should like to pay a tribute to the very great kindness and hospitality that I received on that occasion. I was, in fact, a member of an official delegation to Kenya, and my visit to Zanzibar was purely unofficial and private, but, although it was a brief one, I had an opportunity of discussing at first hand a number of matters which I should like to bring to the attention of the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies.

When we last discussed Zanzibar in this House, when the present Secretary of State for War occupied the position of Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, our main concern was with political matters, in particular with the constitution and the proposal to institute elections on a common roll basis. Before I conclude my observations tonight, I should like to return to some of those political questions. Before I do so, however, there are other matters of interest on which I believe many of us would like to have the observations of the hon. Gentleman.

One of the interesting and rather technical points which were raised when I was there is a matter of interest to the Muslim population of Zanzibar and also, I suggest, to the Muslim population of some of the coastal areas of East Africa. In these areas there is a system of Muslim courts, and it was put to me that while the courts themselves function satisfactorily there is a particular grievance that cases which are taken to appeal from these courts go to the High Court of East Africa, where the judgment is given by a learned judge but one who is not necessarily learned at all in the Muslim law and who has no religious or cultural

background which would enable him to appreciate some of the niceties of the cases which are brought before him.

I can see that there is some substance in this point. It was put to me very strongly in Zanzibar that in these matters of Muslim law they felt that there should be an appeal to a court the members of which were themselves versed in the Muslim traditions. It would not apply to other cases which would go through the normal channels. This is obviously a matter of considerable legal importance, and I would hesitate to pass an opinion upon it except to say that, on the face of it, there seems to be some reasonable case.

I cannot expect the Under-Secretary of State to give a complete answer on this matter tonight, but I would ask him, even if he is not able to give me that answer now, to take advice on the matter to see whether anything could be done to meet the very strongly felt wishes of some of Her Majesty's Muslim subjects.

One method for dealing with the matter suggested to me was that as the Sultan is now being provided with a Privy Council there might be some committee of that Privy Council analogous to the Judicial Committee of Her Majesty's Privy Council here. It was suggested that that might be a suitable body in Zanzibar to hear appeals on points of Muslim law from the Kadis' courts. I very much hope this matter will be given consideration. It seems one of substance. While one does not wish to encourage a narrow religious basis for political or social life, I should have thought that there was something to be said for trying to meet by a reasonable compromise difficulties of this sort on these matters of law.

Among the many problems which face a very small community like that of Zanzibar is that of the very great expense of administering a modern society, and it was put to me with great emphasis that the cost is high of the pay of the expatriate officers, as they are called, the European officers who hold important administrative and technical jobs in the island. It was suggested to me that Zanzibar suffers from several disadvantages because it is small as compared with other parts of the Colonial Territories.

I was told that the people who go there as expatriate officers, if they are any good at all, stay there only a very short time. I was told, "If a man is any good he comes as a bird of passage and leaves as soon as he can obtain promotion." The only men who stay for any length of time normally are those who are not very competent. As an example of the difficulties under which they labour, I was told that in the last fifteen years there had been no fewer than seven directors of education. That number takes no account of officers acting in addition to the substantive holders of the office. How can we possibly expect continuity of policy when there are so many changes in the expatriate staff?

The expense of having expatriate officers is very considerable. In addition to the basic salary, they have to be paid what is called an inducement allowance. There are air passages for themselves, their wives, and up to two children each, I think it is. There is an education allowance for the children. These officers also receive fairly expensive housing accommodation at what seems to me a more or less nominal rent. When one adds up all those items and adds them to the basic salaries one finds that they are a considerable burden on the resources of the island.

One cannot help having very great sympathy with the local population who suggest that much more should be done towards educating local Zanzibari to take some of these posts, because, as they say, "We should thus obtain some continuity of policy, and avoid many of these additional expenses." With which sentiment I have the greatest sympathy. They admit, of course, that for a long time certain people with very high qualifications will be needed, but there seem to be administrative jobs to do which we ought to be able to find competent persons locally.

One must, however, recognise that this requires far better provision for education than is now generally available. On this, in Zanzibar, as in most other parts of Africa, I found the most intense feeling. I was told that of an estimated number of children of school age of 56,000 only about 14,800 attend school, that is to say, roughly 27 per cent. of the children of school age. Of these children

only about 700 have the benefit of secondary education.

It being Ten o'clock, the Motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, without Question put.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—[Mr. Hughes-Young.]

Mrs. White: That is a very small proportion of the children who should be receiving education, and one cannot build the kind of structure in local or national government administration which is needed if one has this very inadequate foundation. It was suggested that not only is more needed in the training of teachers but also that reorganisation is required at the primary stage. Zanzibar is the only country I know where the primary course extends over as long as nine years. In most parts of East Africa the primary and middle course extends certainly no more than eight years. Those in Zanzibar who are interested in education feel that it is time to tighten up their primary course to see that their children advance a little more rapidly.

Another suggestion made was that further consideration should be given to priorities in education and in the expenditure of their very limited resources. It was explained, for example, that a relatively large sum has been spent recently on sending students to the Mombasa Institute of Muslim Education, which is an institute for technical education.

I was told that in order to educate 43 students to only a very moderate level of technical competence they had to spend £21,000, and they pointed out that for this sum they could have educated 30 students at university level in this country or as many as 100 at the University of Khartoum. They feel that the amount which they are asked to spend on sending students to Mombasa is out of proportion to the results achieved, not only because the absolute expenditure is excessive but because when the students return they find it impossible to obtain the kind of work for which they have been trained in Mombasa and either go back to the mainland to look for jobs there or hang around in Zanzibar finding great difficulty in getting any suitable appointment.

It was also suggested to me that when a country has very slight resources it is

[MRS. WHITE.]
a luxury which it cannot easily afford to send a relatively large number of more senior people for short courses such as British Council courses which are, no doubt, very enjoyable to them, but on which, I gather, there is some local feeling that the money might, perhaps, be more wisely spent.

Another suggestion made to me was that as the majority of people in Zanzibar are Muslims with a Muslim tradition, it would be very interesting to learn whether anything has been done to provide an institute of higher Muslim education in the Commonwealth. I understand that it has been suggested to them from time to time by various representatives of Her Majesty's Government with whom they have discussed the matter that there are some proposals for such an institution somewhere in the Middle East. I do not know what those proposals are, but I think that the Government have been in contact, for example, with people in Aden.

At the moment, of course, if they do not send their students for higher education to the United Kingdom, they send them to Cairo or Khartoum, and it was suggested by some who are anxious to have a Commonwealth link that an institution of academic education with a Muslim trend was something which Her Majesty's Government ought to consider, if they are not already considering it. They told me that although they send some students to Makerere they feel that this is not as suitable for many of their young people as a Muslim institution. I put that point forward for consideration; I know there are arguments which can be advanced both for and against it. It would be interesting to know the views of Her Majesty's Government on this point.

A number of other matters were raised with me concerning health, housing, agriculture, economic development, and so on, on which we could spend a long time. Had the Navy occupied a little less time earlier this evening, as at one moment I thought was likely, we could have gone into greater detail. As we do not have so much time available, however, I do not wish to go into much detail on these matters except to say that it is quite clear that there is a great deal still to be done in Zanzibar in development in all these directions.

I turn now to a political matter which has a direct bearing on some of these problems of social and economic development—that is, the position of the unofficial members of the Executive Council, who, at the moment, have no ministerial status but who are associated with certain Departments. There are three of these gentlemen. It was suggested to me that their position was not an entirely happy one and I am inclined to sympathise with the arguments that were put forward.

It is possible to be a little too timid in this matter of political development. To have a member of an Executive Council who is said to be associated with a Department without having any real responsibility for it is not a satisfactory halfway house. He does not feel happy about it and very often the civil servants are not very happy about it, either. It is neither one thing nor the other.

It was put to me, for example, that the amount of influence over policy which any of these members have is entirely dependent upon their personal relationship with the permanent civil servants, that they do not have the sort of status which would give them real responsibility and that if for any reason permanent civil servants wished to embark on a certain policy, they were under no obligation to discuss it with the associate member.

I was told, for example, that the member who was meant to be concerned with the Department of Health awoke one morning to find that there had been a sharp increase in hospital charges. I can only state what I have been told; on my short visit I did not have an opportunity to investigate. The member in question, apparently, had not been consulted although the matter was, obviously, one of considerable popular interest. Other similar examples were suggested to me.

Now that the Constitution of Zanzibar is advancing in several directions, I would think that this is one direction which Her Majesty's Government might consider whether the rather anomalous position of these associate members could not be turned into proper ministerial jobs. I have just been considering another small territory, that of the Gambia. If the Gambia can have

Ministers, I should have thought that Zanzibar should have them, too.

As the Minister knows, Zanzibar is preparing for its first direct elections on a common roll basis, although with a restricted franchise which are due to take place in July. One would expect that there would be certain difficulties—there always are—in the initial stages of an experiment of this kind, but I should like to draw the Minister's attention to one difficulty which has arisen and which is peculiarly acute owing to the geographical position of Zanzibar.

When the conditions of the franchise and the Constitution were being discussed, it was decided that electors should be confined to those who were subjects of the Sultan and who had been resident in Zanzibar, I believe, for the preceding twelve months, but mere residence for twelve months was not sufficient: they had also to be Zanzibari. As the Minister knows, Zanzibar is not far from the mainland of East Africa and at certain times of the year in particular a large number of persons come over from the mainland. There is considerable coming and going.

I have been sent information, which I received only yesterday, so that I have not been able to give it in detail to the Minister, that there has been difficulty because it has been suggested that some of these persons who have come over from the mainland fairly recently, or who may have come over a considerable time ago but who are, nevertheless, not Zanzibari, have been registered or have attempted to get themselves registered as electors in the forthcoming election.

This is of some considerable political importance, because their general outlook might quite well be very different from that of the majority of those who are genuine Zanzibari. Therefore, I should be very glad if the Minister would give me some assurance that he will look very carefully at the precautions which are being taken to make certain that those on the electoral roll are entitled to be on the roll.

I have before me a very detailed letter which Sheikh Ali Muhsin al Barwhani sent to the Supervisor of Elections, Mr. Penney, on 2nd April, and I think a copy was also sent to the British Resident and the Chief Secretary, in which he made a

number of detailed complaints about what he believed were the shortcomings of the system. It appears that the superintendent of the elections admitted that some kind of observer system was desirable at the registrations, but, according to the information given to me, these observers, who were appointed and paid by the Government, were told simply to sit there and say nothing and take no notes. It does not seem to me that they are really very effective observers, and, while I do not expect an answer tonight, I would ask the Minister to assure me that he will look into this, because I hope very much that the forthcoming elections in Zanzibar will be a success and that they will be an example to the rest of East Africa.

I myself have urged in this House on previous occasions that a common roll system should be tried in Zanzibar, because I feel that it would be the best place, possibly, in East Africa in which such an experiment might succeed. I was very much encouraged when the Government accepted the common roll basis of the franchise, though there were a number of restrictions, and I hope very much that when the election comes in July we shall see that this experiment has been justified, because it would be extremely encouraging if, in Africa, where we have a mixed society, as we have in Zanzibar, people could show sufficient political maturity by voting not on a racial and communal basis, but according to the policies and ideas which they favour.

If Zanzibar can see itself free of racial prejudice, it will be setting a most valuable example to some of the other neighbouring territories, and I hope very much that the forthcoming elections there will be carried out in a vigorous manner and that the people will fully observe the intent and aims of the common roll which has been granted to them. It is with these hopes and aspirations that I bring before the House tonight these various matters of great concern to a small but extremely interesting and beautiful island.

10.14 p.m.

The Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. John Profumo): I am indeed grateful to the hon. Lady the Member for Flint, East (Mrs. White) for giving me advance notice of the matters that she has raised this evening. I am also grateful to her for giving me the

[MR. PROFUMO.] opportunity which this debate affords me of bringing up to date the statement made by my right hon. Friend the then Minister of State—because he was not Under-Secretary, but Minister of State, and is now Secretary of State for War—on 3rd February last year in reply to a similar debate.

As the hon. Lady recalled, at that time the situation in Zanzibar was still under the shadow of the refusal of the important Arab community, or at least a number of its leaders, to co-operate with the Sultan's Government in constitutional advance. I am glad to say that since then, as the hon. Lady herself knows from experience, things have taken a turn for the better.

This development of better relations happily coincided with the memorable visit to Zanzibar by Her Royal Highness the Princess Margaret during her tour last year in Mauritius and the East African territories, which symbolised the enduring relationship of friendship and harmony between this country and His Highness the Sultan and his people. When the House last discussed this matter Her Majesty's Government were experiencing difficulties in putting into practice proposals for a greater measure of self-government in the Protectorate. At that time the Elections Commissioner, Mr. Coutts, was engaged on his task of inquiring into the most suitable methods of choosing the unofficial members of the Legislative Council, and his Report was published on 3rd March last year.

As the hon. Lady knows, its principal recommendation was for the introduction of elections on a common roll, to which she has referred, for half of the representative members in the Legislative Council, and he proposed that when these six seats had been filled by election, the various racial communities should be asked to put forward suitable names for nomination by His Highness to the remaining six seats. Immediately after the publication of the Report the leaders of the Arab Association decided to end their boycott of the Legislative Council, and since that time they have co-operated with the Government.

It was, therefore, with support from all the communities that the Zanzibar Legislative Council approved the proposals for the introduction of the elections, subject to certain modifications by

the Sultan's Government, the most important of which were the restriction of the franchise to subjects of His Highness the Sultan and the decision that after six of the representative seats had been filled by election, the remaining six should be filled by nomination from among persons qualified to be candidates who had the support of not less than 100 registered electors.

It was felt that that method corresponded more closely with the non-racial idea incorporated in the inception of elections on a common roll, but at the same time made it possible to ensure, during this experimental period, that all main interests retained some representation on the representative side of the Legislative Council, whatever might be the outcome of the first elections. Once that agreement had been reached on policy, the Council's Decree of 1956, which had not of course been brought into operation pending a declaration of attitude on the part of the Arab community, came into force on 17th September last year.

Under that Decree constitutional changes were made whereby a Privy Council, to which the hon. Lady referred, was established to advise the Sultan on matters particular to himself as a constitutional ruler, and the Executive Council was reconstituted with the addition of three representative members who were associated with the work of particular departments of Government. The hon. Lady has suggested that this association has fallen short of expectations, and that the unofficial members would have preferred to have been given greater executive responsibility from the outset. I can assure her that it is the intention of the Sultan's Government to give those members increasing opportunity to acquaint themselves with the business of government, but I think that at the same time some period of apprenticeship is desirable in the not altogether easy matter of exercising a form of Ministerial responsibility. As a matter of fact, the particular matter to which the hon. Lady referred, the introduction of hospital charges, was, I understand, decided as a matter of policy before the new system was introduced.

I was sorry to hear of the complaints the hon. Lady has received about the procedure which has been followed for the registration of electors. The present position is that preliminary lists of those

applying to be registered have been compiled by registration officers, and those lists, containing the names, addresses and occupations of the applicants, have been posted in public places.

It is now open to those whose names do not appear on the list to claim to be registered, or for electors to object—this, I think, is the point—to the inclusion in the lists of persons whom they believe to be unqualified. They have a period of one month for making such objections. In one constituency alone, I understand, more than 300 notices of objection have already been lodged. It does seem to me that the difficulty to which the hon. Lady has referred may well be overcome by the alertness of the electorate itself.

On the other hand, the hon. Lady has raised a point regarding the action and attitude of the registration officers which clearly deserves study. I will most certainly make inquiries into it, and if she wishes, I will let her know the outcome of my inquiries.

Nomination day for candidates has been fixed for 1st July. The intention is that polling shall take place on 21st July, as was originally planned. Perhaps I should say in passing that in spite of what I have just said about registration and the point that the hon. Lady raised, all those concerned with this matter in Zanzibar are to be commended for the expedition and general smoothness with which they have introduced to an inexperienced electorate what is to them a novel feature of democratic life.

There is much that I could and would like to tell the House about Zanzibar, but in the short time that remains I had better concentrate on the points that the hon. Lady raised, particularly with regard to education. She contrasted the nine-year primary course in Zanzibar with the eight-year course on the mainland, and suggested that the educational system required scrutiny.

The reason for the longer course in Zanzibar is that the first year of education is taken up with instruction in the Koran in response to the sentiments of a Muslim community. The remaining eight years form a unified, primary course for all children undergoing education; whereas in the mainland territories—they are perhaps less fortunate in this—the first eight years of instruction are

divided into primary and intermediate courses, with a reduction in the numbers of children at school in the intermediate stage.

Thus, Zanzibar children who do not proceed to a secondary school will have had the advantage of continued schooling to the age of 15. That can be considered as generally satisfactory. When the efforts of the Education Department to improve the standard of teaching and expand secondary education have been successful, this eight-year course may be compressed into seven years, and those for whom places can be found in secondary schools and who are judged capable of benefiting from secondary education will begin that after the seventh year of schooling.

We must, of course, not forget that the Zanzibar child has the formidable task of studying three languages: English, to give him contact with the wider world; Arabic, mainly for religious reasons; and Swahili, which is the day-to-day language of the people.

As regards higher education, the cost of maintaining a student at Makerere was thought at one time to be disproportionate in the case of Zanzibar, but the basis on which Zanzibar contributes has been changed since 1956. The present cost is less than £500 per annum for a student, and may shortly be reduced still further.

The criticism of the cost of education at the Mombasa Institute of Muslim Education is perhaps a little more justified. Forty-two students from Zanzibar have so far completed training there but none of these has yet completed the additional two years' practical training necessary for employment other than as an apprentice with the Zanzibar Government. In view, however, of the expense and doubtful value of these courses to Zanzibar the number of students being sent annually has already been very much reduced. It does seem likely that the future of the Mombasa Institute, which is being taken over by the Kenya Government, will lie much more in association with the Arab secondary school in Mombasa.

With regard to the suggestion that too much money has been spent on sending people on expensive short courses, I can say that 51 students—perhaps these figures may help the hon. Lady—from Zanzibar are now being supported on

[MR. PROFUMO.]

academic or professional courses overseas for two years or more, one is doing a teacher-training course for one year and three are doing courses of less than one year. Comparative expenditure in 1957 on long and short courses will be approximately £34,000 and £2,200 respectively.

My right hon. Friend is not, however, fully satisfied that adequate provision is being made in Zanzibar and the surrounding area for Arabic and Muslim studies. He therefore arranged for a special mission, composed of Professor Serjeant, of the School of African Studies in the University of London—an eminent Arabic scholar—and Mr. Griffiths, of the Department of Education at the University of Oxford—who has had many years experience of teacher training in the Sudan—to carry out a three-month survey in the East African territories and Aden on the existing forms of instruction in Arabic and allied subjects, more especially Islamic law. The report of that mission is expected to be available shortly, and careful consideration will be given to the suggestions or recommendations which it may contain.

In the time which remains to me tonight, I should like to say a word about the matter referred to by the hon. Lady regarding the feeling in Zanzibar that too many posts were held by officers from overseas, the cost of whom was a heavy charge on the Zanzibar Budget. Recent increases in the number of posts held by officers from outside Zanzibar have been due mainly to the expansion of the education service and various technical services for which adequately qualified local candidates are not yet available. Since 1947, however, 48 Zanzibaris have been appointed to posts then held by overseas officers, or posts which would have been held by such officers, had they existed.

The present total establishment of officers from overseas to help in the development of a population of more than 250,000 is 166. There are more than 4,000 posts held by Zanzibaris. All vacancies are locally advertised if local candidates are likely to be forthcoming, and officers from overseas are appointed

only if no suitable local candidate comes forward.

The hon. Lady mentioned a criticism in Zanzibar that overseas officers do not stay long enough and referred particularly to the directors of education. I have had a look at that matter and find that of the recent directors one was released at the request of my right hon. Friend to assist with the development of the Mombasa Institute and one other, unfortunately, was obliged to retire through health and family reasons. None the less, I can assure the people of Zanzibar that the Secretary of State is fully aware of the desirability of continuity in service.

Finally, I should like to say a word about the Kadis' courts. I understand that appeals from the Sultan's court lie to the Court of Appeal for Eastern Africa, as the hon. Lady said. I think that litigants in Zanzibar can rely on Her Majesty's judges in the Court of Appeal to dispense sound justice. It may perhaps take a little longer for a judge who is not particularly versed in Muslim law, but although the time taken may be a little longer, his judgment on that account will most certainly not be less effective.

I hope that I have been able to answer the majority of the points raised by the hon. Lady. I assure her that I shall read with great interest the points which she made in her speech and that my right hon. Friend is just as interested in Zanzibar and some of these smaller territories as he is in those which perhaps get more limelight from time to time. I am glad that the hon. Lady has seen fit to give us the opportunity of discussing this matter. I think that some of the answers which I have given will go further than this House and, perhaps, to the ears of those who live in Zanzibar, who love it, and are devoted to the problems which they have to face and are trying to face them in a way which will improve the status of those who live in the territory.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-eight minutes past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, 3rd May, 1957

The House met at Eleven o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

BLYTH HARBOUR BILL [*Lords*]

Read the Third time and passed, with Amendments.

COMMONWEALTH AND EMPIRE RESOURCES

11.5 a.m.

MR. J. LANGFORD-HOLT (Shrewsbury): I beg to move,

That this House, believing that the development of the natural resources required for the economic and social progress of the Commonwealth and Empire depends largely on the provision of adequate capital and technical skill, and not being satisfied that the needs of the Commonwealth and Empire in these respects are being met adequately at present, presses Majesty's Government to consider as a matter of urgency, in consultation with other members of the Commonwealth, how best these aims can be achieved.

Until today, I have always regarded myself as being supremely unlucky in all forms of hazard and ballot. In twelve years of membership of this House, this is the first time that I have ever been lucky in such a ballot. It is stranger still to find that I am lucky two weeks running—with, indeed, the same number. I never before believed that lightning could possibly strike twice in the same place. On 17th May I hope, if the House tires of drawing attention to the activities or inactivities of the Press, to be able once again to raise the question of Commonwealth migration. This is part of the subject which I am raising today, but I will not deal with it to any extent now, in the forlorn hope that I shall get a further opportunity.

My subject today is not a new one. It has been raised in this House time and time again, and I hope that, if necessary, it will be raised many times more. I do not think that it loses anything by being repeated in very nearly the same form on each occasion. There

is nothing new in the subject, but it is a very vital one, and I think that it should and can bear to be repeated many times.

I have put down this Motion because circumstances have altered slightly since the matter was last discussed, when it appeared that probably the greatest barrier to any form of increased provision from this country was the immense defence burden we were bearing. That burden has been lightened, and I hope that my right hon. Friend will be able to point out that the lightening of that burden can, and will have some influence on the development of the natural resources of the British Commonwealth and Empire.

In the first lesson in economics that I ever had, I was told that to produce something, three things were needed—raw materials, capital and labour. I have put those not in order of importance, but in the order in which they arrive on the scene. My hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, West (Sir A. Braithwaite) will be dealing with some of the practical aspects of this question, of which he has experience second to none, and also with such matters as the activities of the Colonial Development Corporation.

The Government have pointed out many times before that it is this provision of capital for the development of the Commonwealth's natural resources that has been—and I take their word for it—the barrier to any further and greater participation by this country. It has been said by more than one Chancellor—and I have no doubt that it has been said at some time by my right hon. Friend himself—that the need for capital has been recognised on all sides, not only here but in the Empire. It has been recognised, I think, in British Guiana by Dr. Jagan himself.

The colonial Governments themselves recognise that it is important, when trying to attract capital, that the capital should be given a sense of security, and I think that we do well to pay a tribute to Dr. Nkrumah, who has set out to do just that thing. I hope that his wisdom may prove of immense value to the State of Ghana and, perhaps, be an example to others.

The United Kingdom Government have on numerous occasions admitted special responsibility in the provision of capital for the development of the natural

[MR. LANGFORD-HOLT.]
resources of the Commonwealth and Empire. At the Commonwealth Economic Conference, in November, 1952, the then Prime Minister made this statement:

"The United Kingdom is the traditional source of external capital for Commonwealth investment, and has special responsibilities towards the Colonies. The United Kingdom is determined that the flow of capital from London for sound development throughout the Commonwealth shall be maintained and increased."

When that statement was made, the estimate of the annual requirements for development was £300 million a year. Since that time, and over the last six years, I think I am right in saying, we have achieved—and it is an achievement, inadequate, nevertheless—of £100 million a year. We can explain this in two ways. Either we have fallen short of what we set out to do, or, to take the more charitable view, we are failing to fulfil the needs of the Empire and Commonwealth.

The first of these two propositions speaks for itself, but I should like to examine the second for a moment or two. Clearly, the development of all these immense natural resources of these areas of the world is in our interests and in the interests of the people who live there as well. I am quite sure that if my right hon. Friend the Economic Secretary to the Treasury could, so to speak, wave a wand and have all these resources developed overnight, he would fall with exhaustion from waving that wand in all directions at the same time. We know that to do so would raise these living standards not only at home but in the Colonial Territories and Commonwealth countries, and also have the undoubted advantage of increasing the rate of social progress in all these countries.

We should, however, remember this. Time is running out, and if we do not do it somebody else will. We cannot complain if an offer comes from somebody else. We cannot be surprised if what we call welcome dollar investment turns, perhaps quite beneficently, into a dollar empire, with the American way of life. We cannot complain and we cannot be surprised. Let there be no doubt in our minds that the Americans would like an increasing stake in the Commonwealth and Empire. After all, the United States has for many years regarded an Empire as being fundamentally immoral, and,

anyhow, we cannot blame that country if it should take such an interest, both financial and cultural.

It is worth remembering that, since we last discussed this subject in the House, the Vice-President of the United States has done what, for a Vice-President of the United States, is an unprecedented thing. He has gone on a "Cook's tour" of the African Continent, expressing on every occasion possible the importance which the American Government and people attach to that Continent not only as a bastion against Communism, but as a ground for industrial and economic development. It is something very new for a Vice-President of the United States to do, but United States investment may be without strings.

Of course, it has as its object, understandably, an endeavour to increase the influence of the United States, and I should like to quote one sentence which Vice-President Nixon used:

"The most worthwhile projects are the libraries and reading rooms which we have established in a number of centres overseas. The funds for these programmes should be substantially increased."

It may surprise us in this House that the American does, in fact, believe in the American way of life. It is a way which, in the absence of any alternative put forward by ourselves, will have a great attraction for the territories overseas for which we at present have responsibilities.

Before I leave the question of capital, I wonder whether my right hon. Friend would consider this point. My mind has been turning over the last few months to a suggestion which I cannot believe is new. We have at times, of necessity and when the times required, been able to acquire money from the people of this country in the form of War Loans, National Savings Certificates and Premium Bonds. Is there any sound and good reason why we should not have an Empire or Colonial Development Loan? It would not be adequate, in my view, to have a development loan carrying with it the promise that it will be redeemed at par in the year 2,000. I think that that would be inadequate. We have to devise, and it is new ideas that we want, a method by which this form of borrowing can offer the lender success with an assurance of success for the project for which the money is lent.

The second question concerns the matter of labour. Technical skill is also wanted in these territories, and we in this country should be in a position to provide it. The White Paper on Technical Education, issued last year, does not cover the question of technical education for colonial purposes or for colonial students, as such. We have only to look at the advertisements which appear in *The Times* and other newspapers day after day to realise that we are not providing sufficient qualified technical people for our own needs. We see advertisements for engineers, irrigation engineers, road engineers and housing experts in the newspapers day after day. In the White Paper, the Government took a step in the right direction.

Colonial students come over to this country, but what do they study? I find that 15½ per cent. study law, for a start, so that we get a high percentage of barristers. With all due respect to them, I shudder to think what would happen if 15½ per cent. of the population of this country consisted of lawyers. That 15½ per cent. is represented by 1,555 people—which is the figure for 1955, the latest one I have, although I have no reason to suppose that the figures have varied very much. At the same time, 132 students studied agriculture, which is quite astonishing and frightening, 233 studied economics and 58 studied building. This is a strange balance and basis on which to build a sound and steady economy.

Today, we have a situation in which a Colony like Ghana has now come into a state of nationhood, but not yet, in some respects, quite fully equipped to maintain that status. Hitherto, any requests for technical assistance have always gone to the Commonwealth Relations Office, but I question whether the Commonwealth Relations Office is suitably equipped to receive such requests from such newly independent countries as Ghana and others which will be following. This matter should be dealt with either by the Colonial Office or probably by some joint machinery between the Colonial Office and the Commonwealth Relations Office.

May I deal with what is probably the key to the whole situation? It is an old tag in this country that where there is a will there is a way. I hasten to assure my right hon. Friend that I am aware of all the immense financial, population and

labour problems, but there is urgency in this matter.

About a month ago I put a Question to my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade, and in reply, the Minister of State, Board of Trade, told me that whereas trade in the last five years with non-Commonwealth countries had increased by 21 per cent., trade with the Commonwealth and Empire had increased by only 16 per cent.—5 per cent. less.

Only yesterday I asked the President of the Board of Trade

"in view of the fact that since 1952 the percentage of total trade with Commonwealth countries has fallen from 46.3 per cent. of United Kingdom trade to 44.9 per cent. of United Kingdom trade in 1956, what action he proposes to take in this connection."

The President of the Board of Trade replied—and the right hon. Member for Easington (Mr. Shinwell) took him up on this—that

"Our trade has increased considerably since 1952 with Commonwealth countries as well as with the rest of the world. . ."

"and in these circumstances small changes in This is the bit which frightened me—

the pattern and proportions of the trade are to be expected."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 2nd May, 1957; Vol. 569, c. 359.]

This indicates perhaps not complacency but satisfaction with the trend of events, which I myself cannot accept. The general attitude is that we are doing fairly well within the limits of our resources, but this is one fire which, if we do not stoke up, will go out quickly.

The meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers is due to take place in a few weeks. This is an important meeting, and I hope that the question of the development of Commonwealth resources, including political and material development, will be put very high on the agenda of that meeting. I have a feeling that these meetings, although being very friendly and important discussion groups, lack a sense of urgency in some respects. In many cases, the reports which are issued at the end of these meetings might well have been issued at the beginning.

Mr. James Johnson (Rugby): Or not at all.

Mr. Langford-Holt: I wonder whether a suitable subject for discussion would be the initiation of a total survey of our resources within the Commonwealth. The

[MR. LANGFORD-HOLT.]
right hon. Member for Easington has dealt with this matter in the past. The War Office does not know what resources it has in the country. I am sure that we have not got a clue as to what resources there are at our disposal in the British Commonwealth and Empire.

I should like to think that the Government will, at this meeting, propose such a survey to determine, first, those natural resources, including population; secondly, how they can best be used in the interests not only of this country but of all the peoples in the Commonwealth as well; thirdly, how much capital is required; and, finally, how to get that money.

I do not say that nothing has been done in this matter of colonial development—that would be an idiotic suggestion—but I submit that this is a more urgent problem than appears to be recognised. In the Commonwealth and Empire we have an opportunity which no one has ever had before and which, I am sure, we shall never have again. If with this great gift that Providence has given us we create something in a material sense in addition to what we have already achieved in the spiritual sphere, we shall ensure a higher standard of life for all the peoples of the Commonwealth and Empire and we shall earn the thanks of generations to come.

Should we fail in this purpose, surely our inheritance will dribble through our fingers and we shall go down in history, as others have before us, having been weighed in the balance and found wanting.

11.27 a.m.

Sir Albert Braithwaite (Harrow, West):
I beg to second the Motion.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Shrewsbury (Mr. Langford-Holt) on having chosen this subject for discussion. I do not think any of us can have any misgivings about the number of occasions on which we have debated this subject in the House. This is probably the most vital and important of any of the subjects with which we deal.

The world is passing through an entirely new phase. I have been studying for some weeks the Paley Report which has just been published in the United States. It is a most voluminous document, and anybody who studies it needs

many hours to wade through the various complicated details contained in it, but it gives a very broad summary of the world's requirements in the future. The real upshot of it is that in the next ten years the demand for raw materials in the world will double.

We at home are engaged on a gigantic plan of expansion. We are putting into our home industries well over £2,000 million a year in order to increase production and to maintain the Welfare State and our standard of life. We can get all the machinery we need; we can re-equip all the factories; we can make them physically capable of dealing with this job; but unless we have the raw materials the whole of the money that we put in will be wasted.

I regard this problem of the supply of raw materials as fundamentally the most difficult and urgent problem that the Government have to face, and I am not satisfied that the Government are facing the task fairly and squarely. Too many Departments are engaged in it. There seems to be no unified control or action in any Department to get on with the job and ascertain what we really need.

My hon. Friend the Member for Shrewsbury asked why we do not know what we have to develop. Of course, we have broad ideas on the subject, but no physical survey has been carried out in any part of the British Commonwealth. That is really amazing. I am referring to a full physical and geological survey which will tell us where these materials are. It will cost a lot of money to get that done, but it will be worth while. If we are to play our part in the world development of raw materials we must have it.

Mr. J. Johnson: Is the hon. Gentleman speaking about a geological survey or a geophysical survey? We have surveyed a number of Colonies geologically, including Kenya.

Sir A. Braithwaite: Those surveys have to be followed up and we have to prove what the geologists tell us may be present. That has not been done.

In addition, half the resources we have are inaccessible. We cannot get at them to bring them away. There are commodities which require transport in large volume and such facilities are necessary.

Those are undertakings which we cannot expect private investment to carry out at this time. With the burden of taxation in this country there are few companies or individuals who can afford, at a low rate of interest, to go in for these great long-term projects, which have to be funded over long periods. Essentially it is a job which Governments have to undertake.

I am sure that industry will follow when these projects are opened up, but we must have some plan for getting materials to the parts of the world that need them. We must ensure that we can move them economically and reasonably so that people can go to those areas and not feel that they are isolated in the middle of a desert with no social amenities of any kind. We need a great plan for the expansion of railways, ports, roads and power facilities which will enable industry to deal with these tasks.

In the next ten years the quantity of iron ore needed in the world will rise, and the requirements of this country particularly will be doubled. From where are we to obtain it? Have the Government any plan? Have they any ideas about where we are to find it and how we are to get it? I can assure them that if this iron ore is not obtained, it is no use building more steel works because we shall not have the raw material to use in them. Those are the sort of matters that Governments will have to consider. I should like to see more consideration given to them on a Commonwealth basis and not intrinsically from this island alone.

It is important that the Commonwealth countries should work together in this matter for their mutual prosperity. The Commonwealth countries must remember that they have the greatest market in the world for the things they produce, and that if we in this country are not successful in our efforts, the Commonwealth countries will suffer as well. In this country over generations we have poured vast sums of money into areas which needed development, and I believe that the time has come when the Commonwealth countries should help us.

In the Motion which I moved in November last in the House I asked for an inquiry to be made into how far the Commonwealth countries were prepared

to go. We have had no official information, but I understand that the inquiries have not been very successful. I want this matter to be put on a higher level. I want the Prime Minister, with his drive and energy, to bring this matter forward vigorously at the forthcoming Commonwealth conference, and to put plainly to the representatives of Commonwealth countries that if we are to maintain the solidarity of the Commonwealth, we must try to help one another a little more than is at present the case.

I have tried to make a rough estimate of the amount of money necessary, not for developing industry or producing raw materials, but for the essential services needed to get them. I think that we must face an expenditure of not less than £300 million a year for ten years. That is a vast sum of money and, encumbered as we are with a large volume of debt and the huge defence programme which this country has undertaken—not only for our own defence but for the defence of the Commonwealth as well—we are entitled to ask the Commonwealth countries to see whether they can come into the team with us and raise this money on reasonable terms.

I do not mind whose money comes into the Commonwealth so long as it is controlled by the Commonwealth. If American money is available, or if European money is available, I do not mind if it comes into the Commonwealth and is invested there, so long as it is under Commonwealth control. But if the advent of capital from other countries is to be done "on the side", and there is a consequential weakening of Commonwealth ties, then I am strongly against it.

I have prepared a plan of finance which I know is rough and crude, but which I think might cover this situation. I am looking for £300 million a year for the next ten years, on a long-term basis and with a low rate of interest. To obtain it, I think that we must expand the Colonial Development Corporation into a Commonwealth Development Corporation with its own bank on which it can raise loans from anywhere and which would be guaranteed by the Commonwealth so that investors would have security. I think that from a plan such as I wish to outline to the House now something material may result.

[SIR A. BRAITHWAITE.]

I want a contribution from the whole Commonwealth of £30 million a year for twenty years. It is not a vast sum of money. That money would go into the bank. It is not money to be used for capital development, it is the money guaranteed to the Corporation which is entitled to carry out this work and give a guarantee for interest and redemption. These long-term projects take probably twenty years to amortise, and if we had this money coming in for twenty years by that time the projects would have been put upon a reasonably paying basis and the money could go back into the central bank.

I know that this country should contribute the major part of this finance, but surely, if we can get a contribution in dollars from Canada, it would help us with the purchase of the necessary machinery from the dollar area. Countries like Australia could participate in a plan of this kind without damage to their economy. Some countries are already doing this work through the Colombo Plan. The contribution which Ghana is making to the Colombo Plan is substantial for a small country. I believe that this idea could be worked out, but we have to get the Commonwealth thinking and talking about it. Therefore, I beg that when the Commonwealth Conference starts, this matter will be put fairly high on the agenda. Let us have a really prolonged discussion on it to see whether it would work out.

I do not claim that this would be the be-all and end-all in this matter. Of course it would not. There may be other and better plans. But if we have something in which the whole Commonwealth can take an interest, it will weld us more strongly together and build up the whole character of the life of the British Commonwealth into a homogeneous whole. We have given to the Commonwealth countries their system of law. We want them to benefit from the traditions which this country has built up over many generations. We want to put these advantages into their hands, so that they may improve their lot in life.

If we could but lift the native populations in those countries on to an industrial plane what a volume of trade there would be for everyone. I have no hesitation in saying that if we could promise a plan

of this sort for the Commonwealth we should do more to dispel what I will call the rumours of breakaways from the Commonwealth than anything else we could possibly do. We are regarded now as being incapable of rendering the services for which we were formerly renowned. Let us in this House give a lead to show how these things can be done, if other people will play their part with us. I ask the Government really seriously to consider the establishment of some appropriate central organisation for dealing with both the emergent territories and the Colonial Empire together.

We have in the C.D.C. a team built up already. I think that everybody in the House is grateful to it for the work it has done. The members of that team have rescued that venture from a parlous condition and converted it into one which is bringing in revenue now. They are administering very successfully in many parts of the Colonial Empire, liquidating all the silly errors of the early stages, and have made of that venture a sound conception. I think it is time for the Corporation to expand.

Why should an emergent territory such as my hon. Friend talked of, such as Ghana, be excluded from the work which the Corporation is doing? Incidentally, the Corporation has done a great deal of work in Ghana already and has the confidence of the Government there and of the people who are running affairs there.

Mr. James Callaghan (Cardiff, South-East): They want it to go on.

Sir A. Braithwaite: They want it to go on, and quite rightly; and it could go on if more provision were made for it. As my right hon. Friend knows perfectly well, it has exhausted all the money it had for that purpose, and no provision has been made to give it any more. The schemes to which it is committed now will outrun its charter.

We were told some time ago that there was to be a Bill to revise the Corporation's charter, but nothing has been forthcoming. There is stagnation at present. There is no action by the Government. I hope that more effort will be made to correct these inadequacies. We cannot allow this venture to run down. If we do we shall lose all the good men whom we have gathered into that team. We must put the Corporation into a position

in which it can carry on its work. If we do not want it let us disband it and form some other organisation. Do not let us leave it to die a lingering death because the House does not—as it should—tackle the problem of revising its charter and giving it a new lease of life.

I cannot speak too strongly of these matters. It is my belief that the essence of the life both of this country and of the Commonwealth depends upon what action will be taken in the next one or two years. That action cannot be delayed year after year.

There is coming into the Commonwealth an influx of capital which has no relation to this country. It is pouring into countries such as Australia. The biggest works now being undertaken there are being done by the Americans, and the whole Australian people are turning to the Americans as the people to look to for their country's future development. A country which has a population of only 11 million or 12 million is, naturally, very fearful about undertaking large projects alone, for it has not the reserves of population or of other resources to face economic difficulties with ease.

I for one do not feel at all inclined to support a Common Market in Europe until we have settled this problem of raw materials. I think that it will be dangerous for us to go into the Common Market in Europe unless we are sure that we are the purveyors of the bulk of the raw materials required for the European Continent. If we go in without that assurance we shall do ourselves irreparable damage and may bring heavy unemployment to this country before we know what we are really doing.

Surely out of the sums which we spend on development we can earmark, at all events, a sufficient amount to carry out this modest programme of forward work which I have set before the House this morning. If we do that we shall be making a stride forward. Industry will follow progress in this direction, but industry will not sit in the middle of a desert without communications, without power, without proper opportunities of being able to educate its labour.

I commend this Motion to the House, and I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Shrewsbury for moving it. I hope we shall hear at least some

words of encouragement from the Government today, telling us that they intend to do something about this matter and will no longer allow it to drift on and on without any finality. The inadequacy of what we have done during the past few years is patent for everybody in the world to see, and everybody in the world sees it. Let us put that matter right. Let us make good that inadequacy, even if it means some sacrifice here. We ought to make that sacrifice to carry out our obligations and to deal with those projects which are essential to the future development and welfare of the British Commonwealth.

11.47 a.m.

Mr. E. Shinwell (Easington): Hon. Members will agree that we have listened to two excellent speeches from the two hon. Members opposite, the hon. Member for Shrewsbury (Mr. Langford-Holt) and the hon. Baronet the Member for Harrow, West (Sir A. Braithwaite). They deserve our congratulations both for the content and the delivery of those speeches. It seems to me that we are escaping from the sentiments ordinarily associated with debates on Commonwealth affairs. We are now making a realistic approach and obviously doing so with a sense of urgency.

I cannot speak officially for my party, but I believe that I can interpret the views of my hon. Friends, and I would say that we on these benches approach this subject of Commonwealth economic integration in no party spirit. I recall the debates on Commonwealth and colonial affairs before the last war. Occasionally, they were conducted in an acrimonious spirit. I think we have departed from that. Of course, there are temptations. When I hear the two hon. Gentlemen opposite indulging—shall I say?—in mild criticism of Her Majesty's Government then, clearly, no one can complain if we follow that line.

To take an example, the hon. Member for Harrow, West stated explicitly that the comprehensive scheme he has outlined would require not private enterprise at the outset but comprehensive Government action. Therefore, we are tempted to suggest that when private enterprise finds itself in some difficulty it usually has recourse to the State; but I dismiss the thought.

[MR. SHINWELL.]

Let us concentrate on those matters upon which we are in agreement. If there is one subject upon which it appears to me there must be unanimity in all quarters of the House, it is on the need for developing the resources of the Commonwealth. It includes, of course, the United Kingdom, not superior to the others but equal in status and the rest, as regards the need for technical ability, high quality in craftsmanship, good will and an understanding of what is required in relation to the development of the Commonwealth, and in particular, as regards the development of resources in varying form which are available to all the countries of the Commonwealth. There must be agreement on these issues.

The question is how we are to approach this problem and, having approached it, find a solution. Clearly, the solution does not lie in the hands of private enterprise. It requires Government action. Let us see how far the Government have acted in the past. Yesterday, we had an example. I described it as complacency but, having thought about it afterwards, I regard it more as a misunderstanding of the Commonwealth position. It occurred when the President of the Board of Trade replied to Questions put by the hon. Member for Shrewsbury and myself. In reply to my supplementary question, the right hon. Gentleman suggested that one of the difficulties about promoting increased trade in the Commonwealth was the decision of the Australian Government to curtail their imports. If I may say so, that is an orthodox interpretation. It is quite irrelevant to the situation in which we find ourselves.

We are concerned about co-ordinating our resources and ascertaining why it is that Australia, New Zealand, or the United Kingdom require from time to time to curtail imports, which, obviously, has an effect on our exports. Why is this necessary? There ought to be a clearing house to enable us to find out the nature of the problem and how we can tackle it and find a solution. But I do not want to complain unduly about the President of the Board of Trade.

Now I come to the question of the Prime Ministers' conference. If I may say so, the hon. Member for Shrewsbury and the hon. Member for Harrow, West are unduly optimistic. I should not be

surprised if I am the only Member present who has attended Prime Ministers' conferences. I have never come away from those conferences with any degree of enthusiasm. I have heard a great deal of eloquence and many generalisations, but seldom anything realistic or concrete. It may be different, of course, at the next Prime Ministers' conference, but I do not think it likely, unless we can stimulate Her Majesty's Government, in the absence of proposals by the other representatives of the Commonwealth, to press forward with this idea of the development of the Commonwealth in resources, raw materials, manpower, technical ability and the like.

Indeed, this ought to be the first item on the conference agenda. It probably will not be. I can imagine that at the first conference the Prime Ministers will begin to discuss strategy. They always do. They regard war strategy or peace strategy as the most important issues that they can consider, but the fact is that unless we can develop all sections of the Commonwealth and raise the standard of living throughout the Commonwealth and utilise all our raw materials and resources, as we can do if we have the will, all the war strategy considered by the Prime Ministers' conference will be of no avail.

The same applies to what is called the political approach in the Commonwealth, particularly with regard to the dependent territories, the emerging territories, and the like. It is thought that if we can only promote self-government in these territories all will be lovely in the garden. I have never held that view. Unless we can inject a realistic economic basis, the education of the colonial people as barristers, lawyers and professional men will be no asset. I do not care whether they are lawyers, doctors, journalists, or politicians. What matters is that we must provide an economic basis. Before we can do that, as hon. Members opposite have rightly said, we must ascertain what are the resources available to the Commonwealth.

I know that there have been some surveys. When I was in Australia, not long ago, I discussed the question of geological and physical surveys with some of the Ministers. They assured me that there had been surveys, but when I probed further into the matter I discovered that

they were aerial surveys. They, of course, are not adequate. When I reproached them, I discovered that the reason there had been no adequate geological and physical surveys was that they were too expensive to undertake. No doubt they are, but we ought to know what raw materials there are in the Australian Continent, in New Zealand, in Canada, in Ghana, and throughout the whole of the Commonwealth and Colonial Territories. We ought to make a beginning. So far as I understand, a beginning has not been made.

Another question which I regard as extremely important is the creation of adequate machinery for consultation. When I returned from my visit to Australia and New Zealand I conceived the notion, which may have been fantastic, that we might form an unofficial group of Members of all parties to consider Commonwealth affairs. After all, we had made many speeches over there and had learned a great deal. We had been stimulated and our minds had been illuminated about the potentialities of Australia and New Zealand.

Therefore, we thought that we should do something. I became chairman of the group, to my surprise. We held many meetings and we had an agenda containing some specific points. Unfortunately, we were quite incapable of doing anything for the reason that we did not know what Her Majesty's Government have in contemplation. We ought to know, and if the right hon. Gentleman winds up this debate I hope he will convey to the House some information as to the Government's intentions about Commonwealth affairs, and will not rely on what has happened in the past. That is not sufficient for our purpose.

Then I come to the question of what machinery should be created. We met some of the High Commissioners and their deputies, who told us that there was a great deal of machinery available. There were many committees, many consultations, but there was no centralised organisation capable of dealing with these matters in a comprehensive fashion. It appears to me that this is what is required.

It may be that there are difficulties on the part of the Commonwealth Governments. What I feel about their position is that they want finance to enable them to develop, and they will take the finance

from any quarter in which it resides. If they cannot get it from the United Kingdom, they will take it from the United States. I understand that in the case of Ghana, statements have been made by representative people in the new Commonwealth that they are not much concerned whether they get the finance from the United Kingdom or not, because they are certain they will get it from the United States.

That is all very well and, as the hon. Baronet said, he does not mind where the money comes from as long as the development takes place, and as long as the Commonwealth controls the development. I doubt whether that is likely because, if there is American economic and financial penetration, it will be the Americans who will be in control and not the Commonwealth.

We find that already in Australia, where the Americans have a holding company controlling the entire motor car industry. In Australia, the Americans have bought up millions of acres of land. They contemplate rice growing in the Northern Territory. They have an agricultural project in view in Western Australia, where they have purchased 2 million acres of land. It is obvious that if they put the finance in, they will exercise control.

Therefore, it seems to me that, unless we are careful, the Commonwealth will become another economic satellite of the United States of America and, frankly, I dislike the idea. I am not criticising the United States. It is a very fine country and Americans are very fine people, but I do not want to see the independence of the United Kingdom sapped. And it seems to me that it will be sapped, and very soon indeed, in a fashion we dislike—a fashion that may reduce our standard of living—unless we can associate ourselves in the matter of raw materials and in migration and in technical association with the Commonwealth countries, and make ourselves less dependent on the United States of America.

