

SPEECH MADE BY THE HON. THE CHIEF MINISTER  
CHAGUARAMAS JOINT COMMISSION REPORT

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO



Speech made by the Honourable the  
*[Eric Williams]*  
Chief Minister during the Debate on the  
Chaguaramas Joint Commission Report

6TH JUNE, 1958

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## CHAGUARAMAS JOINT COMMISSION REPORT

**Hon. Chief Minister :** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the Motion listed in my name which reads as follows :—

*“Resolved :*

That, this Council endorse the request of the West Indies Federal Government that an early conference of representatives of the four Governments—Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the West Indies—be convened to consider the Report of the Chaguaramas Joint Commission :

*And be it further resolved :*

That such conference be held in Trinidad.”

Mr. Speaker, this Motion raises some very important considerations, which in the opinion of the Government have been lost sight of in the period that has elapsed since the publication of this Report, and perhaps it would be useful if I were to indicate very briefly the background of this Report and of this Motion. It arose, as hon. Members are aware, from a decision of the Standing Federation Committee, the pre-Federal organisation set up at the 1956 London Conference, to make all the necessary constitutional and other arrangements for the establishment of a Federal Government.

This Committee at one of its meetings last year decided in accordance with the instructions passed on to it by the 1956 Conference that the Federal Capital shall be located in the Island of Trinidad, and in due course the Standing Federation Committee selected as the most suitable site the North-West Peninsula now occupied by the United States Naval Base. The S.F.C. resolved that the United Kingdom Government should be requested to use its good offices to have the West Indian case presented to and considered by the United States Authorities, as a result

of which a conference was arranged in London in June, 1957 where representatives of the United Kingdom, the United States, the pre-Federal Organisation, as the West Indies Federal Government was then known, and Trinidad and Tobago, quite independently, met to discuss this question.

At the request of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, which was represented by the Chief Minister, who was advised by the hon. and learned Attorney General, the question of finding an alternative site for the United States Naval Base so as to release the present site for the Federal Capital was referred to a fact-finding commission, comprising technical representatives of all the Governments and taking into account the military, economic and strategic considerations.

The report was published a few weeks ago on a date agreed upon between the parties, whereupon, Mr. Speaker, two of the Governments, parties to this conference, the United Kingdom and United States Governments, issued unilateral statements, together with the report of the Commission. The United States statement said that the Government believed the conclusions should settle the Chaguaramas question, so that the countries can proceed to develop their relationship in a constructive manner, and the United Kingdom statement, which gave a résumé of the recommendations of the Commission, or rather of the conclusions of the Commission, the facts found by the Commission, added its own views on this Report, suggesting or stating that in view of the considerable cost of moving the base to another site, the United Kingdom could not be expected to request the United States Government to move the base. I am not concerned at the moment, Mr. Speaker, with what is contained in these statements, though I shall have much to say



about them on behalf of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. I am concerned with the method and the attitude that these statements convey.

The Commission has reported and two of the Governments, parties to the Commission, come forward with unilateral statements which in effect slam the door on further discussion, slam the door in the face of the people of the West Indies and their representatives. The two statements, Mr. Speaker, made not the slightest reference to the fundamental issue involved in all these discussions. These two statements made no reference whatsoever to the specifications for a West Indian capital which was what led to the appointment of the Commission in the first instance. The two statements made no reference whatsoever to the views of the representatives of the West Indies as expressed in these discussions. So Mr. Speaker, in presenting this Motion on behalf of the Government, the first claim of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, which was represented as of right at this conference at which the Chaguaramas Joint Commission was appointed, is to claim the right of the people of the West Indies and the right of the people of Trinidad and Tobago to be heard in their own cause in a matter of vital importance affecting their interests.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago, Sir, repudiates the unilateral statements of the Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom, however correct they may be in substance. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago sees in these statements an attempt to deny the people of the West Indies and the people of Trinidad and Tobago their fundamental and democratic rights, their fundamental rights as a new democratic nation moving towards self-government at the unit level, with the Government at federal level going on to dominion status. It sees in these statements

an attempt to deny once more the right of the West Indian people to be heard in this vital matter. We have never been heard until June 1957, and as a result we have this agreement that few people seem to know much about. We were never consulted about the agreement. The agreement talks all about good neighbour relations between the Government of the United States and the Government of the United Kingdom—good neighbourliness, friendly co-operation, consultation between the Government of the United States and the Government of the United Kingdom. There was no Federal Government in those days. There was no pre-Federal Organization, but there was a Government of Trinidad and Tobago. No reference was made whatsoever to the Government or the people of Trinidad and Tobago. The matter was dealt with by these two powers in terms of their own interests.

Mr. Speaker, in order to emphasise the very serious view taken by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago of this attempt to deny a hearing to the people of Trinidad and Tobago, it might be useful if I were to indicate some of the factors in the selection of Chaguaramas which have led us to the position in which we now find ourselves. There is evidence to suggest from all reliable sources that this question involved problems of American security, problems of international relations in connection with the war that broke out in 1939. For example, it is known now that in the dark days of 1938 it looked as if there would have been a total sell-out to the German Government after the Munich compromise. There is sufficient evidence that the President of the United States was very worried about the prospects through this appeasement of the German dictator that the British Government, led by Mr. Chamberlain, would turn over Trinidad and the French Government led by M. Daladier, would turn over Martinique



Roosevelt called in his cabinet and stated that if that were done he would send the American fleet to take over both islands, but it was not done and the question did not arise again until the German air campaign over Britain. The British war leader, Mr. Churchill, fighting with his back to the wall, sent message after message to the United States begging for destroyers.

Mr. Roosevelt's problem was how to send these destroyers to Britain within the context of the American Neutrality Act which forbade him to intervene in any war. He has left us the record that he at first considered turning over the destroyers to the Canadian Government, so that Canadian destroyers could be released for service in British waters. But he rejected this subterfuge.

The Secretary of the Navy at the time then threw out a suggestion that was circulating in private circles to the effect that the United States Government should turn over the destroyers requested by the British Government in return for a surrender by the British Government of bases in the West Indies. Mr. Roosevelt thought that that was an excellent arrangement and he asked that it be investigated. He put the suggestion to Mr. Churchill, who was disinclined to agree.

I have in my hands Mr. Roosevelt's Biography entitled, *Roosevelt, the Lion and the Fox* from which I quote: "Churchill had always wanted to announce the leasing of bases to America as a spontaneous act separate from the destroyer arrangement. Tying the two matters together in one package, he argued, would make it a kind of business deal, and people would start trying to compute the money value. The embattled Prime Minister doubtless reasoned, too, that the British would consider that they had got the worst of the deal. Roosevelt took just the opposite view. Legally, he could hand over the destroyers only as part of an arrangement that would improve America's defenses. "Politically"—if I may interject, this was two

months before the vital American presidential elections which involved the anti-third term tradition—"Politically, he could win popular support with the measure, he felt, only if he could offer it as a good Yankee deal, so that people would say in Roosevelt's later words, 'My God, the old Dutchman and Scotchman in the White House has made a good trade.'

Having considered that it would be a good trade, he turned the matter over to his Attorney General. I have here the opinion of the Attorney General of the United States of America submitted to the President on 27th August, 1940, on the question referred to him by the President which amounted to this: Did the President of the United States have power under the constitution to make this agreement with the British Government involving the transfer of destroyers for bases without reference to the Congress of the United States? The opinion of the Attorney General of the United States is remarkable for its sophistry. The opinion includes two points that are of fundamental importance. I want to indicate that this matter we are facing today originated way back in 1940 and 1941. Mr. Speaker, this arrangement was made between the two parties without any reference to the people who mattered—the people of the West Indies. The Attorney General made two points which are of considerable importance to this question today. He advised the President that he could enter into this agreement. The first point he made was this:

"Upon such transfer all obligation of the United States is discharged. The acquisition consists only of rights, which the United States may exercise or not at its option; and if exercised, may abandon without consent. The privilege of maintaining such bases is subject only to limitations necessary to reconcile United States use with the sovereignty retained by Great Britain. Our Government assumes no responsibility for civil administration of



any territory. It makes no promise to erect structures, or maintain forces at any point. It undertakes no defense of the possessions of any country"—may I repeat that Mr. Speaker: It undertakes no defence of the possessions of any country—"In short, it acquires optional bases which may be developed as Congress appropriates funds therefore, but the United States does not assume any continuing or future obligation, commitment, or alliance."

I shall now read you the Attorney General's second point leaving it again to hon. Members to interpret it. This is as follows:—

"I am informed that the destroyers involved here are the survivors of a fleet of over 100 built at about the same time and under the same design. During the year 1930, 58 of these were decommissioned with a view towards scrapping and a corresponding number were recommissioned as replacements. Usable material and equipment from the 58 vessels removed from the service were transferred to the recommissioned vessels to recondition and modernize them, and other usable material and equipment were removed and the vessels stripped. They were then stricken from the Naval register, and 50 of them were sold as scrap for prices ranging from \$5,260 to \$6,800 per vessel, and the remaining 8 were used for such purposes as target vessels, experimental construction tests, and temporary barracks. The surviving destroyers now under consideration have been reconditioned and are in service, but all of them are over-age, most of them by several years."

So that, Mr. Speaker, when the question arises of these two statements by two Governments about the Report of a Commission dealing with a matter which was never submitted to the West Indian people, and on which we never before 1957 had the opportunity of expressing ourselves, we cannot

now exclude from our consideration the two questions prominent in 1940 when the Agreement was signed without any reference to the people at all. The first is that the United States Government was accepting no obligation, no commitment, no alliance. It was in the position to abandon its undertaking whenever it pleased them to do so with or without consent. Sir, all this was done in return for 50 vessels which, had they been sold in 1930, ten years before, would have fetched a price varying between \$263,000 and \$340,000, an average of \$300,000. It was commonly said at the time that Trinidad represented 40 of these 50 destroyers, so that a sizeable portion of Trinidad was leased in exchange for destroyers which, if sold in 1930, would have fetched \$240,000. No Trinidad representative would ever have accepted any such arrangement. To ask the West Indies in 1958 to endorse this act of 1940, undertaken without the people's consent, is asking something totally inconsistent with the aspirations and ambitions of the West Indian people today. We ask for a conference; we are now asking for support of the West Indian demand to discuss this matter with the other parties and to do so we ask for a conference of the four Governments involved. We are a Party to this Commission Report. It has been presented to us independently. It has to do with Trinidad; it is Trinidad's soil that is involved. The base is in Trinidad; the capital is in Trinidad; and nobody is going to give away or surrender one iota of Trinidad's soil without reference to the elected Government of the people. We demand the right to be heard. We never consented to be sold for scrap. Knowing Trinidadians, as I do if we had had any say in the matter we might have insisted on being sold for aircraft carriers [*Laughter*]. But, Sir, this Government had stated previously without any ambiguity whatsoever that we propose at all costs to



maintain always the separate identity of Trinidad as a Government and it is rather disconcerting now and then to hear somebody who has not enough work to do say that we should have no voice in these matters. In London last year, for example, His Excellency the Governor formally requested the Secretary of State for the Colonies to invite Her Royal Highness the Princess Margaret to pay a separate State visit to Trinidad and Tobago after her State visit to the West Indies Federation. I, as Chief Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, supported His Excellency with respect to this proposal for a separate State visit, and Her Royal Highness' programme was approved by the Trinidad Government. The Trinidad Government provided the funds for that part of Her Royal Highness' visit and when she concluded her federal activities she left the Federation which was one Government and came to the Trinidad Government which accepted its own independent responsibilities. We do not therefore, Sir, propose that one tittle of Trinidad's rights should be abdicated without the full consent of the elected Ministers of this Government. When we consider this 1940 episode, Mr. Speaker, I think we should make it quite clear that nobody in this wide world is going to be given *carte blanche* to make decisions on giving away Trinidad's soil in future. Any decision with respect to Trinidad's soil cannot in future be done without the consent of Trinidad's elected representatives.