I do not think that it is necessary to say a great deal more on the subject. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will not regard this as harsh criticism of Her Majesty's Government. The Government must say categorically

[MR. SHINWELL.] whether they wish to see further development of Commonwealth resources, or whether they are prepared to leave it to the United States of America or to other countries in possession of the necessary finance to take part in this development, and even control the development. They must tell us. Unless they do so, as I suggested yesterday to the President of the Board of Trade, we shall have to be on our toes and we may have to force the Government to take action.

I hope that this afternoon, as a result of the speeches that have been made—factual, unchallengeable so far as documentation is concerned, and practical to a degree—the reply given by the right hon. Gentleman will not be merely to dismiss these matters as of little consequence, but to realise that they are of the utmost importance to the United Kingdom, as they are to the entire Commonwealth.

I conclude on this note. I apologise in advance that I may not have the opportunity of listening to the right hon. Gentleman, because I have to go off soon to my constituency. I shall, however, read carefully in the OFFICIAL REPORT what he says. It may well be that the Minister will say that, as regards investment in the Commonwealth, the percentage of the United Kingdom investment compares favourably with that of any other country. I believe that to be true. Also, the volume of trade on a percentage basis is at a very high level. The trouble, as I see it, is that there is now a variation in the percentages which is to our detriment, and it is an indication that the position may become worse in the future. If I am wrong in that assumption, the right hon. Gentleman can correct me when he replies to the debate.

The question that arises—and it is a practical question which was faced by the hon. Baronet—is whether we can find the finance to inject more investment into the Commonwealth countries. I do not know whether the scheme propounded by the hon. Baronet is the most effective one. It is for the Government to say. Yet of one thing I am sure, that there must be co-ordination in these financial matters throughout the Commonwealth. Canada must be brought in, Australia, New Zealand, Ghana and all the others,

and they must make their contribution according to their ability.

If they are incapable of making any contribution, what is to happen to the Commonwealth, and to this country, with its more than 50 million people? Our country is highly industrialised and, apart from coal, depends largely on raw material from overseas. What is to happen to us? In my view, we are not likely to survive for many years longer as even a second-class or third-class industrial Power unless we can avail ourselves of the vast resources of the Commonwealth. We have the sentiment, we have the attachment, we have the affinity, we have the good will. All we have to do is to co-ordinate it in a realistic fashion.

I beg hon. Gentlemen opposite and the Government to understand that when we on this side of the House address ourselves to Commonwealth affairs we do so in no partisan spirit. We do it because we believe sincerely that unless something practical is done, and in the most urgent fashion, the standard of living which we on this side of the House wish not only to maintain, but to improve upon, will be impossible for the United Kingdom to provide.

Because we want that, and because we desire it not only for ourselves but for the people in the Commonwealth, and particularly for the native people in the Colonial Territories, I beg the Minister to give us some hope this afternoon that the Government regard this question with urgency and with some enthusiasm, so that we can assure ourselves that, although the way may be long and although there may be obstacles on the road, nevertheless we are making a beginning to a solution of this problem.

12.8 p.m.

Mr. John Tilney (Liverpool, Wavertree): Somewhat unusually, I find myself today in agreement in large measure with what the right hon. Member for Easington (Mr. Shinwell) has said. I say "in large measure", because there are two things he said with which I do not fully agree.

The right hon. Gentleman referred to the Commonwealth becoming an economic satellite of the United States of America. If American dollars, which I should like to see invested in the Commonwealth, were to be channelled through a Commonwealth bank or a

Commonwealth organisation, then the Commonwealth, in my opinion, would be strong enough not to be a satellite but to become an economic partner. The trouble is that at the moment that is not happening. What we see is that individual members of the Commonwealth go to the United States of America and borrow, either through the World Bank or through private enterprise in America, and then they are in danger indeed of becoming economic satellites of the great dollar empire. If we could only arrange for the flow of American capital to go through some Commonwealth bank, we could have a proper partnership with the West in developing the great Commonwealth of the future.

The right hon. Gentleman also referred to curtailing the imports of New Zealand, Australia, or even ourselves; but the right hon. Gentleman, and certainly I and many of our colleagues in the House have had to curtail our own "imports" from time to time. If we spend more than we can get for what we produce, or more than what we can borrow, we occasionally have to curtail our imports. If only we had a Commonwealth bank which could tide us over difficult periods—provided that one knew that those periods were only temporary—that curtailment need not take place.

Mr. Shinwell: I was not complaining about the curtailment of imports. That was not my point. I was dealing with the point made by the President of the Board of Trade when, in replying to Questions yesterday, he seemed to indicate that the reason for the reduction in the volume of Commonwealth trade was the curtailment of imports. I suggested that we must take a comprehensive view.

Mr. Tilney: I agree that we want expansion of world trade, and in that expansion of the whole we want to see Commonwealth trade increased even more.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Shrewsbury (Mr. Langford-Holt) and my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, West (Sir A. Braithwaite) on what they have said and on the Motion. It is worth while considering what should be the Commonwealth of the future. It is no use investing in a Commonwealth which will not be a firm base for investment. We are all proud of the past of our Empire for the bulk of its history.

Of all the metropolitan countries, Great Britain has done more for the underdeveloped areas of Asia and Africa, certainly in spiritual matters, than any other.

I want to trespass a little on what I want to say in Monday's debate, if I am lucky enough to be called. What should be the future of this great confederation? Most of the members have now democratically decided to remain in the Commonwealth. There are one or two former members, like Eire and Burma, who have gone out, but most of the new Dominions have decided of their own free will to remain.

There are still certain territories which have not yet been given the chance to opt in or to opt out. Several million people are in what might be called "Commonwealth pocket or rotten boroughs". A date in the comparatively near future should be stated when certain territories will be told that they will be given full freedom remain in the Commonwealth, or to go outside. I believe that most of them will decide to opt in, because many would find it very difficult to get on completely by themselves and without the very large expenditure which throughout the years has come from this country for their well-being.

One territory which has recently opted to remain in is Ghana, and I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Prime Minister of Ghana on the excellent Agreement about public officers. The Oversea Civil Service, as visualised in that Agreement, represents technical aid of high quality. Administrators are hard to get in this world, and in the Oversea Civil Service we in this country have trained a fine body of men who have done splendid work throughout the world. At one time I was afraid that so many would want to leave that they would be unable to continue the Service. I hope that those who are still there will read the Agreement and decide that, with the suggestion that those employed in Ghana at present may be given jobs elsewhere, the future for the Service now looks very much better than it did a year or two ago. Incidentally, I wish that other West African Governments, remembering that Agreement, could also remember the old pensioners who, in the

[MR. TILNEY.]
past, gave those territories such good service.

What are the factors which must be remembered in deciding on the investment of capital in the Commonwealth? The Commonwealth is multi-racial and has very varying standards. For defence purposes it is far too widely separated and, above all, there is not enough capital, not enough savings in this country and probably not in the world for what has to be done in the under-developed areas. It may well be very much better for people in this country to invest their savings at home rather than in territories where they run the risk of nationalisation measures. In the same way, it would have been very much better in the past if money had been invested in the Commonwealth rather than in oil wells in Baku, or Customs loans in China, or railways in South America.

I know that there is a problem in that we have not fully implemented our 18 per cent. subscription in sterling to the World Bank and that, therefore, there is still an implied liability to give sterling so that World Bank loans may be made with our money, but we must also look after our own people for whom we are responsible. The sterling area is responsible for half the world's trade. There is a turnover of £15,000 million a year very largely backed by the dollar earnings of the newly emergent States, particularly Nigeria, Ghana, and Malaya.

It is worth looking at the dollar transactions between the sterling area and the dollar area between January, 1954, and June, 1956. It must be remembered that that was before the big drain, especially through India, at the time of Suez. The balance of our transactions with the dollar area at that time was minus £181 million. The balance of the independent members of the Commonwealth was a deficit of £205 million, and it was only the net gold sales of the United Kingdom and, above all, the balance from the United Kingdom Colonies of £291 million which adjusted that deficit. With these new territories becoming independent, will they continue to support the sterling area, especially as we have not invested their money in a good way in the past? It might have been very much better for the marketing boards of the Gold Coast to have bought the Aluminum Corpora-

tion shares rather than Government stocks that have depreciated in value and in price. Malaya and Nigeria may be thinking similarly.

I welcome what my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has done in his Budget for the overseas trade corporations which, in private enterprise, will help capital investment very much in the Commonwealth, but as my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, West has said, big investment in ports, harbours and railways, which cannot be undertaken by private enterprise, must be considered.

I hope that the Government will also be thinking of the future of the Bank of England—whether the term “England” is not rather like the term “Empire”—and whether we should not have our own national bank and hive-off a bank of the Commonwealth or a bank at least of the sterling area. What Ministry is thinking of the economic development of the Commonwealth? Is it the Colonial Office; is it the Commonwealth Relations Office; is it even the Capital Issues Committee of the Treasury? I do not know, and I do not believe that any of my colleagues do either.

Is it not worth while creating a Commonwealth development committee with an absolutely first-class chairman and with the job of looking at the possible developments and the possible priorities in the Commonwealth and then getting the various Government Departments moving? Sterling trade represents 50 per cent. of the trade of the world, and I think that it has been said that if only $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the £ were levied on that it would produce £30 million a year. That £30 million could quite well go into what my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, West has rightly suggested should be a revolving credit in order that we can go to countries that have capital and get that capital channelled through our Commonwealth committees or banks and into various territories of the Commonwealth.

I know that we are now one of the world's greatest debtors—in fact, the world's greatest debtor—but my experience of business is that a big company, if it is a sufficiently great debtor, is never allowed to go bankrupt, and I cannot believe that the United States has not an

interest in seeing that the Commonwealth expands and is really a stable economic member of the world community.

We have so much to offer in this Mother Country. We can, with our “know-how” and as the leader of Europe, bring the Commonwealth and Europe together as a great trading area. I am one who hope to see the Free Trade Area in Europe so adjusted that Commonwealth raw material producing territories will benefit and not suffer. It is up to Her Majesty's Government to see that that is done.

Neither do I see why such development should run counter to the broader conception of the Atlantic community in which I have always believed. But unless something is done, territories like Nigeria, Ghana, and Malaya will tend more and more to go to the United States for help. That would have such a bad effect on our balance of payments that we, in turn, might have to curtail the imports of American tobacco—we can well grow tobacco elsewhere—and films—which we can well make ourselves—from America. Surely it is much better to come to an agreement between the Commonwealth and the United States rather than run into economic war.

Finally, it is confidence in the £ which will make the sterling area really work in the future. That confidence involves our own hard work and the determination in this country not to consume more than we produce; in fact, to produce enough to provide savings of £350 million a year. Provided we obtain those savings and spend wisely in long-term investment, I think that in an expanding Commonwealth that has come together by its own free will we shall have firmly based one of the greatest experiments ever seen in the history of the world.

12.26 p.m.

Mr. William Blyton (Houghton-le-Spring): I hope that the hon. Member for Wavertree (Mr. Tilney) will forgive me if I do not follow all his remarks. I think that he is very optimistic, in the light of the development that we have seen in the last two or three years, both in the Commonwealth and in the Colonies, when he thinks that American money will be channelled into a Commonwealth bank.

I should like to congratulate the hon. Member for Shrewsbury (Mr. Langford-Holt) not only on his luck in the Ballot, but also for raising what I regard as the most important question affecting this country today.

In the second half of this century—we have to face it—we are now seeing the old imperialist outlook being attacked everywhere in the world. Countries are demanding their independence and sovereign rights. That should not upset us because as the Commonwealth continues to grow, and emerging nations come within the Commonwealth, I believe that that will not allow us to relapse into what some people would like to term a little Britain.

It is possible, I believe, to reconcile the process of this growth with effective co-operation and it is essential that this co-operation should exist if the Commonwealth is to expand in the future. In discussing this very important subject we have to face the fact that as the old imperialism dies, and as nations get self-government and a status of equality, they will expect a rising standard of living. We therefore face the problem: can these emerging nations in the Commonwealth build up stable democratic Governments once sovereign powers have been given to them? Very often they cannot, and that is why they need capital and technical help without any strings attached to them.

It is being said in the world today that the United Nations should build up a bank for development and that each nation should contribute to this fund according to its wealth. We are far from that situation in the world and, therefore, it is imperative that we in Britain should face the problems of the Commonwealth which are embodied in this Motion.

This week I read with great interest the Government's policy concerning a grand design for Europe, which has been enunciated at the Council of Europe. The Government now have an opportunity of bringing forward a grand design for the future development of the Commonwealth, upon which the greatness of this country in the years ahead must depend. The economic integration of Europe is based upon the federal approach. Although I believe that we must have some association with Europe, I do not think that we could ever hand

[MR. BLYTON.]
over our economy to a supranational authority.

Are we doing all we can, especially in the economic field, to help the Commonwealth to obtain the necessary capital to exploit its natural resources and give its peoples a higher standard of living? That is the greatest protection against the advance of Communism. I recently went to the West Indies, and I came back a very disillusioned man. Here were a number of islands building up towards economic integration and the setting up of a federal Parliament, ultimately leading to Commonwealth status.

In Barbados, with a population of nearly 250,000, the economy is fully stretched. The people receive no unemployment or sick pay. Those who work on the plantations do so for only five months in the year and have to live on credit for the rest, which means that they are always mortgaging their future. Those who are capable of work but are unemployed receive nothing. In such circumstances, emigration is the only outlet.

The question of technical assistance is of great importance, especially in the Caribbean area. There is no apprenticeship system in any part of the Caribbean. We must send technical men out and impress upon employers and trade unions alike that if they want to develop their economy in the present very technical world it is essential for them to have an apprenticeship system.

I now turn to the question of American penetration in our Colonies. In Trinidad, which is a great island, there was great consternation among the people when the Trinidad Oil Company was sold last year. That sale had a remarkable effect, which was felt throughout the Caribbean. The feeling grew that as we were selling our assets it was no use looking to us to help them find the capital to develop their resources. This week that ideology has been shown still to exist.

Sir Alexander Bustamante—the head of the equivalent of the Conservative Party in the area says:

“The West Indian Federation will not have the economic viability necessary for independence in anything like five years. We shall need a very large loan at low interest rates and a substantial non-returnable grant. Under-

standing Britain's economic difficulties, we cannot expect too much in the way of continued subsidy from London. I favour an approach to the United States for financial help. Perhaps we could be aided by some Commonwealth organisation similar to the Colombo Plan.”

Apart from the question of the merits of the sale, we must consider the effect that it has had throughout the Caribbean. The feeling has grown there that it is no good looking to England for any capital help.

America controls the whole of the bauxite industry in Jamaica. An English firm which is to make aluminium in Canada is to buy raw material produced in Jamaica. When I consulted the Chief Minister and the Minister of Trade they said, “If only Britain would lend us some money, so that we could invest in our own industry, we should be able to look to the future to control our own economy. If we cannot get it from Britain then we must get it from somewhere else if we are to increase the standard of living of our people.”

I am speaking here today simply because my biggest fear is that if we cannot help our Commonwealth and Colonies by formulating a plan which will give them the necessary capital to develop their own resources we may reach the stage when, although we are the political heads of the Commonwealth, the internal economies of its various parts will be controlled by someone else. It has always been my belief that control of the economy was the most important thing in political life.

Jamaica is to become part of the Commonwealth and will eventually reach Commonwealth status. It is important that the Government should state not only that they will provide capital to help the Caribbean maintain a fair balance between American investment and their chance of controlling their own economy, but that they will also continue to provide aid through the Colonial Development Acts. It is in no partisan spirit that I urge upon the Minister the argument that if we are to be a power in the world between the great empires of Russia and America we must develop our Commonwealth, with Britain as an equal partner in a great Commonwealth which will have some standing in the world of the future. If we do not do that we may be left in a very isolated position as the second half of the century progresses.

So far, I may have seemed critical, but I want to point out to the world outside that Britain has done more in the way of giving people their independence than any other country in the world, many of whom criticise us so much. In the last ten years we have given freedom to many countries, yet we are still criticised. It should go out from this House that the critics who criticise us so severely should look at the record. Ours is as good as any in the world. I therefore ask the Minister to give serious consideration to the principle embodied in the Motion.

On Commonwealth affairs all we get at the moment is a long communiqué after the Commonwealth Prime Ministers have met. That does not convey very much. I want to see an organisation for Commonwealth countries set up upon the basis of the Council of Europe. Why should not the parliamentarians of our Commonwealth meet in a consultative capacity, argue out the great problems facing the Commonwealth as it develops, and have power to make recommendations to a council of Ministers who would have the power of veto? If that can be done in Europe, why cannot we do it for the Commonwealth? Let us have a real interchange of opinions about the development and the future of the Commonwealth.

I believe that in the second half of this twentieth century it is upon those lines that we have the best hope of solving the problems which face us as a nation.

12.42 p.m.

Mr. Archer Baldwin (Leominster): I wish to begin by congratulating the hon. Member for Houghton-le-Spring (Mr. Blyton) on his contribution to this excellent debate. I can only hope that the result of the expressions of opinion in the debate will circulate throughout the Commonwealth, and, indeed, throughout the world, because if there is one thing that we find when important visitors from the Commonwealth or the Colonies come here it is their wish that there could be some bipartisan agreement on all Commonwealth matters. Too often the message which they get from this House is a distorted idea of what the House really thinks, and it is on occasions such as this that I feel proud to belong to the House. During the periods of emotion and hysterical demonstrations of the last

six months there have been occasions when I felt thoroughly ashamed of this great debating House, but on this occasion, and in this small company, I feel very proud to belong to it.

I have enjoyed very much the speeches to which we have already listened today. They have been practical and have stressed something which is of vital importance to the whole Commonwealth and to no member nation of it more than this country. I only wish that the people of this country would realise that it is on the Commonwealth, and on the future of the Commonwealth, that their standard of living depends. I am afraid that too many of our people think that their standard of living is something which they themselves are creating. They should realise that if we had not got the Commonwealth at the back of us, and with us, that standard would decrease. Therefore, if they have to make some contribution towards the development of Commonwealth, I hope that they will do it ungrudgingly.

The right hon. Member for Easington (Mr. Shinwell) made a suggestion which I hope will be developed. He said that there should be a committee composed of hon. Members on both sides of the House which would approach this subject in a non-party and non-political spirit. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will follow up what he said by making an endeavour to get that committee functioning. The debate today, and the debate which we had on the same subject on 30th November last, should give the Government, and, indeed, the Front Benches on both sides of the House, something not only to think about but something to take action about.

My hon. Friend the Member for Shrewsbury (Mr. Langford-Holt) said that we had discussed this matter time and time again and that he hoped we should continue to discuss it time and time again. I cannot go with him to that extent. I hope that this will be the last time that it will be necessary to bring forward and debate this subject. I further hope that the debate that took place in November and today's debate will convince the Government that some steps should be taken, that when the Prime Ministers' conference takes place shortly this matter will be very high on the agenda, and that something better will emerge from

[MR. BALDWIN.] that conference than has emerged up to now.

Conferences are no use unless something of interest and of vital importance emerges from them, and unless action is taken on what is decided at them. Therefore, I sincerely trust that the Front Benches on both sides of the House will read what is said during today's debate. I can only wish that they were present this morning to listen to the speeches, because then they might be convinced that some steps should be taken. It is quite possible that certain steps are already being taken and that what we are saying today will encourage everyone concerned to proceed with them. I believe that as a result of previous debates, the Government have taken steps in the Budget to do something extremely important for the development of the Commonwealth. That matter has already been referred to, and I think it will have a very beneficial effect.

The development of the Commonwealth rests on two fundamental factors—money and people. Not long ago we had a debate in this House about emigration. But emigration is quite useless unless it is assisted by cash for the development of the countries to which the migrants go. I know that this does not apply to Canada, because Canada is now a wealthy part of the Commonwealth and can finance all that is necessary in relation to the large number of emigrants she receives. But there are other parts of the Commonwealth which have not the necessary cash. I hope that a result of this debate will be that the Government will decide to make cash available to Commonwealth countries in order to help their development of houses, hospitals, schools, transport, so necessary for the emigrants who are now going to them in such great numbers.

Where is the money to come from and who should administer it? I think that the money could be made available from the Budget surplus above the line which, too often in the past, has been used for development in this country that, unfortunately, has not proved of any great value. I have in mind, for instance, what is almost the bribing of local authorities to spend money because of the great amount of grant that will be given by the central Government. I am glad to think that the giving of percentage grants to

local authorities is passing, and that instead they will be given a block grant, the result of which may be that they will spend the ratepayers' money more economically than in the past. Some of that money will be saved instead of being handed out in the way in which it has been, and can now be used in the development of the Commonwealth.

I do not agree that money is not available. I know the difficulty that faces my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer in reducing taxation. He has explained that a reduction in taxation to any large extent would result in inflation. I suggest that if my right hon. Friend still has that fear by the time of the next Budget, he should devote a percentage of the Income Tax which is paid by returning to the Income Tax payers something resembling post-war credits but without their disadvantages. The idea of post-war credits was quite sound, but its operation is not very good. I think that if the taxpayer were issued with interest-bearing bonds for the money he had paid, he would be satisfied. Such bonds should not be encashable for, say, ten years. I make this suggestion to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Next, who should administer the money? At present, we have the colonial development and welfare funds, the Colonial Development Corporation and the Colonial Development Finance Committee. It should not be necessary to create a fresh company or a new bank such as a Commonwealth bank to operate the funds. The Colonial Development Corporation has just issued an interesting report. The C.D.C., as it says, has come to the end of its tether. It started off in 1948 with a grant of £100 million, of which it has spent £85 million, and I believe that it is committed in respect of the remaining £15 million. It is about time that we let the C.D.C. know exactly where it is going.

I suggest that the Commonwealth bank which has been proposed today should be attached to the C.D.C., which has the necessary machinery. It has a very able body of people in it and a very able gentleman at its head. I suggest that the Commonwealth bank should be amalgamated with the C.D.C., which then would have two necessary functions. One would be the development of certain projects of a profit-making

nature, and the bank would loan capital to the Commonwealth for the development of the houses, roads and hospitals which it so badly needs.

If we are to develop, we must first make it possible for those who will take the risk in the various countries to undertake the development, and there must be some opportunity for housing the people who will be sent out from this country. The remarks of Mr. Armstrong, the emigration officer of Australia, a few weeks ago, are typical of what can be said about other parts of the Commonwealth. He said that the Continental countries were taking a keen interest in the settlement of their nationals in Australia; that the Netherlands, for instance, were providing capital in Australia to help Dutch migrants to obtain accommodation. He also said that there was a limit to the amount of money that Australia could find for immigration.

That is typical of several other parts of the Commonwealth, and it is in that direction that the money which, this morning, we are suggesting should be found for the development of the Commonwealth should be utilised. I am quite sure that if roads and transport were developed, there is still plenty of enterprise in this country which would go out and develop the resources which in many Commonwealth countries have never been touched. The surveys of which we have heard this morning have been only aerial surveys. In particular, in many parts of Central Africa and in Australia the surface has scarcely been scratched.

I am not advocating that all that mineral wealth which would be found should be brought to this country for development. I want to see it developed in the countries where it is found and where white men can live. We have the "know-how," the labour is available in those countries, and it is only fair to them that their natural resources should go to increase their standard of living.

I speak particularly of Central Africa, which I have visited on one or two occasions, where there is that teeming mass of Africans who can never, under present conditions, increase their standard of life. At the moment, their means of advancement is mainly by selling their mineral wealth to this and to other countries. Those people are waiting to be educated and trained and are willing

to work. My experience from watching them is that they are able to work if they are given the "know-how".

I want to see the day come when Central Africa is developed with transport. I am one of those who believe in the East-West railway there, not as a means of bringing out the mineral wealth and taking other commodities in, but from the defence point of view. As well as spreading our population and money throughout the Commonwealth, I should like to see our defence forces spread, and then this little country would not be quite so vital a target as at present. Defence, therefore, plays an important part in this problem of development.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Shrewsbury and my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, West (Sir A. Braithwaite), who know so much about the development of the Commonwealth and Empire, and, in fact, the world, on raising this matter today. I can only hope that when the Minister replies, he will be a little more forthcoming than in the previous debate, and will give to us who have taken the trouble to remain here on a Friday some encouragement that the Cabinet and the Government generally really will do something.

12.56 p.m.

Mr. James Johnson (Rugby): I have followed the hon. Member for Leominster (Mr. Baldwin) on former occasions, when I have heard him make his plea for a bi-partisan policy concerning the Colonies. I agree, but on what terms and in what parts of the world does the hon. Member mean?

I would go a long way with him concerning economic development in, say, New Zealand or Canada, where there are no complications of colour or a plural society, or, again, West Africa but when the hon. Member talks about the Copper Belt, for example, in Northern Rhodesia. I would say this. I am all for developing the Copper Belt, whose production is now worth about £108 million per annum. Without that output of money, we could not subsidise the social services; schools and hospitals for Africans, or provide money for African agriculture.

When I visited the Northern Rhodesian Copper Belt recently, I found there the beginning of a magnificent new Copper Belt technological foundation. I found,

[Mr. JOHNSON.]

however, that, so far, only the white boys can go to the technical college and only they, of course, can become apprenticed and rise in the industry. When we speak of a bi-partisan policy, therefore, there sometimes arise these difficulties on which the two sides must clash if each side is honest to its ideals and when each of us believes sincerely that what he is saying is true. There is bound to be a conflict.

I cite Northern Rhodesia; especially in the matter of education in the vital copper industry, which is the whole basis of the financial economy of the Federation. It is Northern Rhodesia which is at present putting away about £29 million worth of taxation into the Federal coffers to buttress most of the development that is now going on in the new Federation of Central Africa.

Before I return to the subject of East and Central Africa, I should like to say a word about the hon. Member for Shrewsbury (Mr. Langford-Holt) and the hon. Baronet the Member for Harrow, West (Sir A. Braithwaite), who moved and seconded the Motion. For a few moments, I imagined myself sitting with them on the benches opposite, because they carried me with them in much of what they said. When they spoke of Mr. Nixon's speech, I recalled my recent visit to Africa, where, at Nairobi, the American information service is superb and is used day by day by the Africans, almost as a municipal public library. Why are we doing nothing of this kind? If we believe in our way of life, why leave it to the Americans to dispense, as they do very well, their literature, books and the like? I could quote other examples of this kind of thing.

The hon. Member for Harrow, West spoke about the Colonial Development Corporation. A few days ago, I was speaking to the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, Mr. Garfield Todd, in Salisbury. One of the things he told me was that he had a magnificent housing scheme for the Africans. We all know that without a housing scheme for these people, particularly when the man from the bush is urbanised, we will never get a stable African working population, without which the minority of whites, with all their technological skill, could never develop these parts of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Garfield Todd was pleading with the Government here to give him help by the Colonial Development Corporation, but what happens? When he has a Bill in the Southern Rhodesian Assembly for African housing, he is handicapped because he cannot get the money to develop Highfield Estate, in Salisbury.

When he asked for £3 million, he was told that he could not have it. So we have the C.D.C. in the United Kingdom being held back by this parsimonious Government of ours, which does not think big enough; and we also have a forward-looking, sincere statesman in the Federation who is prevented from getting on with housing by lack of finance. There is something wrong somewhere.

I agree with other hon. Members who have asked, "Why do not the Government do something—give some help to a Commonwealth organisation to survey, plot and map the potential resources?" As the hon. Member for Shrewsbury, who, I am sorry, is now absent, spoke in such glowing terms about economic development, can I take him to one place in particular which is booming—the Central African Federation? There, everything is happening which hon. Gentlemen opposite want to see done. Capital is pouring in on a scale which even the Canadians cannot match. The Americans have invested about £48 million there in a very short time. Our money, and World Bank money, is coming in—but on what conditions? I beg the Under-Secretary to convey to his right hon. Friend just a few of my next remarks about the terms and conditions upon which Western capital goes into a backward under-developed society, and how that capital must behave when it gets there.

Today, more capital per head of population is going into Central Africa than into any other spot in the globe. It is going into the Copper Belt and into many other concerns both north and south of the Zambesi—but, again, what are the conditions? The hon. Member for Shrewsbury told us of his first lesson in economics being about money, men and machines—or raw materials, capital, labour, and so on. I submit that we can talk about white expertise, technology "know-how," money in the Bank of England, and all the rest but, in the

final analysis, it is labour that is the basis of all that is done. When, in Central Africa, there are companies handling literally hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of contracts with only seven white men and hundreds of black men working there, it is quite obvious where the labour is, and who is doing most of the work in civil engineering, and almost all other public works. Let us, therefore, look at the conditions under which the money is being injected.

One can talk about planning and about geological surveys, but unless there is a sweet and harmonious atmosphere, as between the two colours, we will wait long before we see the dividends we ought to be getting in terms of the capital invested. We still have this schizophrenic outlook; this dichotomy, this division of the two colours, and until those two colours get together better than they do at present, this booming part of Central Africa, which holds out one of the most promising futures in the Commonwealth if handled correctly, will not flourish as it should.

What happens? I have met too many people there, European and African, who are uneasy not only about the political and social set-up, but about the volume and tempo of capital going in to that region. Too much is going in too quickly, and an inflationary situation is developing. If one looks at immigration, one finds that Ministers, having examined the figures, are beginning to be cautious, because, like Australia, New Zealand and Canada, Central Africa can absorb only so many people per annum. At present, there are educational and hospital difficulties, and the like. There is a saturation point at which one must say that sufficient people are coming in.

When one looks further into the economic development, one finds jobs which could well be done by Africans being done by white men. Even worse, one finds that the leader of the Federation, Sir Roy Welensky, is now importing Italian and Greek labour to act as firemen on the footplates of the locomotives—work that could be done by the Africans already living there.

Sir A. Braithwaite: Is not the importation of Italian labour due rather to the Kariba Dam, the contract for which has been let to an Italian company? It was always recognised that those men would

go there if the Italian company got the contract?

Mr. Johnson: I accept that, but I have been there on a "fact-finding tour" and checked this up. They have many Italians working at the bottom of the Zambesi Gorge on that project, but there are also, shall I call them Latins—South Europeans and Greeks—coming in to do these jobs on the railways which could be done by Africans, and which are done by Africans next door in the Belgian Congo and Portuguese Mozambique.

I want to convey to the Minister and, I hope, to wider interests, that it is a question not just of investing capital, but of the terms and conditions under which it is invested. As I say, it is very important to have a harmonious labour force in this part of the Commonwealth, where we have these complex colour relations. We have had sufficient trouble over the last year or two in the Copper Belt not to know what can happen. I suggest that we should look beyond £40 million, £50 million or £60 million being invested in a Colony, and in Central Africa, in particular. We should look at immigration, and working conditions to see whether we can get a happier atmosphere in which to develop one of the most promising parts of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Baldwin: The hon. Member criticises C.D.C. for not having spent more money in Central Africa, but I should like to remind him that up to now it has spent £20 million there in projects either completed or in progress, including £1 million for African native housing—a fifth of their total resources.

Mr. Johnson: I could not agree more, but would not the hon. Gentleman agree that African housing is extremely important? To my mind, decent housing conditions for the man, his wife and his family, getting them out of the bush and making them a stable, fixed part of society in their new urban conditions, is even more important than women's education in Africa; and the more that is invested in housing the better.

I will finish this comment on harmony in labour relations in Central Africa by quoting a man whom many hon. Members will know. He was the Finance Minister, and has now gone back into

[MR. JOHNSON.]
the Government. Sir Edgar Whitehead has said:

"We are really the first people in Africa facing up to the building of an expanding economy in a multi-racial society where there is such a disparity between the different races. We have to convince—"

this is a European leader speaking—"the indigenous African population that, but for us, they would be poverty stricken and in many cases starving. We have to feel that essentially we are one people, that we are building up our economy not simply to try and make the biggest profit in the shortest time, that we who are entrusted with this responsibility are thinking for all the people of the Federation economically, and that we are going to build up this country into a prosperous and wealthy State. We will never do ourselves any good if we fail in those objects. We are all in this boat together, on a very great new experiment."

I could not agree more with that. All I would say is that in this matter of economic planning we have, particularly with coloured peoples, to convince them that we are "all in the boat together" and all stand or fall by the success or failure of the eventual economic development. We must carry the Africans with us in this matter of economic planning and capital investment. At present, we are not doing so.

We are not taking the Africans with us, and they are suspicious of the money which is being pumped into Central Africa, because, unfortunately, they see the evidence that they are falling behind in the matter of technological development, and in their prospects of themselves becoming the executives, as the Europeans are now; and, ultimately, directing and guiding their own affairs.

I hope that the leaders both here and in the Federation will pay more attention to this. I know that they are well aware of it, but they will have to think more about this difficult matter of convincing the coloured man that, where European capital does go into their Colonies, it does so for the good of all. As Sir Edgar Whitehead said, we are all in this boat together, but so far we have not been convincing the people there that the money is going in for the good of all and for that same purpose.

To come back to the chief impression that I had in Central Africa, I repeat that it is that Her Majesty's Government must not leave these protectorate territories while the Africans are, as they are

today, so ill-equipped in education and in other ways to play their part, stand upon their own feet and hold their own with the more advanced, better equipped and technically superior Europeans who have come among them. It is vitally important.

If we can convince the Africans that we are there for their good, we shall have done a wonderful job. But if we fail in Central Africa, if we do not convince the Africans that we are there for their own good, if the Federation experiment goes down, and this difficult matter of black and white living together in the Federation and in Kenya fails to achieve a solution, the whole of Eastern and Central Africa will slide, and the Commonwealth itself is bound to suffer as a result.

This is the linchpin of the Commonwealth. We can talk academically and didactically here about investing so many millions of pounds in these countries, but talk will be useless unless we carry with us the full confidence of the indigenous people living in those Colonies, where we are thinking of placing our capital.

1.12 p.m.

Mr. Bernard Braine (Essex, South-East): I should imagine that so far in the debate one fact has been brought home to the Treasury Bench, if nothing else, and that is the complete unanimity of all those who have spoken on this subject.

I was struck very much by what was said by the right hon. Member for Easington (Mr. Shinwell). He said that he liked the way in which the debate had been opened, because there was an absence of the emotionalism which had characterised so many Commonwealth discussions in this House in the past. As he said that, I was reminded of the saying of Lin Yutang:

"Only cynics will ever save the world."

The trouble with the kind of starry-eyed idealism which we have had from both sides of the House in the past is that it has tended to conceal from us the realities.

In this connection, there are two realities which we ought to face. The first is that there is no permanence whatever in relationships between States, even between States linked by blood and sentiment, as we are to some of the older Dominions, because these relationships

can be changed, and are, in fact, changing, under the pressure of world events, by hard calculations of what are the advantages to be gained and what are the disadvantages to be met by following particular policies.

I think we must ask ourselves how strong the links are which bind the Commonwealth together. Indeed, this question should be put at the head of the agenda of the conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers, when they meet very shortly. Let them ask themselves, "Here we are now, meeting together as the political heads of a great family of nations; how strong are the links which bind us together?"

Frankly, the answer is that nearly all the links are weakening, and weakening fast. There is still a strong sense of family relationship between ourselves and some of the older Dominions, between ourselves, say, and the Australians and New Zealanders; but that is a relationship which exists only between those who are of the same blood and bone.

There is the mysterious unifying influence of the Crown; but the Crown commands the allegiance of a minority of the people who dwell within the modern Commonwealth. We like to remind ourselves, too, particularly those of us who are members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, that there is a like-mindedness which springs from the possession of common parliamentary institutions and from certain basic British concepts of law and justice; but this like-mindedness did not prevent—and I am not now arguing, one way or the other, as to whether we were right or they were wrong—many States in the Commonwealth and many millions of people from quarrelling with our actions in November of last year.

Obviously, the conclusion one reaches from this is that if the political, sentimental and cultural ties, which have been so strong in the past, are now weakening, then the economic ties of trade and investment must loom larger if the Commonwealth is to survive.

The second reality which we must face, in my view, is that these very economic links are weakening, too. I suppose that if the process was accompanied by serious economic disturbances in this country and in other parts of the Commonwealth,

if there was unemployment here and in Australia and Canada and deep economic distress in the West Indies, similar to that which we experienced in the late 'twenties and early 'thirties, something would be done about it. We should have mass demonstrations in Trafalgar Square, and we should have half a dozen Lucy Houstons rising up in their wrath and crying, "A plague upon all your parties—you are assassins of the Empire." There would be ugly scenes here, and I can imagine the right hon. Member for Easington, who made such a powerful speech today, with every word of which I agree, provoking a violent scene in this House, and, if I may say so, with full justification.

On the contrary, everybody is doing very well. An illustration of current complacency was given by the President of the Board of Trade yesterday. My right hon. Friend had had a look at the figures, and they were not at all discouraging. In this country, there is full employment, exports are booming, and this morning we hear that our exports to Europe are doing very well indeed. Overseas, there is a development boom at this moment in countries like Australia, South Africa, Rhodesia and Canada such as they have never experienced before. I had a look at the figures the other day, and the countries that I have mentioned lead the world in terms of the rate of economic growth.

Tremendous development is under way. A great dam is being built spanning the mighty Zambesi River; another is bottling up the Snowy River, in Australia. It does not matter to anybody that the Kariba dam is being built by an Italian firm with Italian labour and that the Snowy River project is being undertaken substantially by American contractors. It does not matter because the picture is one of general expansion in which we can all take great delight.

I am sorry that the Economic Secretary to the Treasury is not here at the moment. I acquit my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies; I think that the Colonial Office has its heart in the right place, but I am sorry that the spokesman for the Treasury is not here, because these trends matter a great deal. They matter to us in the House, to people generally in the country and to the Commonwealth as a whole.

[MR. BRAINE.]

It is odd that neither of the two great world wars which have disfigured our century have injured Commonwealth unity in any way. On the contrary, with the exception of Ireland, they have served to unite the Commonwealth peoples. After all, the most important part of Commonwealth relations is that at rock bottom they are human relations. Supreme crises have brought us closer together.

Sir Leslie Plummer (Deptford): What about South Africa?

Mr. Braine: In both world wars South Africa was on our side. She contributed substantially to the common cause. Not even in the economic depression has the Commonwealth drawn apart. I believe I am right in saying that Great Britain was the first of the major industrial Powers to pull out of the depression of the 1930s, largely as a result of the economic integration which took place at Ottawa in 1931 or 1932.

Yet here we have the anomaly that in a time of great economic expansion, of relative prosperity such as we have never known before, and of comparative affluence and ease, real danger to Commonwealth unity is arising. I am assuming that we all agree that the relationship between the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth ought to be continued, because the Commonwealth is greater than the sum total of its individual parts. Therefore, if we believe that the Commonwealth ought to be preserved, we ought to be concerned about the means of ensuring its preservation.

The relationship between the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth is threatened in two ways. First, we are losing our preponderant position in Commonwealth markets. That does not seem to be a matter of much concern to the President of the Board of Trade, but it is certainly a matter of great concern to the rest of us in the House. The reasons are the steady erosion of preferences, the inability of Britain to compete effectively in markets even where she enjoys preference, and our failure to seize the investment possibilities which undoubtedly exist in Commonwealth countries.

The second threat to this relationship lies in the realisation by the two super-powers—the United States, on the one

hand, and the Soviet Union, on the other—of the potential of the Commonwealth and their eagerness to take part in its development. I believe that the blame lies square on the shoulders of those who have been taxing us out of existence. Moreover, those who pass through the portals of Gt. George Street fall under the corrupting influence of that place and its strange teaching that two and two make four. In terms of Commonwealth development two and two do not make four. They make five. They sometimes make six, and could make seven.

I remember the right hon. Member for Ebbw Vale (Mr. Bevan) making his great resignation speech in 1951. It was a very impressive and serious moment. It was an attack by one Cabinet Minister on former Cabinet colleagues. I remember how at the time he pointed a stabbing finger at the Government Front Bench and talked of the dead hand of the Treasury. Parts of the Treasury have never come to life at all. There is no imagination. There seems to be no realisation of the fact that this country has no future whatsoever until it is linked with the Commonwealth.

For example, the very day that we surrendered our sovereign right to adjust those preferences after the war in return for dollars, we gave up the most powerful instrument that we had in shaping Commonwealth trade in channels mutually advantageous to Commonwealth countries. The effect was masked for a number of years because of the preference given to sterling area commodities through the dollar shortage. Now, at a time when the dollar shortage is being overcome, we are waking up to what has happened. Less than 50 per cent. of our trade now is with Commonwealth countries, and our proportion of that trade is steadily declining.

In addition, Commonwealth countries themselves are becoming much more interested in securing a share of growing world trade—that is natural and inevitable—than they are in merely trying to increase preferences here. They want to preserve the preferences that they have got, but it is far more important to attract new capital to expand their manufacturing industries.

I have recently looked up the figures relating to Australia. I did so because Australia is our best customer, and I

thought it would be a good idea to see what the figures revealed. Since 1939, making allowance for the change of money values, the volume of our exports to Australia has doubled and the volume of Australia's exports to this country has decreased. That is an extraordinarily significant and challenging fact. Before the war the Australians had a trade surplus with this country; they are now running a substantial trade deficit.

The fall in money values has altered the balance of advantage. The value of the preferences which we enjoy in Australia is greater than the value of the preferences which Australia enjoys in this country. We receive a preference on 85 per cent. of all our exports to Australia, and we have no competitors. The Australians receive a preference on 50 per cent. of their exports to this country, and that preference is enjoyed by their principal competitors.

If I may give a practical illustration of what that means to the Australians, a preference of 15s. on 1 cwt. of butter was equivalent to a 15 per cent. *ad valorem* preference in 1932. In terms of 1956 prices, it is worth 4½ per cent. The preference link has weakened.

Having said that, I accept, and I believe everybody in the House will accept, that nothing can be done to adjust these preferences to knit our countries more closely together. I accept that Australia's fortunes are bound up with expanding world trade. Nevertheless, there is still Australia's need of capital for development, and that is something that we ought to supply. If we can supply it, we shall not only be forging new links between ourselves and Australia but we shall have a stake in the expansion of Australia.

Unhappily, we are falling far short of what is required. Previous speakers have said that if we go on like this, the Americans will be going into Australia in a big way. They are already there. I have here an extract from an information bulletin, entitled, "An American Looks at Our Investment Value" prepared by the editor of the "McGraw-Hill American Letter", and circulated last October to members of the Victorian Employers' Federation, in which he says:

"With Great Britain having difficulty in meetings her own capital requirements, Australia must rely on U.S. capital for de-

velopment. Realising the tight squeeze placed on England (last year she only supplied 40 per cent. of new foreign capital going into Australia, compared with 70 per cent. before the war) American businessmen stand ready and willing to take the place of the British as bankers. Australia is regarded as the natural jumping-off spot to tackle the potentially huge South-East Asian market which is the long-range goal of many U.S. companies."

I think we should take that seriously. If we are not willing to supply the needs of these Commonwealth countries, there are others who will.

The Americans are not merely interested; they are taking an active part in the development of Commonwealth resources. The Soviet Union is interested too. In the last four years or so the Soviet *bloc* has made available loans in the region of £500 million on quite generous terms, angled towards the underdeveloped countries of Asia and Africa. Here we see the two great colossi, whose shadows lie across the earth, reaching out now to develop our inheritance. I should have thought that if they are moved to take an interest in the matter, my right hon. Friend and the Government should also be moved to take an interest in it too.

Why should the Americans be interested in Commonwealth resources? Why is it that we hear of coal deposits in Queensland—investigated years ago by British firms, but not developed—being developed by American firms? Why is it that we hear that a newly discovered bauxite deposit, I think in Queensland—said to be the largest in the world—is to be developed by the Americans? Why is it that they are taking such a keen interest in the uranium deposits of Canada, South Africa and Australia? Or that whenever we hear of new minerals being uncovered it is American capital which seems to be taking the prime interest?

The answer is that our American friends have taken very much to heart the lessons of the Paley Report, published in 1952, to which reference was made today by my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, West (Sir A. Braithwaite) in his magnificent speech. Here we have a report of an investigation into the raw material resources of the United States and the likely requirements over the next quarter of a century. What was the lesson drawn from it? It was that the mighty United States economy would

[MR. BRAINE.] slow down unless efforts were made to conserve domestic resources and develop new resources overseas.

Again, why is the Soviet Union so interested? I do not think we need to look for a Communist under every bed. The reason here, I believe, is sheer economic necessity. As the Soviet five-year plans have developed, industrial production has outstripped agricultural production. We see a reversal of the old economic pattern. The U.S.S.R. used to import capital goods and to export raw materials and foodstuffs to pay for them. Today, the Soviet Union is finding that she is deficient in many vital mineral resources. She is totally deficient in natural rubber and industrial diamonds and many of her mineral ores are low-grade. Her agricultural production is insufficient to meet the requirements of a rapidly expanding population. The result is that Soviet industrial development has reached a point where she can produce capital goods and provide others with mining and constructional equipment, vehicles, tractors and things of that kind, but must import food and raw materials in return. Accordingly, the pattern of her trade is changing.

Thus, it should be no surprise to anyone in this House that India has got a steel mill on a twelve-year £40 million loan; that she has got £6½ million worth of constructional steel and £45 million worth of machinery from the Soviet Union. That is the new pattern. At this moment Soviet teams are making resources surveys in India, which is the job we should be doing. I suggest that these are matters which should weigh heavily with the Government. It does not matter what are the motives of these great Powers, because undoubtedly the aid they provide will bring great benefits to the recipient countries. What matters is that at a price countries like India, Australia and Canada can grow rich and powerful and add to their resources without Britain. If they can do that, then the Commonwealth itself ceases to exist, because this country is the only possible hub around which the system can revolve.

Mr. J. Johnson : I am becoming a little baffled by the argument of the hon. Gentleman. Will he please tell the House, and the Minister, how he intends or hopes to get these technicians and techno-

logists in the United Kingdom to go out to the Rhodesias and to India? The hon. Gentleman talks about sending out these teams. Will the Government advertise for them? Does he propose that they should be paid more wages, or will he impound teams, in a Communist or Soviet way, to go overseas to help these territories?

Mr. Braine : I do not propose to be diverted from my main argument by that particular "red herring".

The point is that we have to decide here, in the United Kingdom—it would have to be decided by the Government of the day—that we shall give first priority in the allocation of our national resources to the development of the Commonwealth resources. It is a question of balancing advantages. If we do that, the right answers will follow. The difficulty is, and this is the burden of the complaint—both in the debate on 30th November last year and now—of hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House, that it has been no one's job to work out the priorities in this respect. The matter has been tackled in a piecemeal fashion.

The hon. Member for Rugby (Mr. J. Johnson) need not take this from me. He is an assiduous reader of Commonwealth newspapers. It was Sir Roy Welensky, the Prime Minister of the Central African Federation, who said earlier this year:

"We know that Britain cannot provide all that is required. We need to pool our resources as a Commonwealth family."

It was Mr. Harold Holt, the dynamic Australian Minister of Labour, who, earlier this year, said:

"It is time we worked together to produce a Commonwealth plan. It would be rash for us to think that time is on our side or that the solution to our difficulties will suggest itself. I know of no more urgent task of long-range planning for British people today than this large question of how we can make the most of the potential we have."

I go further. Hon. Members may recall that Sir Eric Harrison, the Australian High Commissioner in London, speaking at the last Australia Club Dinner, called for the setting up of a permanent Commonwealth body in London charged with the duty of advising the Prime Ministers' conferences and collecting and evaluating economic information about the Commonwealth as a whole. It is no use saying that the

Commonwealth Economic Committee exists to do the job. It is neither large nor powerful enough, nor has it been given the powers to do the job on the scale required.

Why cannot we have a "Commonwealth Paley Report"? I should like my right hon. Friend to tell us why, when the Americans have shown the way, and the Canadian have had a Royal Commission to inquire into their economic prospects over the next quarter of a century—and even O.E.E.C. has made a cautious, but intelligent, forecast of what is to happen to the European economy during the next five years—we cannot have a similar survey for the Commonwealth as a whole.

It is not just a question of showing the world what resources we possess, though that in itself might spark the imagination and produce results. It is that such a survey would lead to changes in national economic policies such as happened in the United States after the Paley Report came out. Within twelve months of the Report being published the United States Administration were considering revision of their tariff policy to encourage low-cost imports, were laying emphasis on the kind of technical assistance which would develop resources overseas, and were considering loans for small mining companies. Business was adjusting itself in the same way. If those were the results which flowed from what the Americans did through the preparing and publishing of the Paley Report, why cannot we follow that example?

As I understand the argument against this, it is that we do not need any more machinery; what we need is more cash. That has been the argument from the Front Bench in the past. We should ask ourselves, therefore, these questions. Would a Commonwealth bank, the kind of proposal which my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, West made this morning raise new capital not at the moment coming into the Commonwealth, and would it encourage new savings at home and so enable us to divert additional resources to Commonwealth development? I think that the answer to both questions is "Yes," and the onus is on the Government to prove the contrary.