The Commission's report could never and was not intended to be final. No man with sense would expect a Report like this to be final. At the 1957 conference I along with my legal adviser, the Attorney General, asked that the Commission be appointed with sufficient speed to permit its report to be submitted to a political conference of the four Governments to be held in Trinidad at the end of January, 1958. That, Sir, was

officially a part of the record of the conference and I do not know why it was not mentioned in the communique. Certainly, this proposal was made explicitly and it was implicit in the statement of the United States Government's case made by the United States Ambassador, the head of the United States delegation, at the final meeting of the Conference.

This was what the Ambassador said in the course of certain remarks proposing a modification of the suggested terms of reference of the Commission :

"We still maintain the hope of being able to convince you that (the release of Chaguaramas) would not be a feasible or desirable solution to the problem. You on your side have similarly expressed the hope that we will be convinced that this would be in fact a feasible and desirable solution. As I understand it, we have now tacitly agreed to put aside further efforts of persuasion until a survey is able to develop the necessary facts which we then can consider."

The Trinidad Government officially requested the United States Government to release Chaguaramas and to look for an alternative base. There was no time for that in 1940, but I emphasised there was time for it in 1957. Right or wrong that was what was discussed. The Commission was asked to investigate all aspects of the West Indies request and it is impossible for anyone to suggest that the Trinidad Government which had posed the issue would have abdicated its rights to a Fact Finding Commission with a lot of Admirals from the United States and Great Britain. Obviously, they were to report back to us; the communique specifically says, "report to the parties as early as possible". One does not report back by putting a copy of the report in an envelope, marking it confidential or secret, and forwarding it by mail



to the individual parties. You report back to the parties collectively—in a conference.

In accordance with its terms of reference the Commission was particularly instructed to investigate all aspects of the British West Indies request to make Chaguaramas available taking into full account military and economic considerations. I cannot, Mr. Speaker, but remark on the astonishing composition of the Commission. It comprised personnel very competent to investigate all aspects of the question but there was no economist on it. I should like to say, Sir, that the distinguished economist whom the Government of Trinidad and Tobago would have wished to put on that Commission was not available at the time but there was no economist from Britain or the United States on that Commission. The Commission appointed a Sub-Committee to consider alternative sites and their findings are recorded at page 48, paragraph 72 of the Joint Commission Report. It states, as follows:—

“On the economic aspect, that is, the impact on Trinidad’s economy, Caroni would probably be regarded in the most favourable light, &c.”

Oil interests to some degree or other would be affected but the economic aspects in terms of land acquisition had been assessed. There are also, Sir, these two sentences in the Sub-Committee’s report:—

“But there is also the long-term effect to consider on the general economic development of Trinidad. It is outside our terms of reference to comment on this, nor are we in a position to do so.”

Mr. Speaker, the Conference should have considered all aspects of the question but the Report says that the economic aspect is outside its terms of reference or if it were not it would not be in a position to comment on it now. It is impossible to consider this question, Mr. Speaker, or be in a position to

comment by leaving out the economic aspect. But the Government of Trinidad and Tobago knows that it cannot regard the long-term effect on the general economic development of Trinidad as outside its terms of reference. Our population is increasing at the rate of 2½ per cent. per annum; 150,000 young people will be added to the labour force in the next few years and some provision has got to be made for them; and the Government of Trinidad knows that with Federation there is the probability of large scale migration due to freedom of movement. The Trinidad Government knows that every day the Cabinet meets the Minister of Housing keeps asking for the acquisition of lands for public housing purposes, the Minister of Health wants lands for hospitals, the Minister of Education for schools, and the Minister of Agriculture for its development programme of our agricultural projects, which means the spending of Government subsidies. Consequently, Sir, the question cannot be seriously regarded if the economic aspect is omitted.

Sir, if they had been influenced by the representations of the Governor in 1940 they would never have selected Chaguaramas. It was obvious then that the natural overflow of the Port-of-Spain population would have been in that direction and in Diego Martin. Well, Sir, somebody has got to consider the economic aspects as they affect us. Whether the Commission was right or wrong with respect to this matter, I would rather not say, but what we have got is this document *in vacuo*. This is a document which has clearly stated it is not taking into account the long-term economic effects on the development of Trinidad. What I am drawing attention to is the background of the whole matter from which it can be clearly seen that no consideration whatever was given to this question.



**Mr. M. G. Sinanan :** Is the hon. Chief Minister saying that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago does not accept the Report of the Joint Commission?

11.00 a.m.

**Dr. Williams :** The report in another sense is incomplete, in that nowhere is there any reference to the attitude of the population. You would believe, Mr. Speaker, reading this report—I am merely stating a fact that I am using to prove that it is absolutely necessary for [this report to be considered at a high level—no reference whatever to the attitude of the population! One gets the impression that the only reason for Trinidad's existence on this earth is that a naval base has to be located somewhere. All these things involve a certain attitude on the part of the population; you cannot just ignore them, we cannot do so, Mr. Speaker.

There is a limited land area in this Island. It looks as though this limited land area has to provide a naval base, a Federal Capital, and take steps for the economic development of Trinidad on a scale far larger than has ever been attempted so far. This place is too small, Mr. Speaker, for all this parcellation of American territory—down at the wharf, down by Cedros, by the sea-level, places out at Manzanilla, Chaguaramas, all of Waller Field, all of Carlsen Field, and we still do not know whether the Five Islands are in or out. It is no longer possible to talk about taking over Trinidad to prevent its being turned over to Hitler.

Trinidad belongs to the people. The considerations that dominated in 1940 cannot be allowed to dominate today. We need a base somewhere at Caroni, Irois Bay, or wherever it may be, but we say Chaguaramas for the Federal Capital and Waller Field for the University of Trinidad.

Some of the aspects considered by the report, Mr. Speaker, are not final. I do not know how they could be accepted by

anybody as final. The report indicates something, Mr. Speaker, that I believe none of us ever knew before, particularly in respect of what is stated on page 5, under "Strategic Considerations," paragraph 24, &c. May I read paragraph 24, Mr. Speaker, if you will allow me, just to refresh the minds of hon. Members opposite.

"24. The United States annually imports approximately 142.4 million tons. Of this overall volume, 59 per cent. (or approximately 84 million tons) comes from Latin-America—mostly through the Caribbean. Of these 84 million tons, 54 million tons are Caribbean oil which accounts for approximately 76 per cent. of the total United States petroleum imports. The remaining 30 million tons are dry cargo which accounts for approximately 42 per cent. of total United States dry cargo imports."

In paragraph 25, Mr. Speaker—

"In addition, there is the considerable and important United Kingdom and world sea borne trade to, from and through the Caribbean."

And then they go on to talk in paragraph 26 about "The Panama Canal." Those figures are impressive enough themselves, but they are far more impressive when they are translated into values which the ordinary person can understand. It has been a little difficult to get any details, Mr. Speaker, because the figures we have in Trinidad of the United States trade with Latin America is the trade as a whole. The most important countries, presumably, in respect of the trade through the Caribbean are Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, &c. Possibly the American interest down here might have some effect on the trade with Cuba, or with Mexico, or even with the Panama Canal.

The position is this, Mr. Speaker, without attempting to give any particular aspect of the trade, that the problem involves a total



American trade with Latin America in the year 1955 of \$6,383 million, as compared with a Trinidad trade with the United States of \$49 million (U.S.); and the United Kingdom trade—Import and Export—with Latin America involves a total trade of \$861 million, as against a Trinidad trade of \$208 million. In terms of specific countries—because that is all of Latin America—how much of that trade is concerned with the base at Chaguaramas I do not know. But if you look at Argentina, Argentina's total trade with the United States in this same year amounted to \$274 million, and the trade with the United Kingdom, some of which might well in time of war come through this part of the world, is \$208 million. The trade with Brazil, which is likely to follow the pattern of Argentine trade, is \$866 million a year with the United States—\$107 million a year with the United Kingdom. The Venezuelan trade, the principal source of oil from outside of the United States, is \$1,126 million—\$156 million with the United Kingdom.

So, Mr. Speaker, when the United Kingdom publishes a statement, and asks us to accept their unilateral statement, that if they could be certain that the necessary facilities could be replaced at reasonable cost without loss of strategic efficiency—the Commission has unanimously found otherwise, Mr. Speaker, let us correct that—the British Government's statement does not agree with the report of the Chaguaramas Commission!

Is it reasonable to consider a base costing \$300 million for the part protection of a trade involving \$6,383 million a year? Is it unreasonable to talk of a particular base in Trinidad which has to protect an annual trade with Brazil of the order involving \$866 million? As I read this I was at a loss to find out why the British Government should be so much concerned with deciding for the United States what is reasonable, I was even

asking myself whether anything would be unreasonable in the West Indies today that involves any increase of the scrap price of 1940? I am sorry to say it, but these are political considerations. It is obvious that nobody is going to speak for Trinidad. If Trinidad has anything to say it had better say it itself, otherwise it will have all its points of view suppressed. I do not understand what is reasonable here at all. They gave certain figures about the cost of the base, Mr. Speaker. They said it would cost \$226 million at Irois Bay and \$425 million at Caroni Swamp to provide what exists at Chaguaramas today. One would have thought that the British Government would have been much more concerned looking at this so-called importance of the base from the standpoint of trade.

If the British have a stake in this because of United Kingdom trade, a point we would like to draw attention to is that one cannot at the same time speak of this trade to be protected and then haggle about the cost of the base to protect that trade. If the trade is important—and it appears to me that it is—and it is quite clear that it would not be Trinidad's infinitesimal share but the powerful share of the United States that is most important—if the trade is important enough to need a base to protect it, and if the base is important, it ought to appear as if it was important. One of the things that a lot of us here cannot quite understand is why with this base that is so necessary, that is so important, there should have been such neglect? I believe the same question was raised in Parliament. The Commission said what it would cost, they give a yardstick as to what it would cost, what a base must have. I do not know anything about a gun, or naval considerations, I am merely reading: This yardstick involves buildings and structures, piers and marginal pavings, sea-plane ramps and hangars, utilities and various other services which are all



standard for any class of base, and which would be required in due course whatever the site. They estimate this yardstick at a figure of \$227.8 million, and then proceed to tell you, Sir, that the value of the structures at Chaguaramas is \$116.4—50 per cent. Why is that? Somebody is guilty of a serious dereliction of duty.

11.15 a.m.