I have just addressed a question to my right hon. Friend the Economic Secretary, and I do not think that he was doing me

the courtesy of listening to it, but as he is now disengaged I will repeat it, because I should like it answered today. I was saying that we should ask ourselves whether a Commonwealth bank would raise new capital not at the moment coming into the Commonwealth, or whether it would encourage new savings at home and so enable additional resources to be diverted to Commonwealth development. I say that the answer to those questions is "Yes." If the Government propose to take no action at all on that front then the onus is upon them to prove why the answer should be in the negative.

I end as I began. If we are all agreed that the Commonwealth as such ought to be preserved, then we must will the means.

1.42 p.m.

Mr. J. Grimond (Orkney and Shetland): We are usually friendly on Friday mornings, and today is no exception. I find myself in agreement and in sentiment with nearly all that has been said in the speeches which have been made and, in particular, with the Motion.

I start by apologising very sincerely to the hon. Gentleman the Member for Shrewsbury (Mr. Langford-Holt), who moved it, for not having been here when he made his speech. Unfortunately, I had an appointment which went on longer than I expected. But I did have the pleasure of hearing the excellent speech of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Harrow, West (Sir A. Braithwaite), the seconder of the Motion.

In spite of a great deal of what has been said about those who will the end must will the means, and that if we devise new institutions we shall call out new capital, I still believe that the real crux of the matter is the provision of capital and that it really does not entirely lie in the development of new institutions.

The question we have to face is: who is to save the capital to invest in the Commonwealth, or, indeed, anywhere else? Are we to do it voluntarily? If so, how? Or are we to have forced savings? Is that really what we are asking the Government to do? There have been moments today when hon. Members have suggested what would amount to forced saving. I, personally, should regret it.

[MR. GRIMOND.]

We have to realise, whether it is forced or whether it is voluntary, that somebody has to give up something, and if the provision of this capital is to be on the large scale which has been suggested it will be necessary to give up a great deal. Capital is wanted not only for investment in the Commonwealth overseas, but for investment in oil in the Middle East, nuclear energy at home, for roads, railways, mines. Therefore, even though, as the hon. Gentleman the Member for Harrow, West rightly said, his £300 million for ten years may not, by itself, be so very big, it is still a substantial addition to all the other demands on our savings.

I do not think that it is much good blaming the Treasury, much as I enjoy doing that. The Treasury, after all, has to get this money out of the pockets of the ordinary people. It cannot produce it itself. This is a task we have to face ourselves. One question I would ask is: is this a matter which can be considered by the Radcliffe Committee—this question of saving? I do not know; I am only asking that question.

In the days of the Macmillan Committee it discovered what was called the "Macmillan Gap" in investment. I suggest that the gap which there is today is in savings. I do not think it would be proper to go into that matter in detail now, but I would say that we have to tap new sources of savings. We have to induce the wealthier artisans and technicians to save, and provide them with an incentive to invest their savings in productive industry here and overseas.

Though I have not a great deal of faith in Government publications, I think it would help if there were a publication to show the demands to be made upon our savings and to show the people clearly where our obligations are, and to help them to choose whether they want to consume now or whether they want to save to invest in the Commonwealth and develop a better future for their children.

In the schools, this aspect of the matter has not been given nearly enough attention. The really fundamental question is one of education, and these things have to be put across to the children in our schools and the young folk in our universities. It would help to make the Commonwealth a living reality to the

people of this country if more of us could go there. It is really deplorable how few of our people ever see a British Colony—and what a shock some of them get if and when they do see one. This is a question not for the Treasury, but there must surely be a large philanthropic body which could help.

I have noticed a slight tendency among hon. Members to feel that if we link a number of weak parties together they somehow grow stronger. I am all for bringing the Commonwealth closer together, but I think that we should be deluding ourselves if we believed that by linking, for instance, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and ourselves more closely together we should somehow create more savings, because those countries themselves want more than they have and we shall not create a surplus by linking together a group of deficit countries. We must escape from our deficit before we do anything else.

We built the Commonwealth and we must pay our debt to the Commonwealth in helping to provide many things it wants. There are, for instance, the social services, housing, roads, and I suggest that it is an obligation on the people of this country to help. We have accumulated large parts of the globe and we have an obligation to deal with these matters, but then there is the problem of the projects which are economically rewarding.

I agree with the hon. Member for Essex, South-East (Mr. Braine), who has just spoken, and whose speech I so much enjoyed, that a Paley Report for the British Commonwealth would help to give us part of the answer, but I am afraid that it will show that, of course, there are greatly divergent circumstances. I am afraid that it will show that Australia is not the great mine of natural resources which some people think it is. Exploration for oil in Australia has not been very successful. There is a widespread feeling in this country that there are limitless quantities of oil in Canada, but if we look at the figures of the quantities being raised, or likely to be raised, we see that the Canadian resources are limited indeed compared with Middle Eastern resources.

Having spoken about savings, I must say that I do feel that the suggestion by the hon. Member for Harrow, West, of a Commonwealth bank, should certainly

be examined further. If it could be used to channel dollar investments so much the better. I would also suggest that if we are to have a Capital Issues Committee it should have this subject within its purview. It must be relevant to considering investment in this country to consider the possibility of alternative overseas investment, and I have always said that, though I have my doubts about the Committee, if we are to have it at all it should be an investment board to examine all the different calls upon our savings—not only the Commonwealth but, incidentally, the nationalised industries.

I have noticed in the debate a slight tendency, which I am sure hon. Members do not want to go out as the view of the House, to assume that we invest in the Commonwealth for nationalistic reasons. We are not, I hope, investing in the Commonwealth because we want thereby to retain our political hold on the people of the Commonwealth, or for the sake of a dog-in-the-manger attitude towards the Americans. We invested immensely in South America without taking political control of any country there, and it is not true to say that that investment has been wasted. We gained enormously by investment in Mexico and in South America generally even though, in the end, many of our enterprises were nationalised.

I feel that what we can do now within our present resources is strengthen the lateral ties throughout the Commonwealth. I entirely agree that the future of this country lies as a member of the Commonwealth, but I do not believe that we can supply all the services and the "know-how" necessary to run it. We must get Canada to interest herself more in the West Indies, and Australia in the African Colonies, and get Mr. Menzies to talk to the South Africans. That idea could be stimulated at the forthcoming Prime Ministers' conference.

The time has come to develop more Commonwealth institutions. It has been suggested that there should be a meeting of Commonwealth parliamentarians on the Strasbourg model. That might help. I should approach this matter very much from the point of view of practical co-operation over definite problems. For instance, we might very well have had the Canadians in to help over Malta.

A Roman Catholic French-Canadian might have been a good person to look at Malta. I should also like to see Governors and Governors-General drawn from all over the Commonwealth, and the development of a technical and administrative service recruited from all countries and prepared to go all over the Commonwealth and even to underdeveloped areas outside the Commonwealth.

In previous debates doubts have been expressed about the future of the Colonial Service. A common service would resolve these doubts and it would be immensely useful in cementing the Commonwealth together. Singapore, for example, is essentially a Commonwealth question. I find it distressing, when talking to representatives of some of our Commonwealth countries, to discover how little attention they give to problems outside their own country. It is true that they have grave internal problems of their own, but really it is India, Pakistan and Ceylon, not to mention Australia and New Zealand, that ought to come in on the question of Singapore, because it is a Commonwealth matter. We took part in the development of a service for Ghana, but we must go further and create a Commonwealth service of technicians and general administrators for all Dominions and Colonies who want it.

One great bond in the Commonwealth which has not been stressed very much in this debate is education. Large numbers of people come from the Commonwealth to go to the universities in this country, and it is very significant how many Commonwealth statesmen and leaders have been educated here. If that practice were to cease, it would be extremely serious for the future. But the universities are having great difficulty in accommodating those who come. Many of these students may not come up to the high standards of people in this country, but we must make every effort to take them.

I ask the Government to address themselves to the problem, within the larger problem created by the fact that we have not enough places for those of our own whom we want to educate. However, there are universities like that of St. Andrew's, which are too big for the pool from which they draw their students and they should be expanded into a great

[MR. GRIMOND.] Commonwealth university. The Government should also go out of their way to help Oxford and Cambridge to meet the demands upon them.

I should like to support the hon. Member for Rugby (Mr. J. Johnson) in what he said about the social difficulties attendant upon the growth of investment in the Commonwealth. We should have been able to learn by now from the mistakes made in the sudden development of oil production in the Middle East. I should like to be assured that the social implications of the rapid development of backward societies are being studied and that there is Commonwealth concentration upon them.

This debate has been one of the most useful that we have had recently, but I should like to feel that the House does not evade the fundamental issue of what the British people themselves are prepared to do and to give up for the sake of the Commonwealth.

1.55 p.m.

Mr. John Stonehouse (Wednesbury): I am very pleased to be able to follow the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Grimond). He underlined two matters of great importance. He spoke of the need for effective savings so that development can take place in colonial countries. If the rising standards of the Colonial Territories can be fairly shared among the population, and there can be development of peoples' institutions like co-operative societies and trade unions, savings can take place through those institutions which will help the economic development of the countries concerned.

I was also impressed by the hon. Member's reference to the need for a Commonwealth service to provide the necessary technicians and administrators. Perhaps we do not have to wait for such a service to be established. We have already international agencies like the World Health Organisation and U.N.E.S.C.O. which could do a very effective job indeed in our colonial countries if we allowed them to go in there. Some years ago, when I was in Uganda, an annual meeting of the World Health Organisation was held in Kampala, but such was the parochial outlook of our Colonial Civil Service in Uganda that it prevented representatives attending that conference from having anything to do with the health service

which was being established in Uganda. They were not allowed even to see the services that had been established. That is a fantastic state of affairs. We must be big enough to realise that in our Colonial Territories we can receive a great deal of assistance from these world agencies.

I have been struck by comments from the benches opposite on the unanimity of feeling on the subject of this debate. It may be partly due to the fact that there have been a few conversions on the benches opposite. There has been a great development of ideas in the past few years. I thought so when I heard the hon. Member for Harrow, West (Sir A. Braithwaite) explaining the importance of public enterprise in colonial development and when the hon. Member for Wavertree (Mr. Tilney) spoke of the importance of establishing a target date for colonial countries to achieve independence, so that they should be able to choose in advance whether or not they would remain in the Commonwealth. I thought that, too, when the hon. Member for Shrewsbury (Mr. Langford-Holt) introduced the subject of the debate in his very able speech and emphasised that development in colonial countries must be carried out with the object of improving the standard of living of the people of those countries.

References have also been made in the debate not only to the assistance that we in the United Kingdom give to the colonial countries, but also to the assistance that our economy can receive from the Commonwealth. I should like to underline that point, because in too many places today it is assumed that all the aid is flowing in one direction. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, South (Mr. Gaitskell) said in the House a few weeks ago, our economy has been greatly assisted by the sterling balances which the colonial countries have built in this country in the last few years. They amount to over £1,200 million. The fact that these colonial countries have been sending raw material and foodstuffs here, which we have not yet paid for in goods, has been a substantial help to our economy.

We all want to see the economic development of colonial countries. Why? Because we want to see the standard of living of the indigenous people in those

countries improved. We are all approaching this subject with that premise in our minds. I wonder, however, whether economic development has always meant better living standards for the people in the colonial countries, and whether the economic rewards are being fairly shared among all sections of the community when development takes place?

I was impressed when my hon. Friend the Member for Rugby (Mr. J. Johnson) referred to his experience in the last few weeks in Northern Rhodesia. I was struck by his remark that we need to examine the terms and conditions of investment and the benefit that flows from it. I have here the 1955 Annual Report of Northern Rhodesia, which is the latest available. This states that the number of Europeans involved in the copper mining industry in Northern Rhodesia is 7,660, whereas the number of Africans engaged in it is approximately 50,000. The monthly wages of Africans, the Report states, are

... based on thirty shifts of eight hours.
... Surface workers receive from £10 12s. to £23 7s. and underground workers £11 10s. to £25 14s."

On the other hand, the Europeans receive much higher incomes. According to the Report, their monthly earnings range from

"£125 17s. 8d. to £176 6s. 8d. for surface workers and from £103 7s. 1d. to £197 12s. for underground workers for twenty-six shifts of eight hours' duration."

Of course, it may be said that the European workers are doing much more skilled jobs. That may be true in some cases, but it is also a fact that many Africans have been denied an opportunity of participating in the skilled occupations which they could well perform.

Mr. J. Johnson: May I intervene to say this about the wages, in case someone may attack my hon. Friend later for misquotation? The most up-to-date figures show that the Africans earn between £45 and £47 a month.

Mr. Stonehouse: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for that correction. With his more recent experience he has more up-to-date information at his disposal than the Report from which I was quoting. At any rate, the comparison of incomes still applies.

Again taking the figures for 1955—and I have no reason for supposing that the

percentages have changed to any great degree—the African workers in the industry, who are receiving an average of £200 a year by way of income, receive a total remuneration in the region of £10 million a year whereas the 7,600 Europeans, with an average income of £2,000 a year, receive an income of £15,200,000 from that industry. So although the number of Europeans involved in it is so much lower than the number of Africans, the amount of money they are receiving in the form of wages and salaries is much greater, namely, £15 million as compared with £10 million a year.

The total wage income from the copper mining industry in that year was approximately £25 million. The Report also shows—a fact which my hon. Friend the Member for Rugby also commented upon—that the total production of minerals in Rhodesia is £120 million. Yet the total wages received by both Europeans and Africans amounts to only £25 million a year.

We may well ask where the rest of the money goes. Some of it goes in royalties, some in taxation. A very large part indeed comes to this country in the form of interest and bonus shares to shareholders. I should like to see a greater part of the profits made out of the copper mining industry in Northern Rhodesia being ploughed back in development of all kinds and into a diversification of the economy. Companies which make big profits because of their position in a country have the moral duty to plough back the profits they make into the development not only of their own industries, but into the general welfare of the country in which that exploitation takes place.

My hon. Friend the Member for Rugby also referred to the new technical foundation. This is one example of how the copper mining companies have started to do something in a general sense to improve the educational opportunity in the country concerned. When, however, we look at the miserly amount of money, £400,000 which they are donating to that foundation, we realise how inadequate is their contribution. I was amazed to hear from my hon. Friend something I did not know before, that the foundation will limit its educational service to Europeans. That is a shocking

[MR. STONEHOUSE.] state of affairs when Africans also need educational opportunities.

We have a responsibility to make sure that economic development takes place on the right lines. In colonial countries particularly, we must not only talk about building railways, roads, factories, and hydro-electric development schemes, but we must also concern ourselves with the development of land. The prosperity of countries such as Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda will depend on the value of the produce that is extracted from the soil.

In that connection, we must examine the participation of the African peasants in the economic development of the land in those countries. Here, I want to sound a note of warning. We speak in broad terms of economic development, but unless we make sure that the development which we encourage means participation in real terms by the African people who live in those countries, we may find that it will take place without any real benefit for the indigenous populations. We want to avoid that.

I should not like to see in a country such as Uganda economic development which would mean that the peasant population would be removed from their independent land holdings and transformed into a landless proletariat living in squalid conditions round the towns, employed in factories, without having any opportunities to improve their lot. The importance of economic development in the countries to which we are referring is that it will enable the indigenous populations to improve their lot and play a bigger part in the development of their own countries.

I was very interested a few weeks ago to read a speech by Mr. Michael Blundell which was made to the Central African Group of the Conservative Commonwealth Council. He said:

"Many thousands of Africans are now growing coffee in half-acre plots, the increase in the past three years being some 21,000 acres. By next year we shall have about 29,000 acres of coffee under cultivation by Africans. Having grown the crop myself for 25 years, I know something about it, and I can say that much of this African coffee is magnificent. Some of the growers are getting yields of between 15 or 30 cwt. to the ton, and of a quality which is selling today on world markets at £50 per ton. Some of this new coffee can rank with the best in the world—and this wonderful result has been achieved by Africans who would have been described not

long ago as 'ignorant men with a hoe,' men whose wealth would then have been reckoned in terms of scraggy goats."

I am very glad that Mr. Michael Blundell should have made a statement like that. A few years ago some of my hon. Friends on this side of the House were lone voices calling for the Africans in Kenya to have an opportunity of growing coffee. I am glad that people in Kenya itself have been converted to the wisdom of allowing Africans an opportunity of participating in the agricultural wealth of the country.

There is no doubt that when an African peasant farmer has an opportunity to develop land he can make a real contribution to improving the value of produce flowing from the land, thus increasing the exportable earnings from a particular territory and so earning the money which is required for internal development and the development of social services in general.

I should like to refer to the part which co-operative societies can play in colonial countries. We want to make sure that the African people have all the encouragement that we can give them in the development of their land. Co-operative societies can be the best way in which we can establish a bridge between the Government and the governed, so that we can break down so many of the suspicions which have existed in the past.

When I was in Uganda, I found a great many farmers there very suspicious indeed of the advice coming from civil servants who, in their own way, were trying to do a good job. Where the farmers were members of a co-operative society and getting advice which they thought was objective and sincere, they were very often prepared to do work on their land which they would not have done if that advice had not come from their co-operative society.

The agricultural co-operatives in those countries can play a big part in making the marketing of crops more efficient. The surplus gained from the economic activity of co-operative societies can be ploughed back into economic development which we all want to see. In Uganda the development of up-to-date cotton ginneries, for instance, under co-operative supervision, is one of the best

contributions which can be made to the internal economic development of that country.

Another most important aspect of the contribution which can be made by co-operative societies is the training in democracy which Africans receive when they participate in them. Finally, co-operative societies give African peasant farmers an incentive for improving their own contribution. So often in those countries we find that peasant farmers have no interest even in improving their standard of life, because they have felt for so many years a deep suspicion of what we call progress. They do not, as we do, take for granted that progress is necessarily a good thing. They do not always believe that economic development and economic investment are good for them, but when they are members of and participating in democratically controlled co-operative societies, they get that confidence in themselves and in their own countries which enables them to forge ahead and to make the best of their own land.

I should like to deal with a point made by the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland about the need for a Commonwealth service. The development of co-operative societies could well come within the orbit of that assistance from some Commonwealth or United Nations organisation. It is vitally important that the supervision of co-operative societies should be undertaken by people who have a sincere interest in the ideals of those co-operative societies.

It is an absolute mistake for the supervision of co-operative societies in the colonial countries to continue to be in the hands of civil servants who, very often, have been seconded to a co-operative department, and have no real interest in co-operative societies or in the co-operative ideals which should be behind them. An international service providing co-operative administrators not only from this, but from other countries with a co-operative background, like Denmark and Sweden, would provide groups of administrators who would be able to give of their best in the development of co-operative societies.

I was very struck by one remark of my right hon. Friend the Member for Easington (Mr. Shinwell). He said that before political independence could be

achieved, there needed to be an economic basis for political independence. There is some truth in what he says. I hesitate to welcome Colonial Territories rushing into a political independence and freedom before the people of those countries have had an opportunity of building up democratic institutions like co-operative societies, trade unions and political organisations which will give them the opportunity of controlling the democratic structure when it is established. To rush those countries into independence before the people have had an opportunity of building up those institutions may leave the colonial countries with landlords and an aristocratic clique in control, to the detriment of the real welfare of the mass of the population.

But I also believe that the economic development of a country is very often tied to the political initiative within it. I was very interested to read a quote in a book by Gunnar Myrdal called "An International Economy." Gunnar Myrdal quotes Professor J. K. Galbraith, who wrote, in the *Journal of Farm Economics*, that:

"... land reform—
in underdeveloped countries—

"is a revolutionary step; it passes power, property and status from one group in the community to another. If the government of the country is dominated or strongly influenced by the land-holding groups—the one that is losing its prerogatives—no one should expect effective land legislation as an act of grace... The best assurance of land reform, which I for one hope can be orderly and peaceful, is a popular government by those who really want reform."

He further quotes Professor Galbraith as saying:

"In the past few years we have somehow managed to persuade ourselves that all of the governments of the world want economic progress. This is undoubtedly true of the great masses of the people of the world. But we should not suppose that the lip service that members of their governments pay to these aspirations reflects, in all cases, a genuine desire for change. In important parts of the world... governments are still the property of the puppets of small groups whose future security may be not with progress but with stagnation."

He goes on to comment:

"In underdeveloped countries small groups of privileged people, enjoying exceptional wealth, political power, and prestige, ... are often likely to be apathetic, if not actively hostile, to many of the measures required for economic modernisation."

[MR. STONEHOUSE.]

I think that that is an important point which we should not fail to take note of in this debate. We want economic progress but we also want the political inspiration which will help the people of those countries to take the best advantage of it. As Myrdal said in his book:

"... nothing is more apt to strengthen the basis for the frail beginnings of political democracy in underdeveloped countries than the successful embarking upon the reforms necessary to break down social and economic inequalities."

Economic development in the colonial countries must be organised in such a way, if necessary with legal safeguards, so that the wealth flowing from such development is fairly shared among all sections of the community, and also in such a way that the people in those countries have a chance of developing the democratic and economic institutions which will enable them to participate in the economic rewards flowing from development and also to participate in the political control of their own countries.

2.23 p.m.

Mr. Norman Pannell (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I hope that the hon. Member for Wednesbury (Mr. Stonehouse) will pardon me if I do not comment specifically on his speech. There are many points on which I should like to cross swords with him, but I am anxious, in the course of my speech, to deal with the general subject of Commonwealth development. I have listened with great interest to all the speeches in this debate and I agree with most that has been said. The doubts that arise in my mind concern the means by which our objectives can be achieved.

I personally think that this Government and all Governments since the war have had a fairly good record in the matter of colonial development. The Colonial Development Corporation, the colonial development and welfare funds and the Colonial and Commonwealth Development Finance Corporation are all doing excellent work. Now the Government are proposing that overseas trading corporations shall be exempted from United Kingdom tax. These are all moves in the right direction, but I freely admit that their scope is limited. They cannot achieve all that we want to achieve but I think that it would be quite unrealistic, in present circumstances, to advocate any

grandiose scheme of Commonwealth development.

The day, unfortunately, is past—I hope only temporarily—when this country could invest large sums in overseas development whether in the Commonwealth or outside it. Up to fifty years ago this country was earning regularly every year large export surpluses, and it invested those surpluses overseas. In this way we promoted the development of Dominions such as New Zealand, Canada, Australia and South Africa, and also of countries outside what was then called the Empire, such as the Central and South American Republics.

It was quite natural that we should do so. It was, indeed, necessary, because no country could consistently build up surpluses against the rest of the world without redressing the balance by overseas investment. But the situation has drastically changed in the meantime. Our erstwhile investments have virtually disappeared as a result of two world wars and we have accumulated large debts to overseas countries.

The recent White Paper disclosed that our overseas unfunded sterling debt amounted to about £4,000 million. Of that, £2,860 million was owed to countries within the Commonwealth; that is to say, £1,286 million to Colonies alone and £1,574 million to the independent countries. In addition to this £4,000 million, we had funded dollar debts to the U.S.A. and Canada amounting to £2,000 million, giving a total external debt of £6,000 million, against which we have gold and dollar reserves of roughly £800 million.

We do not know the break up of this sum of £2,860 million which is owed to the Dominions and Colonies. The figures are a secret. Efforts to get them have been unsuccessful. Probably it is wise that they should not be divulged. But we do know that very large sums are owing by this country in respect of money deposited by underdeveloped countries such as Ghana, Nigeria and Malaya.

All this money is at short call and the problem, in my view, is not what we shall invest in those countries, but how we can dissuade them from drawing heavily on those reserves, which they have a moral right to do, since they have, by their efforts and trading, contributed

very largely to the gold and dollar reserves of the sterling area.

We talk of inter-Commonwealth co-operation and I believe that there have been moves to bring the Commonwealth countries together to discuss a general plan of development. What, in effect, can this country say to its Commonwealth partners about such a scheme? All it can say is, "We will put in our debit balance of £2,860 million. What can you offer?" Quite plainly, we cannot invest a deficit and that, from the monetary point of view, is all that we have to offer.

There have been suggestions that we should invest the Budget surplus. We have had no overall Budget surplus of any consequence for many years. Admittedly, we have had from time to time, and have at the moment, a large surplus above the line, but to invest that in Commonwealth enterprises would be highly inflationary. If, for example, we were to manufacture machinery for that purpose in this country it would give rise to increased spending power with no corresponding increase in the amount of goods available.

Moreover, any increase in overseas investments reduces the amount of money available to us for imports, and to that extent it must be detrimental to our balance of payments position, although possibly only in the short-term. I agree that we should benefit in the long-term, by stimulating the demand for goods on the part of those Commonwealth countries, but the immediate effects would undoubtedly be adverse. I am afraid that we are not yet in a position to support even an immediately adverse effect.

It has been mentioned that gross fixed investment in this country is running at the rate of £2,000 million a year—a sum very much greater than we ever thought it possible to invest in the Commonwealth. Could not we divert some of that to Commonwealth development? I say that we cannot do so if we are to maintain our competitive position in world markets. Therefore, that possibility is ruled out.

Quite clearly, the essence of the problem facing us is the balance of payments position. We are constantly told that we require a balance of payments surplus of £300 million, year in and year out, if we are to honour our obligations overseas and slowly build up our reserves.

In the last two years we have scarcely broken even on our balance of payments position, and we have had to draw upon our gold and dollar reserves to honour our commitments.

As a result, over the last two years our reserves have fallen by £200 million, and this despite the fact that we have borrowed £200 million from the International Monetary Fund and sold the Trinidad Leaseholds for £60 million. But for those two extraneous items our reserves would have been reduced not by £200 million, but by £460 million, to the uncomfortable if not dangerous level of a little over £500 million. It is a curious commentary upon our desire to develop the Commonwealth and Colonies that we have had to sell for £60 million one of our colonial enterprises in an effort to bolster our own economy.

For many years nervous fears about our gold and dollar position have bedevilled all our thinking and conditioned all our actions. At all costs we must maintain the level of those reserves, or risk another devaluation of the £. If we were again to devalue the £ we should most certainly risk the break-up of the sterling area and the end of any possibility of Commonwealth co-operation, because in devaluing the £ we should devalue those thousands of millions of pounds deposited by the Commonwealth and colonial countries, and reduce their purchasing value.

We are constantly looking over our shoulders at the spectre of devaluation and are inhibited from adopting a bold, courageous and reasonable foreign policy, for fear of unfavourable world reaction which might cause a run on sterling, which our present meagre resources would not permit us to sustain. We are the victims of our own chronic poverty, and at the mercy of all who wish to take advantage of it.

Mr. Callaghan: Do not be so gloomy.

Mr. Pannell: I say that with a smile on my face, in deference to the hon. Member for Cardiff, South-East (Mr. Callaghan). I admit that we have come a long way since 1951.

Mr. Callaghan: Since 1945. We were bankrupt then.

Mr. Pannell: Until 1951 we were depending largely upon American largesse. Since that date we have been able to

[MR. PANNELL.] dispense with it and have been able to begin to pay our debts, although I agree that we have recently had to seek an accommodation in that respect. Presumably we shall resume our capital payments this year, and we will endeavour not to seek another waiver of the interest. To achieve that aim we shall have to do very much better this year than we did last, even to maintain our present rather precarious position.

I may be accused of pessimism, but optimism, unsubstantiated and unsupported by facts, will do no good. We must face the facts of the situation. If we are to embark upon any worthwhile scheme of Commonwealth development we must now be ready to enter the second stage of our recovery. Instead of a £300 million balance of payments surplus, we require a surplus of £500 million annually. Even if we achieve that it will take us ten years to cover our external debts. Obviously, a national effort will be needed, but it is one that is by no means beyond our powers. Last year, the gross national product was £18,000 million. A little more than 1 per cent. of that would give us the extra surplus that we seek.

Unless we do achieve this object, overseas development, including Commonwealth development, will inevitably lie with the United States of America. Of all the countries in the free world only the United States has vast reserves and an annually recurring surplus on her balance of payments—a surplus which, as in the case of ourselves, formerly, must find its outlet. If that money is to be invested outside the United States I would think it churlish and foolish of us to resent its investment in the Commonwealth and Colonies.

I was rather surprised to hear the right hon. Member for Easington (Mr. Shinwell) say that American investments meant American control. We have invested very large sums in independent territories, but there has never been any suggestion that by doing so we have retained or gained control. Indeed, we go further than that; we give Colonies their independence, relinquish all control and, having done so, endeavour to invest further sums there. Surely it is not reasonable to assert that Americans will be different from us and will invest money

in our Colonial and Commonwealth territories with the object of getting control of them.

We certainly have a part to play. The present schemes that I have mentioned will do something, but apart from that we can offer these countries our technical assistance. There, I join with the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Grimond) in suggesting that we should extend what has been done in Ghana by creating a Commonwealth overseas technical service which would be available to aid all countries within the Commonwealth and Empire who needed it. As the right hon. Member for Easington emphasised, we must also ensure that conditions in the countries for which we are responsible are favourable for investment; that the Governments concerned are reasonable ones which will have due regard to the rights of capital which is invested. That is where our duty lies at the moment.

Despite that, however, we must not give up hope of resuming once more our traditional rôle of a lending and investing nation. I have said before that this will require an effort on a national scale. How is it to be induced? Exhortations on the purely domestic plane have not been particularly successful. Is it likely that an appeal on more altruistic grounds will be more effective? Somehow or other we must make the people of this country Commonwealth-conscious, by education—as was mentioned by the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland—and by all the other means within our power.

We must deflect the gaze of the country from purely domestic considerations and turn our thoughts to our responsibilities as the focal point of a great Commonwealth and Empire. That, in due course, will bring its own reward and should stimulate the country to make the effort. It will bring its reward not only in the moral satisfaction of knowing that the world has been made a better place, but by the assurance that this country will thus be restored to its rightful position as a beneficent and potent force in world affairs.

2.40 p.m.

Mr. A. Fenner Brockway (Eton and Slough): This is the third occasion this year that we have discussed the subject of development in the Commonwealth and Colonial Territories. The debates

have been remarkable for the degree of unanimity shown on both sides of the House. I think that the speech to which we have just listened from the hon. Member for Kirkdale (Mr. N. Pannell) is the only speech, except those from the Government Front Bench, which has taken the view that we are unable, in our present position, to go much further in colonial development.

I do not want to answer that speech in detail, but I would say this. The hon. Gentleman argued that the present balance of payments position prohibits greater investment from this country. I would remind him that the rubber of Malaya and the cocoa of Ghana contributed more to a restoration of the balance of payments situation than all the greater production in this country.

I would further say to him that if there is to be a solution of the balance of payments position, it must come through purchases by this country of goods which we now buy from the dollar areas. The Colonies can contribute to this country nearly everything we need in the way of foodstuffs and raw materials, and, in the long run, there can be no contribution to the solution of the balance of payments problem so great as the development of our Colonial Territories.

Whilst there has been unity in this House in demanding greater expenditure upon colonial development, I am not sure that there is real unity between the two sides of the House as to the purpose of that development, the source from which investment should come, the conditions under which that investment should take place and the final ownership of enterprises developed in Colonial Territories by such investment. The history of this country and the history of every imperial country is not happy in this respect.

The Motion moved by the hon. Member for Shrewsbury (Mr. Langford-Holt), which, if I may, I should like to congratulate him on introducing, refers to the natural resources of the Commonwealth. I would lay it down that those natural resources should be the property of the peoples in the Commonwealth and Colonial Territories and should be used for the welfare of those peoples. That has not been the story. In too many British Colonies, as in the colonies of other European Powers, the peoples

Vol. 569

have often been tricked and cheated out of their ownership of natural resources. We actually have today the rather pathetic sight in Swaziland of the chiefs building up a fund so that they can purchase the land and mineral rights out of which they were bamboozled by traders in past years.

If the natural resources of the Commonwealth and Colonial Territories are to be used primarily for the benefit of the peoples of those territories, then we have not only got to have greater investment in the territories, but much stricter rules governing the conditions of that investment. I do not deny that the investment which has taken place has resulted in a lifting of standards in those territories. It is one of the sad things to many of us that Africans in Nyasaland go to the Rhodesias because of the higher standard of life which is accompanying industrial development there, and Africans in the Rhodesias likewise go to the Union of South Africa and Johannesburg.

However, if there has been a lifting of standards of life owing to such industrial development, there has also been very great exploitation of the African peoples. I have in my hand the "Special Study on Social Conditions in Non-Self-Governing Territories," published by the United Nations in December, 1953. I should very much like to quote later figures, but when I have put Questions in the House in an attempt to get them, the Secretary of State for the Colonies has replied that they were not available.

This Report shows that if one takes Colonial Territories as a whole the proportion of exploitation of the value of production by investment is between 3 and 4 per cent. That figure may seem low, but in the estimate of the production of the territory subsistence economy is included. In most of the Colonial Territories, a great part of the production is subsistence and agricultural which does not come into the cash market at all. If the percentage is between 3 and 4 per cent., representing dividends, profits and interest which go to external financiers, the accurate figure paid to them on their investments would probably be nearer 10 or 12 per cent.

The Report, however, shows something much more marked than that. It shows that in the case of investment of mineral development in the Colonial Territories,

[MR. BROCKWAY.]

the degree of exploitation is very much higher. A table in the Report gives the net payments abroad as a percentage of the geographical product, that is to say, the amount which is returned to financiers on their investments compared with the value of the total production.

These figures show the amazing fact that 30·6 per cent. of the value of the total products of Northern Rhodesia goes in interest, dividend and profit each year to financiers in Europe and in America. My hon. Friend the Member for Wednesbury (Mr. Stonehouse) described the wage levels of African workers in the copper fields. When, on top of those disgraceful facts, is added this proportion of one-third of the total value of production of the Colony which passes to external financiers, one begins to understand the degree of exploitation which is taking place in the Colonial Territories.

Therefore, I say that whilst there will be unity on both sides of the House that greater investment in these territories is necessary, there is likely to be a difference between the two sides when we insist that conditions must be attached to that investment which will prevent the exploitation which I have described.

If investment is to take place, it can be provided from two sources. It can be private investment or it can be public investment. One must recognise that while most capital is privately owned, most of the investment must come from private sources. I hope that these will be only temporary circumstances, but while capital is mostly privately owned it is inevitable that Ghana and Nigeria, East and Central Africa, and other Colonial Territories, will be dependent to a large extent upon private capital.

I suggest that certain conditions should be laid down for the investment of that private capital to prevent the exploitation of the African and other colonial peoples. In the first place, I would suggest that the concession should be for a reasonably short term so that at the end of it the people of the territory would be able, if they so desired, to take over the economic enterprise which has been established in that way. I admit that if the term is made too short, one would not be likely to get the investment of private capital.

I would, however, draw the attention of the House to what I regard as the greatest and most valuable economic enterprise that has taken place in the Continent of Africa—the Gezira Scheme, in the Sudan, where the concession to the two British companies was limited to only thirty years and at the end of that time every halfpenny in loan and in investment had to be repaid. I suggest that there should be conditions for concessions of a short-term character so that the peoples of the territories in which these enterprises take place shall be able to take over those enterprises, if they so desire, after a reasonable period.

The second condition which we ought to lay down for the investment of private capital is that there should be minimum wages of a living standard, not for a single worker, but for the whole family. In Kenya, one of the tragedies has been that wages have been decided on the level of a single man and the family often had to scratch what existence it could in the land around its huts on the Reserve. In Kenya, that mistake is now being recognised. I would lay it down as a condition for the investment of private capital that in all Colonial Territories there should be a minimum living wage for the African population which should be on a living standard for the whole family and that that minimum wage should progressively rise.

Thirdly, I would stipulate that if there is to be the investment of private capital in Colonial Territories, the African and other indigenous workers must be trained for skilled work and prepared for ultimate management. In the case of Uganda, in the copper mines which have been discovered in the Mountain of the Moon, conditions of that kind have been laid down. What has been done in Uganda can be done in other areas as well.

I believe that another condition for the investment of private capital should be the recognition and encouragement of trade unions and that that trade union organisation should apply to the African and indigenous workers as well as to any European workers who are so employed.

My final condition would be that there must be housing plans for the African and indigenous workers which will prevent the growth of the shanty towns, insanitary and unhealthy, which have grown like mushrooms round so many of the

industrial enterprises which have been established in the Colonial Territories. I welcome the fact that in Central Africa there are certain firms which have almost model housing schemes, but the development of such housing schemes ought to be an absolute condition of the investment of private capital in the Colonial Territories.

If I seem to be over-emphasising these points, it is because no one who has any knowledge of Africa can be less than fearful at times about what may result from the industrial revolution which is now taking place. Our own Industrial Revolution in this country brought its horrors. A similar industrial revolution is now taking place in the Continent of Africa.

One thinks of the High Commission Territories, of Bechuanaland, Swaziland and Basutoland, where gold and silver, copper, iron ore, uranium and thorium have been discovered and where, if that wealth were utilised primarily and with the definite purpose of lifting the standards of living of the people in those areas, they could be revolutionised within a quarter of a century.

But what may happen with concessions given to private capital, with the great profits which can be made out of the exploitation of minerals in those territories? We may have there the same shanty towns which have in the past disgraced the industries of Johannesburg. I beg the Government not merely to encourage the investment of private capital in those territories, but to ensure that it is introduced under conditions which will not make permanent the appalling circumstances which so often surround industrial areas in Colonial Territories.

I want to make a further suggestion. One of the difficulties in many Colonial Territories is that, because of the very high return on the investment of capital in particular Colonies, they dare not tax invested capital heavily. Kenya is a case in point, and Jamaica is another. There, we have actually had Governments begging us not to impose taxation on investments as, otherwise, the investment of private capital would not be encouraged. In Kenya, they dare not tax invested capital heavily because, if they do so, that capital will be invested in Northern Rhodesia, where the returns are high, as I have described.

I suggest to the Colonial Office and to the Commonwealth Relations Office that there should be a code extending over Commonwealth and Colonial Territories so that there would be no longer be the competition of one country wanting investment yet not daring to tax it because of the high returns offered in another. There should be a code covering all the Colonial Territories and, if possible, by agreement, the Commonwealth Territories as well, by which the profit, interest and dividend made by capital investment in those countries might be kept at a certain standard. So much for the investment of private capital.

Turning to public investment, I would urge upon the Government that they should very greatly extend public investment through the Colonial Development Corporation and through the colonial development and welfare funds. I hope that they will listen to the appeal made in the Report of C.D.C. that its funds should be made available to the newly-independent countries. I hope that the moment will soon come when the British Government will change their attitude towards a contribution to such United Nations funds as S.U.N.F.E.D., because by such public investment we may be able to escape the effects of the exploitation by private capital.

There may be some difference between the two sides of the House as to the source from which public investment should come. I suggest that if we are to have the funds to develop the Colonial Territories, we can only find them by a much more drastic reduction in expenditure upon defence and armaments than has at present been contemplated. One hears a great deal now about the cuts to be made in defence, but, so far, the figures do not justify these expectations. In 1956, the defence figure was £1,600 million, and for 1957 it is £1,483 million. The reduction is comparatively small. It is very likely that, as we pass to concentration on nuclear weapons, the actual reduction in armament expenditure will be disappointing.

I urge upon the Government, as I should like to urge upon all Governments, that if there is to be a world war against want, if there is to be a lifting of the standards of life of the peoples, if we are to destroy disease and illiteracy and lift mankind, then, at all costs, we

[**MR. BROCKWAY.**] must find an agreement to cut our expenditure upon arms and begin to spend in a constructive way instead. If our Government would begin to try to turn the mind of man in that direction, they might be captured by a constructive and positive idea which would hold their minds as much as fear and destruction grip them today.

The hon. Member for Essex, South-East (Mr. Braine), who referred to starry-eyed idealists, has now left the Chamber. I would only say to him that the material realists, if they maintain the policies to which they are at present committed, may prove to be the real destroyers of civilisation and human progress.

3.5 p.m.

Mr. James Callaghan (Cardiff, South-East): I should like to thank my hon. Friend the Member for Eton and Slough (Mr. Brockway) for his eloquent speech, which I found so much in tune with a great deal of the sentiments that I would like to utter. It was a reminder to all of us that industrialisation can be bought at too high a price, and that the consequences upon the living conditions and on the breaking up of the tribal life of the backward and underdeveloped peoples of the world may be so great as to make one really wonder whether unrestricted development of the type of which we sometimes talk and think is really worth while in these areas. If my hon. Friend's speech has done nothing more—and I think it has—it has brought us back to a realisation of our great interest in the underdeveloped members of the Commonwealth.

But we are discussing today not only Africa and its territories, but also those developed areas of the Commonwealth like Australia and New Zealand, which can, at any rate politically, look after themselves. I have enjoyed all the debate, even though I thought I heard many echoes from the debate of four or five months ago. Even then, those echoes were still worth listening to.

Today, we have a second chance—and I put this point to the Economic Secretary to the Treasury—of hearing in a little more detail what is the Government's attitude on a number of these proposals. Speaking for myself and, I know, for a great many of my hon. Friends, I must say that the reply we had last time from

the then Under-Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, who has since been translated to the Scottish Office, was singularly unimaginative, and I think that it is, in part, the dissatisfaction which many hon. Members felt with that debate that has prompted so many speeches to be made again today.

I should like to congratulate the hon. Member for Shrewsbury (Mr. Langford-Holt) on bringing up this important subject again. I agree with him very much that the basic problem here, as far as investment is concerned, is how this country is to secure sufficient capital savings to enable it to fertilise and water the underdeveloped territories of the Commonwealth.

This is the real problem, and I must say that, apart from the tax remissions that have recently been announced and which appear in the Finance Bill, the attitude of the Government seems to be broadly limited to restricting the Colonies and other parts of the Commonwealth from spending their sterling assets too quickly, and running them down. It is that rather gloomy approach that I contrast with the expansionist and buoyant approach of the hon. Member for Harrow, West (Sir A. Braithwaite), and if I had to choose between him and the hon. Member for Kirkdale (Mr. N. Pannell), I know where my vote would go.

We must approach this problem not in the spirit that we are down and out and that anybody can take advantage of us, because I never did believe that because someone thinks that we fought an excellent battle in 1940 we ought to be looked after now. I repudiate that approach. We have 50 million people in these islands, highly skilled and with very great civic virtues, and I deny the proposition that we cannot stand on our own feet and build our own future. It is in that spirit that I want to see the Treasury and the Commonwealth Relations Office approach this problem.

May I say a word about the Commonwealth Relations Office and its attitude towards other members of the Commonwealth? It is, I think, still obsessed by thoughts of the Statute of Westminster and the fact that twenty-six years ago Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada wanted to break away from the Mother Country in order to live their

own lives. That was no doubt true in 1931, when we passed the Statute of Westminster. I am sure that as all children grow up they wish to break away and lead their own lives, but when I talk to statesmen who come here from the Commonwealth I wonder whether they have not explored the limits of freedom and have begun to see that one cannot live entirely unto oneself in the modern world.

The Commonwealth Relations Office is falling a little behind the pace of development, in the view of many other people who are outside these islands. At any rate, I agree with those who say, "Let us really put this to the test with the Commonwealth countries; are they ready to come along with us or are they not?" This cannot be done on the basis of civil servants in the Commonwealth Relations Office talking to civil servants in the Commonwealth. As the hon. Member the Member for Harrow, West (Sir A. Braithwaite) said, this is really a matter for a great debate at the next Prime Ministers' conference.

I would say that this should become the major issue for discussion at this forthcoming conference in June or July: what is to be the pattern of development in the Commonwealth? How are we to secure the capital and the savings that are necessary to make the investment that will be needed to lift all our standards of life and make us more independent than we are today of some of the extraneous resources that some of us do not much care about?

I put this to the Government and to some hon. Members opposite. Is it possible to build up the Commonwealth in the way that we have been talking today and, at the same time, to follow a policy of liberalisation in trade both in Europe and outside of Europe, throughout the rest of the world, and particularly is it possible for us to enter into the Free Trade Area without many more reservations than are contained in the White Paper that was issued since we had our last debate in February, 1957?

It seems to me that the Government were caught napping about the Free Trade Area in its relationship to colonial products. I am sure the Government must know that the French are always ready to put across "swift ones." If I have one abiding recollection of my experience at Strasbourg, it is that the

French could out-manceuvre us any day of the week. They are past masters of the art. The Government ought to be ready for that sort of thing, and instead of shedding tears about it they should be aware that it is likely to happen, anyway.

As usual, the French, at the last moment, introduced a proposition relating to the Messina Convention to the effect that the products of the French colonial territories and of the other Messina countries should be included in the Free Trade Area. So far as I know, our Government had not even given any thought to the possibility of that happening before they had declared themselves in favour of the European Free Trade Area.

So far from talking this afternoon about whether we are going forward with great schemes of Commonwealth expansion in trade, we ought to be considering what is to be our attitude to the Free Trade Area in the light of this last minute development on the part of France and the other Messina territories. I hope that we shall have some answers from the Economic Secretary to the Treasury. I speak as one who has a great affection for France, but I know that France looks after her economic interests, and we ought to make sure that we look after ours. I do not think the Treasury has thought this business out yet.

I want to put some questions to the Economic Secretary to the Treasury on the Free Trade Area, and I should like a clear indication of the Government's mind on the problem. I am glad that the Economic Secretary is to speak, because he is capable of answering these points. Let us, first, consider the results of bringing in the French Colonies. If the Free Trade Area agreement is entered into, will it mean that we shall continue to grant preferential concessions to Commonwealth produce? Because if it does not mean that, if we are excluded from doing so, why should we imagine that the Commonwealth and Colonies will be willing to continue to grant preferential concessions to British exports? Either it must be one or the other. I say to the Economic Secretary that this seems to me to be the most important question to be answered and on which we have as yet had no guidance about the views of the Government.

[MR. CALLAGHAN.]

On the question of the liberalisation of trade, I ask the Economic Secretary this. I think it historically true, if we review the history of the last ten years, that, however desirable liberalisation may be in theory, a dose of liberalisation of trade, at any rate in the short run, is always followed by a balance of payments crisis; the balance of payments crisis gives rise to retrenchment; retrenchment gives rise to a credit squeeze; the credit squeeze seems to give rise to higher rates of interest, and, in the long run, to less investment in the Colonies.

This sequence of events may not be a causation, it may just happen every time. I ask the Economic Secretary: suppose that the Free Trade Area agreement comes into force and we go through this miserable sequence—obviously, if the Free Trade Area means anything at all it will mean more imports from the Continent of Europe into this country, we shall not have more exports without more imports—and the sequence is a balance of payments, I will not say “crisis”; a balance of payments deficiency—shall we be able to reimpose quantitative controls?

As I understand this memorandum on quantitative import restrictions, according to paragraph 19—I am referring to Cmd. 72—we can, in certain circumstances. The question which follows is that if we enter into this agreement, can we ensure that if we have to reimpose quantitative restrictions we can treat the Commonwealth at least as favourably as the Free Trade Area? It seems to me that the whole purpose of this Free Trade Area is to ensure that it would be the most favourable trading unit and that territories which are not included in it will in some way or other be discriminated against. If we are to have to impose any controls on imports at all, are we bound on entering this Free Trade Area to exclude or make it more difficult for our own Commonwealth to send its imports to this territory? That is a fair question which I think the Government have to answer.

I ask this third question. We understand, as a result of the last minute intervention by the French, that the Common Market colonies produce will be imported freely into the Common Market itself. The question follows, therefore: what is to be the position of the Commonwealth

or colonial products? Are they to be allowed to enter freely into the Common Market area, or are they to be discriminated against? If they are to be discriminated against, that is something else to be smoothed out before we can consider signing an agreement of this sort.

I do not wish to speak for too long, but I should like to ask two more questions, and the first is this. One of the things which I think has become more and more clear to us since the war has been the need for stability among primary producers. Part of this element of stability has been the necessity to enter into market arrangements, long-term agreements, bulk purchase contracts, and the rest of it. I am asking everyone to put aside his ideological considerations. Let us face the fact that, whether we like it or not, there are at least some territories ready to enter into long-term contracts and agreement, and some territories which certainly would not be averse to market arrangements that would secure bulk purchase.

Certainly, we on this side are ideologically more committed to it than hon. Members on that side, but I ask the Economic Secretary this: will he undertake not to bind a Socialist Government in such a way that we cannot enter into bulk purchase agreements and long-term contracts which could be and, in certain circumstances, might be desired by some members of the Commonwealth as being in their interests as well as in our interests? I believe that to be an important question which has to be answered in relation to this Free Trade Area.

My last question is this, and it is in relation to the expanded schemes of investment which we have debated today. Are we to be free under these Free Trade Area proposals to work out reciprocal trade agreements on the basis of British investment in the sterling area following our own investment?

I say this to the right hon. Gentleman, and I say it also to the hon. Member for Shrewsbury, that unless and until we get clear and satisfactory answers to these questions, the passage of the hon. Gentleman's Motion today will be a mockery. It really will. We cannot foresee any substantial expansion in Commonwealth trade unless we have at least these guarantees and conditions

worked out and reconciled even with the Free Trade Area.

My own approach would be this. I should like to see the Free Trade Area and Common Market come into being. I would approach the problem not with the view of wrecking them, but with a view to trying to reconcile our basic needs and desires as substantially a debtor country.