On page 29, paragraph 16, the Report states:—

"At Chaguaramas, for example, our 'yardstick' target of accommodation and facilities has not yet been reached although there was nothing to prevent this having been done years ago, had the necessary finance been available."

Why should the necessary finance not be available for a base that has to protect this important, vital trade? We do not believe that the Chaguaramas Base is of the great importance that is claimed for it. If it were then the Chaguaramas Base should not have been neglected as it obviously has been. There are examples of important bases in this part of the world. The important American Base in this part of the world is not Chaguaramas, it is Puerto Rico. I should like to give hon. Members opposite a picture of the United States operations in Puerto Rico. This is

"THE ECONOMIC REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR"  
"COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO, OFFICE  
OF THE GOVERNOR"

"PUERTO RICO PLANNING BOARD, BUREAU  
OF ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS"

"Federal Government — The Military activities of the Federal Government in Puerto Rico continued to decline with the result that the net income generated in that sector fell to \$75 million compared with \$90 million in 1955-56, and a peak of \$134 million in 1952-53. It is believed that the adjustment may be virtually completed and an upward trend may actually set in as construction on air and naval bases gets underway."

This figure means \$300 million U.S. in three years, nearly \$510 million of our dollars. The big year was 1952—\$134 million U.S., that is \$220 million of our dollars. That is the expenditure on a Base in Puerto Rico. And they have not only that in Puerto Rico; the Federal Government of the United States spends a lot of money through its agencies there every year. The Puerto Ricans are associated with the U.S., for example they have a very powerful incentive of free immigration. They do not have any act limiting them to a quota and making it difficult for their surplus population to go over there. The U.S. Government makes every effort to keep Puerto Ricans reasonably happy.

What is involved is one of the U.S. bases in the Caribbean. It is not for the United Kingdom, I submit, to tell the U.S. Government what sort of bases they should develop. If Chaguaramas is important, then develop the base. The mere fact that a case for removal to a new location has been made out obviously means that cost cannot act as a deterrent where interest of the magnitude alleged are involved. If that is a deterrent then I submit the interests are not of the magnitude claimed for them. What is amusing is this; with all this trade the United States statement says the conclusion to be drawn from the Report is that the military superiority of Chaguaramas over any alternative site together with the expenditure and time required to establish an alternative base makes it impracticable to remove the Base from Chaguaramas. Who said so? The Commission does not say that. Whether it is impracticable or not is for the four parties to decide. What might be impracticable from the military point of view of the United States of America might be highly practicable from the political point of view.

The Commission found five alternative sites—an absolute vindication of the stand of the West Indies in London last year; an



absolute vindication of the stand taken by Sir Hubert Young, Governor of Trinidad and Tobago in 1940. How can you, in spite of these five alternative sites taking different periods of time to develop, costing different sums of money—how can you sit down at somebody's desk and say, "We accept the Report"? What do you accept in the Report? The Report said that you have certain requirements for a base. The Report said that Chaguaramas can meet those requirements. The Report said that there were five alternative sites which fulfilled or could be made to fulfil these requirements; and the United Kingdom and the United States Naval Representatives agreed that if the Governments concerned agreed in principle to move the Base and if the necessary funds were made available, from military considerations Irois Bay would be the preferable choice of the alternative sites. But in their opinion Chaguaramas was the most suitable site for a naval base.

Ever since the days of Clemenceau, we all know, that war is too important a matter to be left in the hands of the military alone. The Americans fully understand this.

May I show how serious the Commission took its job? The Report is a very good one so long as it is not abused, so long as it is not made to subserve a purpose which was not intended and which could not possibly be justified. On page 14, paragraph 77, it gives the time it would take to complete the preliminary work at each site before any buildings or construction could begin:—

"Caroni Swamp	...	7 years
Waterloo North	...	3 years
Waterloo South	...	3 years
Savaneta	...	3 years
Irois Bay	...	30 months"

It is a little unfortunate that this Report paid no attention to one aspect of this economic question as far as the Base is concerned; that is, to what extent would it

be possible to transfer facilities and installations now at Chaguaramas to any new site? I raise this question as the sort of thing which would strike anyone making an economic appraisal of all the factors involved in this Report. They go on to say throughout the Report, Waller Field and Carlsen Field would be available for air support to the Naval Base. But they "noted that a sufficient area could be made available at the alternative sites selected, except, possibly, Savaneta, to make it feasible to construct an adequate Naval Air Station, which requires approximately 5,000 additional acres in each case..." In other words, in four of these sites the Commission found that it would be possible to satisfy the West Indian request that one base should be established in the island making it unnecessary to have dispersion of facilities between Waller Field, Carlsen Field, Chaguaramas and a lot of other places.

Then they have a "Summary of other Factors."

"The flat terrain at Caroni and the Waterloo sites, whilst facilitating planning of buildings, roads, &c. renders the security aspect of magazine construction more difficult. Savaneta is somewhat better in this respect, whilst Irois Bay is perhaps the nearest approach to a good combination of the two requirements.

"The matter of proximity to deep water has been mentioned. Caroni is the nearest, the distance increasing towards the south.

"As regards security, Savaneta and the Waterloo sites are close to fairly heavily built-up areas, Caroni not so much so, whilst Irois Bay is to all intents and purposes isolated.

"Caroni and Waterloo North are on the direct line of approach for aircraft using Piarco Airport which is somewhat of a disadvantage from the security angle. Waterloo South and Savaneta are only slightly



affected, whilst Irois Bay suffers no such drawback.

"Caroni, the Waterloo sites and Savaneta are closest to existing military airfields; Irois Bay is very far away through generally inferior roads. The possibility of constructing a new airfield close by is greatest at Irois Bay, Caroni and Waterloo, and much less so at Savaneta.