Major H. Legge-Bourke (Isle of Ely): Would the hon. Gentleman say whether, in this request he is making of the Government, he also visualises completely revising our attitude to G.A.T.T. and Ottawa? That is what is involved.

Mr. Callaghan: I do not think this afternoon. I think that we have asked the Economic Secretary to the Treasury sufficient questions today at least to carry us through this debate. Perhaps we could come back to G.A.T.T. on another occasion. I was trying on this occasion to relate the Free Trade Area with the Commonwealth, because it is to me of great importance, as it also seemed to be to hon. Gentlemen opposite.

I ask the Government what is their attitude towards Commonwealth development. Are they really in favour of it? Do they really want to raise this splendid conception to the highest level and to secure co-operation between the Commonwealth as a whole, and the British people to march forward together? Or have they become Little Englanders who, while paying lip service to the doctrine of the Commonwealth, are ready to walk into a Free Trade Area and say, “Well, the Commonwealth will cost us a lot of money; we are very heavily in debt; we cannot find the capital to expand; so we have to realise the realities of the situation and give up any thoughts and hopes for the future”?

That would be entirely wrong, and it should not be our approach today. I thought the hon. Member for Kirkdale was a bit gloomy. He may have thought that he was being realistic, but the only purpose of facing facts is to overcome them and to try to adjust them to the situation one wants to see. That is surely the art of politics. I believe that it is still politically possible—I have yet to be convinced by the Government that it is politically impossible—to bring the Commonwealth along in this direction.

I want the Government, at the forthcoming conference of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers, to make a supreme effort to try to enlarge our conception and vision of what can be done, and at the highest level where its consideration can be of tremendous importance to the future of our people and of those who are still to come after us.

I follow the approach of my hon. Friend the Member for Eton and Slough towards our ideal of trying to raise the standard of life, raising the general standard of living in the underdeveloped territories of the world. It is a noble conception, one we all ought to have at heart. The circumstances have gone, however, in which that was our only conception. It may be part of our duty, but the plain truth—and this is why we really do have to find out how far the Commonwealth is ready to come along with us—is that we need the Commonwealth as much as the Commonwealth needs us. The day has gone by when we could just invest large sums of money in raising the standard of life of the backward peoples out of a bountiful surplus that we might have. This is no longer our position. With us, the development of the Commonwealth is basically a matter of life or death.

I believe that we are approaching a crisis in our relationships with the Commonwealth economically. Either we are to tax ourselves, or in some other way raise the level of our savings so that investment on a considerable scale can take place in the Commonwealth, or, alternatively, if we do not do that, the Commonwealth as we understand it as a concept is politically and economically at an end, and we shall be forced either to turn inwards upon Europe or to have substantial emigration from this country.

I do not believe that it is possible to escape from one or other of those conclusions. My conclusion is that in 1957, with the opportunities that lie ahead of us, we should take the decisions and achieve the resolution that will secure capital and the adherence of other Commonwealth countries to the concept that we have in mind and lay the foundation for the material and economic prosperity of thousands of people throughout our own territories.

3.21 p.m.

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Nigel Birch): The hon. Member for Cardiff, South-East (Mr. Callaghan) has taken advantage of this occasion to make a speech on the Free Trade Area which I feel that he has been wanting to make very much during the last few weeks.

Mr. Ede (South Shields): A very good speech.

Mr. Birch: Well, it had its points.

Perhaps I might make one or two comments on the matters outside the general theme of the debate which the hon. Member for Cardiff, South-East mentioned. The first is the effect which the Free Trade Area would have on our balance of payments. The view of Her Majesty's Government is that it would strengthen our balance of payments rather than the reverse. Then there was the question whether we could maintain our preferences for the Commonwealth. It is because of these preferences that we have said that we will not enter the Free Trade Area unless agriculture is excluded from its scope.

The hon. Member raised a number of other points of great interest about the entry of products into the Free Trade Area, and so on, but these points are at this very moment under discussion with the Commonwealth. Therefore, I do not want to anticipate the results of the consultations, nor do I think it appropriate to do so in this debate. The main point that the hon. Member made which had reference to this debate was to ask how we were to secure the extra savings that we need. I waited for the answer, but I am afraid that I did not get it.

Mr. Callaghan: Is the right hon. Gentleman really not going to say anything more about the Free Trade Area? Surely even the Treasury knows that at least 15 per cent. to 20 per cent. of colonial products go to Continental Europe.

Mr. Birch: Of course the Treasury knows what goes to Continental Europe, but this is not a debate on the Free Trade Area.

Mr. Callaghan: A Treasury answer.

Mr. Birch: We have had a very interesting debate and one in which there

has been universal good temper and a great deal of agreement on both sides of the House. My hon. Friend the Member for Essex, South-East (Mr. Braine) made a few acid remarks about the Treasury, but that is something to which we are well accustomed. On the whole, there has been very general agreement.

This is a subject, of course, which commands the strongest emotions and the loyalties of everybody in the House. There is in the Commonwealth a vast field for investment and for ensuring greater prosperity and social good. We are all agreed on that. It is also universally agreed in the House, and by Ministers for that matter, that everything that we can do should be done, and that obviously the ideal amount, other things being equal, is not being invested.

We are urged to invest far more in the Commonwealth. In just the same way, during the Budget debate we were urged from both sides of the House, and sometimes by exactly the same people, to invest far more money at home. We were told that we needed more roads, more tankers, more shipbuilding capacity, more atomic power stations, and a hundred other things. Of course, both these demands for investment must be met from the same pair of pockets. They depend upon the same volume of savings.

In their eloquent speeches both my hon. Friend the Member for Shrewsbury (Mr. Langford-Holt) and my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, West (Sir A. Braithwaite) mentioned £300 million as the amount which we ought to be investing now annually in the Commonwealth. My hon. Friend the Member for Shrewsbury seemed to indicate that we had entered into an undertaking to invest that amount of money. So far as I have been able to find out, no Government statement has ever been made, nor was it made at the time of the 1952 Commonwealth Conference, that £300 million was the undertaking: we only undertook that we would invest what we could. It would be extraordinarily difficult to say exactly what sum we ought to invest. It would take the wisdom of Solomon to decide that, because the gap between what it is desirable to invest and what it is possible to invest is so very large. Therefore, I do not think that the figure of £300 million has any great validity.

I will look briefly at what we are doing and the agencies by which those tasks are accomplished. Having done that, I will consider whether we need any new agencies, and whether there are any means available by which we could increase the present volume of investment in the Commonwealth. That will deal with some of the points raised in the debate.

Investment in the Commonwealth, both public and private, is running at present at a rate of about £150 million a year, and that figure excludes Canada. The figure of £150 million for the sterling Commonwealth comes through Commonwealth and colonial Government loans, through private investment and, almost the most important, through the ploughing back of profits by United Kingdom companies operating in the Commonwealth. I endorse what several hon. Members have said about the relevance of that to the legislation in the Finance Bill for overseas trading corporations. I believe myself that in the long run—not quickly of course—that legislation will do a great deal to help to build our companies operating overseas. That is something clear and practical which my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has been able to do.

Mr. Grimond: May I ask a question of fact? The right hon. Gentleman has referred to the profits ploughed back, including those of United Kingdom companies trading in the Commonwealth. Does that figure include profits ploughed back by companies registered outside this country and in the Commonwealth, but which are largely owned here and in America and Canada?

Mr. Birch: The figure which I was giving dealt with companies where there was United Kingdom control. If the hon. Gentleman asks whether it includes the reserves ploughed back by, say, a Canadian company in Canada or an Australian company in Australia, the answer is, "Obviously not."

Mr. Grimond: Yes, but there are companies owned in this country but registered in Canada and South Africa.

Mr. Birch: I should like notice of that question.

Now I wish next to say a few words about Canada. It is only since 1953 that we started to invest in Canada again.

Owing to the dollar difficulties after the war all investment in Canada was stopped. We are now investing in Canada at the rate of approximately 100 million dollars a year, and in the long run I believe that we shall derive great benefits from that, both for ourselves and for the Canadians.

The figure of £150 million also includes the amount invested by the Commonwealth Development Finance Company. This is a relatively new finance company; but it has on its board a number of prominent industrialists, and it has been most helpful not only in advising the Government, but in bringing in outside capital to good purpose in the Commonwealth. It also includes money spent under the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts, and money spent by the Colonial Development Corporation. I do not want to deal at length with the Corporation because I understand that there is to be a colonial development debate on Monday, when that matter might be dealt with.

Someone used that very popular word "stagnation" on the subject of the Colonial Development Corporation, but the fact is that the Corporation still has money which is unexpended. The whole question of finance for the Colonial Development Corporation and the whole question of finance for the emergent independent countries are, as the House has been told, under consideration and decisions will be given shortly—certainly before the Summer Recess; so I will not deal any further with that particular aspect of the problem.

Mr. Callaghan: Has the right hon. Gentleman noticed that although the Colonial Development Corporation has unexpended money, it says, in paragraph 14 of its Report, that these unexpended sums are already committed and that the present limit is thus in sight and that the Corporation has already spent up to the limit?

Mr. Birch: One can be in sight of a hole without falling in it.

Mr. Callaghan: Answer the question.

Mr. Birch: The answer is simply that there is no stagnation now for want of money, and that decisions will be given as soon as it is needed.

Mr. Callaghan : I do not think that the right hon. Gentleman has looked at the Report. If he has, the Report is wrong, because it quite clearly says that the Corporation is refusing new and pressing business.

Mr. Birch : As I have said, questions of the Corporation's finance, how much money it wants, and when it will get it, are now under consideration, and it will get the answer in due course.

We have got slightly off the subject of the debate. The Government have also promised the release of £60 million from our subscription to the capital stock of the International Bank over the six years from 1953.

A number of hon. Gentlemen mentioned technical assistance, and there is a reference to it in the Motion. I think I am right in saying that the Colombo Plan is one entirely for technical assistance and we have hypothecated £7 million over the next seven years. The main channels through which the United Kingdom provides assistance to less developed areas of the world are the colonial development and welfare schemes, the Colombo Plan, which I have just mentioned, and, of course, through Her Majesty's Oversea Civil Service.

Colonial development and welfare schemes have been made to help finance the building of colleges of art, science and technology in the Colonies, and slightly more than £3 million has been made available for that in the period 1946-56: that is for higher technical education. In addition, between 1946-56 we have provided, through the colonial development and welfare funds, £6.6 million for other forms of technical and vocational training. At the end of 1955 there were 560 colonial Government officials and 234 students studying in the United Kingdom under colonial development and welfare schemes. That is only a small proportion, as the House knows, of the total number of colonial students who are over here. In all, there are 12,622 colonial students studying in the United Kingdom in 1956-57. A large proportion of those students are studying technical subjects. That is a matter which several hon. Members raised, and I should like to answer them.

Included in those figures are 1,295 students who are taking engineering. That is a higher figure than for any other

subject except nursing. Less than 10 per cent. are studying law. We have been rather given the impression by some hon. Members that everybody was going to become a lawyer. I do not think that there is a member of the lawyer's union in the House or he might have spoken up for the lawyers. At any rate, less than 10 per cent. are taking law.

Mr. Langford-Holt : The figures which I gave were those for 1955. They are the Central Office of Information figures. If the figures which my right hon. Friend is giving show an improvement, I am pleased.

Mr. Birch : I was giving the latest figures, which I know are not available to my hon. Friend, and I was pointing out that this is not entirely a lawyers' holiday.

Under the Colombo Plan we give Asian students training in the United Kingdom, pay their fares, and maintain them while in this country. There are 400 trainees in the United Kingdom under this scheme. We are providing experts in technical matters for temporary service in Asian countries. There are about 50 such experts in Asia at present. We are also making gifts to Asian countries of equipment for training purposes and for research.

We have entered into a mutual technical assistance scheme, as the House knows, with the Government of Ghana, and it is contemplated that under that scheme officers nominated by the Government of Ghana—many will be younger public servants—will come to the United Kingdom at our expense for training in practical and technical subjects. We are also ready to supply the Government of Ghana with experts to fill specialised technical or professional posts of a temporary or advisory nature, and the cost of such experts will in that case be shared equally between the two Governments.

It is perfectly true, as several hon. Members pointed out, that we have not enough technical staff either in this country or in the Commonwealth. It is for the very reason that such people are in great demand that during the last ten years Her Majesty's Government have made every effort to push on with all possible speed our technical education schemes at home; and those schemes are still being pushed steadily ahead.

The point has been raised several times that we cannot force technical experts to go overseas. Unless they get decent treatment there is no reason why they should go. Similarly, we cannot force people to invest capital in countries where they do not think they will get a square deal. But I do not think that our record is at all bad in this matter. In a recent O.E.E.C. study of the proportions of their national incomes which countries were devoting to underdeveloped countries, the conclusion was that the United Kingdom was really doing better than any other country in the world in proportion to our means. We are still, in spite of American money—which is certainly and rightly going into the Commonwealth—overwhelmingly the most important provider of external capital for the Commonwealth, and today over 70 per cent. of the external capital provided for the Commonwealth comes from this country.

There is one other body which I will mention because it has been referred to by several hon. Members. That is the Commonwealth Economic Committee. We attach a good deal of importance to that Committee. It is composed of the High Commissioners of the Dominions in this country and representatives of the Colonial Office and the Commonwealth Relations Office. The Committee is engaged in carrying out a study of all raw materials existing in the Commonwealth, and those studies are, I understand, approaching completion.

Although it may not be in exact analogy with the Paley Report, I should have thought that that study was something not altogether dissimilar, and when that report is available it will be circulated not only in this country but in all the countries of the Commonwealth. As hon. Members pointed out, certain conclusions emerged from the Paley Report and action was taken on them. It may be that when this report to which I have referred comes along certain conclusions will equally emerge upon which action can be taken.

When we are talking about machinery we must not forget the two Ministries—the Colonial Office and the Commonwealth Relations Office—both of which, as one of their tasks, specifically engage in studying the economies and resources of all the countries in the Commonwealth.

The question, therefore, is whether we need any more agencies than we now have and whether there would be any advantage in setting up any new bodies.

Several hon. Members have raised that question, and I want to deal with it for a few moments. There has been the suggestion of a development agency, and some hon. Members have talked of correlating and integrating all the development plant of the Commonwealth. In the previous debate we had upon the subject my noble Friend who was then Under-Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, said that he would consult members of the Commonwealth to ascertain their reactions to the establishment of such a body. The consultations are not completed but I should be deceiving the House if I let it be supposed that the answers so far received have been particularly favourable.

We must remember that independent Commonwealth countries are composed of highly independent-minded people. The right hon. Member for Easington (Mr. Shinwell) said some quite tough and rather old-fashioned imperialist things about planning the Australian economy. Too much intervention from this country would not be welcomed by these independent countries. Plans for the economic development of the Colonies are invariably drawn up by their own Governments, and are made in their own interests. Although we can help, and we do help, the idea that it is within our power to integrate all those plans is rather dangerous. It is quite fun being the integrator, but not such fun being integrated—as many people discovered when they had a planning Government in power.

Mr. Braine : I hope that my right hon. Friend will not misrepresent the views that I put to the House. In 1951, at the Finance Ministers' Conference, it was agreed that certain economic policies should be followed which would strengthen the Commonwealth as a whole. In the last few months calls have been made by Commonwealth statesmen—I cited Sir Roy Welensky—for a central organisation, meeting, body, or some such thing, to decide upon priorities. That would suggest that something has happened in regard to priorities. It is in that sense that some of us are arguing that some machinery should exist whereby

[Mr. BRAINE.] priorities in relation to major economic developments in the Commonwealth should be decided.

Mr. Birch : I quite see my hon. Friend's point, and there is some force in it. I was arguing against the utility of setting up a body to decide the matter. Government machinery exists to deal with these matters, and I do not think that there is any need to have a new agency to do this work.

Mr. Callaghan : This is an important point. Quite apart from developing new machinery, is there any discussion about the proposal to co-ordinate the monetary policies of the Commonwealth along the lines suggested by the hon. Member for Wavertree (Mr. Tilney) in order that we can stand together, independent, instead of becoming, individually, economic satellites of someone else?

Mr. Birch : As the hon. Member well knows, there is the closest day-to-day consultation between this country and the members of the Commonwealth. When the hon. Member was a member of the Government no doubt he read the telegrams which went out every day. There are periodical consultations between the Finance Ministers of the Commonwealth and ourselves, and constant consultations between the various central banks involved. I really do not think it would be possible to devise any means by which there could be closer contact in financial matters than, in fact, there is at present.

That brings me to the last suggestion made by several hon. Gentlemen that there should be a Commonwealth bank. My hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, West suggested that in setting up such a Commonwealth bank we should get subscriptions from the Commonwealth. He mentioned, I think, the sum of £30 million with which to set it up. I know that it is irritating to say it again, but it is, of course, the fact that this country is the only net capital exporter in the Commonwealth. As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister pointed out, and as my hon. Friend the Member for Kirkdale (Mr. N. Pannell) pointed out today, one cannot invest a deficit. The only way in which the Commonwealth countries could subscribe to the bank would be by cutting back their own

development programmes, which would not be a very satisfactory thing to do.

I can assure my hon. Friends that this suggestion, which was first put up, I think, last November, is still under consideration, and we are consulting the Commonwealth about it. I think the 64,000-dollar question, as it were, was put to me by my hon. Friend the Member for Essex, South-East. Quite clearly, such a bank would only be of benefit if it did two things—if it had some effect on stimulating savings in this country and if it proved a more convenient channel than any other now available for getting investment, and that really means investment in dollars by the United States of America.

On the question of savings, I am not really prepared to pronounce. Would somebody not buy a television set because there was a new Commonwealth bank? I do not really know. Such a project might have a certain appeal, and I think it is worth thinking about. On the question of whether it would be useful in canalising the dollar flow to the Commonwealth, that, again, is a subject which is under examination. So far, the United States has always been rather unwilling to use machinery other than United Nations machinery or machinery which it has itself set up. But it is a suggestion well worth examining whether we could reap any kind of advantage from that.

Mr. Braine : Before my hon. Friend leaves that topic, may I ask whether he would also consider the possibility of European money flowing to such an organisation? If Germany is willing to put money into a European development fund, is it unlikely that she, the Swiss or the Swedes would be unwilling to put money into a Commonwealth bank?

Mr. Birch : I quite agree. It is a good point, and one which we are also considering.

If the bank did not stimulate savings or did not make it easier to raise money from outside countries which are in surplus then, I think, it would have no purpose. Infinitely, the most important factors in all this business are the savings in this country and our own balance of payments.

Some of the speeches today have rather suggested that if the balance in one's bank is not big enough, all one has

to do is to have a bigger cheque book. That is a device which has often been tried and which has not worked very well. What we need is, as I say, a strong balance of payments position and sufficient savings at home. It is precisely to that end that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor is bending his efforts, in the Budget, to stimulate savings and to strengthen our balance of payments. I will, of course, report to both my right hon. Friends, the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations and the Secretary of State for the Colonies the suggestions, many of them very valuable ones, which have been made.

I should like to thank my hon. Friend the Member for Shrewsbury, the proposer of the Motion, and my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, West, who seconded it, for making this debate possible, and for their admirable speeches. On behalf of the Government, I am perfectly willing to accept the Motion. There is only one slight rider that I would add. We all agree that investment in the Commonwealth should be greater. What I am saying is that it is at the moment as high as we can make it, given the present financial position. Our object is to improve that financial position, and when we have done so greater investment will result.

Mr. Langford-Holt : The Motion states:

"presses Her Majesty's Government to consider as a matter of urgency, in consultation with other members of the Commonwealth . . ."

I think it was unanimous, on all sides of the House, that this was a subject which not only should be considered at the forthcoming meeting of Prime Ministers, but should be considered at the head of the agenda. I realise that my right hon. Friend cannot give a straight answer now, but will he see that that is put forward to the Prime Minister as being the unanimous view of the House?

Mr. Birch : I will certainly see that the Prime Minister is informed of that view.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House, believing that the development of the natural resources required for the economic and social progress of the Commonwealth and Empire depends largely on the provision of adequate capital and technical skill, and not being satisfied that the needs of the Commonwealth and Empire, in these

respects are being met adequately at present, presses Her Majesty's Government to consider as a matter of urgency, in consultation with other members of the Commonwealth, how best these aims can be achieved.

H-BOMB TESTS (FOOD CONTAMINATION)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—[Mr. R. Thompson.]

3.57 p.m.

Mr. Hector Hughes (Aberdeen, North): It would be difficult to find in the history of mankind a problem of more general urgency than that of preserving the world's food supply from contamination by strontium 90 released by modern hydrogen bomb tests. It would seem to me axiomatic that any Government which promotes such tests should, as a condition precedent, provide protection against the dire, terrifying and horrifying results from worldwide contaminated food.

The questions I want the Minister to answer are these. What protection is being provided? What is being done towards international agreement on this urgent matter? Why are there no urgent meetings of heads of Governments? Why has no decision of the United Nations been sought? What is the policy of the British Government? Why should these tests not be banned among civilised nations in the same way as poison gas has been banned? Alternatively, why not specify Civil Defence methods in detail combined with training in food protection against the contamination threat?

My object is to draw attention to the non-disclosure of protective measures for preserving mankind from the disasters which threaten it with cancer, leukaemia and agonising death from radioactive food. I hope, by this means, to stimulate international activity in this matter, to elicit British Government policy, to minimise the risks and to eliminate the dangers from which our own and future generations otherwise may be afflicted.

Whatever be my own views on the manufacture, testing and use of hydrogen bombs, I shall not complicate this debate by discussing their abolition, either multilateral or unilateral. What I want to know is what the Governments are doing, and, in particular, what the British Government are doing, aided by

Mr. Harvey : I note my hon. Friend's observations.

Mr. H. Morrison : As the Question asks about the balance of arms being supplied to the Middle East, surely the Joint Under-Secretary can state whether Israel has made application. He might be able to state whether there is any result. Is Question Time to become just fictional? Why should he refuse information? Has he been taking lessons in avoiding answers from the Lord Privy Seal who, when he was Joint Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, similarly refused to give the House any information?

Mr. Harvey : With the deepest respect to the right hon. Gentleman, I think that it is unwise for him to refer to anybody's experience as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

In reply to the first part of his Question, I can add nothing to what I have already said.

Sir L. Ungoed-Thomas : In view of the statement by the Joint Under-Secretary that the Tripartite Declaration is considered by him as being in operation for the purpose of considering the supply of arms, and of the statement of the Government on a previous occasion that the Tripartite Declaration is not in operation, will the hon. Gentleman inform the House for which purpose the Government consider that Declaration to be in operation and for which purpose they consider it to be not in operation?

Mr. Lipton : That is another question.

Mr. Harvey : It is, in fact, another question, but, arising out of the Questions that have been asked, I should like to make it perfectly clear that the Tripartite Declaration does not call for the maintenance of a balance.

Mr. Noel-Baker rose—

Mr. Speaker : Order.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUPPLY

[11TH ALLOTTED DAY]

Considered in Committee.

[Sir CHARLES MACANDREW in the Chair]

CIVIL ESTIMATES AND ESTIMATES FOR REVENUE DEPARTMENTS, 1957-58

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That a further sum, not exceeding £40, be granted to Her Majesty, towards defraying the charges for the year ending on 31st March, 1958, for the following services connected with Colonial Territories and the South African Protectorates, namely:—

CIVIL ESTIMATES, 1957-58		£
Class II, Vote 7 (Colonial Office) ...		10
Class II, Vote 8 (Colonial Services) ...		10
Class II, Vote 9 (Development and Welfare (Colonies, etc.)) ...		10
Class II, Vote 5 (Commonwealth Services) ...		10
	Total ...	£40

COLONIAL TERRITORIES AND SOUTH AFRICAN PROTECTORATES

3.34 p.m.

Mr. James Callaghan (Cardiff, South-East): The Opposition made a request for this debate today, and the Government immediately conceded it, with a special purpose in mind. On comparatively frequent occasions we have debates on particular colonial subjects and Colonial Territories, but there have been very few days recently when we have had a general debate which has enabled us to discuss a number of territories in which there is neither revolution, war, subversion nor unrest.

It seemed to us highly desirable that we should have an opportunity for a debate that might be limited, with the assent of hon. Members—who are, of course, free to debate anything which they choose—to a number of areas which do not commonly hit the headlines. Indeed, there is a lot to be said for having a debate about them before they do hit the headlines. We therefore asked

[MR. CALLAGHAN.]
the Colonial Secretary, and he immediately agreed, that we might discuss some of the territories in the Colonies with that in mind.

Although nothing I will say can limit the area of the debate at all, I would just like to express my personal view that it would be very useful if, for a few hours, we could discuss the affairs of those territories which are not necessarily large, but which rarely come into the main news in this country. There are three or four such territories about which I should like to make some comments, and I am sure that some of my hon. Friends will want to talk about others. Then, perhaps, we could have some discussion about our general arrangements for handling colonial matters.

The first territory about which I should like to ask the Colonial Secretary to make his policy clearer is Tanganyika, because some reports and protests have been reaching London about the treatment of one of the political parties there—the Tanganyika African National Union. I understand that Mr. Nyerere, who leads that party, may not address open air meetings, although, apparently, he is allowed to address meetings if they are held in a hall. It is said that the dangers of public disturbance are very much reduced in that way.

That, in any case, is a matter of opinion, but what did alarm me when I asked for an explanation of that restriction was to be told by Lord Perth, for the Colonial Office, that what had alarmed the Government was the tone and delivery of Mr. Nyerere's speeches as much as their content. I must say that it is a new form of censorship to say that open air meetings should not be held because of the tone and delivery of a leader's speeches as distinct from their content. I am extremely surprised that the Governor should take this view. I suppose that he has reached it because he finds it difficult to bring any complaints against the Tanganyika African National Union about the content of the speeches.

I am told, for example, that a tape recording was made of the speech by Mr. Nyerere on this particular occasion, and that that recording is available to the Governor at any time he wishes to

challenge any of the comments that have been made by Mr. Nyerere. Whether or not the Governor has heard that tape recording I do not know, but it seems very odd indeed that, on the basis of someone's tone and delivery, an injunction of this sort should be laid on the Tanganyika African National Union.

What is quite clear is that there has been no breach of the peace. I cannot trace there being any disturbance at all at these meetings but, apparently, reporters have been going back to the Governor and have been telling him that some of the contents of the speeches are extremely dubious. Some of the complaints which are made are so childish that I can hardly believe them, but I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman just what reliance he places upon the reports brought back to the Governor by persons who may or may not be accurate in their recollection. After all, all of us in this Committee have had the experience of being reported by skilled reporters and not all of us would say that the results are always accurate.

I must say that I think that the Governor, according to my information at the moment, is making much too heavy weather of the reports which are being brought back, especially as Mr. Nyerere himself does not glory in the charges made, but repudiates the sentiments which he is alleged to have uttered. He indicates that, so far from behaving in an unconstitutional way, it is his desire that the progress of the Tanganyika Union should be on a constitutional basis.

I understand that on 18th January last there was a trial of an African member of T.A.N.U. who had claimed that the Tanganyika African National Union had obtained full self-government and that, therefore, everybody had the right to disobey the Native Authority. He was charged with sedition, found guilty and sentenced. That seems to me to be the proper way of dealing with a situation of that sort. But with a leader of Mr. Nyerere's standing it seems to me to be rather short-sighted to deny him access to open air meetings, and to deny him access—if my information is right—to particular provinces without any charges being brought against him at all. This seems to me to be the way to turn a constitutional leader into something quite different.

If I may sum up his policy as he has expressed it to me, it seems to be this. First, he does not say that foreign investment is unwelcome, which is one of the complaints made against him, though that complaint could be heard frequently from time to time in this House. What he does say—and here I have a great deal of sympathy with him—is that South African investment is unwelcome. There was a proposal to bring a South African company into Tanganyika, and I can understand the fears of any political party in any other part of the Continent of Africa at the proposal to bring South African capital into East Africa. That, I understand, is his attitude towards foreign investment.

Mr. Nyerere complains that the policy of multi-racialism as it is being interpreted is a policy to prepare a white minority to govern the indigenous majority. His case is that minorities should not have more influence than majorities. He is claiming equal representation between the majority and the minority. None of this seems to me to be very revolutionary. It seems to be in full accord with the natural development of a country in which there are 8 million Africans and 50,000 Europeans. I cannot understand why the Governor, on the very slight evidence that has been published, should have indulged in this rather heavy-handed action which is denying the leader of one of the largest political parties access to certain parts of the country.

I should also like to comment on the news that is published in the newspapers this morning that the Franchise Bill, which was to have extended the franchise to some parts of the country, has now been withdrawn by the Chief Secretary because of the opposition of unofficial members of the Legislature. I thought that the Chief Secretary, if he is correctly reported, adopted an unnecessarily military attitude. He says, in rather threatening tones, that unofficial members must accept responsibility for the withdrawal of the Bill. They are, of course, pressing that the franchise should be more widely extended. It seems to me to be a quite natural desire and proposition to be put forward by a body like the Tanganyika African National Union.

I should like to ask the Colonial Secretary for what purpose has this proposed extension of the franchise been

withdrawn? Is it intended that there should now be new negotiations started with the leaders of the Tanganyika African National Union in order to get agreement on the franchise, or has it been withdrawn out of pique because they cannot get agreement? If it were the second, it would be reprehensible. I cannot believe that a Governor would behave in that way. In that case, there must be some other explanation, and I should like to know what it is.

I am bound to remind the Under-Secretary that the Governor and the Government here have been very slow in introducing any extension of the franchise whatsoever. It is five years since Professor Mackenzie reported on the possibility of extending constituencies on a single member basis with a communal vote. Five years have gone by, and we have now reached this stage in which a Bill is introduced into the Assembly and is almost immediately withdrawn because opposition is proposed to it.

Certainly, the franchise was to be withdrawn on a very narrow basis. I am told that it excluded both grade 2 school teachers in the primary schools and African nurses. If neither of those categories are worthy of being included in the franchise, it cannot be expected to meet with much acquiescence on the part of those who are most directly involved in the legislation. The qualifications, I am told, are that one must have property of £500, or an annual income of £200—the average income is £13 a year, so there will not be many Africans included in that basis—or education up to standard 12.

I should like to pass to the subject of West Africa. The conference on Nigeria is about to start and, therefore, I should not like to say anything that would make the task of the Colonial Secretary more difficult there. I should, however, like to say how pleased we must all be that the Nigerian delegation is coming here to speak with a united voice. At one time it seemed unlikely that the North, West and East could agree, but now they seem to have reached agreement. That must be a source of satisfaction, and it must make it very easy for the Colonial Secretary to handle this problem to have unity on the other side.

I should like to say a word about Sierra Leone, where the results of the elections are coming in. The new House of Representatives is being formed as a result

[MR. CALLAGHAN.] of these elections, and I am bound to say, without taking any sides in the political struggles out there, that all of us ought to be glad that the national parties seem to be thriving rather than those based upon particular sections of the community or geographical sections of the electorate. It seems far better that we should have a national expression of opinion than regional or sectional expressions of opinion.

I should like to know whether the Under-Secretary will raise with the new House of Representatives the unnecessary rule which prevents candidates from taking their seats if they have been disqualified at any time from practising their profession. This, I understand, is an indefinite disqualification. The matter has been raised in the House here. The candidate concerned stood for the election and was defeated, so that for practical and immediate purposes the issue does not arise, but there is an issue of principle here.

The rules of candidature, I understand, as drawn in this way are more rigid than they are as drawn for membership of this House, and it seems to me quite wrong that somebody should be indefinitely prevented from taking his seat in the House of Representatives, even if elected, because at some time in the past he may have been disqualified for any period, however short, from practising his own profession.

Indeed, the Sierra Leone Bar Association has sent a deputation to the Governor asking that this disqualification should be removed. That seems a reasonable proposal, and although the Under-Secretary may argue that it is for the House of Representatives to take the initiative, I hope he will not leave it in that way. This is something on which we ourselves might state our views before the appropriate members of the Sierra Leone Legislature. The Colonial Office will be having constitutional discussions with Sierra Leone as a result of these new elections, and we must be prepared to see them take further steps along the road to self-government, and indeed we should welcome those steps forward.

As far as I can gather from the programme of the party that has won the election, both roads and taxation are in the forefront of the programme. These

will need a very sound economy, and the fact that the economy seems to be turning over from a peasant economy to more reliance on mineral exploitation may help them to raise the revenue that they must have if they are to push these reforms forward, and we shall have a substantial responsibility in this matter.

May I say a word about Singapore? While we were delighted with the formation of the new self-governing States within the Commonwealth—and we welcome the agreement that the Colonial Secretary reached—I wonder why he had to put the sting in the tail at the last moment. There was apparently one major disagreement. Apart from the request by the Chief Minister that Singapore's affairs should be handled in this country by the Commonwealth Relations office—they are left with the Colonial Office—there was only one major disagreement, and that was about the condition that persons who have been engaged in subversive activities shall not be eligible for election to the Assembly. *The Times* reported that the delegation protested at the unilateral imposition of the constitution.

Singapore Ministers will have full responsibility, as I understand, for preserving internal security and for preventing subversion. Why, therefore, was this barb thrust into an agreement which would otherwise have been acceptable? Is it true that it was introduced at the very last stage, right at the end of the discussions? If it was, why was it left until then? Why was it brought in when the delegation was about to go from this country, and when it would make more dubious the chance of acceptance of the proposals by the people of Singapore? Quite apart from the reason for that—and I hope we shall be told the reason why that condition was brought in at that stage—why was it brought in at all?

Anyone who has met the Singapore leaders feels that they are quite capable of looking after themselves and of dealing with the Communists, if they feel they are likely to be a danger. There is nothing more likely to weaken the authority of the Ministers there, as I see it, or of the leaders of the non-Communist parties, than the suggestion that they are not capable of handling some of their own people themselves. Certainly, the view of Mr. Lim Yew Hock, who has expressed it publicly, is that the electors

would take care of those people, anyway. I say to the Colonial Secretary that it was a mistake to bring this condition in right at the last moment, without, so far as I have heard, any previous intimation of it.

I understand that on 30th April the Legislative Assembly approved the agreement, but refused to accept the condition that "subversives" should be prohibited from contesting the 1958 elections. It is not too late to reconsider this proposition. I understand from the newspaper reports, which are all we have to rely upon in these matters, that Mr. Lim Yew Hock intends to raise this matter again, and to come back again to see the Colonial Secretary. I ask that in that event, in the event of further negotiations, the Colonial Secretary should reconsider this issue. He is completely safeguarded, and there is no reason unnecessarily to humiliate the leaders of political opinion in Singapore in this way.

I turn to the last of the Colonial Territories whose affairs I wish to raise today, and that is British Guiana. Elections are to be held in August, I understand.

Miss Jennie Lee (Cannock): Hear, hear.

Mr. Callaghan: I would say, in parenthesis, in view of the interjection of my hon. Friend the Member for Cannock (Miss Lee), that no doubt a number of my hon. Friends will want to deal in greater detail than I shall with some of the problems that I am going to raise, and they will, perhaps, re-emphasise some of them and, perhaps, present some of them rather differently. I do not think that that will necessarily weaken the debate; I think it will strengthen it, even though it may mean that there will not be continuity of theme in the debate.

A number of us are disturbed by the situation in that Colony where elections are due to take place in August. The question which arises there, and which is causing dissatisfaction, is: how does the Governor intend to use his powers, after the election, to nominate those members of the new Assembly for whom he is responsible? I believe that there are 14 to be elected, three official members, and 11 to be nominated by the Governor. It is quite clear, is it not, to us all that the Governor could so use his power of nomination as to frustrate the will of the electorate? That is quite clear. Even if

one party got all the elective seats he could use his powers to nominate 11 members to frustrate the result of the election.

In Trinidad, a similar situation arose, but after the election it was decided that those who were to be nominated by the Governor should broadly represent the wishes of the electorate, as they had been expressed. I also understand that in the agreement which has been reached for the forthcoming elections in Mauritius it has been promised that the Governor will not use his powers of nomination to frustrate the will of the electorate.

I ask the Colonial Secretary if the Governor will undertake so to use his powers in British Guiana that the will of the electorate is not frustrated. I fully understand the difficulty of a situation in which Dr. Jagan and Mr. Burnham are competing in this election. I have read Dr. Jagan's speeches. In particular, I read that very long speech which he made at his annual conference last year. It seemed to me to be a perfect repetition of Stalinist thinking. I would say that he is one of the last of the Stalinists.

However, if we are to have an election we really cannot hold it on the basis that we shall concede the results of the election only provided that a certain party does not win. If we have decided to hold the election we have got to go through with it. It seems to me that, having decided to take this next constitutional step, the Colonial Secretary, whatever the results of the election, must allow the people of that country to determine their future. We do not know that Dr. Jagan will win the election, but, suppose, he does, I am not saying that if he does, and takes up office, and then proceeds to govern in a way which makes a second election unlikely—in other words, if he tries to establish a totalitarian régime—the Governor should not use the considerable powers he has in reserve.

However, I do not see how we can at this stage try in this way to tie the results of the election so as to ensure that even if one of the Communist parties gets a majority we prevent it from functioning by the Governor's nominating sufficient people to ensure that that party has not a majority. If we are to have this election we must take the risks of it. We must have a certain amount of trust.

[MR. CALLAGHAN.]

We have to see what the result is. I would, therefore, appeal to the Colonial Secretary to take this risk and to announce now, or have it announced by the Governor, that he will not frustrate the victory of any political party through his own nominations.

I would quote what Mr. McKitterick, who has recently been there, wrote in an article recently in the *Manchester Guardian* :

"The real strength of Dr. Jagan and Mr. Burnham lies in the economic frustration of a country where the pressure of population is rising and where so little is being done."

The burden of his argument was that the Government were lethargic and that no real steps were being taken to open up the country or to raise the standards in a great many areas of the country.

My hon. Friend the Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Slater), who has recently come back from that territory, has given us a most graphic account of the absence of road communications, which are a necessary beginning to opening up any territory at all, for there must be communication with the interior. There is no doubt there is a great deal to be done, and the sooner we have a representative Government to get ahead with the work the better it will be for the people of British Guiana.

For the last five minutes of my speech I should like to make some general remarks about our own arrangements in the House of Commons for handling colonial affairs, and the relationship between the Colonial Office and the Commonwealth Relations Office. We have had two recent examples of the way in which it is becoming increasingly unsatisfactory. Mr. Lim Yew Hock, when he came here from Singapore, asked that the affairs of Singapore should be transferred from the Colonial Office to the Commonwealth Relations Office. That request was rejected by the Government. I do not complain of that, but I mention it to show that there is complaint about which office handles some of these affairs. Sir Roy Welensky has asked that a special office should be set up to handle the affairs of the Central African Federation.

I have been turning back the records, and I see that, as recently as 1930-31, the same Minister held the joint posts of

Commonwealth Relations, or the Dominions Office, as it then was, and Colonial Secretary, and, apparently, the separation into two offices is a comparatively recent innovation. I well understand, and I think we have to be very careful here, that every African, or every member of a territory that has not yet fully achieved self-determination, should regard himself as completely protected, and that no alteration in our administrative machinery here should give him the feeling that that degree of protection is lessened. That seems to me absolutely cardinal, for in politics symbolism is extremely important.

Nevertheless, I can see that an unsatisfactory relationship is being created in our Commonwealth and colonial affairs. First, in the Colonial Office, even under the energetic administration of the Colonial Secretary—and whatever other adjective I might apply to him, I would never say that he was not energetic—obviously, he is working himself out of a job. He is in a declining office.

On the other hand, the functions, or at any rate the responsibilities, of the Commonwealth Relations Office are increasing. The Commonwealth Relations Office is not one of my favourites. It never seems to me to be much more than a post office, and it seems to have a purely negative conception of its relationship to the Commonwealth as a whole. I am sorry to say this, but the hon. Gentleman who is at present Under-Secretary of State has not been there long enough to bear any responsibility for it. [AN HON. MEMBER: "He was at the Post Office."] Perhaps that is why they transferred him.

This seems to me to warrant a fresh look at the relationship between these two offices. There is something to be said for looking at the staffing of both these offices, and I should like to see the Commonwealth Relations Office injected with a little of the vigour, energy and positive Commonwealth conception that undoubtedly inspires the Colonial Office. There is a feeling in the Colonial Office that there is an end in view and an objective, and the Department is trying to work towards it, but I cannot see anything like that emerging in the Commonwealth Relations Office.

Therefore, without reaching any conclusion, because I am bearing in mind the

whole time that we should recognise our very great obligations to the coloured members of the Commonwealth, who feel that they are in need of our protection. I ask that we should re-examine this relationship. It seems to me to be quite absurd that one's status at the Prime Ministers' conference or in the Commonwealth itself should depend to some extent, according to a common view, upon who deals with one in the home Government. That seems to me to be nonsense.

I come now to another matter—Parliamentary Questions. My hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, South-East (Mr. Benn), who is a great arithmetician, worked out the other day that the Colonial Office receives 800 Questions a year. They appear on the Notice Paper on only one day, and, because of the way in which the Departments revolve, for Oral Questions, that means that the Colonial Office comes up for questioning only every three, four or five weeks. That seems to me to be increasingly unsatisfactory, and I understand that the Colonial Secretary is not unsympathetic to that view and that he would like to appear on more frequent occasions so that he could defend his policy.

There are, I believe, some conversations going on at present, and it is the view of this side of the Committee that there should be an additional day devoted to Questions to the Colonial Office, and that it should be arranged in such a way that Questions should appear for Oral Answer every week, so that we can have the opportunity, as these matters arise throughout the Commonwealth, to present the Colonial Secretary with them at no longer than seven-day intervals.

Another matter which I want to raise, because of the growing importance of Commonwealth and colonial discussions—and I approach it with some reluctance and hesitation—is the committee system. I am no lover of the committee system as such. I do not want to see it grow unduly in the House, because far too many of us spend far too much time in committees now and not enough on the Floor of the House, but I think there is a case for considering here, to put it no higher than that, whether we do not need another forum outside this Chamber in which the affairs of these territories can be considered at regular intervals and in which information can be obtained.

I fully realise that, in what I have said about the territories I have been discussing, I am relying upon newspaper reports and on the voluntary work done by a number of devoted persons who spend their time in gathering this information in order to provide an informed opinion both in this House and in the country. This is really a rather slapdash way of doing it, when we have responsibilities for about 80 million people in 47 different territories, and I am, therefore, putting the thought—it is not a proposal—to the Committee that we ought to consider whether there is not a better way of organising our affairs so that the problems of the territories overseas could be brought before hon. Members of this House more regularly and more officially than they are at present.

I would add a comment on what I regard as an absolutely ridiculous situation, which is the infinitesimal sum that we spend every year on hon. Members of this House visiting our Colonial Territories and our Commonwealth Territories. It really is quite monstrous that, where we have the responsibilities of this House being exercised at the moment for 80 million people, we should last year have spent, or the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association should have spent, £7,000 on visits by Members of this House to overseas territories. I cannot believe that I am pressing against a door which is firmly shut. I imagine that the Colonial Secretary would welcome an extension of these visits; at any rate, I hope he would.

At present, if I may put it in this way, we spend on these visits, in 12 months, one-tenth of the sum which an Italian football club was prepared to pay to secure a footballer a fortnight ago; or, shall we say, it is equal to one of the smaller prizes in Littlewood's football pool in a bad week. This is the way in which we are governing, or attempting to govern, our great territories overseas.

If, because of the failure of information to percolate here, trouble arises in three, four or five years' time, there will be no hesitation on the part of the Ministry of Defence to send a battalion of soldiers, and we could get 1,500 out there without hardly blinking an eyelid. I think that a visit of three Members of Parliament today is worth many companies of British soldiers in four or five

[MR. CALLAGHAN.] years' time, and that we should forestall a lot of trouble if we were prepared to extend this system.

Speaking for myself, I have got to the stage when I prefer to stay at home, but I hope that nobody will think that there is any intention in this matter to get jaunts round the Commonwealth. It seems to me that it really is part of our duty that there should be regular contacts between parts of the Commonwealth for which we are responsible and ourselves. I was ashamed the other day to hear that when Uganda wanted four Members of Parliament to go out to visit that territory the territory itself paid all the fares and expenses. Is not that a rather shabby way of running the Commonwealth? There is much more here that the Treasury ought to do, and I believe that it would be the wish of the House of Commons that it should.

May I conclude with a reference to scientific research in the Commonwealth? The Reports of the Government's Advisory Committee on Scientific Policy are extremely valuable, and I will only mention that both the Eighth and Ninth Reports, published during the last two years, have commented upon the inadequacy of scientific research in the Colonial Territories. I understand that we have throughout the whole commonwealth only 450 scientists, one-tenth of the number we have in this country, and yet, as is pointed out in these reports by Sir Solly Zuckerman, who presided over one of the working parties, the great problems that confront the Colonial Territories today are the pressure of populations and food supplies.

We really cannot claim that we are doing our duty to the people of the Colonial Territories unless the advantages that they are securing in the way of better health, caused, for example, by the abolition of a number of the dreaded diseases that used to afflict people in these territories, are followed up by positive proposals and measures for increasing the access to food and the capacity for producing crops and also for reducing the pressure of population. I believe that we ought to follow these matters up very much more than we have been doing so far.

I know that there are some colonial research workers in a number of these

territories. The Report recommends, for example, the institution of an institute of tropical agriculture in this country, which should form a centre from which research could be directed and information could be channelled and to which people working in the tropics could come to see what is being done and then go out again. I understand that this Report went to Ministers in November. I should like the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies to tell us whether he has any information about the decision reached on this issue.

In the last six months, during which I have been making a detailed study of colonial affairs, I have marvelled more and more at the devotion with which a number of hon. Members give practically their whole time to following the affairs of our fellow-citizens in our overseas territories. A great deal of devoted work goes on in the House of Commons among hon. Members of all parties which rarely comes to the surface and is rarely acknowledged. It is valuable work in preparing the people of the Commonwealth for self-government and in making relations between us and them easier than otherwise they would be.

As one who has joined this company, for the time being, at least, I should like to say how much I welcome the privilege of working with all those hon. Members who are doing their best to ensure that the approach of the people of the Commonwealth to self-government is made in a way that does honour to us all.

4.12 p.m.

The Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. John Profumo): I am sure that the Committee has listened with very great interest to the thoughtful and constructive speech which has been made by the hon. Member for Cardiff, South-East (Mr. Callaghan).

I agree with the hon. Gentleman that because our deliberations are, of necessity, frequently concentrated on those trouble spots and parts of the Colonies that hit the headlines, there is the possibility of an impression being created that Parliament is not sufficiently concerned with the problems of other territories to whose people our responsibility is equally great.

Therefore, we on this side of the Committee are grateful to the Opposition for giving us a chance of having a debate

today so that we may consider progress in some of these territories upon which the limelight does not so often fall, and also to survey the Colonial Territories as a whole and, indeed, our general policy.

I shall hope to show that in British colonial policy today we have one of the most inspiring endeavours which has ever been undertaken in the whole history of humanity. We are involved in an enterprise in which we and our colonial partners can justifiably take immense pride. We are building new nations throughout the world, we are leading people of all races, creeds and colours to a state in which, we hope, they will be able to stand on their own feet, politically independent and economically prosperous.

I think that the Committee will agree that, apart from the policies of successive Governments here in the United Kingdom and, indeed, the interest to which the hon. Member for Cardiff, South-East referred, of large numbers of Members of Parliament, the credit for the successes which have been achieved is chiefly due to the colonial administrators, the doctors, teachers, engineers, agriculturists, missionaries and many others in all walks of life who have given such devoted service to the colonial peoples, and, indeed, to the fundamental intelligence, reasonableness and capacity to learn of the colonial people themselves.

Let us consider some of the more recent achievements and some of the developments which are now in progress in various Colonies. The achievement of Ghana's independence has been of significance not simply to the people of that territory, but throughout the whole of Africa and, indeed, all our Colonies. In August, the Federation of Malaya is due to celebrate the inauguration of independence within the Commonwealth.

Later this month, my right hon. Friend the Colonial Secretary will preside over a conference of delegates from Nigeria, which will decide the next steps to be taken in the constitutional progress of that territory. In Tanganyika, the Governor has recently announced further steps towards constitutional advance. My right hon. Friend will be dealing more fully with the affairs of that Colony later in the debate.

Only last Thursday evening I was able to give some information about recent

constitutional developments in Zanzibar. Elections for the Legislative Council are to be held there for the first time on 21st July.

As the Committee will remember, a series of meetings was held at the end of February between delegates from Mauritius, the Governor, Sir Robert Scott, and myself to discuss the new constitution to be introduced in 1958. A report on this conference has already been given to Parliament.

Mauritius, with its multi-racial and multi-religious character, is not an easy country for which to devise a constitution which will prove fully acceptable to all in every detail. I was much impressed, however, by the willingness of the delegates to try to reconcile their differences. The Governor returned to Mauritius last month and he is now arranging for the introduction of the Ministerial system which is the first stage of the main changes to be introduced in the autumn of next year.