"Displacement of population is negligible at Caroni, progressively greater at the Waterloo sites and Savaneta, but is small at Irois Bay.

"The level of agricultural activity more or less follows the above, being practically nil at Caroni, intense at Waterloo, somewhat less so at Savaneta and not very great at Irois Bay.

"The possibility of oilfield development is extremely slight at Caroni. At the Waterloo sites it is so far not high, but will depend to some extent on the outcome of the off-shore exploratory well now being drilled off Couva. This may also affect Savaneta, which is otherwise not promising. At Irois, development on land is not as yet promising, but exploration is still in progress; off shore, a productive field has been established, the future extent and effect of which can so far only be estimated."

That is the Commission—paragraph after paragraph.

I went to see Irois Bay yesterday accompanied by my hon. Friend, the Minister of Industry, Commerce, Tourism and External Communications, and my Parliamentary Secretary. I do not care what the Commission Report says; I know perfectly well that if the Governor of Trinidad had been able to have his way in 1940; if they had had a survey of all the possible site in 1940, if the West Indies' voice had been heard in 1940, we would not be

discussing Chaguaramas this morning. They have found a site, and when I went back last night to read the Report after I had seen Irois Bay, I am absolutely convinced that the Chaguaramas Joint Commission and in particular the United States Naval Representatives left themselves a line of retreat from Chaguaramas to Irois Bay should it be found necessary for them to vacate Chaguaramas. It is obvious that nobody talks about Irois Bay as is done in this Report, if this were not so. Irois Bay satisfies the requirements, and it satisfies one important requirement—an adjacent airfield without any risk. If you have to select one for the Base and one for the Capital, in so far as Irois Bay is one of the alternative sites, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago says today it is quite possible to accommodate the Base at Irois Bay and the Capital at Chaguaramas—far more than to accommodate the Base at Chaguaramas and the Capital at Irois Bay.

The Commission imply that if you do not have this Base for your Capital then you can go to one of the alternative sites for your Capital.

The terms of reference were that the Joint Commission shall be set up and shall report to the parties concerned as early as possible. I have here a publication indicating the necessity of keeping the military in line. This is a United States publication of five years ago. They understand the position very well. I want to read some extracts from it which affect everything we are saying here this morning.

He says :

"But when military people function in their military capacity, they are specialists. They do not purport to be judges of economics or of world opinion. They do not attempt to take account of possibilities that reside in moral forces. They do not



claim to understand the working of organisations like the United Nations, and the intangible but powerful influences that radiate from them. It is not their business to measure the resources of diplomacy and conciliation."

It gives a practical example of the extent to which the military viewpoint predominated in the United States over the past few years.

The first example I will quote is that of the Japanese Mandated Islands. May I read what he says on that :

"The military were insistent that we should have complete strategic control of these islands, and their attitude embarrassed our preparations for the San Francisco Conference and embarrassed us in advancing at the United Nations the program of colonial evolution in Asia as against the Soviet program for violent revolution there.

"The military were scarcely in a position to appraise the importance of our colonial policy as an offset to Stalin's programme of violent revolution."

#### "LATIN AMERICA

"Our relations with Latin America have occasionally been strained by the efforts of our government to meet the views of the National Security Council and Joint Chiefs of Staff on bases in Latin America.

"The base in Panama got considerable public attention. The Panama government was not willing to commit itself to as long a lease as our military people thought necessary in order to justify a big expenditure there.

"That was no doubt a sound military judgment; but it did not attempt to appraise the element of good will in our relations with Panama and other Latin American countries. In the end, we suspended the project for the base."

#### "ITALIAN COLONIES

"The solution of this problem was complicated and delayed by the views of the military regarding bases for the British in Libya, North Africa."

#### "NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY

"The parties to this treaty were, as we have seen, more numerous than had been originally contemplated. The treaty was originally sponsored by Canada, the United Kingdom, France, the three Benelux countries, and the United States. These countries had very close association in peace and in two world wars, and had similar political institutions. When the treaty was conceived, many felt that it could be of greatest service by solidifying a political unity that would, in turn give reality to military unity and common defence. However, the military people felt that it would be more advantageous to enlarge the membership in order to get certain strategic advantages — notably, bases in Greenland, Iceland, and the Azores, and Alpine passes. Thus, the North Atlantic Treaty assumed a pattern that was essentially strategic, and political values were lost which the military did not, and could not, appraise."

And the author goes on to say :

"It is always tempting to accede to military requests . . . You can see guns, battleships, airplanes, bases. They are material things that can be measured. On the other side are intangibles, things not seen. In reality, these are vitally important. To get an air base at the price of goodwill may be a very bad bargain."

These are the views, Mr. Speaker, of one of the United States' great statesmen who knows, better than anybody, with the possible exception of the President, and who has a right to be heard. This book was written



in 1953, under the caption *War or Peace*. The author is the United States Secretary of State, Mr. John Foster Dulles.

"To get an air base at the price of goodwill may be a very bad bargain." The United States fully recognises that, and we feel sure that just as the United States understood that these military considerations are very necessary—necessary however to be submitted for political consideration for all the values and factors, not excluding the moral ones involved, for that reason we feel—and that is why we are emphasising the point; we want no one to misunderstand our views, this is not a question of stalling or prolonging the agony, this is the proper method—it is absolutely necessary for a commission on which the military services were well represented, for the report of this commission, its findings, to be submitted to the Governments concerned to take into consideration all the factors which these people, rightly or wrongly, left out, so that no one could say they did not take into consideration the question of the housing programme, the employment opportunities and migration of labour from the small islands.