It was not possible at the meetings in London to reach agreement on the system of voting to be adopted. The question was whether or not to have single-member constituencies. It was finally agreed that a committee of three people from outside Mauritius should be appointed by my right hon. Friend to look into the question. This commission will examine whether it is possible to divide Mauritius satisfactorily into single-member constituencies. If the commission finds that it is not possible, it will proceed to settle boundaries for 11 three-member constituencies. All the delegates from Mauritius pledged themselves to cooperate in working whichever of these systems will be introduced. My right hon. Friend is now taking urgent steps to appoint the members of the commission so that it can get to work as soon as possible.

The task of the recent Singapore Constitutional Conference was to find a solution which would accord to Singapore the fullest measure of self-government, short of independence, and, at the same time, place no unnecessary obstacles in the way of eventual merger with the Federation of Malaya, reserve to Her Majesty's Government the right of occupation, control and use of the base, and provide the necessary machinery for consultation on matters of mutual interest.

[MR. PROFUMO.]

Agreement was reached on a constitution which will confer full internal self-government on Singapore, leaving the United Kingdom Government responsible only for the defence and the external affairs of the territory, for which purpose they will have the right of occupation and use of the base. In recognition of its advanced status, Singapore will be known as the "State of Singapore". It will have a Malayan-born Queen's representative and will have local citizenship equal in status to that of fully independent members of the Commonwealth. The Committee will have been glad to have heard that the agreement has now been endorsed by the Singapore Legislative Assembly.

The hon. Member for Cardiff, South-East mentioned one point on which agreement was not reached. As a temporary condition, Her Majesty's Government have insisted that people who are in prison because they have been engaged in subversive activities should not be eligible for election to the first Legislative Assembly of the State of Singapore. It is vitally important to get the new constitution off to a good start and we felt that some temporary restriction was necessary to prevent the forces of Communism, known to be strong in Singapore, from using the democratic machinery to destroy democracy.

No one can seriously think that people who are known to be engaged in subversive activities are fit and proper people to play a responsible part in the first legislature of this self-governing State. Safeguards against the abuse of this provision, exist in the form of an appeal tribunal, and in the fact that the Governor will continue to have reserve powers until the introduction of the new constitution.

Incidentally, there have been indications that the public reaction to the "subversives" clause is not as unfavourable as that of the political parties in Singapore. A leading article in the *Singapore Standard* has stated that

"... the provision would be supported unreservedly by all intelligent and loyal citizens"—

and that

"its inclusion was of prominent importance to the future peace and welfare of Singapore."

Another newspaper carried the headline:

"A big cheer for the U.K. clause on the 'bad-hats'."

It went on to say that the clause would be welcomed by the man and woman in the street.

Conditions really are very different in Singapore from those in this country. Singapore is in the front line of the battle with Communism, and politics there can mean life or death. My right hon. Friend must hold himself free, if he is convinced that it is necessary, to do what he can to ensure the growth and emergence of the democratic principle and, indeed, to protect it.

Mr. A. Fenner Brockway (Eton and Slough): I appreciate the action of the hon. Gentleman. He has used the phrase "subversive persons in prison." Could he tell us whether this reservation also applies to persons in detention who have not been placed on trial?

Mr. Profumo: I am glad that the hon. Gentleman has picked me up on that point. I do not wish to mislead the Committee. I am sorry I used the expression "prison." Yes, those who are detained for subversive activity and are in detention are debarred, purely as a temporary measure for this first election, from standing as candidates.

Mr. F. Blackburn (Stalybridge and Hyde): Does the hon. Gentleman mean people who are detained in prison at the time, or people who are detained in prison at the time of the coming elections?

Mr. Profumo: At the time of the elections, when they take place.

Mr. Blackburn: Would the hon. Gentleman not agree that during the past year the Singapore Government have had difficulties to contend with, but that they have handled them effectively? Surely they could be trusted to handle this problem effectively, also.

Mr. Profumo: I hope that the hon. Gentleman will have a chance of elaborating his points. I want to place on record, out of respect for what the hon. Gentleman has said, what the Committee wants to know, namely, the reasons why my right hon. Friend and Her Majesty's Government have felt compelled to take this step at this time.

In Sierra Leone, a new and enlarged House of Representatives is now being elected. My right hon. Friend has agreed that should the new House wish to put

forward proposals for changes in the composition and formation of the Executive Council, and other related constitutional matters, he will be prepared to consider them. The hon. Gentleman has mentioned the question of disqualifications for election to the House of Representatives. As these disqualifications were introduced at the request of the Sierra Leone Ministers, my right hon. Friend did not think it would be right for him to overrule them in a matter which, in the Governor's view, was designed to secure high standards of integrity in public life.

Nor did my right hon. Friend think that it would be right to ask the Governor to postpone the elections to allow the petition which was put forward to be further considered. The life of the late Legislative Council has already been extended for six months. However, my right hon. Friend has undertaken that if, after the General Election a different view about these disqualifications is expressed in the new House of Representatives, he will be prepared to consider the matter afresh.

My right hon. Friend also proposes, in consultation with the Governor, to take up the matter again with Sierra Leone Ministers when they have settled in after the elections are over. I hope that answers a point which many other hon. Members may also have had in mind.

Mr. Callaghan: Of course, the House of Representatives will be composed of a majority which is opposed to the Leader of the party who is so disqualified. Therefore, I hope that the Minister himself, as the hon. Gentleman says, will take the initiative and will not necessarily wait for it to come from the House of Representatives.

Mr. Profumo: I have indicated that. But if this had been a really serious problem in the minds of the people in Sierra Leone I believe that it would have had a wider reflection in the results of the election.

Mr. Robert Edwards (Bilston): Is it not a fact that the petition was signed by over 5,000 citizens? Is not that considerable support?

Mr. Profumo: That petition was signed by a large number of people, but it does not appear to have been the major political issue at the time of the election or we would have found that some of

these people would have been returned, and that it would have had considerable effect on the behaviour during the election. So I do not think it was as serious as it has been made out. None the less, my right hon. Friend is prepared to consider the matter with the Governor when the elections are over.

Now a word about the West Indies. The most important current political activity in the West Indies concerns the federation of those territories which decided to unite at the conference held in London in February, 1956. The Standing Federation Committee is holding its third meeting this week in Trinidad, where it is expected to reach final agreement on proposals for a draft constitution. The Committee has already decided that the Federation shall be known as "The West Indies", and on its recommendation a nucleus of senior federal officers has been appointed. An interim, part-time Public Service Commission is now being set up.

There is still a considerable amount of planning to be done before the full establishment of the Federal Council in the spring of 1958, following the first elections to the Federal House of Representatives and the appointment of members to the Senate. Some of it must await the assumption of office of the Governor-General in the coming autumn, when the interim provisions of the Federal constitution will come into effect. Our earnest hope is that the Order in Council, incorporating the constitution which is now being prepared, should be accepted by early affirmative Resolutions when it is laid in draft before both Houses of Parliament in the course of the next few months.

In British Guiana, we have recently made important progress in the direction of a return to democratic institutions. Under the Order in Council of 19th December, 1956, there will again be an elected element in the Legislative Council. The arrangement gives considerable flexibility within the constitution in allowing, without further amendment of the constitutional instruments, future variations upwards in the number of elected members, and downwards in the number of nominated members. For the first elections on 12th August, however, the number of elected members will be 14. The matter of the nominated members

[MR. PROFUMO.]
is one for the Governor, as the Committee will recognise. I have no doubt that he will be guided in his decision about nominations by the attitude of the political leaders when the time comes. I know, however, that the Governor is as anxious as any that this should be a successful step towards the return of democratic Government in the Colony.

What we have done here is to amend the interim Constitution so as to allow for a very large stride forward. The Constitution still remains interim in character. It is certainly not the idea of Her Majesty's Government of what should be a settled constitution for British Guiana, but we cannot entirely put out of our minds the events of 1953, and we must show caution in following the uphill road to fully representative Government once more.

However, we were anxious that the period of marking time, which was recommended by the Robertson Commission, should be brought to an end at the earliest possible moment, and we are satisfied that this moment has arrived. What is now immediately ahead of us is a testing time during which we sincerely hope that the political parties in British Guiana, and particularly the elected members, will show, by a sense of responsibility in the conduct of public affairs, that they can safely and properly be trusted to shoulder yet more responsibilities, and so earn the right to further steps in the direction of self-government.

Miss Lee : Just for the sake of clarity, does the hon. Gentleman mean that some time has to elapse after the election in August when one has the elected members on probation? At the moment, we are left in a great deal of doubt. Cannot it be left entirely to the Governor to decide what is to be done immediately following the August elections? Or can we have an answer to the question already asked by my hon. Friend, whether the wishes of the electorate will be respected?

Mr. Profumo : I have already tried to answer the question which was asked by the hon. Gentleman. I want to be absolutely frank. The matter of how the nominated members are nominated must be left to the discretion of the Governor. Therefore, my right hon. Friend and I cannot say any more about it.

What I was trying to say was that the Governor is anxious that there should be a real advance. It would be wholly wrong for us to say anything by way of committing the Governor or Her Majesty's Government as to how the nominations will be made. All I would say is that we appreciate what the hon. Lady and the hon. Gentleman have in mind, and we are confident that the Governor will take the right decision.

Mr. Callaghan : I am obliged to the hon. Gentleman for giving way again. He says that consideration will be given to the attitude of the political leaders "at the time." In the event of the election resulting in a clear majority for one party, could he not undertake now that the nominations procedure will not be used in such a way as to frustrate the will of the electorate? After all, such an assurance has been given in respect of the Mauritius elections to take place later this year. What is the difference in this case?

Mr. Profumo : The hon. Gentleman has held office and knows that it would be wrong for me to give hypothetical undertakings. I do not take his question badly, but I must not give hypothetical undertakings. I fully appreciate how hon. Members opposite feel about this, and I am not trying to hide anything. I am sure that what has been said is clearly understood by hon. Members on all sides. I do not necessarily mean "agreed", but I hope it is understood.

I should now like to say something about recent developments in Aden. Since my right hon. Friend's statement on 6th March, there has been a further succession of frontier incidents in the Western Aden Protectorate near the border with the Yemen. These have been more in the nature of irritants than serious threats to security. The Yemeni authorities have continued to concentrate on the subversion of tribesmen inside the Protectorate. Meanwhile, negotiations have continued with the Government of the Yemen towards holding a meeting between representatives of Her Majesty's Government and the Government of the Yemen to restore peaceful conditions.

In Aden Colony itself an informal arrangement has already been brought into force whereby each of the unofficial members of the Legislative Council has assigned to him one or more departments

in the affairs of which he will specially concern himself and about which he will be provided with the fullest possible information. An additional unofficial member of the Executive Council has been appointed from the Arab community, and a committee has been set up to consider ways of speeding the process of appointing Adenis to fill Government posts.

The closing of the Suez Canal, as hon. Members will realise, caused considerable disruption in the economic life of the Colony, including some unemployment, particularly in the port, which both Government and employers took steps to mitigate as much as possible. It is now hoped that the restoration of shipping through the Suez Canal will restore the previous prosperity of the port.

Despite these troubles, the labour situation has remained quiet, but I ought to tell the Committee that I realise that there is scope for the improvement of relations between employers and employed and for guidance to the emergent trade unions. For those purposes, one of the Secretary of State's labour advisers is at present visiting Aden with Mr. James Young, a prominent ex-United Kingdom trade union official, and Mr. Dunning, of the Colonial Section of the Trades Union Congress.

Mr. Dunning will stay in Aden for some time and will advise the local unions on day-to-day problems of administration and organisation. We are most grateful for the ready co-operation which the T.U.C. has given in this effort, and I should also mention the valuable advice and help which has been received from the Secretary of the Overseas Employers' Federation, who visited Aden last year.

In the Somaliland Protectorate a Legislative Council has been established consisting of the Governor as President, three *ex-officio* members, five official members and six unofficial members. This Council is due to have its first meeting on 21st May. Hon. Members will probably wish to join with me in extending good wishes to all members of this new Council.

In October, 1956, Sir Christopher Cox, the Secretary of State's educational adviser, visited the Protectorate, and, in consultation with the Protectorate Government, submitted recommendations, in consequence of which a comprehensive

plan for expanding the educational services has been prepared. Separate provision is being made for scholarships for study abroad. These measures, I think, will enable the Somalis to play a steadily increasing part in the government of their country.

A large-scale plan for water development is being considered, and schemes for the extension of agriculture, forestry, irrigation and soil conservation are being carried out. It is also the intention to press ahead in the near future with the improvement of Berbera port. Finally, it is hoped that a large commercial enterprise will soon begin oil drilling operations in the Protectorate.

The livelihood of the nomadic inhabitants of the protectorate depends substantially on their enjoying access to the Haud and Reserved Areas of Ethiopia. In April, 1956, discussions were held in Addis Ababa between representatives of Her Majesty's Government and the Ethiopian Government on a number of topics including difficulties which had arisen in the operation of the 1954 Agreement. Some of these problems were ironed out, and other difficulties were referred to the British Liaison Officer and the Ethiopian Government's representative in the area, and their talks are still continuing. Meanwhile, I am happy to tell the Committee that the situation in the area since last autumn has been quiet.

Mr. John Dugdale (West Bromwich): Is the land on which there will be prospecting owned by the Government, or by whom is it owned? To whom will the royalties go should any oil be found?

Mr. Profumo : I would rather have notice of the details of that question, and I will write to the right hon. Gentleman. I am not absolutely certain of the conditions. I do know, however, that it is being done by concession, and I imagine that it will be done by concession in the normal way. I have already said that it will be done by private enterprise. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will permit me to write to him, which will enable me to get the facts right.

Mr. James Johnson (Rugby): Might I ask the hon. Gentleman a factual question about the dispute in the Haud?

[Mr. JOHNSON.]

Can he tell us whether he intends to increase, or has already increased, the number of policemen on our side? I believe that we have only 220 police, yet under the terms of the Treaty we could increase the number to 700. Has the number of police risen since the dispute was at its worst last year?

Mr. Profumo: All I can tell the hon. Gentleman is that the number is that which has been asked for locally. I cannot say whether it is as high as the figure that he has quoted, but we have not been asked to increase the number.

Mr. Callaghan: The real test is whether the tribesmen are able to move freely across the boundary without hindrance from the Ethiopian authorities. Can the hon. Gentleman give us an assurance that that is so?

Mr. Profumo: I cannot give that assurance, because that is one of the problems which was not ironed out and about which discussions are still going on. It will be difficult if there are too many interruptions. Other hon. Members wish to take part in the debate. My right hon. Friend will be speaking later and will be happy to deal with these other problems. If I try to deal with them I shall take too much time, and I already have to deal with a number of matters which the Committee may like to have on the record before the debate continues.

I was about to deal with one or two other aspects of general colonial development. There has been a really remarkable development of education in the Colonies. This is, naturally, most noticeable in countries in which formal education did not exist until comparatively recently. In Africa, there has been a striking increase in the facilities which have been made available for the vast population of school age. This is well illustrated in, for example, the four-fold increase since before the war in the enrolment in primary and secondary schools in Nigeria and East Africa. The rate of progress is being maintained, and since 1948 enrolment in these territories has doubled.

The number of girls attending school in the African and certain other territories is still not, of course, equal to the

corresponding figure for boys, but the encouragement given to their education has begun to take effect, and during the last five years the rate of increase in enrolment has been 25 per cent. higher for girls than for boys.

In the Far East, a similar, or even more striking, increase in school enrolment has been achieved. There has been a four-fold increase in Singapore and the doubling of enrolment in Malaya in the last ten years. In territories such as the West Indies, where the percentage of children enrolled is high, efforts have been concentrated on secondary education. In Jamaica, for example, enrolment in grant-aided secondary schools has doubled since the end of the war.

Progress in the schools depends to a very large extent on the provision of teachers and all overseas Governments have made great efforts to expand facilities for teacher-training. That is particularly true in Africa. Both in West and East Africa the number of teachers under training has doubled in the last six years, and elsewhere there has been similar progress. In Singapore, the rate has been even more striking, more than threefold.

I propose to say a few words about colonial students who come to this country to study. At the end of 1956, there were 12,622 colonial students in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, very nearly three times as many as there have been six years before. Of those colonial students, 3,170 were here on scholarships compared with 1,450 six years earlier. That seems to me to be substantial progress.

Mr. R. W. Sorensen (Leyton): Does that include nurses in the category of students?

Mr. Profumo: It includes all students, including, I am glad to say, engineers. The Committee may like to know that since the end of 1946 about 34,000 colonial students have arrived in this country to take courses of full-time study and of those approximately one-third have come on scholarships, the remainder as private students.

Finally, I should say something about recent economic developments in the Colonies, because without that my picture will not be complete. The Colonies have made steady economic progress in

the last few years. Since 1950, the total value of goods and services produced in the Colonial Territories has risen by more than one-third and there are particularly striking figures in the output of bauxite in Jamaica, copper in Northern Rhodesia, diamonds in Tanganyika, and coffee in Uganda.

Colonial cement production rose from less than 100,000 tons per annum in 1950 to more than 500,000 tons in 1955. In the same period output of electricity more than doubled in the Gold Coast, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanganyika, Trinidad and Uganda. The value of exports rose by about 14 per cent. between 1950 and 1955 and a further 6 per cent. in 1956. Imports increased by nearly one-half between 1950 and 1955 and a further 9 per cent. in 1956.

There has been considerable expansion in the rate of capital investment in the Colonies. Expenditure on such things as machinery, plant, equipment, buildings, and public works nearly doubled in value terms between 1950 and 1955. After allowing for price rises, there was an increase of more than one half in real terms over the period and a further substantial increase in 1956. The rate of expenditure by colonial Governments on development roughly doubled over that period. The Colonies' external reserves rose by more than three-quarters between the end of 1950 and the end of 1955.

The possession of these large assets is, of course, an important factor in the development planning of the Colonies and enables them to think and plan on a larger scale than would otherwise be possible. The revenue and expenditure of colonial Governments roughly doubled over that period. Her Majesty's Government are, of course, fully aware of the importance for colonial development of United Kingdom companies trading overseas and I am sure that the Committee will share my view of the value of the proposal made by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his recent Budget to grant these corporations tax relief.

I hope that I have said enough to give hon. Members some idea of the progress we have been making recently in different territories and in different fields. I have touched on some of the difficulties and some of the problems which we have to solve. I do not want in any way to sound

complacent. Indeed, complicated and weighty problems still lie on the road ahead. I have no doubt that hon. Members will have criticisms to make. That is right and proper and my right hon. Friend would not have it otherwise, for such criticisms can certainly be most helpful to us in the discharge of our responsibilities. But, as I said at the beginning of my speech, the British people have achieved and are achieving in our formerly dependent territories and those which are still dependent things in which we have the right to take a very real pride.

Before I sit down, I should like to remind the Committee of something which seems to me of great importance in the world today about our colonial policy and about the success which we are achieving in it. As everybody knows only too well, the world is divided into two ideological camps, the Western peoples and the Communist peoples. They are facing each other with hostility and suspicion. It is vital that we should convince the uncommitted people of the world, particularly the many millions who live in Asia and Africa and others who are now involved in what Mr. Adlai Stevenson has called "The revolution of rising aspirations", that their future lies with the West and not with Communism. Our success or failure in this will depend very considerably on British colonial policy. I think that I have said enough to remind the Committee that that policy has not been wholly unsuccessful.

Our colonial policy is also of the greatest significance in our relations with the Communist world itself. I wish that I could have the chance of asking some of those who still subscribe to Karl Marx's view of colonialism—some of the more open-minded, if there are any open-minded, inhabitants of Russia and other Communist countries—to consider what has happened in India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Ghana, the Caribbean, Nigeria, Malaya and elsewhere in our Colonial Territories and to compare British colonial policy with Russian colonial policy, to compare our achievements in Ghana with theirs in Hungary, ours in Malaya with theirs in Eastern Germany, our activities in the Caribbean with theirs in the Baltic States, our treatment of the people of Nigeria with the way they have treated some of their subject peoples in Central Asia.

[MR. PROFUMO.]

I should like to ask them to say sincerely and honestly whether they believe that British colonial policy today coincides more closely with Karl Marx's view of colonialism than does Russian colonial policy. I believe that if we could convince some of the Communist people, at any rate, that we are not the exploiting imperialists which they have been taught to believe, but that we are engaged in our Colonial Territories in a very great human endeavour for whose aims they themselves should have sympathy, we should perhaps come closer to achieving that mutual understanding with them upon which the lasting peace of the world depends.

4.49 p.m.

Mr. John Dugdale (West Bromwich): Like my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South-East (Mr. Callaghan) I welcome this discussion, a discussion which covers territories not normally covered in colonial debates, a discussion which is particularly designed to cover territories which are not the subject of tremendous controversy between the two sides of the Committee. I hope that we shall be able to pursue the discussion in that spirit, as we have done already; I myself certainly hope to do so.

In the first place, I want to refer to my hon. Friend's remarks about the Commonwealth Relations Office. Many of us are inclined to agree with him that it is steadily becoming more and more a simple post office. I realise the difficulty, as the decision does not lie with us alone. I notice that the Under-Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations is laughing at the thought of his transfer from one post office to another. I agree that it is a much bigger post office.

It is not only our affair, but the affair of other members of the Commonwealth, but I suggest that we should take the lead in proposing in some way to try to integrate a little more those nations which have now got their freedom and which, until now, have been concerned with disintegration in the sense of getting freedom and being allowed to go their own ways. Is it not now time to try to see whether we cannot get them to agree to work together a little more than they have done hitherto? I know that they work together in spirit, are part of the great Commonwealth, and pay tribute to

Her Majesty the Queen, but that is not enough. It would be very much better if we had some form of co-operation.

We have been told that there is great need for financial development in the Commonwealth, and we all agree about that. Cannot there be some kind of pooling of Commonwealth brains? Cannot some kind of organisation be set up to deal with this problem, so that all the financing will not be left to London but will be spread among all the members of the Commonwealth?

United Nations organisations are very often financed by many different countries, both rich and poor. The rich countries give a great deal, the poor a little, but each makes his contribution, and the result is a combined effort. We might have something on those lines in the Commonwealth. It would be a great help if we did. I ask the Under-Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations to consider asking his noble Friend to make representations to the Prime Minister along those lines, so that at future Prime Ministers' conferences, something more positive may be done than has been done up to now.

I now turn to the question of visits by hon. Members and Ministers to different parts of the Commonwealth, which was mentioned by my hon. Friend. Although I represent a constituency which places football upon a very high level, I still agree with my hon. Friend that we are doing far too little in contributing towards the cost of hon. Members' visits to Colonies only one-tenth of the amount which the Italians have paid for a famous footballer. I hope that more money can be given, because it would be a great advantage to the Colonies, to this country, and, indeed, to the Government.

I also hope that the Government will consider whether it would not be right to appoint another Minister to the Colonial Office. I know that Scotland is a very important country, but even so I do not think it right that more Ministers should be responsible for Scotland than for the whole of the Colonies. There is a case for having more Ministers, so that they can pay more visits and see for themselves what is happening in the Colonies.

I think that I am the only Minister ever to visit one part of the world which I know the right hon. Gentleman would

himself immensely like to visit, if he had the opportunity, namely, the Pacific islands. We have recently had many discussions about one of them, but they have been in connection with only one activity, and that not a very constructive one, namely, the detonation of a hydrogen bomb. Many other considerations affect the Pacific islands and the lives of the people who live in them. They are not merely some islands in an area which is to be the scene of the detonation of a hydrogen bomb.

The island in which the bomb is to be detonated is only one among the vast number of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands. I once asked an official in the Colonial Office if it would be possible to go to Christmas Island and also Ocean Island. "Yes," he said, "it is quite possible. We can certainly make arrangements for you to do so, but you realise, of course, that the two islands are 2,000 miles from each other." There is, in fact, a distance of 2,000 miles between two islands in a group governed by a system of remote control, with a governor in one island who, quite obviously, could not know as much as he would like to about what was happening in the others. Strange to relate, however, these islands have brought into being one of the best co-operative systems in the world, and I hope that the Secretary of State will tell us what is being done to help them develop it.

I turn from those islands to Fiji, which is a very happy island. I hope that because the island is happy we shall not say that we need not bother about it. As my hon. Friend said, it is worth while taking trouble in advance rather than waiting until trouble is upon us. I believe he said that two Members of Parliament in time were worth a regiment too late, or words to that effect. I heartily agree. I hope that Members of Parliament and Ministers will be able to pay sufficient visits to that island to see something of its problems. A real problem in Fiji arises from the fact that the Indian population is growing so fast that it surpasses the local population of Fijians. That problem must be remembered. At present, there is very good feeling among all races, but we must be certain that we do not find ourselves suddenly in a difficulty there, before we realise what is happening.

I now turn to some of the most beautiful but also most poverty-stricken and certainly most remote islands that I have ever seen, namely, the Solomon Islands. I should like to know what is happening in regard to the new organisation there. A Governor has been sent to the Solomon Islands, charged with the duty of looking after their interests, which was previously the responsibility of a High Commissioner for the whole Pacific. Is the Minister certain that we are not spending too much money in building imposing—very often hideously imposing—Whitehall offices for the Governor and his staff rather than concentrating upon developing the social services and helping the economic development of the islands?

In particular, is the geological survey complete? If so, has it shown any results? If so, can they be exploited? Will it, for instance, be possible to exploit upon a large scale the extensive forests there? I hope that it will, but I think that hon. Members should hear something about it. They should also be told something about a subject in relation to which I have frequently corresponded with the right hon. Gentleman, namely, the hospital. I agree that I saw it at a time when I and my hon. and right hon. Friends were responsible—and the right hon. Gentleman can quite fairly say that it was our fault—but it was then in a most terrible condition, and one which I thought a disgrace in any Colony. I hope that conditions are better now. I gather that improvements have been made. I hope that people can now go there without having showers of rain pouring on to their beds.

What is being done about communications? When I was there, they were appallingly bad—so bad that I suggested that any Governor who was appointed must, as a *sine qua non*, be a good sailor and never be seasick. I made that suggestion because it is not easy to journey from island to island in a small boat. In spite of all we have read about the Kon Tiki expedition I know that it is very difficult to go from island to island in a small boat. It would be better to have a reasonable system of communication between the islands.

I now turn to quite another part of the world, namely, the South African Protectorates. We should probably all agree about their very great importance.

[MR. DUGDALE.] First, they are important because of their size. Any guide book will tell us that Bechuanaland has an area of 275,000 square miles, compared with only 93,000 square miles in the whole of the United Kingdom, but that there are only 300,000 people in Bechuanaland as against 50 million in these islands.

I may be told, "Yes, but Bechuanaland is largely desert." That is quite true, but for all that something can be done about it. Today is the anniversary of the independence of Israel, and it may be a suitable day upon which to remind hon. Members of all that is being done by the Israelis in reclaiming their deserts. Can we not do something to see that the large areas of Bechuanaland are reclaimed, and that Bechuanaland becomes more prosperous than at present and capable of supporting a greater population? That can only be done if it gets help from the United Kingdom.

At present, I do not think that Bechuanaland is getting enough help. I would ask, first, for help to develop irrigation, because of the fact that so much of it is desert, and, secondly, for help to develop its communications. The Colonial Development Corporation wants, I understand—in fact, it says so in its Report—to carry out great developments in Swaziland. It is unable to do so at present owing to the lack of communications. It seems, therefore, to be of the utmost importance that adequate communications should be provided.

Not only do we want to see the economic development of these territories, but also the development of social services. Up to now education has been primarily the task of the missions—I think the Minister will agree with this—who have done it very well as far as they could with limited resources. It is not enough. We must see that the people have an adequate system of education.

When we come to the matter of health, the question is perhaps even more serious because there has been a considerable amount of tuberculosis there. Can the Minister say what is being done to combat this disease? What help is being sent from this country? I know that much has been done recently, and I do not want to give the impression that nothing is being done, but we cannot

do too much there. It is of the utmost importance that everything that can be done should be done to improve the conditions of these countries.

I pay tribute to the Colonial Development Corporation, which has invested no less than £6½ million in the Protectorates and made great progress with its work there. But now that the Corporation is losing Ghana, and may well lose other territories when they become free, it may be that there will be more money to spare for the Protectorates. I hope that there will be some reorganisation of the Colonial Development Corporation so that it can cover those territories which it is now losing, such as Ghana and, may be, Nigeria and others. For all that, I hope that in any reorganisation there will be an adequate amount of money available for the Protectorates, and certainly more than there is at present.

As I have said, the Protectorates are important because of their size, but that is not their main importance. Their main importance is, surely, that they are today an oasis of humanity in the midst of the desert of cruelty that is South Africa—

The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Alan Lennox-Boyd) indicated dissent.

Mr. Dugdale:—and that we must do something to see that that oasis is managed to the best of our ability so that it can set an example.

I notice that the Minister shakes his head. If he does not think that the South African Government are a cruel Government, I shall be very surprised indeed. He will be one of the very few people in this House who does not think so.

We want to see the fullest possible development of the territories contiguous to South Africa so that they may show in every possible way not only that they are humanitarian and democratic, but that economic and social help can be given by a great nation to small nations that live in such surroundings as do these territories. I hope that everything possible will be done for them and that we shall play an every-increasing part in helping them to show to the South Africans and to the rest of the world what democracy can do.

5.5 p.m.

Lord Balmiel (Hertford): On a point of order.

The Temporary Chairman (Colonel Sir Leonard Ropner): Lord Balmiel.

Miss Jennie Lee (Cannock): Did not the hon. Gentleman rise to a point of order?

Lord Balmiel: As you have called me to speak, Sir Leonard, I will not raise the point of order. [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."] May I seek your guidance, Sir Leonard, as to whether it is in order in this debate to discuss the Government of the Union of South Africa?

The Temporary Chairman: No. The right hon. Member for West Bromwich (Mr. Dugdale) was out of order, but he remained out of order for so short a time that I had no opportunity of calling him to order.

Mr. Callaghan: Further to that point of order. May I call your attention, Sir Leonard, to the statement in the Press this morning to the effect that the South African Government are coveting High Commission Territories for which we are responsible? Is it not necessary that a firm declaration should go out from this House that in no circumstances will they be allowed to take them over?

The Temporary Chairman: Such considerations would also be out of order in this debate.

Lord Balmiel: The Committee is very fortunate in the choice of subject for debate this afternoon because it enables our discussions to roam over the whole field of the Colonial Dependencies and Protectorates. Like the hon. Member for Cardiff, South-East (Mr. Callaghan), I would agree that all too often, owing to the great pressure of work, debates in the House on the Colonial Dependencies tend to be debates on a particular Colony that is involved in a crisis or on one which is patently heading towards a crisis, or, alternatively, a Colony where, through delay and neglect, the problems have become almost inextricably complicated. All too rarely is it possible for the House to debate the wider principles of policy which should govern our attitude towards the Colonial Dependencies which we are trying to lead forward to self-government.

Some of them will, in due course, achieve self-government and independence, but many of them do not contain within themselves the ingredients of sovereignty.

I confess that I am not full of confidence about many of the blueprints which are put forward to chart the course of the non-viable Colonies. I do not think that they serve a very useful purpose. I believe that the variety between the Colonies which are not viable is so great that they can only be treated on an *ad hoc* basis. It is in that spirit that I wish to look at two of the Colonies which, so far in this debate, have not been mentioned, but both of which I think, contain in themselves the ingredients necessary for sovereignty.

I wish for a moment to look at the constitutional changes which are impending in Uganda. It is our purpose and our policy to develop Uganda and to help it forward so that, in the fullness of time, it will be able to take its place as a self-governing territory. But it is also our purpose that Uganda should go forward and develop as a unitary State, not as a State based on any theory or concept of federalism, nor as a State consisting of a whole series of loose and uneasy agreements between the Lukikos of the various territories.

I think it is clear that if we are to achieve this ideal of forging a unitary State out of Uganda which will continue in existence when the indigenous populations are governing themselves, we must achieve a much better relationship between the various tribes in Uganda than exists at the present moment. We must do what we can to diminish the antagonisms, jealousies and ill-feeling which undoubtedly exist. Any hon. Member who knows the area will know, for instance, of the claim of the Bunyoro to what they call the five lost counties in Buganda. It is that kind of traditional jealousy which it is very important to help abate. In that sort of matter, our hands are tied and our powers are limited to persuasion because, of course, it depends in the last resort on the good will and co-operation of the indigenous peoples themselves.

One sphere in which Her Majesty's Government can play a part in helping to forge a unitary state of Uganda is that of constitutional advance. If we are trying to build a unitary State, surely it

[LORD BALNIEL.] stands absolutely to logic that we should try to secure that constitutional advance in Uganda should be on a uniform basis throughout the whole territory.

I welcome most warmly the agreement reached by my right hon. Friend on behalf of Her Majesty's Government in 1955 with the Buganda Government under which direct elections will take place this year in Buganda if the discussions at present proceeding with the Uganda Protectorate Government about the qualitative franchise come to a satisfactory conclusion.

While I welcome that agreement, however, I regret with equal sincerity that it has not been possible for Her Majesty's Government to make provision for similar advance in the Constitution for the other territories within Uganda. I realise some of the reasons why Her Majesty's Government did not think that this was possible, but it is to me regrettable that there will be no direct representation of the other territories in Uganda until, I think, 1961. That seems to me to make our task of forging a unitary State in Uganda far harder than is really necessary.

I regret it for two other reasons, one of which is that it seems to me to be inequitable between individuals. If there is an individual of a certain standard of intelligence, with a certain standard of literacy, owning a certain stake in the country, living in Buganda, then this year, if all goes well with the discussions, he will be entitled to direct representation in the Uganda Protectorate Government this year. If, however, there is a similar individual, with a similar standard of intellect, with a similar stake in the country, with a similar standard of literacy, and yet living just outside the borders of Buganda, he will not be entitled to direct representation in the Government, at least until 1961.

I also regret that it has not been possible to accelerate this constitutional advance outside Buganda because it increases and accentuates the disparity which exists in Uganda between the Baganda people, who, after all, form only 17 per cent. of the total population of Uganda, and the remainder.

I should like my right hon. Friend to explain the reasons, not of administra-

tive convenience but of principle, why it has been necessary to seek constitutional advance in Uganda on that basis, which is not uniform throughout the country. I should also like to ask him, although with, I admit, a less optimistic feeling of getting a satisfactory answer from my own point of view, whether there are any grounds for hoping that he might be prepared to reconsider the position of the territories outside Buganda with a view to putting forward to a date before 1961 the direct representation of the other territories to the Uganda Protectorate Government.

In saying this, I want to make it absolutely clear that I have no wish in any way to delay the constitutional advance of the Baganda, but I have every hope that it will be possible to make a bold advance in the constitution of the territories outside Buganda.

I should now like to look across the borders of Uganda at the Constitution in Kenya as it now exists. I congratulate my right hon. Friend on the very firm and definite statement which he made last week that he would not authorise any constitutional change in Kenya before 1960 without the agreement of all the communities in Kenya. While welcoming that statement, however, I hope that my right hon. Friend would agree with me that if agreement could be reached between all the communities of Kenya, it would be very desirable to alter the Constitution of Kenya before 1960. If the Constitution of Kenya is not altered before then, I foresee that the lines of political advance there will be fraught with difficulty and, indeed, possibly with danger.

Mr. Brockway: Hear, hear.

Lord Balniel: African elections have been held this year for the first time under the Lyttelton plan, and everyone, I think, would agree that that is a most desirable step forward towards self-government. It is none the less desirable in spite of the fact that the African members who were elected under the Lyttelton plan have now decided to opt out of the operation of the Lyttelton constitution. I hope that that is only a temporary decision on their part.

From now onwards, all sections of the community in Kenya will be voting on a communal franchise. The European will

be electing a European; the African will be electing an African; the Asian will be electing an Asian; and the Arab will be electing an Arab representative.

We can all see very clearly the advantages of a communal franchise. They are very well seen and clearly appreciated in Kenya itself, particularly the advantage of protection which it gives to the minority groups in Kenya, especially in a country where there is not that sense of mutual confidence between the races which is so desirable or where there is, indeed, a mutual subconscious fear between races.

While these advantages of the communal franchise are very apparent indeed to people living in Kenya, less apparent to them but none the less real are the disadvantages accompanying the communal franchise, including the disadvantage that it is hardening and perpetuating political thinking on racial lines in a country which we wish to see developed on multi-racial lines.

As I am not optimistic that agreement will be reached between the African elected members and the European elected members, I hope that my right hon. Friend might consider it possible to use his good offices to try to achieve some kind of agreed change in the Constitution. I think it is absolutely necessary that we should continue with the communal franchise as it exists at the moment if we are to protect the minority groups. If necessary, the communal franchise should be extended, but we should also try to create some kind of bridge or superstructure on a common roll basis between the various races in the constitution.

If agreement cannot be reached before 1960, two elections will have been fought on a purely racial franchise, and on a racial franchise in which the grooves are getting deeper, in which the European members look solely to, and act solely on behalf of, the European electorate and the African members look solely to, and act solely on behalf of, the African electorate. As the years go by, those grooves of racial franchise will grow deeper and deeper, and will make difficult the lifting up of the Constitution of Kenya and the basing of it on the multi-racial lines which we all want to see.

If I may pass from constitutional matters, there is something which I would

call to the attention of my right hon. Friend. Progress in Kenya is advancing at a tremendous pace. The atmosphere is one of advance and progress, with a vitality and confidence in the future of Kenya which is very remarkable indeed. Everywhere there is a demand for more widespread and more intensive education. Everywhere there is a clamant demand for more money to be spent on roads, water supplies, health centres, and land consolidation; indeed, on almost every facet of everyday life.

To me, the most remarkable feature is that this sense of exhilarating advance and progress is most marked in those areas which, only during the last few months or years, have shaken off the horror of Mau Mau. It is marked also among those people who, only a few months ago, were engaged in the obscene and bestial conspiracy of Mau Mau but who have now confessed and have found that their souls have been lightened of a terrible burden of guilt. They have been passing out of the very well-run and successful rehabilitation centres and returning to their homes in ever-increasing numbers and with a wonderful sense of expectation and great hopes for the future.

It would be tragic if those hopes were to be turned sour through frustration and disillusionment. These people have great hopes that land consolidation—which is the bringing together of individual strips of land into one consolidated unit—will do much to raise their standard of life. Of course, land consolidation by itself, unless followed by agricultural reform, is a complete snare and delusion. It offers the opportunity of raising the standard of life, but unless it is followed by the same close administration which exists in Kikuyu land at the moment and by agricultural reform, it will by itself do little to raise the standard of life.

While the people have these great hopes, it has to be remembered that land consolidation also brings great difficulties. It increases the difficulties of the older people who in the past would have retired on a small strip of land which they owned. Through land consolidation, we are creating a landless class. My right hon. Friend would do a very great service if he would emphasise to the Kenya Government how very serious is the problem which might be created by the developing of a landless class. It would be too

[LORD BALNIEL.]
tragic if this land of the Kikuyu were to become a reservoir of unemployment and discontent.

It would be well worth overhauling and looking again at the policy which is followed in Kenya of diffusing industry into the provinces and into provincial towns such as Kisumu and into the new and larger villages which have been created in Kenya as the result of the emergency.

It was a great act of faith by this Government and this country to provide, for the use of the people who have so recently been involved in the conspiracy of Mau Mau, a very large sum of money. Everywhere in Kenya, in every section of every community of every race, one finds the certainty that that money has been well spent and that the act of faith by this country has been well justified. I ask my right hon. Friend to ensure that that act of faith does not falter or fail now for lack of money.

5.25 p.m.

Mr. James Johnson (Rugby): I am happy to follow the noble Lord the Member for Hertford (Lord Balniel). If, as we are often told, there is need for a bipartisan approach to these problems and for clear and honest thinking, I am glad to say that we have had a speech with both those characteristics. I enjoyed listening to the noble Lord talking of the danger of a landless class in Kenya. I must not say much about that matter because I intend to talk of Mauritius; but I left Kenya less than a fortnight ago, and I could not agree more than I do with what the hon. Member said about land consolidation schemes and the possibility of the Swinerton agricultural plan for absorbing this future landless class.

I would say one thing to the noble Lord, with all kindness. He makes a big mistake if he thinks that the Africans will change their minds about the Lyttelton plan and about their non-participation in the Government. I am sorry to say so. I spoke about it to Africans at a meeting in the Pumwoni location in Nairobi, and there is no doubt that they have never accepted the Lyttelton plan. The Colonial Secretary may not like my saying it. Although Mr. Ohanga went forward as a Minister with the consent of the African members some years

ago, the majority of Africans have persisted in saying that they do not wish to enter the Government. That is their view, and we ought to accept it. We ought not to indulge in wishful thinking about it. As I understand the position—and I was with the Africans in Nairobi a short time ago—they are clear in their own mind about what they want. I should like to believe that what the noble Lord said is correct, but he may be making a big mistake about it.

My hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South-East (Mr. Callaghan) spoke about delegations of Members going overseas to see what is happening there. My last two visits to Africa have been private enterprise, so to speak. It is a bit shabby financially when an hon. Member has to go to two Colonies—they were Somaliland and Northern Rhodesia—as a guest of Africans. It is a fine thing to be invited as their guest, but I wish there were more chances for more Members to make visits overseas to investigate matters on the spot.

I should like to see teams like the delegation that went to Kenya in 1954. Let us use this weapon which was forged by Lord Chandos when he was Colonial Secretary, of sending out Government-sponsored, fact-finding delegations on an all-party basis, with Members picked by the two sides of the House of Commons, to do a job.

Such a delegation is not always looking over its shoulder, as a C.P.A. delegation must be when it goes on a goodwill mission. It is difficult for it to pass critical comments about a Colony overseas; it is unfair to expect a C.P.A. delegation to make a fact-finding critical survey. The Government should send out representative delegations to make honest factual surveys; I should like to see more of that done in the future. One place to which the Lyttelton type of team could go is the Seychelles. Some Colonies are not so sweet as they might be, and do need careful looking into.

Now I wish to speak about Mauritius. The Colonial Secretary today is almost overwhelmed. He has, on the one hand Malta, which hopes to be integrated, and on the other hand, Cyprus, which wants just the opposite, Enosis. He is perhaps happy about the Caribbean Federation in the West Indies, as he ought to be, but, on the other hand, Honduras and

Guiana do not want to come into that Federation and may have off into independence. The Central African Federation is not too happy; Kenya has its "passive wing" of African resistance, too. The colonial shoe is pinching here and there, but in one Colony it does not pinch, and that is Mauritius. It has given the Foreign Secretary a lovely pair of carpet slippers.

The Mauritius Labour Party came here, signed an agreement, and made a concession. It has been most co-operative and statesmanlike. Quite often, the complaint is that these coloured nationalist bodies do not make concessions, but this was one which came in a so-called "civilised fashion", discussed matters tolerantly and compromised on lines for which the Colonial Secretary often must wish, but often complains he does not get. Important concessions were made by Dr. Ramgoolam and his colleagues.

I wish to ask one or two questions on this subject. As the Under-Secretary has said, under that agreement a mission is to go out to the island, and with luck—a lot of luck will be wanted—having looked at the map, will demarcate the island into 40 constituencies. I think that the task is almost impossible. I say that advisedly. It is almost impossible to make 40 divisions in that island, which is not so large as Surrey. Each of those constituencies is to have about 5,000 voters. We know the history of Mauritius and the unsavoury behaviour of some of the people in Port Louis elections. I am afraid that in a small constituency, with 5,000 votes there is danger of corruption and the offering of inducements to sway those votes. Hence it might be better to consider making 25 constituencies which would have larger numbers of voters.

I am not altogether happy about what is the suggested alternative. If this three-member fact-finding mission goes out and, as I believe, does not find it possible to have 40 small constituencies, the alternative, as the Minister said, will be to have 11 multiple-member seats. We have been told that due attention is to be paid to minorities. We have also been told:

"all the delegates from Mauritius pledged themselves to use their good offices, to cooperate, and persuade the members of their parties to co-operate, in the acceptance and working of whichever of these two systems was introduced. . . ."

If the mission turned down the proposal for 40 seats, there would be 11 three-member constituencies. In that event, there would be difficulty in getting a clear-cut decision.

The Labour Party, which had on overwhelming win in the last election, might get 20 or 21 of the 33 seats. Having a majority against the 12 or 13, it would be the dominant party in the Assembly. Having received the most votes, it should have the larger say in the Government, but we find that in the Legislative Council there are to be up to 12 nominated members. I hope that the Minister will give a pledge or a guarantee, that what has been said earlier will happen in British Guiana, will not happen in this case.

I hope that the Governor will not feel himself forced to hold a balance between these minorities and the dominant Labour Party, and hence find that he must nominate 9, 10, 11 or 12 members to hold the balance for the anti-Labour faction. I trust that it is quite clear that in this case, there will not be juggling with the nominations as has happened in the past; but that if there are 20 or 21 Labour members returned, 8 or 12 nominated members will carry over the accent of the elections, into the Legislative Council.

This is most important in view of what we have heard earlier in the debate about the danger of thwarting the will of the people, the necessity for having democratic elections and not having a "phony" constitution in which the Governor can act in an executive position and deny the will of the people. I know this may sound platitudinous, but it is most important. If we have elections by which the people are to be able to choose their leaders to govern their own affairs, we must go through with this to the end, and not in the final analysis thwart and balk them when it comes to the actual governing of their country. I hope that we shall have it made quite clear that if and when the elections take place, the Legislative Council and the nominated members will be a reflection or mirror to show the accent and emphasis, the dominance of the elections, revealed by the people through the ballot box.

There are to be nine Ministers. Are they to be a loose, inchoate coalition of nine in a ministerial set-up and not those pale shades—the former liaison members? Are six of the

[MR. JOHNSON.]
 nine appointments to be Labour members? Are we, in Port Louis, to have a faithful reflection of the people's votes shown in the Government mechanism? The Mauritians are not unfit to look after their own affairs, as some people allege Africans are. They have a high standard of culture and are a society of people who can talk and debate. They know what they want. They are not in the "bush", as we are commonly told the Tanganyikan or Northern Rhodesian people are. They are people of higher levels than people in Africa are commonly said to be. We hope that when the elections are over, there will be a definite constitutional decision, and people will know clearly what is to happen to them.

When the elections are over, two other things should be looked at. First, there is the danger of unemployment. That has arisen before. There is the difficulty of finding jobs for people in small densely populated islands where, as in the case of the Barbados, employment is dependent on sugar cultivation. With an expanding population, thousands, indeed tens of thousands, will want jobs in five or ten years' time. What is being done about that? I understand that there are 126,000 acres of land on the island which, at the moment, are owned and used by a small number of people for such dubious purposes as stag hunting. If the Government could open up those acres for use as smallholdings and farms for landless people who desire land there, that would be a good thing. The 126,000 acres are not by any means on steep, inaccessible hillsides.

There is today a population of 560,000 people. What is being done about emigration? A government committee was set up some years ago, and it was hoped to send some of those people to Tanganyika. I believe that 200 "pen-pushers", if I may use that term, found jobs in Dar es Salaam and there were hopes of people going to Borneo and Madagascar, but there have been difficulties. Ethiopia has no inhibitions about colour, and has large areas of undeveloped land. I understand that in the last few months it has taken some Indians. Will the Minister explore that possibility and see whether there is a chance of Mauritians going to Ethiopia? They are not averse to going there on a voluntary basis—and I am

reliably informed that that is a possibility. It is quite possible that the Mauritius Government may have to ask some of their people in the future to go to places like Ethiopia or Madagascar. Let us look carefully at that to see whether it is possible.

I should like to close on this note. I think that islands like Mauritius will give us quite a headache in the future if we do not do some planning now. Fiji is another similar island with a large plural society. For those islands, which, in the past have always been peopled by peasant farmers, it is difficult to find secondary industries, owing to their lack of power, minerals, and raw materials. What do we do about those places?

I heard earlier a somewhat sombre if not sinister note from the Under Secretary—why it was introduced I do not know—when he was talking about the danger of Communism. I do not know what was its context in this debate. I think that he was speaking about British Guiana. I beg of him to look at islands like Mauritius where, at the moment, we have a very orderly, well-behaved, decent Labour movement. Do not let us do anything which may make them go further Left and be a nuisance, as has happened elsewhere.

If the Colonial Secretary is a little anxious about Guiana and other places, let him take steps in time to do something for the population of islands like Mauritius. I hope that he will pay attention to this because at the moment things there are peaceful and comfortable. As I said earlier, the Colonial Secretary has a pair of Mauritius carpet slippers to walk in today, and not a pair of shoes that pinch him; but the shoes may pinch in the years to come if he does not take steps in the near future for the welfare and development of this beautiful island in the Indian Ocean.

5.42 p.m.