There is a third reason behind this Government Motion for the resumption of negotiations suspended in London last June, pending this fact-finding commission, for that was what it was. This London Conference had to consider an aspect of this question which possibly quite legitimately has been left out by this Commission—I think indirectly it might have been taken into account by the commission, but it was not specifically included in its terms of reference and they left it out—and that is the question posed by the Trinidad delegation who thought the time had come to review the 1941 treaty.

On behalf of Trinidad, Mr. Speaker, speaking as the Chief Minister of the country, I officially requested, under Article 28 of the

agreement, that the treaty be revised. I asked the United Kingdom to take it up with the United States, go through the motions, making it absolutely clear that the Trinidad Government wanted to be in on those negotiations, and that any new treaty to be signed was to be signed by a Trinidad Minister. We were not accepting any further division of Trinidad by the two Governments sitting down in London or Washington. That has not been dealt with, Mr. Speaker, because we suspended the London Conference and appointed a fact-finding commission to investigate the particular aspects of this question which we were considering in London, the possible release of the present United States Naval Station for the Federal Capital. But the Trinidad delegation never allowed the matter to rest there. The Trinidad delegation extended the consideration of this question to the entire treaty of 1941 and called for the revision of that treaty in accordance with Article 28—a very important question—because, now, whether they stay in Chaguaramas or go to another place, on what terms will they stay or go? Will it be 99 years?

Mr. Speaker, since 1940 a lot of water has flowed under the bridge. In the North Atlantic Treaty the duration is for 20 years. Must we have a treaty in the West Indies for 99 years as against 20? The United States Government signed a treaty with the Danish Government regarding a dependency—the Dependency of Greenland. The treaty is for the duration of N.A.T.O.—20 years. The United States signed an agreement in 1951 with the Republic of Iceland: there is no term stated. The Iceland people if they want to give notice can do so. Then, after a time, if nothing is done about it, the treaty is just simply abrogated. The United States Government signed a treaty with Spain in 1953 for bases. The duration is for 10 years in the first instance, with an automatic extension for two-five year periods. We raised



that question in London and hon. Members opposite will recall that the Federal Government in its statement has also referred to it, "that it cannot however, agree that at this time a decision should be taken which accepted the perpetuation of a lease for 99 years even though during that time world tensions may disappear." That is a matter which must be considered even if it is Chaguaramas, even if it is a removal elsewhere—a relocation of the base at Caroni or Irois Bay, or whatever it might be called. What would be the duration of the treaty? What would be the provision for automatic review? That provision was left out in the present treaty on which the West Indies were not consulted and their voice not heard, except insofar as the general clause under Article 28 was included calling for review after a reasonable period of time. What is reasonable to Trinidad might be quite unreasonable to the United States and to Britain. We have had examples of that. What they consider reasonable appears quite unreasonable in Trinidad's eyes.

Another point arises, Mr. Speaker, what is going to be the nature of the control of the base or these bases? You have in Trinidad the old idea of extra-territorial rights, sovereignty, jurisdiction over Trinidad personnel under certain circumstances, &c. No idea as to who can come in or who cannot come in. Would we need to revise that? Take for example one clause in the Iceland Treaty of 1951: "The national composition of forces and the conditions on which they enter upon and make use of facilities in Iceland, pursuant to this agreement, shall be determined in agreement with Iceland." "The number of personnel to be stationed in Iceland shall be subject to the approval of the Icelandic Government."

In the Greenland Treaty, they have modified the type of arrangement entered into with Trinidad. Take, for example, the Greenland Treaty of 1951, under Article 2, the two Governments agreed that the national flags of both countries shall fly over the defence areas. The division of responsibilities for operation and maintenance of the defence areas shall be determined from time to time by agreement between the parties. In cases where it is agreed that responsibility shall fall to the United States of America, the following provision shall apply: "The Danish Commander in Chief of Greenland may attach Danish military personnel to the staff of the commanding officer of such defence area under the command of an officer, with whom the United States Commanding Officer shall consult on all important matters affecting Danish interests." I do not say that that is what must be done here. I do say, Mr. Speaker, that the very important introduction of the fundamental right of the West Indies to be heard on this vital issue raises all the hosts of questions as to the terms under which this control is now going to be exercised more than ever now, because the moment you talk about a Federal Government abdicating all its rights and privileges in this matter, you automatically talk of a Federal Government which is a doormat for everybody. It may be that the Federal Government should be that. We in the Trinidad Government are merely stating, without any ambiguity, that our conception of the Federal Government is that it should perform a higher function than that of a doormat. The same thing is true of all these other treaties—the Spanish Treaty and the Portuguese Treaty—The Portuguese allow them to come in and build installations, and as soon as they are built they are transferred to Portuguese personnel. The same arrangement has been true about Brazil—the tracking station in Brazil.



In Saudi Arabia the situation worked out is simplicity itself. It has been put a little different, much simpler than that. Our old friend, Mr. Speaker—this is a magazine read by hundred of thousands of people in the United States—*Time* magazine dated January 28, 1957, states :

“The U.S. was allowed to build the Dhahran airfield itself only with the stipulation that every installation would become Saudi property as soon as completed.”

This question is being dealt with now in country after country at a much higher level than prevailed in 1940; and dealt with by people like Trinidad, like the Federation; in Saudi Arabia, Greenland, Iceland and Morocco by people emerging out of a state of dependency and out of colonialism.