Mr. C. W. Armstrong (Armagh): I am very glad to follow the hon. Member for Rugby (Mr. J. Johnson), because I remember that he followed me in my maiden speech and was kind enough to refer to me as his hon. Friend. I am sure he will forgive me if I do not follow him into the intricacies of Mauritius, of which obviously he is a master, because I cannot hope to compete with the detail in which he has dealt with that subject.

I should like to consider for a few moments the kind of overriding problems that these territories emerging into independence will themselves have to deal with over the next two, three or more generations, and whether we are giving them all the help that we should to enable them in the future to face these problems.

What are they? First, there is the problem of the relationship between peoples. I think it is true to say that after outside control has left those territories, and even perhaps after the tensions between coloured and white have somehow or other been resolved, they will be still faced with very great difficulties of relationships between peoples. Here, I am thinking primarily of Africa, although possibly what I have to say may have some application to other territories as well.

I am sure that in Africa for many generations still society will be mainly tribal, with all the difficulties that that brings. Even in this country and in this House, after centuries of union, would it not be true to say that national issues still sometimes trouble us? It is only a matter of decades since the Irish Members in this House tried, and almost succeeded, to bring parliamentary institutions in this country to a stop. In Africa there is a still greater potential menace to the Continent as a whole, because in the north of Africa there is a great Moslem population with its ancient traditions of conquest, of organising and administering great territories and to the south of them there are pagan and Christian populations with none of these traditions who, because we have taught them, are better educated and rather more technically advanced. Surely there is a great problem that they will have to face alone.

Another problem obviously for these territories is how to provide the revenues they must have to educate and advance their people. To do this they must somehow or other exploit their own resources: they will need vast sums of capital and technical knowledge which they do not possess. Nearly the whole world wants capital to develop its resources. These emerging territories will be faced with the most appalling competition in finding the capital and the technical knowledge to develop.

A further problem, which faces all Governments to some extent, but perhaps very particularly these emerging Governments, is the relationship between freedom and justice, freedom and security, freedom and progress. Perhaps there is no better example of what I mean than what has been happening since the emergency in the Kikuyu country of Kenya. As we all know, the progress there has been astonishing, but, quite clearly, it has been made at some sacrifice of freedom. In many of these territories, perhaps that appallingly difficult choice will arise over the matter of population. One of the freedoms that has hardly ever been suppressed in any country in the world has been the freedom to increase the population. In some of these countries that freedom may conflict with the protection of the people from famine. It is problems of this kind that these countries have to face.

The overriding needs of all of them to enable them to face these problems are wisdom, experience and integrity. It seems to me that we do a great disservice to the people living in those countries if, for whatever reason, we encourage the wilder and more impatient ambitions of the African politician who is barely beginning to understand these things.

Surely it must be wrong for African politicians in these territories to keep looking over their shoulders at the state of party politics in this country. Surely it must be wrong that politicians should force the pace in their own countries when they think that perhaps they have a sympathetic Government here. Surely it is wrong that they should drag their feet and refuse to co-operate in the hope that later they will find a more sympathetic Government in this country.

When the hon. Member for Cardiff, South-East (Mr. Callaghan) opened this debate and mentioned a committee on colonial affairs, I hoped that he was proposing to develop that into some approach to a bipartisan policy in colonial affairs. It is my belief that the greatest boon this House could confer on the emerging territories would be a bipartisan colonial policy. I have followed the correspondence in the Press which put forward the difficulties very fairly. But I do not believe that they are insuperable. We all know that there are differences of opinion inside parties, but

[MR. ARMSTRONG.] that, somehow or other, it is possible to devise a policy which the whole party can support.

Surely the whole spirit of this debate this afternoon has shown what an enormously wide area of common agreement exists between both parties in this House. I beseech hon. Members on both sides of the House to consider this very carefully, because, I repeat, the greatest boon that this Parliament could confer on the territories which are now approaching independence is a bipartisan colonial policy.

5.52 p.m.

Mr. R. T. Paget (Northampton): I have a great deal of sympathy with what has been said by the hon. Member for Armagh (Mr. Armstrong) about the need for a bipartisan approach to colonial matters. Of course, we cannot go all the way. For instance, from one point of view nothing could be worse than to have a pro-Pakistan party on one side and a pro-Indian party on the other. That is the sort of thing we should avoid. But I think it inevitable that an emerging nationalism, an emerging people, tend to look to a party whose policy is in measure pledged to change, as against a party who, in its name at least, is pledged to conserve.

I think that from the very nature of things an emergent colonial people will tend to look to this side of the House of Commons and it may be that a greater responsibility lies on this side not to encourage them to an advance which might be disastrous for their countries if it is too fast. I do not think, therefore, that in this field an entirely bipartisan approach is possible.

I wish to speak particularly about Kenya and to refer especially to some of the things said by the noble Lord the Member for Hertford (Lord Balniel). In Kenya, we can see a most remarkable civilisation in physical terms. We can see the great city of Nairobi now one of the metropolises of Africa, which came into existence within less than half a century. We can see roads and houses, and farming of a very high standard. Let us recognise and, indeed, pride ourselves upon the fact that what has been achieved in Kenya has been the work of a very few English people. The development of Kenya is a tremendous physical

achievement for which those responsible have every reason to be enormously proud.

In a society which had not moved for tens of thousands of years there has been built up a modern civilisation, and it follows that we cannot go back. The African, however much he might wish to—I do not know whether he does—cannot go back to a tribal society, if only because he has multiplied too much. He has become involved in that new society and his future, his existence, depends upon that society continuing to run; upon the new economic machine on which he now lives continuing to work. That is the first proposition. A modern civilisation has been created in Kenya, and upon that modern civilisation and modern economy the people of Kenya must depend for their existence.

The next proposition is that Kenya is an African country and will inevitably remain so. The proportion of the population is 200 Africans, three Asians and one European. On those proportions, even if one wished, nothing on God's earth can prevent Kenya from being governed by an African majority. That will happen, and in all the discussions I had with people in Kenya and from every point of view, I found nobody who challenged that proposition. It is the inevitable, and once that is faced, one must consider how it should be arrived at. One must prepare a constitutional road to enable the civilisation which we have created to continue on a multi-racial basis as power passes to the Africans. The alternative to a constitutional road is a road to revolution, and that state of things could come about very quickly.

Once the African gets organised—having learned the lesson of Mau Mau, that violence is not his best means—he has only to withdraw his labour to bring the Colony to its knees. Kenya is not, I do not think it is likely to be, an economic asset to this country. I believe that the people in Kenya should be warned, and should realise, that if it came to a show-down with the Africans in non-violent terms, in which it was not a question of having to go to the rescue of people being massacred, the white population of Kenya would not receive the support of this country. We here would not supply the means of repression. In that sense, the Europeans in Kenya are

very much on their own and they should realise that fact.

What, then, is one to do which would be best in the face of the stark realities we are up against? So far, we have been shown the Lyttelton plan. I believe that the fatal error in the Lyttelton plan is the communal electorates. Unlike the noble Lord, I would totally abolish communal electorates because I believe they will be fatal to the civilisation we have created. The trouble is that if we have a communal electorate forming a Chamber and forming a government, it is not a government or a chamber of the particular races, but is the Government of Kenya and the Legislature of Kenya, and if we elect the members on a communal basis then, every time there is an election, every member must appeal to the selfish, sectional interests of the race which he represents.

So, as one sees in practice, at each election those people who have been working together quite satisfactorily before come apart as the election approaches; and men like Blundell, who had been talking really good sense when the election was a little further off, have to talk what, frankly, they know to be nonsense when the election comes. Surely that is wrong, and it will immensely worsen when we get the African communal roll. The Africans know the overwhelming powers of their numbers.

Before these elections, Mr. Coutts was asked to prepare proposals for an African communal roll. The first thing that Mr. Coutts found was the rather surprising fact that the African did not want the vote. That seems quite odd. Africans are very much like Conservatives. They do not feel that a leader should be elected but that he should emerge. It is curious that the Conservative Party and the Africans are at one on this. In this part of the world, the Africans have never had a chieftain system. They have had the system of the age groups, and within the age group the leader emerged, and became the leader in war. He was somebody who had emerged, and the idea of a man going on a platform and saying, "Vote for me" seems, to the African at present, to be gravely immodest. It has not, at present, achieved his approval.

Therefore, when it came to the registration for that election, there was the gravest difficulty in getting people to

register. It is true that we got quite a high registration—about 35,000, I think it was—in closely-administered areas like the Kikuyu Reserve, where the district officer could really use all his powers to make the people register, but in Nairobi, what was it? About 2,500 out of, probably, 50,000.

That was the position a year ago. I think that it might be very different today, because, once it has started, the African communal vote will acquire a momentum which will be irresistible. I believe that the Africans, on the basis of a communal roll, will win political power long before they are capable of running the economy, or remotely capable, of providing the capital that that economy requires, and capital just will not come if Government does not inspire confidence. I should, therefore, like to make the following suggestions.

First, I think that in any multi-racial society we will never get a satisfactory constitution by consent. I do not think that that will ever happen, because a constitution by consent will have built into it so many bargains that it will be unworkable. The constitution which will work is one which we shall have to impose. I know that the right hon. Gentleman is committed up to 1960, but what he can do is to say, "In 1960, we shall do so-and-so—prepare for it." He should also say, "In 1960 there will not be any communal rolls at all; there will be one common roll"—but that common roll must have a fairly high property and educational standard in the initial phase.

I believe that that property and educational standard should be arranged so that, in the initial elections there would be approximately the same number of voters of all three races, and, even if it involved having parts of constituencies which were not contiguous, each constituency should be arranged so that there was a substantial vote from all three races. Each constituency should return three members, one of each race, and every voter should have three votes, one of which he would have to give to each race's candidate. That would mean that nobody of any race could get elected unless he got other races to vote for him. In other words, a machine would be created which would get the racial

[MR. PAGET.] moderates elected, because only they could draw votes from the other races.

A further consideration, perhaps the most important of all, would be that it would make parties necessary. For instance, if I wanted to get elected, I should require an Asian and an African running mate to ask their supporters to vote for me, in the same way as the African would require an Asian and a European. Thus, we would create by that machine parties which were necessarily multi-racial, and in the process both of getting elected and of working Parliament they would have to work together. Every African would have required the aid of other races to beat a fellow African and so would every Asian and European. To make this acceptable, to the Africans at any rate, one must draw conclusions and say where one is going. I believe that it is necessary to make something different from the original Devonshire declaration, and to make a declaration that this is a method designed to provide for African majority government; that the qualifications imposed will never be raised without African consent; that, as more Africans qualify—and, of course, they will in this developing community—more seats will be provided for them.

That would mean that in the second stage it would not be one European, one Asian and one African in each, or in some constituencies, but two Africans, one European, one Asian. None the less, the second African, if he wanted to get in, would almost necessarily have to join an existing party. He would have to go in with a colleague who could draw the votes of the other two races, and would come in to an organisation which had been evolved for running the society and the economy instead of coming in as one of a nationalist party, pledged to destroy them.

Eventually, there must be three Africans in each of these constituencies. There must be an African majority. That is where the road must lead. It is going to happen, but it will be an African majority coming into multi-racial organisation, which has got the experience, which has become involved in and which has acquired interests in the economy and in the way of living that exists.

This, I believe, is the best chance of making a multi-racial society within Kenya, which recognises the reality of the overwhelming majority and also recognises the necessity to that majority as well as to everybody else of a civilisation created by a small white minority continuing and continues on tolerable terms the contribution of the immigrant races to that economy. I believe that the time available for this is very short indeed.

The noble Lord the Member for Hertford suggested that a common roll should be superimposed on a communal roll so that we should have some people on the common roll and some on the communal roll. I discussed this matter with Tom M'Boya. He was quite favourable to the idea. I then said, "Which would you stand for—on the common roll or on the communal roll?" He said, "On the communal roll, of course; it is only the communal roll which would represent the Africans."

That is the danger. Once we get an African communal roll established—and it is not really established yet—that African roll will be a party. It will be a racial party, against the other two parties, and it will inevitably overwhelm them. It will overwhelm them on terms of having won against the other races, instead of having built itself up to a majority position with the other races.

I warn the Government, my own party and my friends in Kenya, that if there is a hope for a multi-racial society in Kenya—and I believe the whole future prosperity and way of living for black, brown and white in Kenya depends upon that achievement—we must not allow an African communal roll to establish itself, because such a roll will inevitably become a party and will turn politics into a racial conflict.

I ask the Government to announce that we are going over to a common roll, to send a commission and to announce what the qualifications and constituencies will be. We have to wait till 1960 before we put this into effect, and we have that time in which to organise multi-racial parties. The Government should give the people time to know all about this by announcing the intention. The intention may not be operable until 1960, but it should be announced well in advance.

That is where the real hope of Kenya lies. It is probably the last hope of multi-racial society in Africa.

6.15 p.m.

Sir Ian Fraser (Morecambe and Lonsdale): Many politicians all over the world and many emerging politicians will read about this debate, and I think it is worth while underlining for them one of the characteristics of our Parliament which is often overlooked, and that is the way in which from time to time we can approach matters such as foreign affairs and colonial affairs on a non-party basis.

Anyone who has heard the last two speeches will realise that all kinds of points of view have been put forward from both sides of the Committee which might not have been expected from those quarters. One speaker has said—and I echo what he said—that no more valuable contribution can be made by this ancient and experienced Parliament to those who are hoping to take part in legislative government all over the world than this thoughtful, non-partisan approach.

Another speaker said that there should be some sort of amalgamation or, at any rate, greater identity of interests between the Colonial Office and the Commonwealth Relations Office. He almost criticised the Commonwealth Relations Office for not functioning so vigorously and so actively as the Colonial Office. Let us remember that these two offices have entirely different functions. The name of one of them indicates that it is not the Commonwealth Office, but the Commonwealth Relations Office. It is concerned with relations between members of the Commonwealth and not with the functions of its members. It would be a gross interference if the Department were to concern itself with the functions of the Governments in Australia, South Africa or Canada. It is only in the field of relations that it comes into play at all.

The Colonial Office, however, is entirely different. It is a mother and father to the less advanced peoples, and at least a step-father or a continuing trustee for the more advanced peoples. The functions are entirely different and should not be confused in our minds or in the minds of politicians all over the world.

Another speaker on the benches opposite spoke about the governor—I am not talking of any particular governor: I am

referring to the theory which the hon. Gentleman had in his mind—frustrating the apparent will of the people by appointments. It is a necessary reservation of power amongst emergent people that the apparent will of the people, expressed through a machine which is hardly understood and about which there is certainly no experience, should be—I will not say frustrated, but guided.

In my judgment, it would be fatal in the extreme to go straight from a tribal system or an authoritarian system such as we must have in our Colonial Empire and which must occur amongst all uneducated or slightly educated peoples. There must be the phase of authoritarian government or management of the people by the few governors, who, generally, will be Europeans. To emerge from that stage directly into elections in which the apparent will of the people must, in all circumstances, be given free rein and a halt called only after the horse has run away would seem to me to be quite absurd.

We have learned from experience that it is possible to go too fast in this matter. The horse can be frightened into running away, and then the consequences have to be faced. He either goes over a precipice, or he is brought up with a jerk. Far better is it to let the idea of voting sink in in controlled conditions so that not until it is understood and the consequences of power begin to be realised does the power become absolute. That surely is the justification for governors' reserve powers, whether they be powers in emergency or whether they be powers of nomination to mitigate the full consequences of a sweeping election.

It has become a commonplace for people to say government should be of the people by the people for the people; but any student of politics and history must know that that is claptrap. The people cannot possibly govern in any circumstances, not even in a sophisticated country like this. The one thing they can do is to choose at rare intervals who shall govern for them. Fortunately, they do not choose all of them. We in this land are blessed with a Civil Service which stays. Indeed, I think the civil servants are the ones to be praised for their good governance and we are the ones to be praised for daring to come forward and to take the knocks. Without them and without

[SIR I. FRASER.]
us the system would not work at all. I often tell my friends overseas, when they say they fear what may happen in consequence of a change of Government in Britain, "No Tory Government in Britain is ever as good as we hope, and no Labour Government is ever as bad." I believe that is true, and it must be a great comfort to people overseas.

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bromwich (Mr. Dugdale) spoke about the Protectorates, and I agree with him that these important territories in southern Africa require more money. I shall speak about one of them and its needs a little later, but I should like to correct the right hon. Gentleman's geography. He was in Government office, and he ought to know better. Neither Bechuanaland nor Swaziland is in South Africa. Basutoland is an enclave in the middle of that country, but Bechuanaland and Swaziland are not. Perhaps he did not mean that, but that is what he said: oases in South Africa, he called them. He is wrong. They are outside it.

I spent the week of Easter in Basutoland, two days in the capital and three days riding Basuto ponies over the mountains and fishing the mountain streams, and talking to the chiefs and headmen; and very agreeable, too. It is one of the most beautiful countries in the world, well watered, with rich valleys, splendid sheep lands, and more rainfall and a steadier rainfall than have many other parts of that varied southern continent. I and my family have known this country for eighty years, and I declare an interest, because I am concerned with a very considerable business which operates in that country and in the Free State and in Johannesburg. While I do not speak for the interest, it does cause me to know a little about the country.

There is a people who, only a hundred years ago, had their own ways of doing things which were different from those which we would approve, who now, under our guidance, as they would be the first to admit, are benefiting by progress. As the hon. and learned Member for Northampton (Mr. Paget) has just said, the progress which is taking place in that country, as indeed in the whole of southern Africa, is due to the White settlers and the brains, experience and

capital which they have brought there. Without them the roads, the stores, the plantations, the methods of farming could not exist on the scale or at the standard at which they exist today.

Someone else in this debate referred to the increase in population and the problems which that sets. Indeed, it is a problem. In Basutoland, for example, the black population is increasing very rapidly, and by their old methods they could not be fed. The successive Resident Commissioners and their agricultural officers and other officials from this country, inspired by the British colonial tradition and trusteeship, and with money from outside the territory flowing in, have changed it so that it very nearly can feed itself. In good years it can. This year it will. Last year it did. But even so, not every year.

By teaching primitive people to plough round and round instead of up and down, by encouraging them to conserve water by every possible means instead of wasting it, by building roads, and by introducing education, and better stock, agricultural and animal, we—the British—have done much to make that country richer than it could otherwise be. Even its institutions which are gradually beginning to emerge are on an English model and based upon our experience and our wisdom.

It should be remembered that that country of Basutoland is not viable. In no circumstances can it become self-governing in the sense that an island in the Pacific could. An island in the Pacific might well be brought up to be self-governing in the local sense, provided it were attached to some great Power for defence and foreign affairs. An island in the Caribbean may join with other islands to have local self-government with foreign affairs and defence and other overriding considerations vested in some federation. Basutoland, however, is in the centre of Africa, in the same way as Rutland is in the centre of Britain, and the one is no more viable than the other.

The Basutos cannot grow enough in some years to feed themselves. They have no market of their own, only Johannesburg and the greater Union towns as markets for their meat. If they have a surplus those are the only places in which they can sell it. They have no

outlet to the sea, no means of communication whatever. They have a Customs union with the mother country, by which I mean the surrounding country which mothers them, which protects them, which nourishes them, and sometimes feeds them.

That is their situation. It is very like a South African native reserve, and the conditions for both Europeans and Africans are very similar in the two countries. Land is reserved to the natives and cannot be purchased or occupied by the Europeans except under licence and by permission of the chiefs and the Governor. It is the same in Zululand and many other South African territories as it is in Basutoland. There is a great similarity between the way of life of the countries, and it is well that it is so, because we could not very well have one small fraction, 0.6 of a million people moving along too different a road from that upon which 9 million people surrounding them are moving. Inevitably, the disappointment and clash in the end would be so great.

I should like to report to the Committee, because I think it is fair to the colonial servants, that, in my opinion, for what it is worth—and I say this without reserve and, at the same time, as an amateur visitor's opinion—that the Government in Basutoland are an admirable one. The Resident Commissioner there, the headman of this territory, is a wise and sensible man, and he has gained the confidence of both the Europeans and the Basuto people alike. If there were any difficulties at the beginning of his régime because he happened to be born in South Africa the Basuto people were far too realistic to allow that to do more than flutter the dovescotes for a few minutes. The Basuto people realise, as I daresay some hon. Members of the Committee do, that if you are a bull calf it is not your fault where you were born, because you have to be born where your mother happened to be; but yet you could still turn out to be quite a good bull, as, indeed, Mr. Chaplin has.

Let us remember that this territory is not viable, and that the relationship between Great Britain and South Africa, in many matters outside this debate, is an extremely important one. May I express the hope that the friendship between Britain, South Africa and

Basutoland may long continue? There is no reason why we should exacerbate feelings, and anyone who does so renders no service to the Basuto people. Moreover, as sure as anything, he will be found out, because the Basutos are very sensible, and quite as sensible as some of those who either go to Eton or represent Eton and Slough.

The crops in Basutoland are the main sources of wealth, but there is also a large income coming into the territory from the mines in South Africa, as 40,000 or 50,000 Basutos go to work in the mines and they bring back considerable wealth. This migration of labour, contrary to the belief of many people, suits the Basuto people, and if one were to tell the Basutos who work in the mines that they could take their wives with them, they would give the same answer as would the average sailor if invited to go on board a ship in which the sailors' wives and children went, too.

I think that the Colonial Office, the Commonwealth Relations Office and the Government ought to make it clear, during the period, which may be now approaching, when constitutional development may be expected in the Protectorate, that the Europeans who have been there for a very long time also have some status, some position and some rights in the country in which they have been brought up and in which they live. They are British citizens, too, as are the protected persons in these lands, and they have employed their capital, their wisdom and experience there, and they also serve.

I would ask that the noble Lord the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations should choose some appropriate time to say, in relation to these territories in South Africa, just what the Colonial Secretary said in Rhodesia the other day about the Europeans there. There is a very good relationship between the Europeans and the natives in Basutoland, and the paramount chiefs and the Government there are working with the Resident Commissioner to maintain this good relationship, which is of very great importance, not only to the happiness and comfort of the people in these territories, but also to their material well-being.

As another speaker, I think the hon. and learned Member for Northampton,

[SIR I. FRASER.] has said, there must be substantial investment, whether that investment be made by the Government or by private persons, because it will be a very long time before such investment can possibly come from the local African people themselves. They are not of a saving disposition, and they have not the opportunity of saving large sums of money. To take Basutoland, for example, and this might well apply to other territories for all I know, tremendous water supplies are running to waste in that country, and a few million pounds would preserve this water, fertilise vast areas of land, and leave a tremendous surplus to be sold to the Union of South Africa and to control the Vaal River in one instance, or to supply most of the fertilisation of a large part of the Free State in another instance.

An enormous amount of capital is required. There is a road running into the heart of Basutoland which has been left unfinished when, for the sake of a few hundred thousand pounds, it could be finished and would provide a route straight through to Natal. Anyone who knows the country or who looks at a map will see how vitally important that would be to these territories. If one wants to go from a place in Natal to a place on the other side of the Drakensberg Mountains, which will be familiar to all who have read the Vortrekker story, which is a distance of only about twenty miles by helicopter, though a helicopter will not fly at this height, it will involve a journey of 200 or 300 miles round the mountains.

In all these things, there should be an understanding of the problems of this country and a recognition of the vital companionship between white and black which has existed for so long, of a community which is so contented and happy and which will remain so provided that the meddlers do not get their way—all these things should be realised, so that the state of present contentment in that country may long continue.

I have nothing but praise for the Colonial Office and the Commonwealth Relations Office, and for the officials of those Departments whom I meet here and elsewhere, and I think that this Committee should take the opportunity, on a Vote of this kind, of registering its approval of their work.

6.37 p.m.

Mr. A. Fenner Brockway (Eton and Slough): I am very glad to follow the hon. Member for Morecambe and Lonsdale (Sir I. Fraser), particularly because he made a personal reference to myself, but more especially as I want to speak about the Protectorate which has been the main subject of his speech. We are today discussing not only a Vote of the Colonial Office, but also a Vote of the Commonwealth Relations Office, and, therefore, what I say about the Protectorates will, I hope, be in order.

The hon. Member for Morecambe and Lonsdale argued that the Commonwealth Relations Office had the duty of maintaining relations between our Government and the self-governing Dominions, and yet the Protectorates in South Africa also come under its control. They are the Cinderellas of the Commonwealth Relations Department—only 1 million people, only 7,000 whites, wretchedly poor Africans, vast parched and arid areas in Bechuanaland. It may be thought that these territories are of little importance compared with Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, India, which are other parts of the Commonwealth, but I venture to say that the future of the Protectorates will very largely decide the future of race relations in the Continent of Africa.

The hon. Member for Morecambe and Lonsdale resisted the idea that these territories are in South Africa. It is true, of course, that only Basutoland is entirely surrounded by South African territory. Swaziland is surrounded by South African territory except for a small border on Portuguese East Africa.

Sir I. Fraser: The proportions are the other way round.

Mr. Brockway: Bechuanaland lies between the South African Union, South West Africa and Southern Rhodesia. What happens in the British Protectorates under our administration will largely determine whether the policy of the Union Government of apartheid, of race discrimination and segregation, of the outlawing of the African from what is regarded as the civilised white community, becomes the pattern of southern Africa, or whether we give such an example in the Protectorates of race equality and of African advance in education, in social affairs, and in the

economic and political spheres that it will be impossible for the white minority in South Africa to retain their present domination, politically, socially and economically. The Protectorates may be small and may be poor, but upon their future will depend the great British conception of human values, of racial equality, and of liberties, in that part of the world.

I do not want to go over old ground, but I should not be honest with myself or with the Committee if I did not acknowledge that one of the Protectorates in the quite recent history of the British Government, Labour as well as Conservative, has practised race discrimination in a way which has made Bechuanaland a symbol of the colour bar throughout the continent of Africa.

I need not emphasise that now, because not only is Seretse Khama back in Bechuanaland but Tshekedi Khama is able to take his place in public activities. I mention this particularly because what has happened in connection with Seretse Khama and his white wife Ruth will be the theme of my speech. Not only has Seretse gone back, but the white wives of Bechuanaland, who had been taught that a mixed marriage was an outrage upon human relations, have been conquered and won over by Ruth Khama. They now accept her and welcome her. The Khamas little daughter Jacqueline is in the exclusive European school. The South African Government turn African children from the schools; but Bechuanaland is now giving the example of the daughter of a mixed marriage being taught in a European school by a South African headmistress.

The whole of my appeal today is that we must make our administration of the Protectorates in South Africa models and examples of racial equality and of the social, educational, economic and political advance of the African peoples. If we do that, it will be impossible for the Government of South Africa to retain the principles and policy of apartheid in its midst.

I must acknowledge that sometimes we are a little hypocritical in our references to the Government of South Africa. We have isolated instances of the colour bar in this country. We have racial segregation in Kenya. We have both racial segregation and discrimination in the

Rhodesias. South Africa has some right to resent an apparent attitude of superiority on our part. It has the right to resent that, particularly when thousands of Africans from the three British Protectorates, Bechuanaland, Swaziland and Basutoland, have to go to the South African Union to earn a livelihood. Their conditions of labour in the three territories are so poor that they have to go to the Union of South Africa which we condemn.

There are 9,000 Africans from Swaziland employed in mines, farms and domestic service in South Africa. From Bechuanaland, 24,000 Africans cross the frontier each year into South Africa, and from Basutoland 33,637 Africans are in the mines in South Africa and 28,013 in other work. They go there to get a livelihood because of the wages which we tolerate in our own British Protectorates. In Bechuanaland, the average wage of an agricultural worker is £2 a month. In Basutoland, the labourer's wage is from 2s. 3d. a day to 2s. 9d. a day. Worst of all, and here the Commonwealth Relations Office is itself responsible, in the Public Works Department in Swaziland unskilled workers are paid from 9d. to 1s. 5d. a day. When we have wage conditions like that in our own British Protectorates, can we be surprised that Africans have to seek a living across the frontiers in South Africa.

Sir I. Fraser: Will the hon. Gentleman allow me to interrupt? Why should it be assumed that it is either a crime or a disadvantage to seek a living in another country? Many Scots come to England because they do better. Why should not Africans from Basutoland go to the Union? They do much better there because conditions are infinitely better there. Why should they not go? They enjoy it.

Mr. Brockway: Yes, I was indicating that conditions were better—

Sir I. Fraser: And they enjoy it.

Mr. Brockway:—and I was indicating that it was our duty to make conditions in our own Protectorates better before we have the right to condemn the South African Government.

Sir I. Fraser: But why condemn them?

Mr. Brockway: Because they are the most infamous reflection of the colour bar

[MR. BROCKWAY.] on the face of the earth. Nevertheless, the South African Government have every right, when they face the criticism of our country, to point out that the Africans in our own British territories have to go to South Africa to get a livelihood.

I recognise that these conditions in the British Protectorates reflect the underdeveloped economy there. Those territories are mainly agricultural, cattle-rearing, although there is asbestos in Swaziland. Against that underdeveloped economy, and with the gold, uranium and diamonds in the Union, standards of payment can be higher in Johannesburg.

Yet a new situation is arising. There are new, rich mineral discoveries in each of these three British Protectorates. In Bechuanaland, there is copper, coal, asbestos, gold and silver. In Swaziland, there is iron ore and coal. In Basutoland, there are diamonds, uranium and thorium. If these new mineral resources are used for the benefit of the populations in those territories, within a generation they can be raised to a standard that is beyond present recognition.

There are also dangers. The industrial revolution is now beginning in those Protectorates. We have in our history memories of our own Industrial Revolution. One can see the possibilities in Basutoland, Swaziland and Bechuanaland of those horrors being repeated, of mines being developed with shanty towns around them, of wretched conditions for the African labourers, with compound systems such as there are in Johannesburg.

I want to make a plea this afternoon that with the discovery of these new minerals in the Protectorates we should decide, here and now, that those resources should be utilised for the benefit of the peoples of those territories. I should like to see corporations established which should be public trustees for the people, and which would ensure that the wealth obtained from the new mineral developments should be used for their benefit.

The mineral rights are mostly in the hands of the tribal authorities, but there are five things which we must do if we are to protect these people from the exploitation of our own Industrial Revolution. In a speech last Friday I dealt

at some length with these, and, therefore, I do not propose to repeat them now. I suggest, however, that if there are concessions to private capital the concessions should be short-term. I also suggest that there should be minimum wages, progressively rising, that Africans should be allowed to enter skilled work and be trained for management, that they should be allowed and encouraged to join their trade unions, which should be recognised, and that around these developments there should be great housing schemes to prevent the insanitary conditions of the shanty towns of Johannesburg.

Next, I want to see that the land should be inalienable from the African population. It is so in Basutoland.

Sir I. Fraser : And in South Africa.

Mr. Brockway : It is largely so in Bechuanaland, though there are two concessions of 2,478 square miles to the British South Africa Company and to the Tati concessions. In Swaziland, there is a mixed ownership. It is a little pathetic that the chiefs there have started a fund to repurchase for the Africans land which was tricked and cheated out of them by the first British traders who entered that territory.

I could speak of other needs. There is soil erosion and the need to train African agricultural experts in conjunction with farmers' co-operatives. As regards irrigation and water development there is the Gaitskell scheme for Bechuanaland, which has only been partially put into operation. I could speak of the need for roads and railways. The tarred roads in Basutoland are only three miles in length, in Bechuanaland one mile, in Swaziland half a mile. There is the need for railways. In Swaziland there is none, in Basutoland only one mile, in Bechuanaland there is a single track of 492 miles, but that only because it is the main route between south and north.

I want to emphasise the need for education. When the South African Government are excluding African children from European schools, when they are excluding African students from universities where there are Europeans, surely we should be setting an example of broader conceptions in our British Protectorates?

I recognise at once that in Basutoland education has developed far, but in Bechuanaland there is only one primary school for each 1,225 African children. There are no facilities for higher education in Bechuanaland or Swaziland. In Basutoland, there are only two technical schools, and it is an indication of the purpose for which the 371 students are trained when I say that 239 are taking courses in domestic science so that they may become domestic servants in European homes.

We need more primary schools in Bechuanaland and Swaziland. We need secondary schools in each of these three Protectorates. I would even make a plea for a Protectorates' university. When Africans are being excluded from the universities of South Africa, it would be magnificent if we could begin the establishment of a university in the Protectorates.

I draw attention similarly to the medical needs of these people. In Swaziland, there is one doctor for 18,420 people. In Bechuanaland, there is only one doctor for 19,400 people. In Basutoland, there is one doctor for 21,600 people. My plea is that we make these Protectorates examples of what African life can be, and if we are to do that we must do it for the health and the education of the people as well as for the economy, about which I have spoken.

As to the cost, investment of private capital is likely to be attracted by the mineral resources, but capital should also come from the colonial development and welfare funds, the contributions from which are now woefully small. The hon. Gentleman may have later figures than I have, but in 1952-53 the total contribution for Swaziland was £130,986, for Basutoland £167,235 and for Bechuanaland £182,639. As for the contribution from the Colonial Development Corporation, it was for Swaziland and Bechuanaland only, and of the £9,700,000 allotted only £5,400,000 was used. There was no help at all for Basutoland.

What about efforts through the United Nations? What about the possibilities of the Special United Nations Fund for Economic Development? I beg the Minister to use all these means to lift the standard of living of the people of the Protectorates to one which will be an example to the territories around.

I want to say a final word about the political situation. The Protectorates are the only areas in the whole of the British Commonwealth and the British Colonies where government is still by the proclamation of the High Commissioner and where there is no legislative body whatsoever. The High Commissioner issues decrees, and those decrees become laws. We criticise the South African Government because they exclude Africans and other coloured persons from political rights. We should make a beginning with legislative bodies in the Protectorates. We must make a beginning with district councils and press on to the formation of legislative councils.

There must be no transference of those Protectorates without the consent of the peoples living in them. The hon. Member for Morecambe and Lonsdale asked why we should regret that African workers from the Protectorates have to earn a livelihood in the South African Union. I will tell him why. It is because in the South African Union they are not treated as though they were human beings. They are not allowed to enter the same railway carriage or bus as Europeans. In the parks they are not even allowed to sit upon the same seats as Europeans. They are excluded from equal social life with Europeans. Before those territories are transferred to the South African Union, which behaves in that kind of way to the African population, we must go further than the present decision of Her Majesty's Government, which says that that shall not be done without consulting the people. It should not be done without the consent of the people.

Today, a cablegram has come from South Africa saying that the Minister for External Affairs proposes at the coming Conference of Commonwealth Ministers in London to raise privately with representatives of the Government the proposal that the Protectorates should be transferred to South Africa before South Africa becomes a republic. It is not enough to say that the Africans shall be consulted. They were consulted in the case of Central Africa, and a decision was taken against their view. We say that the Protectorates must not be transferred without the consent of the peoples. So long as the South African Government practise their policy of apartheid,

[MR. BROCKWAY.] colour bar and domination of the African people by the minority of whites, the peoples of the Protectorates will never be ready to amalgamate and join such a Union.

7.5 p.m.

The Under-Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations (Mr. C. J. M. Alport): The Committee may consider it appropriate that I should intervene in the debate to reply to the many points which have been raised in the speech to which we have just listened and in earlier speeches about the three Protectorates which fall to the responsibility of my Department. I should like to say how much we welcome the decision of right hon. and hon. Gentlemen opposite to include a discussion of the affairs of these three territories in the debate. I am certain that it is of the greatest importance that, no matter how small or how lacking in great resources a territory may be, the affairs of such territories should be the constant concern of the House of Commons and should from time to time be debated here.

I will indicate later in my speech some of the progress which has been made, both political and economic, in these three Protectorates, but I want to make it clear right from the beginning that my noble Friend and I are by no means satisfied that more could not be done for the economic development of these territories, and it is the anxiety of the Government that practical methods of bringing forward that development should be undertaken. I accept—indeed, I welcome—the spur to greater efforts provided by the speeches of hon. Members during the debate. It is a question of ways and means. It is a question of the problems which are created, not only in the Protectorates but throughout Africa, by lack of natural resources or the maldistribution of the resources which are available.

Let me make it clear that I am not in any way blaming the Administration. Indeed, the members of it whom I have met and whose work I have watched from a distance for a period fully deserve the tribute paid to them by my hon. Friend the Member for Morecambe and Lonsdale (Sir I. Fraser). I know that the Protectorates and the Government and people of Great Britain are very well

served indeed by the administrative officers in the three Protectorates.

Mr. Dugdale: While I agree with the hon. Gentleman that it is important to pay tribute to those who are working well in these Protectorates, may I ask the hon. Gentleman to tell us how often the Governor goes there in his capacity as Governor of those territories? I understand that the greater part of his time is spent in Pretoria on his other occupation as High Commissioner of the Union of South Africa, which is a most unsatisfactory state of affairs.

Mr. Alport: I cannot give the right hon. Gentleman a detailed answer to that question, and he will not expect me to do so, but every facility is given to the High Commissioner, who, I am sure, in view of the reputation of the present High Commissioner, carries out his responsibility of keeping as closely as possible in contact on the spot with the problems in the Protectorates. Indeed, to make the facilities greater, he has a private aeroplane at his disposal.

Mr. Dugdale: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that the Governor's predecessor visited the Protectorates for 34 days during a year? Does the hon. Gentleman consider that enough?

Mr. Alport: Perhaps I may continue, because there are many points to which I must reply.

The reasons why, in some respects, the Protectorates appear to have lagged behind developments which have taken place elsewhere in Africa, such as in the Union—the hon. Member for Eton and Slough (Mr. Brockway) admitted it on the economic side, although he had strictures to make on the political side—are due to many things, but primarily to the lack of the exploitation and development of natural resources up to the present.

They are due, also, to the very great conservatism of the people. I know that from the study which they will have given to the character, background and history of the peoples of these three Protectorates, hon. Members will realise that it is important that the progress which is made is made with their assent and co-operation and not against their wishes and will. The speed is not always the speed of development which we would like to see here. In our duty as a protecting Power

of these peoples we must take proper consideration of their long-established interests. Changes are taking place and I should like to begin by dealing with some changes in the political sphere.

In Basutoland, as has been said in the debate and admitted by the hon. Member for Eton and Slough, education has made some considerable progress. Within the last eighteen months the National Council of Basutoland discussed the possibility of obtaining increased powers which would enable it to undertake certain legislative functions. My noble Friend has told the Council that he will consider proposals whereby the Council would be given powers to make laws in regard to matters affecting the Basuto people alone and he has asked the Council to submit proposals on that score.

The Council has applied itself to that in a most practical and businesslike way. It has established two committees, one to deal with the problems of the chieftainship, and the other to deal with constitutional arrangements. The members of the latter have spent some time collecting information throughout Basutoland and I know that they are now studying the information which they have obtained through that process.

We believe that when the proposals come forward, through the High Commissioner, they will be of value both to my right hon. Friend in the decisions he has to make and to the Basuto people themselves. That is the answer to one of the points made by the hon. Member for Eton and Slough about the expansion of legislative bodies in the Protectorates. These things must come slowly and I am sure that the Committee as a whole will agree that it is wise that they should come with the willing co-operation and, indeed, as a result of proposals coming forward from the people of the Protectorates themselves.

In Bechuanaland, we have already made some progress in the first stage of the creation of tribal and area advisory councils. Gradually, but steadily, an increasing number of councils, after discussion with tribal peoples and chiefs, have come into being. The Committee will be glad to know that in the Bamangwato Reserve, since the return of Seretse Khama and Tshekedi Khama, a committee consisting of seven Africans, including both Seretse and Tshekedi, and

two European officials, has come into being to discuss the constitution of a tribal advisory council for the Bamangwato. Good progress is being made in those discussions and we will receive through the African Advisory Council in due course the proposals which this committee wishes to put forward.

The approach to the problems in Swaziland is less immediate, simply because the established institution of the paramount chief with his council, representative of the Swaziland people, as far as we are informed meets the wishes of the Swazi people themselves. It is surely right and proper again, whatever may be our ideas of what should be regarded as an adequate constitution, that the wishes of the Protectorate people and their existing institutions, as long as they can serve the needs of the present time, should be retained.

I can assure my hon. Friend the Member for Morecambe and Lonsdale that the legitimate and proper interests of European communities in the Protectorates will also be carefully observed by my right hon. Friend. I am sure that hon. Gentlemen would not wish this matter to be dealt with on a racial basis, but that all races, minorities included, should properly have their interests safeguarded.

I turn from the political for a moment to deal with social and economic progress. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bromwich (Mr. Dugdale) asked me to say what we were doing to combat tuberculosis in the Protectorates. Commonwealth development and welfare funds are to be used within the immediate future for the addition of three T.B. blocks at three separate hospitals in Bechuanaland. Similarly, T.B. wards will be added to existing hospitals in Swaziland, and additional hospital accommodation provided in Basutoland will contribute to a proper nursing of patients suffering from that disease. I fully recognise that hon. Members on both sides of the Committee wish to see greater progress in the provision of the facilities which are required—the social progress, the improved health and education facilities—in the Protectorates.

However, there is one thing which all of us who, in our various ways, have studied colonial progress over the last few years will agree. It is that unless social progress is matched by the development

[MR. ALPORT.] of economic resources it will, in the long run, become meaningless. We are, therefore, most concerned that every action should be taken to provide the development of the resources of the territories, but we must, at the same time—and, again, I am sure that the Committee will agree—carefully consider the impact of that development upon the lives and institutions of the peoples themselves.

Let us make no mistake about this. It must mean the introduction of a substantial addition to the European community, because, without the technicians, this sort of progress will not take place. If it happens too fast, it may produce an immediate return in the shape of money, but it may do very great damage to the long-term interests of the people themselves. The hon. Member for Eton and Slough referred to mineral developments, for instance, in Bechuanaland. As he said, mineral rights in Bechuanaland in the tribal areas are vested in their respective chiefs. So that applications for prospecting and mining rights may be dealt with efficiently, the Resident Commissioner, with the agreement of the chiefs, has, in each reserve, set up a small mineral development committee consisting of Government and tribal representatives.

The first meeting of the Bamangwato mineral committee, of which the Native Authority, Rasebolai, is a member, together with Seretse and Tshekedi, was held in February this year. It was attended by a geological consultant, Dr. Mackay, who comes from this country and whose firm is well-known in London. An application for prospecting and mining rights in the Reserve has been received by that tribe from another firm. That will be considered by the committee. There are many of us who are acquainted with the wisdom of, for instance, Tshekedi Khama and I know very well that the interests of the Bamangwato people in relation to any developments which may take place will, through the methods adopted by the Government, be very properly safeguarded.

I do not think that we shall get exploitation, in the older sense; instead, I think that we shall get a development of these mining rights, ensuring not only that they are effective but also that the interests of those concerned are properly safe-

guarded. It must be remembered that mining in Africa is always a very chancy business.

Mrs. Eirene White (Flint, East): Has any suggestion been made that public funds might participate side by side with private capital in the development of these resources?

Mr. Alport: I know of no reason why, if the Colonial Development Corporation, for instance, were to feel able to take part in it, there would be any difficulty or obstacle in its way; indeed, I am sure that that sort of participation would be very warmly welcomed. I must make it clear, however, that I am speaking without being fully prepared for the question.

The hon. Member for Eton and Slough spoke in severe terms of the fact that the C.D.C. had played no part in Basutoland. If the C.D.C. finds, in Basutoland, a project which commends itself to the Board we should welcome any form of investment there—or, indeed, in any of the other territories—which will be for the long-term advantage of the people concerned. The only reason why the Corporation has not entered that area is that up to the present it has had difficulty in finding the right sort of project for its purposes.

In other areas the Corporation has played an important part. In Swaziland, there are the Usutu Forests and in Bechuanaland there is the Lobatsi abattoir. After difficulty in the early days, these projects are running successfully and showing a profit. In addition, through the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts we have made substantial contributions not only to the development of social services, but also economically. During the period of the two post-war Governments, and up until 1960, nearly £6½ million will have been made available for the Protectorates. I am sure that many hon. Members would like to see more money made available, but there are other claims from all parts of the Colonial Territories as well as those for which the Commonwealth Relations Office is responsible, upon the sums made available for this type of development through the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts. In the circumstances, I do not think that we have been ungenerous to the Protectorates for which we are responsible.

Mr. Dugdale: Can the Minister say a word about irrigation? Surely that is something which cannot bring any destruction to African civilisation. It can only be wholly good.

Mr. Alport: That is quite true. I think I am right in saying that the Corporation is in the process of developing a scheme in Swaziland. Thought has also been given to methods of irrigation in Bechuanaland. I quite agree that the proper control and distribution of water supplies, the improvement of road and rail communications, and the provision of power are as essential to the development of the Protectorates as to any of the countries throughout Africa.

We are undertaking a substantial programme for the development of road communications in Swaziland. In the recent past we have also investigated the question of the development of railways. These are large undertakings and represent long-term investments, which very often produce only small immediate returns. If this money is to be spent it must be spent wisely and after the proper research and preparation. We have never had sufficient money to throw away on ill-considered schemes. It is, therefore, our practice to see that the proper preparations for the application of this money are made. I fully agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Morecambe and Lonsdale and the hon. Member for Eton and Slough that it is along these lines that the greatest need lies in the Protectorates.

I now turn to the question of wages, which was also raised by the hon. Member for Eton and Slough. There is something familiar about this controversy over African wages. Nobody supposes that they are as high as either the recipients or many hon. Members would like, but it has been my experience, and probably that of most hon. Members, that wages are never as high as the recipients or others would like. The figures given by the hon. Member—just as in the case of the figures given in connection with the controversy over wages in Kenya—did not take account of the fact that the money wage was paid in addition to the provision of food. It is, therefore, incorrect to lead people to suppose that the figures quoted cover the whole remuneration of the workers: they do not.

I should have thought that by this time the hon. Member for Eton and Slough, who is familiar with labour practices in Africa, would not again have fallen into the same mistake that he made three years ago.

Mr. Brockway: The hon. Member surely will not say that even if food and housing accommodation are provided a wage of 9d. per day for an employee of a public department can be defended by the Government.

Mr. Alport: I am glad that the hon. Member has raised that point. The question of the wage paid to public works employees is under review by the High Commissioner. In Basutoland, certain categories of wages paid to public works employees have been doubled. I do not say that there is no room for improvement—and we will continue to keep the matter under review—but I remember a previous occasion when an hon. Member stated that the average wage paid in East Africa was 10s., when the Parliamentary delegation which included the hon. Member for Rugby and myself discovered that when housing accommodation and other factors were thrown in the average wage was about 77s.

That may not be a strictly comparable case, but we must realise that when we give figures in relation to labour problems in Africa we often tend to mislead people as to the actual conditions under which labour is employed there. The hon. Member was quite right in saying that the reason why higher wages were paid in the mines of Johannesburg was that that part of the country was prosperous. That is the answer I give to the point raised by the right hon. Member for West Bromwich about the South African Government. If the South African Government's policies were as bad as he says they are—and everybody is entitled to his own opinion in these matters—there would not be large numbers of men going not only from the Protectorates but from Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland into the Union to find employment—and going not once but many, many times.

The hon. Member for Eton and Slough said that conditions in Basutoland, Swaziland and Bechuanaland were driving people out of the Protectorates. He is an expert on Africa and should know that the whole history of Africa has

[MR. ALPORT.]
 been one of the migration of peoples. The people of Africa move not only to get higher wages or to leave their homes, but because there always has been this movement of population, all over Africa—East, West and South.

It is, therefore, wrong for the hon. Member to draw false conclusions and to mislead people as to conditions existing in the Reserve—because people do pay attention to the things that he says. What happens is that having made their money these people go back, in the end, to rejoin their families in Swaziland, Bechuanaland and Basutoland.

I do not want to take up too much time in my reply, but there was another point raised by the hon. Member for Cardiff, South-East and repeated by other hon. Members. Let me put it bluntly; it was a stricture on the Commonwealth Relations Office. I landed back only about four hours ago, having spent ten days in Ghana. One of the objects of going there was to assure the people of Ghana whom I met, and perhaps to illustrate it as graphically as was possible to those responsible for affairs in Ghana, that the United Kingdom does not "govern the Commonwealth". I use the words used by the hon. Member.

If I may say so with great respect, I feel that anyone speaking for the Labour Party in a debate of this sort, and referring to the relations between the United Kingdom and free and independent members of the Commonwealth, should be extremely careful of the terms he used. To suggest that the United Kingdom has a responsibility, whether it be through the Commonwealth Relations Office or any other Department of State, for governing the Commonwealth, to him may be a mere slip of the tongue or a loose expression, but to others not understanding these things so clearly, it would give a sign that there is still a desire on the part of the Opposition, the "progressive" party, to exercise control over the policies of these free members of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Callaghan : I did not say anything like that.

Mr. Alport : I took down the hon. Member's words very carefully; the hon. Member did use that phrase. I know that he did not realise it and did not

mean it in those terms, but that is exactly how everyone who listened to him in the Committee heard it and how anyone outside would have understood it.

Mr. Callaghan : What is it that the hon. Gentleman is saying I am supposed to have said—that the Commonwealth Relations Office governs or should govern the Commonwealth? That is absolute nonsense.

Mr. Alport : I know it is nonsense. That is the point I am making, but that is what the hon. Member said. If he looks at HANSARD tomorrow he will see that he used those words, "govern the Commonwealth." Unless I have got it wrongly, that is what he said—

Mr. Callaghan : I want to clear this up. The hon. Gentleman said he may have got it wrong. He is now putting in my mouth an expression, which he says I used, that the Commonwealth Relations Office governs, or should govern, the Commonwealth. If he is trying to withdraw that, what is he accusing me of having said with which he disagrees? Let us have it accurately.

Mr. Alport : I say that in reference to the relations between the United Kingdom and the free and independent countries of the Commonwealth the hon. Member used the three words, "govern the Commonwealth." That is the point I want to make as to the value of the Commonwealth Relations Office.

We have to be extremely careful in ensuring that there are no misunderstandings, such as might have arisen from a phrase of that sort, between the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Relations Office has not the function of a post office, but of a diplomatic office, and that is what it is. We act to the best of our ability to ensure that the liaison between policy in this country and understanding of policy by our fellow members of the Commonwealth is as complete and accurate as possible. I can assure the hon. Member and others that the functions of the C.R.O. are extremely valuable—

Mr. Callaghan : What is the C.R.O.?

Mr. Alport : The Commonwealth Relations Office. I realise that the hon. Member is new to his present position and I apologise for using terms with

which he is unfamiliar. The C.R.O. is extremely valuable in times when there may be differences of opinion and in many other ways.

The hon. Member chided us for failing to make our policy on collaboration with other Commonwealth members clear. One of the best examples of Commonwealth co-operation which has come about was the Colombo Plan. That is an example of an idea coming, not from the United Kingdom—the initiative did not come from the United Kingdom—but from one of our Commonwealth friends and as such it shows the great value which this free and equal partnership can have where everyone can make an independent contribution. In this, the United Kingdom is not responsible for governing the Commonwealth.

7.35 p.m.

Mr. Robert Edwards (Bilston) : Many of the points I should like to make have already been made very ably and eloquently by some of my hon. Friends. In particular, I was interested in the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Eton and Slough (Mr. Brockway), because he made a number of fundamental points I intended to deal with the conditions of workers in the Protectorates.

The major point to which my hon. Friend referred has not been replied to by the Under-Secretary of State. We do not suggest that we can impose on any Protectorate or any underdeveloped territory anywhere in the world artificially high wages. We know from experience in the trade union and labour movement that wages have to be earned and can only be earned if capital is applied to the natural resources of the countries where those living standards are enjoyed. No one on this side of the Committee expects in any foreseeable future living standards to be increased in the undeveloped lands of Africa parallel to the living standards and conditions in Europe. What we do suggest, however, is that unless there is capital for those countries so that they can get water, unless there is capital brought into those countries and developed in a way that they can balance their economies, we shall live to rue our failure to develop the natural resources of those great territories.

In the past, the unbalanced nature of those Colonial Territories has been mainly

due to the fact that they were single-crop economies. If anything went wrong with the single-crop people starved, or were driven to some other country in order to maintain a physical hold on life. The tendency now is for big business capital investments to concentrate on pure mining. Most of the American capital in our Colonial Territories is in mining. They are extracting valuable scarce raw materials out of land and ploughing very little capital back—developing no kind of manufacture—and the economies are still in a state of unbalance. There can be a very considerable unbalance of an economy even when mineral wealth is being extracted from it, but if industrial production commensurate with the wealth which is being extracted is not built, there is a very artificial development.

If we are to maintain ourselves as an important force in the world, we have to find means of developing the countries of the Colonial Empire economically and politically until they become part of the Commonwealth. To do that, we have to start to develop a number of new ideas as to how we can get this kind of capital. There is a great deal of capital that can be collected from the people if the appeal is majestic enough, but we are not trying to do anything about it. We should be helping to develop the Protectorates of the Colonial Territories in ways which have already proved a great success.

For example, during the last ten years the outstandingly successful development in all the Colonial Territories has been undoubtedly that of self-help and mutual aid through the co-operative movement. The co-operative form of organisation is actually the most successful aspect of any kind of social development in the Colonial Territories. Indeed, if we look at some of the figures it is amazing how far the co-operative technique of self-help has advanced since 1945. In 1945, the number of co-operative societies in the Colonial Territories was 1,181. Ten years later, in 1955, the number had increased to 9,440—that is, an increase in self-help, because that is what this means, self-reliance, mutual aid, voluntary co-operation—an actual percentage increase of 402 per cent. in ten short years.

The membership of co-operative societies in those ten years has increased by 347 per cent. The number of co-operative marketing societies has increased by

[Mr. EDWARDS.] 745 per cent. and the number of co-operative consumer societies has increased by 1,730 per cent., while the sales from co-operative organisations have actually increased by 3,387 per cent. So it is clear that this is the way in which the people of the Colonial Territories want to develop if they have the opportunity, and this is the best way for them to develop.

My hon. Friend the Member for Eton and Slough mentioned the dangers of artificial, quick industrial organisations in Colonial Territories and the dangers of the industrial revolution. That is perfectly true. We can have an artificial development which creates great evils, but if we have this co-operative method of development—this coming together of simple people doing things along the lines of voluntary organisation, mutual help, accepting new responsibilities over a wider and wider area that they have never had before, building up their own democracy—then, of course, they will be more ready for the political democracy which is bound to come later.

Having made these two points rather quickly and crudely, because I know that other hon. Members want to speak, I should like to conclude with one point which I consider is very important. There has just been a General Election in Sierra Leone. That General Election took place, in my view, against a background of suspicion and discontent which should not have existed.

Two months ago, I asked the Minister a Question about the ordinances that had been carried by the House of Representatives at Sierra Leone. He suggested that he could not do anything about it, as the matter was being discussed by the House of Representatives and an amendment was before the meeting and he would have to wait until the debate had taken place.

Later, when the debate had taken place, I asked the Minister a further Question about the matter, and he said, "We cannot do anything about this. We have to wait until the election and if the new representative wants to make changes we shall be ready to have a look at the matter." I think that is an unusual way of explaining democracy to the people. What were those ordinances? They made it impossible for a man who had been suspended from his profession for a period or who had appeared in

court and had been fined or imprisoned from being elected to any municipality or to the House of Representatives.

It seems to me that we do not learn from history, either ancient or modern, because most of the great leaders of the Commonwealth countries which have recently won their freedom were men who came out of prison. For patriotic reasons—their own kind of patriotic reasons—they broke the existing law which, to them, was legalised tyranny and they went to gaol. In doing so, they were performing a patriotic function for the people they represented.

Mr. John Tilney (Liverpool, Wavertree): Would the hon. Gentleman agree that there is a difference between going to prison for fraud or something like that and going to prison for patriotic reasons?

Mr. Edwards: Of course there is a difference. That is the point I am making. If one goes to prison for fraud, it may be that there is some reason why one should not be allowed to be elected to an assembly, but if one goes to prison one does not suffer for life for something which one has done.

These ordinances condemn a man or woman for life. If people have been suspended from their professions for doing something which they should not have done, they may be reinstated according to these ordinances which still exist in parts of our Colonial Empire and stand for election but, if elected, they are not allowed to take their seats. That, indeed, happened in the General Election in Sierra Leone. The leader of the opposition party was not elected, and it is quite obvious why he was not elected. It was because, if he had been elected, he would not have been allowed to take his seat.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: I do not think that can be assumed to be the cause of his defeat. Indeed, the secretary of the delegation which came over to see me and saw my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary recently was also decisively defeated, although he suffered under no such ban. It would be a mistake if it should go out that it was that particular regulation, made in the interests of high standards of integrity, that led to that particular defeat.

Mr. Edwards: It is hypothetical. It might well be that he was defeated because of this reason.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: We do not always have explanations for our defeats.

Mr. White: The right hon. Gentleman may need some.

Mr. Edwards: The fact is that if there were any danger of this man losing the Election because of this regulation that is a blow against democracy and democratic practices. The fact is he was elected to a rural council in 1947 and he polled 500 votes. His opponent polled only 50 votes. But there was a petition against him and he was denied the right to take his seat. His opponent took his place and sat for two years.

Mr. Ede (South Shields): They treat them worse than in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Edwards: Of course, the Irish have a history of political struggle and they usually send people to this House because they have been in prison and so are denied the right to sit here. There are not many people in the world, like the Irish, who think in that way, and that attitude arises out of decades of political struggle.

I do not wish to belabour this point, but it appears to me a curious way to encourage people to operate the machinery of a free democracy. I consider that this Government should have intervened when an obvious injustice was being done in Sierra Leone. We do not know how many people were involved. This Leader of the Opposition, Rogers Wright, is a barrister, who was suspended by his colleagues for a year. Because of that, for the rest of his life he is to be denied the right to sit in the House of Representatives or in a municipal chamber; although his colleagues reinstated him and signed a petition asking that this ordinance should be removed from the law. Although this man was denied that right, he actually served as the solicitor for the municipality of Freetown.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: I hope that we can get it straight that this is no action of mine as Secretary of State. This was an action taken locally in Sierra Leone after similar regulations had been made regarding the Freetown Municipal Council. It seemed to me wrong that I should overrule what was carried by a large majority in the House of Representatives in Freetown, and what was a genuine attempt

to attain a high standard of integrity in public life. But I made it clear that if, after the election, which is now nearly completed, they came to a different conclusion, I would look at the matter again. But I thought it would have been very blameworthy if I had over-ruled them in their attempt—such things are not too frequent in the world—to have a high standard among those who serve in their national assembly.

Mr. Edwards: I appreciate the point made by the Colonial Secretary, and I am grateful for the fact that the right hon. Gentleman is prepared to examine this matter again. But these good people have petitioned Her Majesty and obtained 7,500 signatures. Surely, before that debate in the House of Representatives the Minister could have asked that this severe regulation be amended. It exists nowhere else in the British Commonwealth, or the Colonial Empire. It amounts to a ban for life. A simple principle of our law is that a person is not punished twice for the same crime. But this is a ban on a person for life, and I do not think it good enough to say that it is necessary to wait for a new party to be elected before democratic principles are operated.

To me it appears better and just that this House, through the Minister should give an example of the way to work out democratic principles; and to say that this is a severe regulation which is contrary to democracy and that this House would welcome its amendment. That is how we should give leadership in democratic principles. We should not just wait for an election to take place and then say that we will have another look at these ordinances.

I am sorry to have taken so long, but I was determined to make this protest which I have been trying to make since March. Having heard what the Minister has to say, I hope it will not be too long before this stain on our democratic principles will be wiped away and removed for all time.

Mr. Callaghan: As we are in Committee, I wonder whether I may be allowed to make clear that the Under-Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, in his speech, did not accurately interpret the comment which he said I made. I had left the discussion on the

[MR. CALLAGHAN.]
relationship between the Commonwealth Relations Office and the Colonial Office and had gone on to discuss the number of Questions addressed to the Colonial Office each week. I had passed from that to a discussion on what I regard as the paltry amount we spend and the sums allocated for the purpose of hon. Members visiting overseas territories. I concluded that passage by saying, "And this is the way in which we are governing, or attempting to govern, our great territories overseas."

I was not referring to the relationship between the Commonwealth Relations Office and the Colonial Office in any way at all, and I should, therefore, be glad if the hon. Gentleman would withdraw.

Mr. Alport: I willingly and gladly withdraw. I only hope that I have been able to help the hon. Gentleman by preventing my misunderstanding of his words from spreading further. But what I thought he said was certainly clear in my mind.

Mr. Ede (South Shields): The hon. Gentleman should apologise for having such a mind.

7.59 p.m.

Mr. Nigel Fisher (Surbiton): I wish to add my thanks and appreciation to those expressed to the Opposition for choosing this debate on Colonial Territories and, in particular, on—I will not say the less important Colonies; that would not be true—the less controversial ones. We are all grateful for the chance afforded by this debate, not merely because we desire to talk about territories which we may have visited and in which we are interested, but because it does a tremendous amount of good if what we say about these less controversial Colonies in our debates is read in the Colonies concerned. I am sure that the reports of this debate will be read avidly in those Colonies.

I agree with the hon. Member for Cardiff, South-East (Mr. Callaghan) that another thing which would register in the minds of the people of those Colonies as an expression of our interest in and concern for them would be to send more hon. Members of this House out to the Colonies. The hon. Member was quite right in what he said, and I hope that the

Government will take note of the suggestion.

I wish to say something about the West Indies, because since the crisis in British Guiana, in 1953, we in this House have had little chance of debating West Indian affairs. With the fruition of the federation next year they are assuming a new importance and significance for us. We all believe that they have a very important future as a new Dominion within the Commonwealth. They are, also, or they should be, a matter of great pride to us, because they are a very good example of a multi-racial community which really works, a community where the colour prejudice, which we have been discussing this afternoon in other contexts, does not exist. I will not say that there are not individual cases of a colour bar. Of course there are. I noticed certain hotels and clubs where the influx of American tourism, which is so much welcomed on economic grounds, has brought with it a certain element of colour prejudice.

There are also cases of officials—not Colonial Office officials, but, perhaps, junior business executives—or, more likely, their wives—who bring with them a certain colour prejudice which is very much to be regretted. I think that even those cases could be eradicated if only such people were properly briefed beforehand as to the extraordinary importance of their attitude when they arrive in the Colonies.

There is no colour problem in the West Indies, but there is a racial problem in the Eastern Caribbean. In British Guiana, nearly half the population are East Indians and in Trinidad they represent about 30 per cent. of the population. When I was there, there was an atmosphere of tension existing between those of East Indian and of African descent, but I think that we may hope that federation will bring with it a wider West Indian patriotism which will, in time, take the place of the sense of Indian nationalism which has developed there in recent years.

Economically, of course, the Caribbean needs capital investment, and needs it very badly. The standard of living is still very low, and unemployment—due mainly to over-population caused by the absence of birth control—is still very high. In recent years, I freely admit, the British Government have spent a great deal of money there. Large sums of money are

being spent there at present and, bearing in mind that we can only invest a surplus and not a deficit, the amount that has been done is rather remarkable.

A good deal more still needs to be done. Housing is much improved and is improving all the time, but in some areas it is still very primitive. In many Colonies more and better roads are essential, and secondary industries are needed to bolster the precarious island economies, so often entirely dependent upon agriculture. The need for technicians to administer the development projects is nearly as great as is the need for cash to finance them. There is still a great deal to be done, but a lot has been done, and economic and social conditions are improving all the time.

In the private sector, I think that the reform introduced in the last two Budgets in relation to overseas companies will be a tremendous help. When I was there, business people and local political leaders were alike unanimous that it was a very important reform not only for the sake of the companies concerned, but for the sake of the Colonies themselves. Until that reform was introduced, we had the anomalous position that American companies in a British Colony were very often paying a lower rate of taxation than British companies. I am glad that that has been put right. Hon. Members opposite, naturally, tend to criticise Her Majesty's Government and even some of my hon. Friends, while quick to exhort are sometimes slow to thank, so I would like to express the gratitude which many of us feel.

Politically, things are now going very well, very quickly. The strikes and riots of ten or twelve years ago are almost forgotten, and there is no doubt that adult suffrage, a bold step at the time, has been a tremendous success and is now accepted, as it should be. The democratic system is working very well in the West Indies, and in Jamaica, with its two-party system, it is working almost as perfectly as is possible.

Everywhere, the gift of political responsibility has produced a sense of responsibility in local leaders. The extremist agitator of yesterday is the statesmanlike political leader of today. Many of us who have met the more distinguished of these West Indian poli-

ticians, such as Mr. Manley and Sir Alexander Bustamante, of Jamaica, and Mr. Grantley Adams, of Barbados, recognise that we are talking to men of very high political and intellectual calibre. The fact that that can be so in such a comparatively short time as ten or twelve years is a tribute not only to the men themselves, but to the system which made it possible.

In only one West Indian Colony has there been a serious reverse, and that is in British Guiana. I hope, and think, that the set-back there is only temporary, because I do not believe that the people of British Guiana are any more Communist than are the people of Great Britain. Like the people in other West Indies territories, they went through their period of agitation and unrest, but the popular leader who emerged there was not just an agitator who would learn, as others did, by experience, to work democratic institutions. He was a Communist. That was pure bad luck for the Guianese. They did not vote for Communism, but for better living conditions.

I have met Dr. Jagan in British Guiana, and, like other hon. Members, very recently again here in London. His words now are mellifluous and moderate, and he seeks to give an impression of sweet reasonableness but, although he says that he will work a democratic constitution, I have my doubts. He was certainly a Communist in 1953, and so was his very attractive and highly-intelligent American wife, and I do not think that the principles and policies of either have changed very much since then. The hon. Member for Cardiff, South-East (Mr. Callaghan) described him as the last of the Stalinists, and I think that that is a fairly accurate description. We cannot work with the Jagans in British Guiana, and I do not believe that the other leaders of West Indian opinion will work with them either.

Mr. Burnham, Dr. Jagan's former colleague, says that he is not a Communist. He has split with Jagan, and formed his own party. I do not know how genuine that split is. Both are opportunists, especially Burnham, and they might well re-form their coalition if it seemed expedient to them to do so. As we know, elections under a limited constitution are to be held in August. I think that Dr. Jagan will certainly win seats in the

[MR. FISHER.] country districts, and Burnham will win some, perhaps four seats, in Georgetown. He has announced that he will not accept office in the Executive Council under the new constitution, but he is an ambitious man and might change his mind when the time comes.

When I was in British Guiana there was no sign of the emergence of any united moderate party which could command sufficient electoral support to hope to form a Government. At that time, there was really no alternative to either Jagan or Burnham, or Jagan and Burnham. Since then, Mr. Lionel Luckhoo has formed his National Labour Front, which is certainly the most stable and constructive party which will contest the election. I think that it is a genuine, moderate Labour Party, quite untinted with any Communist leanings. It is somewhat difficult to assess its electoral prospects, but I think that, if elected, it would provide a stable and progressive Government. I do not think that the same can be said, with any confidence, of a Government led by Dr. Jagan.

British Guiana certainly needs stable Government, and it also needs capital development. It needs more and better roads, it needs drainage and irrigation and land settlement and greater industrialisation. We ought to finance these things, but I should feel much happier about doing so if I could be sure that there was a stable Government to put the funds to proper use. I do not quite see why the British taxpayer, who is probably the most heavily burdened taxpayer in the world, should pay for these very expensive projects if they are to be misused by a Communist Government in a British Colony.

Nor do I think that private capital, which is also very much needed there, is likely to flow in from Great Britain, the United States or Canada if Dr. Jagan is in power. Frankly, I do not see why it should. Greater political security and stability are really essential prerequisites for the investment of further private capital. There is a shortage of capital in the world, and I do not think that one can blame industrialists if they look at an area to see whether there is a measure of political stability before they invest in it.

Dr. Jagan is not clear on whether he intends to nationalise or, if he decides to do so, whether he will do so with compensation; but, whatever one's views on the merits or demerits of nationalisation, one cannot blame industrialists for having these factors in their minds before they put private capital into these Colonies.

Of course, the Guianese want to govern themselves, and that is a reasonable aspiration in which we should assist them. But Dr. Jagan has had his chance, and I do not think he is the man best able to teach them how to do it. I believe that the Guianese are realists, and that while they want self-government they also want progress, development and a better standard of living. They would rather back a party which could have some hope of bringing those things to them, than a party which cannot.

Dr. Jagan's strength hitherto has been his assertion, in which there is just a sufficient element of truth to make it sound plausible and convincing, that Great Britain can be forced to spend money in British Guiana through his technique of agitation and unrest. He says that we have only sent money there in the last few years because he made so much trouble for us in 1953, and inasmuch as we have spent a lot in the last four years, that sort of argument makes a great deal of sense to the Guianese.

What I would say to the Guianese is this, "We will tax the British people to finance the things that you need, but we would be happier in doing so if you would elect a stable and progressive Government with which we and the rest of the West Indian Colonies can work and which will itself seek to work the Constitution we have offered". If that were said, I believe that the Guianese, being realists, would probably be much influenced in the elections which are to take place in August.

The next step would be the restoration of the Waddington Constitution, or something very like it, to which we all want to come. But that cannot be restored if Dr. Jagan and his friends are elected, because they cannot be trusted not to abuse it as they did last time. At least, I would not feel happy about it. Following the elections, I hope very much that the whole question of British Guiana joining the West Indies Federation will again be seriously canvassed. I am sure

that that would be in the best interests of British Guiana and also of the West Indies as a whole.

Federation for the British Caribbean is a terrific step forward. It is a most exciting new development, for which many people here and in the West Indies have worked hard and selflessly for many years. We all wish it well. It is a natural, necessary and inevitable development leading to Dominion status for the West Indies. I am sure it will be a success, and I think its establishment will create a new multi-racial nation of which we and the West Indies themselves can be justly proud. It will have an important future in the British Commonwealth and in the free world.

8.14 p.m.

Mrs. Eirene White (Flint, East): In a debate of this kind one is tempted to range as widely as the debate itself has gone, but one must resist that temptation. I should very much like to say something about the Protectorates, but I will confine myself now to saying only that I was very glad that the Under-Secretary reassured us of the desirability of Commonwealth Development Corporation participation in any mineral or similar development in the Protectorates.

I only hope that Her Majesty's Government will ensure that the C.D.C. has adequate funds so as to participate, because we have heard some disquieting remarks in the latest report from Lord Reith that it may not have sufficient funds at its disposal for major developments which may be required in some of the development areas of which we have heard today.

While we welcome such progress as is being made towards more representative systems of government, in Basutoland particularly, I cannot help thinking that in Bechuanaland matters are going a little more slowly than need be the case. I cannot see why the council which is being discussed there cannot have certain possibly limited legislative powers and be responsible for certain executive functions. The time has passed when they need be purely advisory functions. People like Tshekedi Khama, Seretse Khama and Rasebolai are capable of something more than giving advice. I think we are unnecessarily cautious in our advance in those places.

We have had several suggestions today to the effect that we ought to be bipartisan

in colonial affairs. At the moment that is a very popular line which is taken in a number of journals dealing with colonial affairs. All I can say is that it is easier to be bipartisan with some people than with others. For instance, I find it very difficult to be bipartisan with the hon. Member for Morecambe and Lonsdale (Sir I. Fraser). On the other hand, I would go quite a considerable distance with the hon. Member for Surbiton (Mr. Fisher), and I would go some distance with the noble Lord the Member for Hertford (Lord Balneil), with whose remarks on Kenya to a large extent I find myself in agreement.

To my hon. Friend the Member for Rugby (Mr. J. Johnson), who is not here at the moment, I would say that it is impossible for a delegation sent by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to take an objective view of affairs in countries to which they go, but I would grant him that they suffer under the disability that such conclusions as they may come to are confined to a private report. That is something which cannot be discussed in this Committee, but it seems to me unfortunate that when we have a delegation such as the recent one to Kenya, of which I was a member, which has very valuable opportunities of study, in which it has spent a great deal of time, and which was given considerable help by the Government of the territory to which it went, its conclusions should at least in theory be private. In fact, what happens is that if they are of some interest and importance, they leak. It would surely be desirable that if they are to be published at all they should be published in their entirety and not indirectly or by surmise or inaccurately.

I should like to say more about Kenya, but, after all, we have had other opportunities of discussing East Africa, and I will confine myself in that context merely to urge again upon the Colonial Secretary not to miss the tide in the affairs of Kenya. I know very well that there are many other territories which have very strong claims on Her Majesty's Government for funds. One need only go over the border into Tanganyika to see that.

On the other hand, there is a certain momentum in Kenya at the moment, and it would be a great pity to miss this

[MRS. WHITE.] opportunity and allow that momentum to slacken. There is a timing in these things in which theoretic justice may perhaps not play its part. Therefore, I would urge the right hon. Gentleman seriously to consider whether it might not be desirable to give even a little more to Kenya for agricultural and educational development at this moment.

I should now like to turn for a few minutes to another East African territory which the noble Lord the Member for Hertford mentioned, and that is Uganda. It is only too true that in Parliament we are apt to discuss countries at times of crisis and to leave them alone when things are going relatively smoothly. We had several debates about Uganda some while back when there was a difficulty and some controversy over the Kabaka. Now we have relatively few Questions in the House and few occasions for debating that extremely interesting and, in many ways, very attractive country.

Having recently been there for a short visit—altogether I have been there two or three times—I must confess that I was a little disturbed about some of the aspects of life in Uganda. We all know that the people of Uganda are relatively wealthy by African standards, and in many ways they are making excellent progress. They have the promise of elections for their Legislative Council.

However, one cannot avoid the impression that there are very deep divisions still among the different peoples in Uganda. It will be difficult for them to work a democratic system of government successfully unless they can show a rather greater tolerance one of another than they are inclined to do at present. I know that these differences are very largely historical and that it will probably take a very long while for them to be worked out. After all, it is true that in the United Kingdom we have occasional differences among ourselves. I am speaking now as a Welshwoman. On the whole, however, we manage to sink those differences sufficiently to work amicably together for the general good. One hopes that that will happen in Uganda.

One of the major problems there is the peculiar position of Buganda. It has, up to now at any rate, been generally regarded as the most developed of the territories in that Protectorate, but I

would say with the greatest respect to my friends in Buganda that they must at least be aware that the people in the other territories in the Protectorate are beginning to catch up and that they cannot for ever, by the enjoyment of fairly considerable natural resources, continue their air of superiority which has served them adequately in the past. It behoves them to pay more attention than at the moment they do, I think, to the feelings and aspirations of the people in other parts of Uganda.

As one example of this, I mention what for many years now has been a matter of difficulty, and that is the relationship between the Baganda and the Banyoro. The noble Lord the Member for Hertford said that this was something about which the Government here can do nothing and that it must be left entirely to the peoples concerned. To some extent, of course, one must agree with him. Unless these peoples can themselves come to some more amicable agreement no one else can do much for them. However, no Government in this country, of whatever political complexion, can possibly ignore the provisions of the Buganda agreement, the earlier agreement and the revised agreement of 1955. It would be no kindness to the people of Bunyoro to suggest anything different from that.

After all, we have given our pledged word to the agreement. There may be some provisions in it we should have preferred to have had otherwise, but we cannot unilaterally abrogate one or another clause of the agreement, for if we do so we shall obviously open the door for the other parties to that agreement unilaterally to set aside certain clauses which they do not care for very much. Whatever one may think of the past history of this matter, therefore, and whatever one may think of the merits or demerits of the fact that the "five counties" are incorporated in Uganda I cannot see that the Government can simply set aside those clauses in that agreement. Such a change in the legal status of these counties should come about only by a tripartite agreement between Her Majesty's Government, the Baganda and the Banyoro.

Having said that, so as not to arouse any false hopes or fears as the case may be in anybody's mind, I nevertheless say that the present state of affairs is far from happy or satisfactory and I have some

sympathy with the people who are of Banyoro descent who live in these counties and who say, with perfect propriety, that, after all, Buganda is a Protectorate and that they also are protected persons, therefore, and that their general life should be protected and that we in the United Kingdom have a certain responsibility to see they do not suffer any oppression.

We have recently delegated to or conferred upon Buganda certain specific responsibilities, for instance in education. Primary education has fairly recently been largely transferred to the Government of Buganda. As far as I know we took no steps, when making that transference, to make any special provision for the wishes, still less for any rights, of the people who do not speak Luganda. It has been put to me that children from Bunyoro speaking families are being required, even in the very first stages of their education, to be taught in Luganda. It is a fairly well-known principle of modern educational practice that a child should be taught in its earliest years in the language of the home. It has not always been so.

Again, I speak as a Welshwoman. In Wales, we have this bilingual problem. Two or three generations ago Welsh speaking children were not only forced to take their schooling in English, but they were punished if they dared to speak Welsh in the schoolroom or even the playground. However, that was years ago, and modern educational practice is that the child should be taught in its home language, and that is especially important in the first few years of the child's education. Thereafter, the second language of the country comes into use.

The Government at present are spending many pounds on Welsh primary schools, some of them for very small numbers of children, and we find the controversy the other way round in one part of my constituency, for instance, where English speaking children are having to learn Welsh.

Mr. Callaghan : In Cardiff a great many coloured children are learning Welsh, also.

Mrs. White : My hon. Friend will agree with me that they do not have to start their schooling in Welsh if they do not speak Welsh at home. The burden of what I am saying—

Mr. Callaghan : Quite right.

Mrs. White :—is that a child ought to start its education in the language which is its home language.

The Government of the Protectorate are spending money on broadcasting in both languages. They recognise that there is a real distinction between the languages. Therefore, I think there is some legitimate grievance on this score.

I am also told that it is extremely difficult for a pupil living in Buganda and who is of Banyoro origin to attain scholarships for higher education. I am told that only one has been able to get as far as Makerere College and he is financed not by the Buganda Government, but by the Omukama of Bunyoro.

What the reasons for this may be I do not know, but it is quite clear that the people in these counties feel that it is due to discrimination and that they are not getting a fair deal. They also say that in order to qualify for such a grant a person has to declare that he is a Baganda and that they object to having to do this. This is a very difficult problem, because we seem to have resigned some of our power in matters of education, without apparently making certain that we were looking after the affairs of certain minorities.

There is also the difficulty that there are judicial privileges in Buganda which do not extend to other parts of the Protectorate. I am told that if one is sentenced to less than five years' imprisonment or the equivalent fine for certain offences one has no right of appeal to the Protectorate court but only to a court in Buganda. If that is so, it is quite clear that there is at least a possibility that there may be some miscarriages of justice, and the people concerned tell me that in their opinion there have been such miscarriages of justice and that they are without redress.

I will not weary the Committee by going into further details, although I hope to send them to the right hon. Gentleman. I hope that I have said enough to suggest that there do appear to be certain serious difficulties. Some of them, I grant, are of long standing between these two groups of people in Uganda, and I will conclude this part of my remarks by making an appeal to those with influence in Buganda, including the

[MRS. WHITE.] Kabaka himself. He is now in the position of a constitutional monarch, and therefore should not normally interfere in the day-to-day administration of the Government, but, clearly, a man in his position has very great influence, and it would be a most statesmanlike thing that a man in his position should show magnanimity and generosity towards people who, at the moment, feel that they are in some ways being oppressed.

It would win him the good will, not only of the people within the territory of Buganda, but also of their relatives and friends in the neighbouring kingdom of Bunyoro, and I think it would be a much better augury for the future of Uganda as a whole if some greater generosity could be shown by people of influence in Buganda. Therefore, I hope that the Kabaka himself will use his own very great personal influence to see that some different attitude is adopted in this matter, because if he did so he would be showing a very fine example and would, I am sure, win the gratitude and praise of all concerned.

Having dealt with one particular Protectorate in one corner of the Commonwealth, I now wish to turn to another country, which is not very often discussed in this House, again, apparently, I am told, because it is a quiet and peaceful country. I am referring to Gambia. I had the great privilege some time ago of paying a visit to Gambia, and I think that other hon. Members have been there. It is a most attractive small country, with a very happy and friendly population, who get on very well indeed together—all races, communities and religions. Of course, historically, it is something of an anachronism. It is the result of quarrels between the French and ourselves, very largely, and economically it is a very difficult territory indeed to administer, being a narrow stretch of land on each side of about 200 miles of river.

I should like to ask the Colonial Secretary one or two questions about the progress which is now being made in Gambia. I should be glad if he could tell us something about the present situation concerning education. There were some difficulties not so very long ago in the matter of education in Gambia, and I understood—I have been trying to get

up to date, because we did not have very long notice of this particular debate—that the Director of Education had resigned and that the position has not yet been filled. There were also some differences of opinion as to the best method of administering education in Gambia, and it seemed as if the responsibility for education in the territory as a whole was being divided in a way which I should have thought was disadvantageous.

I am very glad to know that progress has been made with the teachers' training college in what was the old egg farm, and the number of teachers has, I believe, been very considerably increased. I am told that, in spite of this progress, there are still far too many children, even in Bathurst itself, having only half a day's education at each school working the double shift system, which is not a very satisfactory basis for education.

There is also, of course, a housing problem in Bathurst, and I should be glad to know whether further progress has been made with the interesting scheme projected there. The primary difficulty in the Gambia, however, is economic. I should be glad to know whether further progress has been made in trying to find some sort of variation in the country's economic basis.

I am glad to hear that the recent crop of groundnuts has been better than earlier ones. I was delighted to read in the latest report that by means of propaganda by word of mouth and films the Government have been able to get the men to share the work of rice cultivation, which traditionally was exclusively the work of women, because the ambitious rice scheme started by the C.D.C. had to be very much cut down. I believe that since then there has been a good deal of progress in growing this extremely valuable food crop. There has been progress also in other directions, for instance, in a minor but useful form of mineral development.

Those who know the Gambia and have affection for its people must remain anxious about its economic future. On the political side, it seems to be developing reasonably rapidly and satisfactorily, but it is one of the small territories that we discuss from time to time which from its very nature is not likely to be able to be completely independent in the future. It is one of the territories about

which, sooner or later, the House of Commons must make a positive proposal. These territories are progressing in internal self-government and, ultimately, the time will come when we must consider what is to happen to territories like the Gambia. I do not think that federation is a suitable solution for it. I have found from my inquiries that the people of the Gambia would prefer not to be linked closely with other African territories. We are faced with the problem of what is to happen to territories of this kind, but this is a rather big subject which we have hardly time to discuss now.

I should like to use the opportunity of this general debate to touch on another subject—the question of the Crown Agents. On several occasions during my recent visit to East Africa I had complaints made to me of the unnecessarily wide powers given to the Crown Agents. I am not speaking merely in terms of appointments, where I recognise they may perform a useful and very necessary function, but they have power extended to other things, in particular, the purchase of books for schools.

It seems ridiculous that headmasters of secondary schools and training colleges in Kenya, for example, are obliged to order their books from the Crown Agents. They complained to me of long delays in getting what they wanted. They said, "We could go to Nairobi and buy them tomorrow, but we have to go to the Crown Agents and it is months before the books may reach us." I must declare an indirect interest, because my husband works for the Oxford University Press. Curiously enough, a week or two ago, not having previously mentioned it to him, he said to me, "Cannot you do something about the Crown Agents?" I asked, "What do you mean?" He said, "They are absolutely strangling the book trade in the Colonies."

The restriction placed on the purchase of educational books is that the ordinary private retail bookseller, with whom hon. Members opposite may have some sympathy, is quite unable to make a living because his bread and butter books, on which he normally depends in this country, do not pass through his hands at all. They have to go from the Crown Agents to the schools or technical colleges. I am not speaking of

university colleges, which, I assume, are independent in this matter.

There is a real lack of a live and healthy book trade in the Protectorates because of this restriction. It may seem to be a small point, but books are one of the tools of civilisation, and if booksellers cannot make a satisfactory living because they are denied a very necessary part of their stock-in-trade, the chances of the rest of the community obtaining an adequate supply and a reasonable selection of books is thereby diminished. So I hope that the Colonial Secretary will look at this small problem.

8.41 p.m.

Mr. Anthony Kershaw (Stroud): I regret that I cannot follow the speech of the hon. Lady the Member for Flint, East (Mrs. White) closely because the only "colony" she mentioned of which I have personal knowledge is Wales, and I am not too well briefed about that. I thank her for keeping me up to date about the egg farm. I have always had an affection for it. Years ago, in elections, I made many speeches about it which went down very well, and I wondered what had become of it.

I want to refer to the West Indies and to welcome, as have other hon. Members, the progress which is being made in that part of the world towards some kind of federation. When I was there recently I was told that much of the good work which is being done by the politicians and statesmen, now emerging as such successful and powerful characters in that part of the world, was learned at the economic conferences of the area instituted by the colonial development and welfare organisation. It was while they were learning to work together on those practical details that they realised how much better and easier it would be to work together in politics as they are doing now.

May I express one slight anxiety which was represented to me there, of which I am sure my right hon. Friend is aware? How will it be possible to run the federated Government on the salaries remaining uncommitted, so to speak, of 6 million dollars a year? It is a very small budget for a Government, and I believe that a certain amount of anxiety is being felt about it. Of course, much water has to flow under the bridge before this comes into operation, and it may be that the difficulties will not be so great as people now think.

[MR. KERSHAW.]

In particular, I want to talk about British Guiana, and for two reasons. First, because I was there recently. Secondly, because I anticipate that this will be the last occasion before the elections are due to be held there on which the House of Commons will have an opportunity to debate its affairs.

As the Committee knows, British Guiana is alone amongst the Caribbean territories with land to spare. At first sight one would think, if that is so, that this would afford an outlet for others and a means of prosperity for itself. Unfortunately, there are great difficulties. The cultivated land is below sea level and has to undergo tremendous drainage and pumping works before it can be used. There is little room for an energetic man with a spade because, while it is possible to go out with a spade, it is not possible to dig without finding water. Therefore, large private or Governmental works have to be undertaken before a large amount of land can be brought into cultivation.

Behind the narrow strip of cultivated land there lies the rain forest. The difficulty with it, as with all rain forests, is that one cannot cut down trees and grow anything else because of the mineral shortages in the soil. Although timber is exported and exploited, and the C.D.C. has done a lot to help in that way it would be idle to suppose that the timber industry can be the foundation of the prosperity of so large a Colony as British Guiana.

Behind the difficult barrier of the rain forest there lie the savannahs. These are miles and miles up-country and at present there is no proper road along which to bring down the cattle which can be bred there.

Also, in this very large territory we have the peculiar situation that over-population is already a difficult problem. Malaria was abolished ten years ago, and since that time the population, which for centuries has been maintained by importing workers from all other countries in the world, has risen by one-third, and pressure on schools, housing and social services generally is immense. The result is that plans for social services and improvements which appeared reasonable and all that was required about two years ago are steadily getting out of date day by day.

I mention these facts, which I am sure are very well known to those hon. Member at present in the Chamber, for most of them are experts in the matter, not merely to lecture but to call attention to the physical difficulties which confront the politicians who will shortly be taking over, we hope, in British Guiana and to suggest to them that, while it is natural for a non-self-governing peoples to criticise their Government rather more than to praise it, it will be wise for politicians who will shortly bear responsibilities not to deny the existence of physical difficulties with which they will shortly have to deal themselves.

My hon. Friend the Member for Surbiton (Mr. Fisher) said what bad luck it was that Dr. Jagan was a Communist. I agree with him, and I think we all do. Dr. Jagan is obviously a man of ability and could run a department or a Government with technical excellence. We in this country are not afraid of British Guiana going Communist and becoming a threat either to the West Indies or to this country, for she is not large enough to constitute that, but we have a responsibility to the people who live there, and it seems to me that if we hand over the Government to a man who is proposing to run it on Communist lines we are not doing our duty or performing our responsibilities by the very large number of people in the Colony. They are not Communists, or anything like it. Like most other people in the world, they wish merely to earn their living, keep their families, and live their lives in peace. It may be that, induced by promises, they may vote for a Government of whose full evolution they have no idea and which they would not wish to have if matters were explained to them clearly.

I think that one of the principal difficulties to arise will be the threat to capital investment in British Guiana. It will certainly be the ruin of sugar, which is the largest revenue earner in that part of the world, and it would have an equally catastrophic effect on the Canadian bauxite firm, which is the next most important. When I was there I found a general opinion among the Guianese that British capital was not being energetically enough invested there. It may be that other countries have a little more capital to export from time to time than we have, but the impression is abroad that

we actually try to prevent American and Canadian capital from being invested in Guiana. I should be grateful if my right hon. Friend would make it clear that we have done nothing to prevent capital from being invested by anybody who has a sound scheme and wishes to invest money there.

Here, I would mention that, although the Canadian bauxite company is investing a very welcome 60 million dollars in a new aluminium plant up river, it is worth adding that the taxpayers of this country have in the last two years invested 20 million dollars in British Guiana, and will not require any return by way of dividend or anything else from the Guianese. Nevertheless, we must in fairness ask ourselves whether we are doing enough for Guiana and the Colonies in the West Indies generally. One can understand that they do not like merely to be offered money. That puts them in a slightly humiliating position and they would prefer the aid, which they know they require and wish to have, to be offered in another way.

One way in which we could offer it would be by subsidising the salaries earned by technical experts required to carry out work in that country. The salaries of the experts who come from this country are normally paid by Guiana and paid on a scale which that country thinks it can afford. It very often happens that experts, especially those in Government service, are enticed away by the very much higher earnings which they can make in private enterprise.

I was told of a mining engineer who was offered twice the salary which the Government was paying him. Very nobly, he refused because he knew that the Guianese Government were very short of mining experts and that he ought to carry on his work. Not very long afterwards he was offered three times his salary to work in Venezuela.

A man with a family often finds it very difficult to resist offers like that and this country could assist Guiana considerably by subsidising to some extent the salaries offered to those experts. In passing, I mention that the salaries paid to our civil servants in Guiana are not so very great, allowing for the cost of living there. It is no secret that the only civil servant in the whole Colony who can save a penny piece after the

year's work is done is the Governor; and I do not suppose that he saves very much.

In spite of the difficulties in Guiana, a great deal has been done for which some credit should be given here and now. Since 1950, progress in housing has been spectacular and is there for everybody to see. Progress in keeping up with the enormous increase in the population of the children in the schools is very creditable, although everybody will admit that a great deal remains to be done. Very large works of drainage are taking place and although they take a long time to come to fruition, very shortly we will see very important extensions of cultivated land in that part of the world.

Surveys have been made, but it is a matter of the deepest regret that, in spite of popular superstition to the contrary, there is no oil in British Guiana. There is said to be some about 50 miles out to sea, but no one has been brave enough to go and look. Secondary industries have been started recently and are providing a fair number of people with employment. Something has been done to stimulate the proper organisation of trade unions and also to stimulate local government.

I should like to see a great expansion of those efforts about local government. The thing is starting up now, but much could be done with experience of local government and the responsibility of running local affairs in that part of the world, where the country is so much divided into counties because of the rivers which run between them and because of local patriotism which is greatly developed, to make a training ground for the political game later.

Lastly, I hope that as much as possible will be done in land settlement. I know the difficulties and I have indicated them. They come from the terrain which is extremely difficult to cultivate, but land hunger among the Indians there is simply ferocious and, unless satisfied to some extent as soon as possible, we are certainly heading for trouble. Much is being done, but the faster we can go, the better it will be. The Committee will especially wish that British Guiana should go to self-government as soon as possible not only because that is our aim in all Colonial Territories, but also

[MR. KERSHAW.]
because we will not get the full co-operation of the Guianese unless we are able to allow them to run their own affairs.

Nevertheless, I agree with the reservations in the constitution which is now to be put into force. The difficulty is not that the Government which is elected will be incompetent, or will do things which this Committee might not entirely agree with or take a view about certain matters of which we would disapprove. They are quite entitled to do all those things. The difficulty here is quite different from that anywhere else. It is that the elected Government may be absolutely unwilling to work the constitution, or may deliberately wreck it.

I hope that that fear is not well-founded, and that the elected Ministers will be willing to work the constitution for the time being, and will show that they can work it properly. If they do that I am certain that we shall be only too ready to match with our co-operation and confidence the work that they are prepared to do for their people. I know that we all wish to see a free and happy Guiana as soon as it possibly can be arranged constitutionally.

8.55 p.m.

Mr. Arthur Creech Jones (Wakefield): Although some of us may feel that the discussion has been a little discursive, none the less it has been a good thing that Members have had the opportunity of raising the matters about which they feel keenly and have drawn the attention of the Secretary of State to a number of problems which are worrying them. We have had a great variety of subjects under discussion, and have visited many places throughout the world. I feel that this ventilation of problems is helpful and that it reveals the very genuine interest of Members and their strong feeling for the future of the dependent Commonwealth. That is true even if the attendance has not been what some of us would have liked.

During the debate we have been reminded of the changing character of the modern world and the consequential changing nature of the territories for which we are responsible. Even the conception of Empire has undergone radical changes. The lively influence of nationalism has made itself felt. It is due

to the criticism to which our stewardship has been subjected at the United Nations and at other international conferences; the growth, throughout the world, of a strong anti-colonial feeling, sometimes a great deal misdirected but, none the less, to be reckoned with; and, above all, the growth in ourselves of a strong anti-Imperial feeling and the development and application of our own liberal sentiments.

With it has come a changed view of our own responsibilities in respect of the territories which the legacy of history has brought us, and a new sense of responsibility and service in regard to those territories. It may be that now and again we have our lapses. I rather fear that that is the case in regard to Cyprus, and I certainly felt it was so in the case of the federation which was imposed upon Central Africa against the majority wishes of its inhabitants. None the less, as a colonial Power our course is set. In spite of the differences in the respective political philosophies of the parties in the House there is a great deal of common agreement and a large area upon which common action might be taken.

During the course of the debate many Members raised the question of the formulation of a bipartisan policy in colonial affairs. I do not want to discuss that aspect of our debate, but I want to emphasise that there can be no doubt that there is a great deal of common ground in the House in regard to many colonial matters for which we are responsible and with which we have to deal.

Perhaps our respective philosophies differ and, sometimes, our approach to certain issues is also different. Of course, it is the duty of the Opposition to challenge the Government from time to time, to probe certain problems which are before us, and at times to be somewhat critical in our approach to some colonial issues. It is a little unfair, however, that those who talk most about bi-partisan policy should address their criticisms to the Labour benches. I try to read most of the speeches made by right hon. and hon. Members about colonial policy, and I find that there is just as great a proneness among hon. Members opposite to exploit party political ends as on this side of the Committee.

I feel, I think with all hon. Members of the Committee, it is desirable that so

far as possible we should try to find that common ground and speak with a common voice to the territories overseas and see in what way we can help their political, social and economic progress. At the same time, it must be understood that no disservice is rendered—indeed, I think a great service is rendered—when from time to time policies are criticised and the point of view of liberal opinion, certainly on this side of the Committee, is expressed.

Undoubtedly, as a great nation with colonial responsibilities we are obliged to face the increasing demand for responsibility and self-government in our territories overseas. We cannot escape it. We cannot run away from the more vocal demands made by an increasing number of educated and responsible people in those territories, but I wish to express a word of caution about what sometimes looks too ragged a retreat before the dynamic forces of nationalism, a retreat often before our own constructive work is completed in some of the territories concerned. It is true that as a Power we cannot very much longer dominate, either economically or politically, the lives of the inhabitants of the territories for which we are responsible.

It is obvious that with this increasing dynamic spirit of nationalism we cannot operate what were the old tests in regard to the ability of a people to take over their own affairs and be responsible for their own destiny. In days gone by, when we talked of self-government and independence, we inquired whether the territory was economically viable and could stand on its own feet in matters of defence, whether it had built up a great framework for its administration. Tests of that kind, we felt, were absolutely essential before a territory took over its complete self-government and independence was conceded to it. Those tests no longer apply in the modern world.

As a power we are witnessing and have witnessed, sometimes a hasty withdrawal, even before we have discharged our responsibility to the protected people under our care and sometimes before the economic framework of the modern State has been built. We have also been obliged to abandon development schemes because of the enormous pressure of nationalism

and the demand for self-government from the people in our control. I suggest that if this is a correct analysis of the situation, as I believe it to be, there is room for an appraisal of our colonial policy in the terms of the territories which are struggling now for self-government.

I have difficulty, I confess, in indicating the new emphasis which ought to be brought into the policy which Governments should pursue. Certainly, there are many things, as recent experience has taught us, where nations are reaching independence or are clamouring for it, which need to be done, particularly in the case of those Colonies which hope before very long to secure full, responsible self-government. I would, therefore, emphasise the greater importance which we ought to attach to the building up of local government in the territories concerned in order that responsibility may be learned and people may know how to deal with their own affairs and make decisions for themselves.

Moreover, if self-government is to come to these territories, we must stress far more greatly than we have done the vital service of education. We cannot hope for self-government to move towards democracy unless there is an educated body of people in the territories concerned. They must know how a Government works, understand something about public affairs and how their country is run if public opinion is to be enlightened and intelligent and is to be brought to bear on the affairs of government. That, of course, means that in all our territories we ought to go all out—much more than we have done so far—in respect of information services, the build-up of the Press and of all the means of communication which bring enlightenment to local inhabitants.

Therefore, I think that we ought to stress even more than we have done, although we have done excellent work in this field, the importance of training in administration and technical services. We are conscious that in a number of territories now reaching independence the framework of administration is not nearly as strong as it should be, particularly because of the withdrawal of expatriate people who have gone to those territories from this country, and also because there has been inadequate preparation in the country itself for administrative work and

[MR. JONES.]
insufficient local people have been trained for the discharge of the new duties which responsibility brings. Therefore, we must stress much more in the future the importance of training local people in administration and in the technical services.

Of course, we cannot hope for new territories to discharge the high calling of responsible government unless there is an appropriate economic framework. We must do all in our power to build up the economic life of these territories; to get a mixed economy wherever possible and help to develop the natural resources of these countries, so that when they establish their social services, at least they can be sustained by local economic resources.

I wish also to draw attention to a few matters against the background I have already indicated. I join with the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies in paying tribute to those who have contributed to the progress so far recorded in our Colonial Territories. The hon. Gentleman is perfectly right in saying that although Ministers sometimes imagine that they do a great deal in achieving some aspects of this progress, it is the patient work of administrators, technical staff, officials in the Colonial Office and overseas, missionaries, traders, agricultural workers, farmers and others who make possible the progress which has been attained. I think it right, therefore, that the Committee should pay tribute to the enormous contribution which our own countrymen have made in great civilising efforts in various parts of the world.

During the debate today a number of hon. Members questioned the future of the Colonial Office in relation to the Commonwealth Relations Office. May I assure the Under-Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations that on these benches there is no ignorance regarding the functions of the Commonwealth Relations Office.

Mr. Callaghan: The hon. Gentleman has already withdrawn what he said.

Mr. Creech Jones: Then I beg his pardon.

Sometimes we wish that we could better group the territories under the control of the respective Departments. I often wish

that the South African Protectorates could come to the Colonial Office. On the other hand, there has been a close liaison between the two offices regarding the dependent territories for which the Commonwealth Relations Department is responsible. Because the functions of the two offices are mainly different, I feel it would be a great mistake—at any rate for a long time to come—for a merger of the two Departments to take place.

The depository of experience and of knowledge in the Colonial Office regarding administration and executive work in the territories is of such vital importance that it should be preserved and used for aiding the dependent territories. I should not welcome any suggestion that the number of dependent territories for which the Colonial Office is responsible should decrease, except those reaching independence. As I have said, because of the quality and experience and the expert skill of the Colonial Office, it would be a great pity for that Department to be merged, and also for one Minister to be responsible for two widely different sets of functions.

Although my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South-East (Mr. Callaghan) paid a tribute to the work of the Colonial Office, I think there is still a suspicion that it is a somewhat moribund office. There used to be a feeling that it was the "Cinderella" of all the Government Departments. I think that that feeling arises from a profound ignorance of the functions of the Colonial Office. I speak with experience extending over a number of years in that Department and can testify to the magnificent quality of its officers; to their alertness and imagination, and to their desire to effect change when change was felt to be necessary.

Of course, the Colonial Office never stays still. It is always adjusting itself to the changing needs of the dependent Commonwealth for which it has responsibilities. If one studied the scope and the work of the office over the last twenty years one would see the extraordinary adjustments that have been made from time to time in the Department's duties and responsibilities. There are still a whole variety of services to be performed which are of immense importance to the Colonial Territories.

My hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South-East referred to research work. The Colonial Office has organised research. When I left the Colonial Office it was spending, in what was, I think, a most profitable way, over £2 million a year in seeking answers to many of the baffling problems that confront the territories—animal health, the ordinary physical health of the people, the health of plants and the like; a whole variety of subjects which are of vital importance to administrators and technicians. There is also the surveying of our overseas territories; the discovery of water supplies, the collecting of geological information and the charting of territories—all that was then going forward under the aegis of the Department.

Higher education is another subject. The question was asked during the debate, "Why not have another university college established for the Protectorates?" Already, in the last decade, six or seven new university colleges moving forward to university status have been established. That work is going on with extraordinary good results. Then there are the Colonial Office training schemes, not only for training people to go out to the territories, but also to enable people from the territories to acquire the skill necessary for the discharge of higher responsibility.

That work is of immense importance and, if I may say so, I was extremely pleased to note that it is now not limited to the Colonial Office but is going forward for the independent territories under the aegis of the Commonwealth Relations Office. The announcement made in respect of Ghana—the interchange of students, the training in technical skills which is to be provided, some at our own expense and some at the expense of this Government and that of Ghana—records a remarkably important advance which I very much hope will be applied to other territories becoming independent.

To conclude this catalogue of some of the services of the Colonial Office, which are not always appreciated, there is the astonishing list of advisory committees composed of some of the best brains and some of the most experienced people. They meet repeatedly to deal with the various problems of the Colonies and to advise the Secretary of State and the colonial Governments. All that

work is of supreme importance, so do not let us minimise it. There are also the periodic meetings of officials from various parts of the Colonial Empire to compare notes and to see in what respects they can improve their service and how they can gain from the experience of people of other Colonies. Therefore, I hope we shall not lend an ear to the kind of criticism that is sometimes heard that the Colonial Office is not discharging its great responsibility for the Colonial Territories.

I should like to refer to colonial development, because here again there is a danger that some of our work in the Colonies in the field of development may become limited as a result of certain decisions recently taken. I do not want to go over the old ground of pleading that the emergent territories should have the facilities which are made available to the dependent territories under the Colonial Development Corporation and the Colonial Development and Welfare Act. I hope the Government have taken sufficient notice of the very strong criticism both in this House and in another place, and of the disappointment which has been felt in countries like Ghana as well as in Malaya, because certain schemes which might have been developed have had to be abandoned or projects dropped prematurely.

But a point is now being reached with regard to the credit that is available to colonial development when either further projects will become impossible, or alternatively the Treasury will have to concede that more credit should be made available. The point is well brought out in the recent Report of the Colonial Development Corporation that they have now almost reached the £100 million which was set in the 1948 Act. The capital approved is already £85 million; £15 million will be required to bring existing projects to fruition. Thus, the £100 million has almost been reached and the need for more credit has therefore become desperately urgent if new projects under the Colonial Development Corporation are to be considered.

I now pass to two other points. One is concerned with economic development in our territories, which is quite apart from the two points which I have mentioned in connection with the Colonial

[MR. JONES.]

Development Corporation and the position of the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund. I mention this point because it is exercising some concern among most of us. In recent years there have been some radical changes in the marketing arrangements of our Colonial Territories. Many of the controls which during the war and subsequently proved of immense importance to the economy of these territories are slowly being abandoned.

I hope that the Secretary of State will have something to say about this problem, because many of these controls, much of this machinery and various economic devices were created to safeguard the economy of the territories. If they are removed, when another world slump comes or the trade cycle goes round again, there is real danger that these Colonial Territories will suffer and production in the territories will be severely diminished.

Further, on the economic side, I should like the Secretary of State to tell us whether the question of the effect on our Colonial Territories of the policy concerned with the Common Market in Europe has been considered, and what are the conclusions of the Government with regard to safeguarding the position of the Colonial Territories if such a policy is further pursued. I shall not deal with the problem of capital for colonial development as that was discussed on Friday last.

The second point causing some of us concern is the difficulties which are being experienced by certain Powers at the United Nations through the machinery of that body. I do not remember that we in this Chamber have ever had a debate on any of the White Papers issued by the Foreign Secretary each year about the discussions which take place at New York regarding dependent and other territories. It may be that there are certain practical difficulties in extending international accountability. On the other hand, the work of the Specialised Agencies of the United Nations is of immense benefit to all dependent territories, whether they are Colonies or not.

Under Chapter 11 of the Charter, as the Secretary of State well knows, there are emerging new difficulties, not difficulties connected with the question of

extending the principle of international accountability, but difficulties because of the failure of certain Powers now to exercise the necessary duties and responsibilities entered into under that Chapter. We see that the Belgian Government, with vast colonial power, have refused further to take part in the machinery under Chapter 11 of the Charter. Spain and Portugal, which are important colonial Powers, regard their overseas territories as extensions, as provinces, of the metropolitan countries, and they are not prepared to operate the machinery which has been erected under that Chapter 11.

I notice, too, that the worthy governor who has represented this nation for many years at the United Nations, under Chapters 12 and 13, has a great deal to say about Chapter 11 in his recent book, and the advice which he offers is that we should follow the example of the Belgian Government and ourselves leave the machinery erected under that chapter and walk out like the Belgians. I personally feel that that would be a profound mistake.

None the less, there are certain practical difficulties which have to be faced, and I ask the Secretary of State whether it is possible for us in our deliberations at the United Nations to take a much more constructive and positive view than we have been taking in recent years. Our difficulties have been, and are, great. We, a great colonial Power, seem frequently to put ourselves morally in the wrong, although technically we have been quite right in the voting stand we have taken. However, there is in all this a very real problem of some concern to some of us.

I conclude with a reference to the High Commission Territories, because I want to emphasise what has already been said, that we ought in no circumstances to surrender to the demand of the Union Government. I feel that that would be a gross betrayal. I think it imperative that the peoples themselves should be allowed a say if such a decision is to be taken. We know what their answer will be. I will also echo what my hon. Friend the Member for Eton and Slough (Mr. Brockway) said in respect to mineral development. I want to see controlled development, and I should like to see the people of the territories associated with that development, and also

the revenues arising from the minerals being used for native welfare.

I feel that I have only got through about half the things that I would like to say, and I know that I should give way to the Secretary of State, but so many problems have been raised today and there has been so much discussion on the smaller territories that I think that our debate has been thoroughly justified. It has been well worth while that this opportunity has been given to us to ventilate the grievances and the feelings of the millions of people for whom we in this Committee have a very grave and difficult responsibility.

9.31 p.m.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Alan Lennox-Boyd): Towards the close of his very interesting speech—and I am grateful to him for sitting down before he had really finished—the right hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Creech Jones) raised what is probably the most important matter that this Parliament will have to consider. It would not be possible for me, in the time available, to deal even inadequately with it, but I must mention it in passing, since the right hon. Gentleman has raised it. It is the question of the Common Market and proposed Free Trade Area.

Needless to say, I, as Secretary of State for the Colonies, and all my colleagues, are very conscious of our obligations in this matter towards the British Colonial Territories. We are concerned with two things. The first is the signature of the Treaty of Rome, and that is now a reality. We must, therefore, see what steps it will be necessary for us to take to mitigate any possible adverse consequences that may come from the signature of that treaty to the British Colonial Territories for which we are responsible.

The second issue concerns the Free Trade Area, and, naturally, we have been giving very close consideration to the position of the British Colonies in this matter. As I have said, if I sought to deal with this question even inadequately now, I shall have to leave unanswered the mass of other interesting points raised in the debate, to which it would not be possible to give more than a passing reference.

When the hon. Member for Cardiff, South-East (Mr. Callaghan) and I first got

to know each other fairly well, I was Minister of Transport and he was in charge of the Labour Party's Transport Committee. Here we are again, and I am very glad that it should be so. It is a curious fact, as he has raised the question of Parliamentary Questions and the volume of the work that the House expects from the Colonial Office, that the two Departments with which we have been associated—Transport and the Colonial Office—should figure amongst the first three Departments to be most heavily questioned in this House. I do not think that there is any connection between them, because the hon. Gentleman is himself limited, though this may be very regrettable, by the rule preventing him from putting down more than three Questions on one day.

Last year, the Colonial Office was asked, on the Order Paper, 958 Questions. The Foreign Office came next with 898, and the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation next with 728, but there is this difference. While the Foreign Office answered orally 486 out of the 898 Questions, I, as Colonial Secretary, and my colleagues, were able to answer orally only 208 out of the 958 asked. So, naturally, I sympathise with hon. Members who feel that at least a new look at the situation is desirable. The Government are well aware of this problem, and it is now under discussion through the usual channels.

I know that hon. Members will realise, or should realise, that between 70 and 80 per cent. of all the Questions addressed to the Colonial Secretary and his colleagues in the Colonial Office have to be referred to colonial Governors before they can be answered. If we are able to find some way out of this difficulty, I entreat hon. Members only to ask those Questions which they really feel justified in asking in view of the exhaustive work of the various colonial Governments in preparing the necessary Answers.

I have refrained on many occasions when I have been sorely tempted from stating that I could find out the facts, but that I did not believe that the finding of those facts would justify the labour involved. I would much prefer to leave it to hon. Members themselves, but if we could meet their convenience in this way we could perhaps bring into effect something which, in the unlikely event of

[MR. LENNOX-BOYD.] our ever being in opposition again, we would do our best to follow in later years.

The hon. Member for Cardiff, South-East also raised the question of the varying responsibilities of the Commonwealth Relations Office and the Colonial Office. Much thought is being given now to the best machinery for dealing with Commonwealth affairs. The hon. Member himself rightly stressed the very particular trust reposed in the Colonial Office and the words "Colonial Office" in certain Colonial Territories and that we must be exceedingly careful not to disturb that trust. Consideration is being given to that, and, of course, it has been stimulated by the representations made, for example, by my friend Mr. Lim Yew Hock from Singapore and by my friend Sir Roy Welensky from the Federation of Central Africa.

Hon. Members on both sides of the Committee will agree that this is one of the best colonial debates that we have had for a very long time. My hon. Friend the Member for Armagh (Mr. Armstrong) said that emerging territories need above everything else wisdom, experience and integrity and that it would be a great disservice to those territories if we encouraged unduly wild ambitions.

The question has arisen from time to time during the debate, and it was raised in particular by the hon. Member for Cardiff, South-East, the hon. Member for Rugby (Mr. J. Johnson) and my hon. Friend the Member for Surbiton (Mr. Fisher), whether Members of Parliament should not travel more in the Colonies. My answer to that would be, "Most certainly, yes, if they genuinely go on fact-finding missions, but most certainly not if they go with preconceived views which, in total ignorance of local circumstances, they then proclaim to the world when they arrive in the various territories."

I could wish that hon. Members would always speak with the same candour when they are overseas as they do elsewhere. I have the greatest respect for the hon. Member for Rugby. He has lately been in the Central African Federation. I have done my utmost to follow Press reports of his various speeches. I may be unjust to him, because I have not read everything, but to the best of my recollection he made a friendly reference to the idea of a qualitative franchise when he was in Salisbury

and he made no such reference when he was in Lusaka; but, of course, it is in Lusaka that it was important that friendly reference should be made to a qualitative franchise.

But I shall not pursue that point. There will be many opportunities of discussing the relative value of the hon. Member's journey in the Federation and of mine.

Mr. J. Johnson: Are we to discuss this now or later?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: It is for you to say, Sir Charles, but I will refer to the matter a little later.

The best friend to the territories sometimes is the candid friend. I listened with great interest to the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Stroud (Mr. Kershaw), dealing with the problem of British Guiana. He said that nothing should be done to frighten off capital from British Guiana. I can assure him that there has been no hindrance of any kind put in the way of worthwhile investment in British Guiana. I join with him in watching with the closest interest the progress of the development programme for the current fifth year period in British Guiana for, which there is a total sum of £19 million.

There are a number of other points on the bipartisan approach that I should have liked to develop, but it will probably be more worth while if I deal with one or two of the great issues that have arisen in this debate. I agree entirely with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wakefield about the vital necessity of encouraging local authority and Native Authority government as the best possible foundation for eventual self-government in the territories, and I wish that we had all felt that way in earlier years.

There is one other general issue, raised by the hon. Member for Cardiff, South-East in his reference to the Report of the Advisory Council on Scientific Policy. I fully endorse what he said about the extremely good quality of that Report and the valuable nature of its advice. It is a Report to my noble Friend the Lord President of the Council, but after it was published the then Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies had two long talks with Sir Solly Zuckerman. We are looking carefully into the proposal that there should be a centre of tropical agriculture, and I can promise him that the Report

is being treated with the seriousness it deserves.

The hon. Gentleman raised a number of questions, of which perhaps the most important was that of Tanganyika. I hope that hon. Members who raised issues concerning other territories will forgive me if I give what may appear to be a disproportionate amount of time to the three East African Territories, namely, Tanganyika, Uganda and Kenya though, if time allows, I will do my best to deal with one or two other points as well.

The Governor of Tanganyika recently announced in the Legislative Council further steps towards constitutional advance in the territory, and a Bill to provide for the introduction of elections, based on a common roll and a qualitative franchise, was placed before the Legislative Council and was considered a few days ago. It was hoped to hold the first elections early next week, and the Government spokesman indicated that the intention would be to confine elections, at the outset, to three or four constituencies.

During the debate on the Second Reading of the Bill, however, it became clear that there was a strong body of opinion in favour of deferring elections *sine die* until they could be held in all constituencies to enable the Government to consider the views which had been expressed. In moving the Adjournment, the Chief Secretary made it clear that delay in the passage of the necessary legislation would make it impossible to hold elections in 1958. The Governor is now in consultation with me on the next step to be taken, but I can assure the hon. Member for Cardiff, South-East that those steps will not be taken out of pique.

Further innovations, which have implications of great importance to Tanganyika, are contained in the proposal for the introduction of a ministerial system and the appointment of six unofficial assistant ministers which the Governor, with my approval has placed before the Legislative Council. I heard yesterday that the Governor has now appointed four Africans, one Asian and one European to these posts as being the persons best fitted by experience and interest to address themselves to the aspects of Government concerned.

All these are really positive steps forward towards a non-racial approach to a greater measure of self-government in

Tanganyika, and I am sure that the whole Committee will welcome them. It is unfortunate that the atmosphere should have been clouded by recent activities of the Tanganyika African National Union. I had hoped to be able to develop at greater length the case for the action that the Governor has taken recently in regard to that union with my full approval. May I say, however, that there are evident signs that, particularly in the Tanga Province, attempts had been made to instil an attitude of contempt for authority, and that the idea has been spread abroad that the Tanganyika African Union is above the law and that their native authorities and their courts no longer have any responsibility or jurisdiction.

Neither the Governor nor I am prepared to tolerate the growth of that idea, and the action he has taken with great regret has, as I say, my entire support.

Mr. Callaghan: I understand that Mr. Nyerere is anxious to go to Tanga Province to put the position right. Why is he denied access to it?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: As the hon. Gentleman knows, it has been held impossible, and I think rightly, that there should be large scale, open-air meetings. If Mr. Nyerere has any particular proposal to put as to how he can undo some of the mischief that has been caused, he has many opportunities of contact with the Governor, whose approachability in all these matters is well known. At his house on more than one occasion in previous years I have met Mr. Nyerere.

My noble Friend the Member for Hertford (Lord Balniel) asked about Uganda and its future as a unitary State. I can assure him that all he said was of the greatest interest to me and to my hon. Friends. As the Committee knows, the future of Uganda as a unitary State is one of prime concern to Her Majesty's Government. As the Committee will also know, a Motion about self-government was recently debated in the Protectorate Assembly and the result of that was a fairly clear indication of the general feeling of people in Uganda about premature political advance.

We are all very concerned with the need not to stand still in this matter, but to keep moving forward consistent with the learning of lessons at every stage. I am confident that under the vigorous

[MR. LENNOX-BOYD.]
 leadership of the Governor, Sir Frederick Crawford, proper progress will be made. I hope that an opportunity will arise for me to be able to deal in greater detail with the steps being taken in Uganda, but for reasons which the Committee will readily understand, I am afraid that that is not possible tonight.

The hon. Lady the Member for Flint, East (Mrs. White) referred to the "lost counties" in Bunyoro. I can assure her that I sat under a tree near Government House in Entebbe, two years ago, and gave my personal assurance to the Omukhama of Bunyoro that I would examine that problem afresh. I did so and I came to the same conclusion as right hon. Gentlemen in previous years, that it was impossible to reopen the question. The hon. Lady mentioned a number of cases where she felt that discriminatory action was taken against Bunyoro citizens in Buganda. I will certainly see that the attention of the Governor is drawn to all her comments and to one or two others addressed to me privately on the same issue.

The hon. Lady and my noble Friend the Member for Hertford also referred to Kenya, and I very much welcome the speeches they made. It would not be proper for me to comment on the Report submitted to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, except to say that as a member of that Association I have read that Report with the greatest possible interest. Opinions may vary about what should be done about reports of that kind, but I urge all hon. Members who do not already belong to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to join at once so as to have the privilege—if there is no other way to find out what is in the report, which is unlikely—of reading the Report.

As the Committee knows, we have lately suffered in Kenya what I hope is only a temporary constitutional setback. A feature of the 1954 settlement was an understanding to arrange direct elections of African representative members who were previously nominated from candidates present by indirect elections. This was a further step forward in African political progress. Elections were held in March and only two of the existing members were returned. Immediately

after their election, eight African representative members declared their intention not to participate in the Government as now constituted. They came to regard the 1954 settlement as dead and urged the immediate creation of 15 more African seats on the Legislative Council.

The effect of such an adjustment would be to increase African representation nearly threefold and at one jump to bring it up to equality with all other races taken together on the representative side. It is clearly impossible for me to accede to such a unilateral demand. As I have explained before, the pattern of development which I and my colleagues have fostered is one of inter-racial co-operation on which the hopes of a peaceful and prosperous Kenya depend. For the African members, at this stage, to fling down a racial challenge to the Government is quite incompatible with the basic principles which my predecessor and I have thought most appropriate in the present phase of constitutional development in Kenya. I do not propose to absolve any member in the legislature from his clear responsibility to negotiate with other groups if he desires early changes to be made.

An opportunity already exists for an examination of the structure of the Legislative Council in the announced intention of the various groups to consider the need for additional seats. That my mind is not closed to change—I was asked about that by one hon. Member—was made clear by my acceptance of the agreed proposals made to me last year, but until this discussion has taken place and recommendations have been made to me I cannot undertake that any further changes will be made.

I welcome the recent extension of African representatives and the opportunity which was given for the Africans to elect their own representatives. It is now for these representatives to show a due sense of responsibility to their own people and to look to their overall interests, which are directly affected by the day-to-day conduct of affairs.

They cannot discharge their duty by throwing a sterile challenge at the Government. Rather will their interests be furthered by the representatives who take their place in the councils of Government and do their utmost by democratic

argument to advance African interests, at the same time looking also to the interests of Kenya as a whole, and playing their part in maintaining a cohesive, confident Government which can tackle in harmony the many pressing problems of the Colony's development. If they persist in their attitude the Government of Kenya will, nevertheless, go on. I cannot regard these obstructive demands as making the existing Constitution unworkable. Ways will be found to make multi-racial government work in Kenya, and I earnestly hope that all will co-operate to this end.

I listened with the greatest interest to the speech made by the hon. and learned Member for Northampton (Mr. Paget), with much of which I was in agreement, and, in particular, when he enlarged on the real dangers of politics becoming racial and developing along communal lines. I was glad that he took a leaf out of the Tanganyika plan, in that under his proposals each candidate would have to command support from people of all races so that it might be hoped that moderate candidates would emerge.

The right hon. Member for West Bromwich (Mr. Dugdale) raised a number of most interesting points in regard to the Pacific Islands. I hope that all those who live in those lovely territories will not think that, because their affairs are not frequently discussed, their interests are far away from the hearts of those of us in this Committee. I think that the right hon. Gentleman forgot that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland, who was then the Minister of State, paid a very hasty visit last year to Fiji, the New Hebrides and the Solomon Islands Protectorate. At present, representatives from Australia, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United States and the United Kingdom are meeting in Canberra to review the work of the South Pacific Commission which was set up by agreement ten years ago. Our representatives include the Governor of Fiji, and the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, and the leader is a senior officer from my Department who has visited the Solomons and the New Hebrides on his route to Canberra and will go on to Fiji and the Gilberts on his return.

The right hon. Gentleman asked me certain questions about aspects of life and development in the Solomon Islands. I

will write to him in detail about the various points that he raised. However, I am glad to tell him that the geological survey has made substantial progress and has yielded thoroughly worthwhile results, that forestry development is progressing satisfactorily, and that the new central hospital at Honiara is now built and, in the words of one of my officers, the authorities have made a magnificent effort and have produced a hospital which can well, I think, develop into one of the best hospitals in the Pacific Ocean. I will write to the right hon. Gentleman privately about the other points he raised about the Pacific Islands.

The hon. Member for Rugby asked me a number of questions about the Haud and Reserved Area of the Somaliland Protectorate. I ought to make it clear that the Ethiopian authorities are not at this moment making special difficulties for such tribes as may now be in the Protectorate, and the object of the talks that are going on is to remove one of the principal causes of dissension in the past, which is the dispute between the British and Ethiopian authorities as to what are British tribes in the Protectorate and what are Ethiopian tribes.

Authority has now been given to increase the strength of the Illalo force by another 100. I can assure the hon. Member that if the Governor presses for further increases I shall see that nothing stands in the way, but it is essential that those recruited for this very delicate job should be most suitable and of the highest quality.

The hon. Member for Flint, East asked one or two questions about Gambia. The territory has had a long and honourable association with Great Britain, and I am at all times anxious to make it clear to its people that the House of Commons is keenly concerned with their welfare and development. The hon. Member asked about housing in Bathurst. I am glad to say that the Gambian Government are now considering a report by the housing adviser to the Secretary of State—Mr. Atkinson—recommending a model estate on reclaimed land in Bathurst, and we shall press on with that with all expedition, subject to some of the financial difficulties of which the hon. Member is fully aware.

If I may turn to economic development, there is a very promising agricultural improvement scheme, assisted by

[MR. LENNOX-BOYD.]

colonial development and welfare funds, in Kombo St. Mary. A new head of the educational department has been appointed from Northern Nigeria and although he has not yet arrived I am sure that when he does so—which will be soon—he will put new life and vigour into the educational development of Gambia. As the hon. Member rightly said, one of the chief difficulties is finance. We are glad that this year there is a record groundnut crop of over 70,000 tons—the best crop for thirty years. This has been bought by the marketing board at £31 a ton, which is £6 a ton more than last year.

Almost as important from the human point of view is that the production of the main subsistence crop—rice—has been greatly increased in the past few years, mainly as a result of the energetic programmes of bunding, which is bringing large areas of swamp land under cultivation. As a result, the hungry season—the period between the sowing of the new rice crop and its reaping, when stocks of the old rice become exhausted—has been abolished. The House should give its warm congratulations to Sir Percy Wyn-Harris, the most enthusiastic and enterprising Governor, whose personal drive has been in large measure responsible for this worth while result.

I realise that I have left a number of points unanswered. I had hoped that on this occasion I would escape the charge of leaving certain issues unresolved. I see that I still have two minutes unexpectedly available, having completed my Gambian journey, so I can tell the hon. Member for Rugby that I also listened to what he said about Mauritius. I left it out of my original plan because the Under-Secretary of State referred to it in his opening remarks.

I can tell the hon. Member—as he probably already knows—in regard to

nomination that, as was stated in the Press announcement made after the recent talks with the Mauritius delegation, the nomination would not be used to frustrate the result of the elections. It would be used where appropriate to ensure the representation of special interests of those who had no chance of obtaining representation through elections.

In the case of the Executive Council the object would be for the nine unofficial seats to reflect the composition of the Legislative Council. I believe that the plans we have suggested to the Mauritius delegates and the proposed Commission which I hope will be able to take up its work fairly soon will provide hope in the constitutional field. I am aware that this debate has been taken up largely with constitutional discussions, but we should all realise more and more that the foundation of successful constitutional development is the economic development, and for that political stability and confidence are essential.

One good result of the debate will, I hope, be to show our friends and fellow-citizens throughout the British Colonial Empire that there is such a wide measure of agreement that although we might not be able to call ourselves a Council of State we get somewhere near it when we discuss this sort of problem and get away from the hustings, either here or overseas.

Whereupon Motion made, and Question, That the Chairman do report Progress and ask leave to sit again—[Mr. E. Wakefield]—put and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again Tomorrow.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, That this House do now adjourn.—[Mr. E. Wakefield.]

Adjourned accordingly at one minute to Ten o'clock.

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION BILL

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question [29th March]. That the Bill be now read a Second time.

Question again proposed.

3.22 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: I think the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire, South (Mr. R. Bell) was in possession of the House when the debate adjourned.

Mr. A. Fenner Brockway (Eton and Slough): On a point of order. On the last occasion, the debate began at one minute to Four o'clock. I moved the Second Reading of the Bill and, in those circumstances, I naturally concluded my speech very rapidly indeed. In the last seconds the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire, South (Mr. R. Bell) made an intervention, but I should have hoped that there would be an opportunity for me to put my point of view in this debate.

Mr. Speaker: I can quite understand the motives which made the hon. Member for Eton and Slough (Mr. Fenner Brockway) shorten his speech to that extent, but the fact remains that the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire, South was actually in possession of the House when the debate was adjourned. I have no doubt that, if time permits on this or some other occasion, the hon. Member for Eton and Slough may, if he asks for it, get the indulgence of the House to speak a second time.

3.23 p.m.

Mr. Ronald Bell (Buckinghamshire, South): Speaking for myself and probably for most of my hon. Friends, I am sure that if the hon. Member for Eton and Slough (Mr. Fenner Brockway), either today or on some other occasion, should ask the leave of the House to make a second speech, I certainly would not object, and I do not think that any of my friends would.

It is desirable in the rather short time at our disposal this afternoon that we should hear a little of the case against the Bill. I hope that in the short time available of which I will not take too much, my hon. Friends and I will be able to put forward some considerations which the House has not hitherto heard

in discussing the Bill. It is not only that in this Session the hon. Member for Eton and Slough introduced the Bill in a one-minute speech. I think that, although such a Measure has been before us before, we have not had a full debate upon it.

Mr. Brockway: Hon. Members have had the opportunity.

Mr. Bell: The hon. Member says that we have had the opportunity, but, of course, we did not have the opportunity or we should have had a debate.

Mr. Brockway: I introduced the Bill under the Ten Minutes Rule. It was not opposed. I suggest that if there had been opposition it could have been expressed.

Mr. Bell: The hon. Member is making a confusion, which is quite common, between a Motion for leave to introduce a Bill and a Bill itself. My own practice on these occasions has often been to vote in favour of leave to introduce a Bill, partly because one thinks that if a Member feels strongly about his subject he should have the right to have his Bill printed to let us see it, and also because one may feel that the matter can profitably be debated. Voting in favour of the Motion or not opposing a Motion for leave to introduce a Bill in no way expresses approval of the principle of the Bill or its details when printed. Of course, we have had no debate on the Bill as printed at all.

I find that when I began my speech on the Bill, I uttered only one sentence. I said that I was sorry to have to oppose the Bill. I am afraid that those words were spoken rather under the pressure of the moment, because, in fact, I am very glad to have this opportunity of opposing a Bill which I believe to be bad in principle, bad in intention, bad in method and bad in detail.

Mr. Barnett Janner (Leicester, North-West): In other respects, it is good?

Mr. Bell: As the hon. Gentleman says, in other respects it is good.

It is a wholly deplorable Measure. The hon. Member for Eton and Slough holds strong views about the treatment of coloured people, and he is quite entitled to hold those views. Indeed, my strongest feeling in approaching the subject is that everybody is entitled to

[MR. BELL.]

have his own views about it. I am very sorry to see any attempt made by legislation to try to stop that and to ram the views of the hon. Member for Eton and Slough by Statute down the throats of other people.

It is quite easy for those who take an interest in particular aspects of the matter of the treatment of coloured peoples to build up for themselves and in the minds of others a belief that there is something specific, definable and wicked in a colour bar. It may be that in some parts of the world there is something so definable and specific, but this Bill relates to the United Kingdom, and there is certainly nothing of that kind in this country.

This is not a Bill to sweep away legal disadvantages and legal disabilities. It is a Bill to create for the first time in the law of England a colour law, and more than that, a law relating not only to colour, but to race and religion. There is probably no country in the world where there is less feeling on account of race than in Britain. The Jews have lived here happily at peace and enjoying full equality under the law for many generations. There is no country in the world where there is less feeling against them as a community than there is in Britain.

Is not that position due to the very fact that we have had the wisdom not to make specific laws enforcing that attitude on the part of our people because it is just the natural reaction which our temperament has, in fact, produced? How foolish it would be to try to formulate that in the terms of a Statute, to bring people to court for infractions of that law, and to fine them. What more effective way would there be than that to create exactly the kind of feeling which has never existed before in this country?

Sir Leslie Plummer (Deptford): Is the hon. and learned Gentleman satisfied, then, that it is perfectly reasonable and proper that Jews should be refused admission to voluntary organisations, like golf clubs, and should be refused accommodation in hotels? Is he happy that hotels should say that Jews are not admitted at any time? Does he think that system should be continued?

Mr. Bell: The hon. Member is confused in at least two ways. The main

purport of what I have been saying is that in these respects there is no happier land than this, and, secondly, that if we try to formulate that attitude into a law we shall create exactly the kind of feeling that is now so little in evidence in this country.

Mr. Bernard Braine (Essex, South-East): Following on this point, is it not a fact that the law as it stands at the moment provides that hotel-keepers are under a legal obligation to provide accommodation to all? This question has already been thrashed out in the House, seven or eight years ago, when the Attorney-General of the Government of the party opposite was questioned about it. He made it absolutely clear that the legal duties falling upon an innkeeper—which includes a hotel-keeper—are not affected by the colour of the traveller, which presumably also means the race and religion of the traveller.

Mr. Bell: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. That is quite true, and I was coming to that point. At present, the keeper of an inn according to the custom of England—and that term covers the keeper of the ordinary public hotel—must offer refreshment and accommodation, if it is normally provided, to a traveller regardless of his race, colour or religion, if room is available. If he fails to do so he is guilty of an offence.

That matter was not only thrashed out in this House but was established in the courts, in the case of Constantine. The duty is not based upon race, colour or religion; it is the ordinary right of everyone to be put up if accommodation is available. That is as it should be. The hon. Member for Eton and Slough, however, is trying to alter that position. He is saying, "We will not rely upon your plain duty to all Her Majesty's subjects to give them refreshment if you can take them in. We will punish you specifically upon the ground that you have refused it to a coloured man or to a person on account of his race or religion."

Sir L. Plummer: What happens if he is not one of Her Majesty's subjects?

Mr. Bell: It makes no difference whether he is one of Her Majesty's subjects or not.

The only effect of the hon. Member's proposal in relation to hotels would be to change the ground upon which the

action or the prosecution was brought, from the ordinary one with which we in England have been familiar for 600 years—that there was accommodation and that it should not have been refused—to this special one, that racial discrimination was exercised. I would regard that as thoroughly retrograde.

One of the strongest arguments against the proposal is that it is so artificial. It is bound to be so, since it proceeds by interfering in the ordinary daily lives of the people. Any attempt to do that is likely to defeat itself because of the complexity of the methods which would be necessary.

Clause 1 says that:

"... a person exercises discrimination where he refuses, withholds from or denies to any other person facilities or advantages . . ."

That is an extraordinary doctrine to introduce into our law—that anyone should be guilty of discrimination within the meaning of the Bill if he refuses some advantage to a person on the ground of his race, colour or religion.

Clause 2 says:

"No person shall be entitled to exercise racial discrimination in pursuance of any of the following occupations:

(a) Innkeeper."

That is a very strange proposal. Apart from the argument which I have just mentioned, why should it be right for an innkeeper to exercise discrimination upon the ground of colour or religion, and an offence to exercise it on the ground of race? What sense does it make? That is what the hon. Member seems to be proposing. I should have thought from what I know of the hon. Member that he would be more concerned to prevent discrimination on the ground of colour, but for some reason or other when dealing with innkeepers he picks out racial discrimination as the only one which shall be an offence under the Bill.

The Clause then goes on to refer to a "Keeper of a common lodging house."

Of course, the keeper of a common lodging house at present may not be under the obligation to which we were referring just now. I wonder whether it is right for Parliament to intervene and prescribe the social attitudes of all people in the country. How do we know what is right as yet? The world is still young. We do not know to what extent it is right or not right to discriminate

against people on those or other grounds. It may well be argued that a wise man discriminates on as many grounds as he can; that the peculiarly human quality is that of discriminating, and that what we want is more discrimination and not less.

All these matters are wide open. Everybody has got his view. One can set out in declarations standards of conduct in matters like this which one or the other person or perhaps the majority of the whole nation might think ought to be observed, but the enforcement of such standards by the criminal law should be reserved for those matters which are necessary to hold the community together—not as a method of clamping the ideas even of the majority upon their fellow countrymen and compelling them to carry out those ideas in the ordinary practice of their daily lives.

The Clause then refers to:

"Keeper of a restaurant, cafe or other place kept or used for the sale of food or drink to the public.

Keeper of any place kept or used for public dancing, singing, music or any public entertainment of the like kind."

What right have we by Statute to impose a particular attitude? Even were the views of the hon. Member for Eton and Slough held by the majority of the House, that still would not mean that Parliament would be right to put this proposal into coercive legislation.

Clause 3 states

"Any covenant or provision in any lease or agreement for or in consideration of or collateral to a lease . . . forbidding or tending to forbid the use or occupation of any premises on any such ground as aforesaid . . ."

—that is on the ground of colour, race or religion—shall be void. Why is that? Suppose that somebody wanted to grant a lease on premises with the provision that for twenty years the premises shall be used solely by Scotsmen for the purpose of Scottish cultural activities. Would that be a criminal offence? Of course, that would forbid or tend to forbid the use or occupation of those premises on the ground of race or possibly colour. I suppose Scots do have a distinctive colour.

There are so many examples that one can think of. Why must we put the whole community upon this bed of Procrustes merely because someone possibly in some other part of the world

[**MR. BELL.**] is behaving towards coloured people in a way of which we do not approve? I do not think it happens here. The case mentioned by the hon. Member for Deptford (Sir L. Plummer) about the golf club is not covered by the Bill. I should have thought that if there were one sphere of human life where this kind of thing is permissible, it would be in a private club, whether for golf or some other purpose. Surely someone can found and maintain a club with almost any discrimination. There are many clubs for bachelors. Is that wicked?

There could certainly be any number of private clubs founded upon a racial basis, and there are plenty of religious clubs. Why should there not be? Why should not someone start a Protestant club or a Catholic club? There are hundreds of them. I know that this is not referred to in the Bill, but the hon. Member for Deptford who intervened obviously wanted that. He should think again because there would be a gross and unreasonable—

Mr. Janner: There are two points in the matter with which the hon. Member is dealing upon which I should like to know his views. He said this does not happen here. But let us take the question of leases. As a lawyer, the hon. Member knows very well that there are leases which contain a covenant specifically excluding assignments to coloured people. What is his view about that?

The other point is that not so very far from here, at Southend, the Westcliff Golf Club, which was using public property at Southend, tried to restrict membership from people of the Jewish persuasion. Why is the hon. Member not prepared to give a Second Reading to a Bill and provide an opportunity to improve it in the Committee stage, but not to oppose the whole Bill on principle?

Mr. Bell: I will take the second point first. As I have said, clubs are not covered by the Bill, and that has nothing to do with giving a Second Reading to this Bill. I would never in any context approve of such a restriction as this on private clubs, and not even the hon. Member for Eton and Slough is willing to press for that.

Mr. Janner: It was a question of leasing public land.

Mr. Bell: If they are using public property, it may be a matter for the Corporation and ratepayers of Southend, and that would be the right way to deal with it.

Regarding leases, as I say, I do not see why people should not do it if they want to. It may be conduct that I would not approve of, but there are hundreds of things of which I do not approve, but which I would consider totally unsuitable for punishment by the criminal law. Like so many other people, the hon. Gentleman thinks that it is good enough if there is something which is disapproved of by the majority of people; that once that has been established, a case has been made out for passing legislation. But there is a great gulf between things which may be disapproved of and things which may bring people into conflict with the law.

Clause 4 of the Bill is a very good example of this nonsense. It states:

"No person who employs fifty or more persons . . . shall be entitled"—
on one of these grounds—

"to refuse to employ or to promote or to terminate the employment or promotion of any person . . ."

I suppose that means to refuse to terminate the promotion of any person. I do not know what that really means. Anybody on the ground of colour, race or religion shall be entitled to refuse to terminate promotion—"entitled to refuse to terminate the promotion of any person". Well, there be it—

" . . . to refuse to consent to such employment or promotion or to terminate the same."

So therefore, we have that no one who employs fifty or more persons is to be entitled to refuse to consent to terminate promotion.

Mr. Brockway: I do not want to teach the hon. Member English, but the phrase here is:

"No person . . . shall be entitled on any such ground . . . to act in consort to refuse to consent to such employment"

or to

"refuse to consent . . . to promotion"

or

"shall be entitled . . . to terminate the same."

Mr. Bell: I am reading from Clause 4 of the Bill, which does not say anything about people acting in concert. It says,

"act in consort." Presumably this means act in concert. I do not know what acting in consort is. The Bill says:

"No person who employs fifty or more persons in any industry, trade or business shall be entitled on any such ground as aforesaid to refuse to employ."

Then we get the next alternative which is:

"or to terminate the employment or promotion of any person."

What all that means I do not know, but I suspect it means the opposite of what the hon. Gentleman thinks it means. This is the kind of length to which we have to go in a Bill in order to ram these ideas down people's throats, in connection with all the multifarious activities of their ordinary life. Have we to proliferate provisions like these to try to cover everything? If that is the object of the Bill, I very much prefer our present method of getting along. It causes a great deal less offence and, what is more to the point, it causes a great deal less colour, race or religious feeling than this Bill would stir up if it became law.

I should be extremely sorry if the Bill were given a Second Reading. There is much more I could say, but I will give way to some of my hon. Friends, who are anxious to speak.

3.47 p.m.

Mr. Bernard Braine (Essex, South-East): I rise to oppose the Bill on much the same grounds as have been stated by my hon. Friend the Member for Buckinghamshire, South (Mr. R. Bell).

Mr. G. R. Mitchison (Kettering): On a point of order. I fully realise, Mr. Deputy-Speaker, that the selection of speakers is entirely in your hands, but is it not customary in the House to select speakers alternatively from the various sides of the House? I observed that some of my hon. Friends rose.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker (Sir Charles MacAndrew): I beg pardon. I made a mistake when I called the hon. Member for Essex, South-East (Mr. Braine). Who rose?

Several Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Sir Leslie Plummer.

Sir Leslie Plummer rose—

Mr. Braine: On a point of order. May I point out that I had already started to address the House. I should have thought—

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I apologise to the House. I made a mistake. I will call the hon. Gentleman next. Sir Leslie Plummer.

Sir Leslie Plummer rose—

Mr. Braine: With great respect, Mr. Deputy-Speaker, and further to my point of order. I realise the difficulty in which this situation places you, and I wish in no way to be discourteous. May I point out that I rose to my feet, that you did me the honour to call me and that I started to address the House. The hon. Member for Deptford (Sir L. Plummer) rose to his feet after I had opened my mouth.

Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I can explain the position perfectly clearly. I saw three hon. Members rise, but I did not catch anyone on the Opposition side of the House. If I had, I would have called one. I am doing so now. I apologise for it. I cannot do more than that. Sir Leslie Plummer.

3.48 p.m.

Sir Leslie Plummer (Deptford): The hon. Member for Buckinghamshire, South (Mr. R. Bell) has made a speech that would have done credit to a Southern senator. He expressed a racial point of view which is held only by a minority of the people of this country.

Major H. Legge-Bourke (Isle of Ely): I distinctly heard my hon. Friend the Member for Buckinghamshire, South (Mr. R. Bell) say that we ought to take pride in this House and in this country from the fact that this sort of issue rarely arose in this country at all. He would not have said that if he had wanted to play the rôle of a Southern senator.

Sir L. Plummer: Whether he wanted to play that part or not, in my view he did play the part of a Southern senator without the accent. He went further even than that. He advanced the absolutely novel point of view that if the majority of people in this country want something and ask Parliament to produce it it should be the duty of Parliament to refuse

[**SIR L. PLUMMER.**] to produce it. I must suggest that the hon. Member should read HANSARD tomorrow. He will find there an expression of a political philosophy in which he argued that because a majority of people want something that is no reason why Parliament should produce it.

Mr. R. Bell : This is a gross misrepresentation of what I said. What I said was that a majority of people might happen to disapprove of some practice but it would not necessarily follow that that practice should be then forbidden by this House.

Sir L. Plummer : I must recommend the hon. Member to read his own words. I think they will produce for him a sense of shame when in cold blood he reads them. As an hon. Member who has expressed an interest in the affairs and happiness of colonial peoples, he will find that—whether deliberately or not—he has now suggested, by inference, that those people should be treated differently from other citizens of the British Commonwealth because he does not want them to have certain laws to protect them.

Mr. Bell : No.

Sir L. Plummer : I suggest that the hon. Member has a look at HANSARD tomorrow and that the whole purpose of his speech—[*Interruption.*]—

Mr. Braine : I was hoping that, having caught the eye of Mr. Deputy-Speaker, and having made this monstrous charge, the hon. Member would permit me a few moments in order to answer it.

Sir L. Plummer : I am quite prepared to consider any suggestion of that kind from the hon. Member, provided he undertakes not to talk the Bill out. If he proposes to do what his hon. Friend did on the last occasion and to use his Parliamentary rights and privileges to talk the Bill out, under no circumstances will I surrender my privilege to continue to address you, Mr. Deputy-Speaker.

The Bill my hon. Friend the Member for Eton and Slough has introduced is born out of necessity. The fact is that there is racial and colour discrimination being practised against our fellow citizens in this country to an extent which demands that Parliament should now come

to the protection of people who are to a very great degree unable to help themselves. The hon. Member for Buckinghamshire, South has said that this country leads all other countries in the freedom which is granted to people of different colour and different race from the majority of the population. Why should we be so particularly proud of that? Is it not our responsibility and our duty, is it not part of our pride that we lead the world in colonial and racial liberty and freedom? This is a purely negative argument—

Mr. Richard Body (Billericay) *indicated dissent*—

Sir L. Plummer : The hon. Member may shake his head in a state of almost juvenile hysteria. All I am saying is that what is happening is that we are now performing the functions which are our functions and which ought to be performed. We ought not to stop there. When we see an injustice being done to people we ought not to say, "This injustice must continue because we are better than other people". Surely our responsibility, because we are better than other people, is to take the necessary steps to see that that injustice ceases, and ceases immediately. The hon. Member is satisfied with the present position and doubtless supports the racialism expressed this afternoon. He does not want to see us progressing in the development of a better and more humane attitude to people who, because of religion or race or colour, which they cannot help, are subject to a great many social and economic disabilities which other people do not suffer.

The hon. Member for Buckinghamshire, South said there was no necessity for this Bill because there was, in fact, no significant evidence that racial discrimination existed in this country. My hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, North-West (Mr. Janner) quoted the golf club. I want to quote the case of colonial students who could not get into a club in Waterloo Road or in Victoria.

Mr. Braine : And trade unions.

Sir L. Plummer : I am not arguing this from a political attitude. When a trade union says that it does not want a man in the union because of the colour of his skin, I believe

that trade union is guilty of as gross a piece of inhumanity, as is the hon. Member who argues that everything in this country today is perfectly all right. Whether it comes from the hon. Member or from a trade union, I object to discrimination being made. I object to it whether it comes from a trade union, from an employer, from a society or from an hotel.

Several Hon. Members *rose*—

Sir L. Plummer : I have not enough time to give way, for I want to leave a little time for the hon. Member for Essex, South-East (Mr. Braine). I shall be interested to hear a denunciation of racialism by him if he is fortunate enough, Mr. Speaker, to catch your eye.

Many people in this country who are suffering the disabilities which this Bill is designed to review are victims of the most gross and horrible tyranny which has taken place in the world in the last 2,000 years. They have been driven out of their own land and they have come to this country. They have benefitted this country by their contribution to our economy, our science, our literature and our music. It is intolerable that, because they are refugees and because they happen to be Jews, these people are denied access to hotels and to social gatherings of people in this land.

In addition, there are coloured people from our Colonies who are driven here because of the lack of economic development of the countries in which they live and who, because they are coloured, are treated in restaurants and hotels here in a way which this Bill opposes. I had hoped that the conscience of the House would be outraged into supporting the Bill not only by the conditions in this country but also by the speech of the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire, South.

3.58 p.m.

Mr. Bernard Braine (Essex, South-East): I oppose this Bill but not on the grounds which have been adduced by the hon. Member for Deptford (Sir L. Plummer). I oppose it not because I am

in favour of any kind of racial or religious discrimination. I think that I can speak for all my hon. Friends when I say that we hate every form of racial and religious intolerance. I judge a man not by the colour of his skin, not by his race or religion, but by the quality of his manhood. The British Commonwealth would have no meaning unless we accepted that.

I oppose the Bill because it goes the wrong way about dealing with a situation which I frankly admit exists. The Bill is half-baked. It nibbles at the problem. In some respects it makes provisions for which existing laws already provide.

This is a Bill to make an offence certain behaviour which is offensive to the hon. Member for Eton and Slough (Mr. Brockway). It is a badly drafted Bill. It is a Bill entitled,

"To make illegal discrimination to the detriment of any person on the grounds of colour, race and religion in the United Kingdom."

In fact, it goes much further than that. Clause 1 gives what purports to be a definition of discrimination. It reads,

"For the purpose of this Act, a person exercises discrimination where he refuses, withholds from or denies to any other person facilities or advantages on the ground of the colour, race or religion of that other person."

What is meant by the words "facilities or advantages"? How are these to be defined?

The next Clause deals with innkeepers and keepers of common lodging houses. As my hon. Friend the Member for Buckinghamshire, South (Mr. R. Bell) said in his most interesting speech, "innkeepers," a term which includes hotel keepers, are under a legal obligation to feed and provide accommodation for travellers. That point has been raised in the House before, as hon. Members will see if they turn to HANSARD of 16th May, 1949. They will see from Vol. 465, c. 2, that the Attorney-General of the day said that—

It being Four o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Friday next.