We have to consider in Trinidad the scope of this Treaty. Mr. Speaker. Is it going to be Verdant Vale? Is it going to be an abandoned area on condition that they could give 48 hours notice and take it back? Is it going to include that part of the Wharf which is the spot that Sir Eric Millbourne, the expert called in on behalf of the last Government to advise on port development, earmarked for the free port zone, and which falls in the American zone slap bang in the middle of this thing which is retarding Trinidad's economic development. If the Five Islands are included in the lease then Nelson Island, the place we have selected for our community camp, is there on a 48-hour notice. We cannot have that any longer. We have to consider all these small pieces of property, 100 acres here, and 150 acres there, which had been turned over in those days. And, Mr. Speaker, it is important to understand the Trinidad Government's point of view. It is to be recognised that it is asking for something that is quite normal. This precise request has already been dealt with in the case of Canada

and Newfoundland. In the year 1951 the same situation arose there, Mr. Speaker, when Newfoundland with which the Base Agreement had been signed by Britain, on behalf of Newfoundland in 1941, became a province of the Canadian Dominion in 1948-1949. As a result, Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Government forwarded a communication to the United States Government which reads in part :—

“In the opinion of the Canadian Government the prospective change in the status of Newfoundland from a Colony to a part of a province of a Dominion justifies a modification of the 1941 bases agreement in respect of the Newfoundland bases in order to bring that agreement into accord with the principles which, for many years, have governed the defence relations between Canada and the United States.”

So, Mr. Speaker, the Canadian and the American Government, who as the Prime Minister of Canada announced with some pride, regarded these matters as something on a higher plane than the plane of strict legality, set up the Joint Defence Board to study this question which came up with modifications of the bases agreement in four fundamental matters and made recommendations in four parts which relates to, No. 1, Income Tax. Hon. Members familiar with the 1941 Agreement would know how much that affects Trinidad—exemption from Income Tax for United States personnel, military or civilian, connected with the bases. Secondly, Customs and Excise (a point that I have had occasion to mention here in the past). An agreement has been reached between the Canadian and the United States Government by which the United States waives duty on the exemptions given by the Bases Agreement on contractor owned equipment, civilian personnel belongings and household effects of contractors and their



United States employees other than on first arrival and on individual purchases in Canada by United States personnel. They have modified their Agreement also in respect of postal privileges, and Mr. Speaker, in respect of the jurisdiction of the Courts.

I have a resolution here that was presented by the Canadian Prime Minister, and the United States waives all rights of jurisdiction permitted under the bases agreement over British subjects and over aliens other than United States citizens. The United States suspends for five years exercise of rights of jurisdiction over United States civilian personnel and all other rights conferred by Article IV of the bases agreement, subject to revival on notice thereafter in the event of war or other emergency.

**Mr. Sinanan :** Was the Defence Board a permanent body?

**Dr. Williams :** Yes. The proposals were presented by the Canadian Prime Minister. I was reading from the speech of the Canadian Prime Minister who recommended proposals to the Canadian Parliament 6 or 7 years ago. We are asking for nothing unusual and Mr. Speaker, that is why partly to emphasise the gravity of the issues that still remained to be considered, partly to prevent any misunderstanding here or outside, we feel that this matter is of sufficient importance to warrant not only our astonishment at the particular method of dealing with it which has been proposed by two of the parties to the Commission, that we should very clearly indicate in no uncertain terms just where we stand on this issue, that we as a country, as a party to this whole issue, as the victims so to speak, one wanting this, one wanting that, one wanting something else, have got the right to be heard on this issue. And with respect to our request for the revision of the 1941 Agreement, hon. Members

will recall that Jamaica is involved in this Agreement; for that matter British Guiana is involved, St. Lucia is involved, Antigua is involved. So that properly a revision of the Treaty of 1941 both as to its scope and as to the territories, as to the areas to be included, as to the terms and conditions on which such areas might be held for the future—all of this is very properly a federal matter. We in Trinidad as the principal unit territory representing 40 of the 50 destroyers for which we were bartered in 1940 feel that we more than anybody else, since the issue arose over two possible legitimate uses for Trinidad soil, need to insist in a matter of this sort at a period of our history when an emerging nation is coming up, when a nation symbolised by the cradle, the cradle of the new capital, as against the grave symbolising the base down at Chaguaramas, or wherever it might be, have got the right to insist on behalf of all the people of the West Indies that our voice should be heard at long last—heard decisively on this particular matter—especially when, Sir, the Report is not and cannot be final.

The Report itself includes information, facts, data that have never been published before, that must be considered by somebody higher up, on a plane, to quote the Canadian Prime Minister, higher than that of strict legality—on a plane where military considerations have necessarily to be subordinated to the more important political issues and the most important of all, the moral issues involved in this question. And we feel, Mr. Speaker, that all of this is a part of a larger exercise, a larger and more fundamental exercise, the revision of the Treaty of 1941 to bring it more in line with treaties elsewhere, to bring it more in line with the new spirit that has spread all over the world in the opposition to bases by Mr. Nehru, the



opposition in Ceylon, the struggle in Cyprus, the opposition in Latin America, and in all parts of the world seeking for something fundamental. That is nothing that should cause any surprise. It should not have been necessary to ask for it, Mr. Speaker.

This matter should have been referred immediately, as was intended all along, to a conference of the four powers. I feel that conference should be in Trinidad. What does Irois Bay mean to anybody who is in London or somewhere else? He does not see Irois Bay. He has got to go down and see the approaches to Irois Bay. You have to see for yourself that Irois Bay would not result in any displacement of population as would be involved, let us say possibly, by Caroni. We have to assess on Trinidad itself the effect of the Waterloo site on sugar production in Trinidad. We would have to decide in Trinidad here.

I say this, Mr. Speaker, we would accept the Report as a basis for discussion but we certainly would want to pay much more attention as a Government to the rather cavalier dismissal of the oil prospects around Irois Bay both on land and offshore. I notice that they had the Petroleum Technologist of Trinidad before them but the Trinidad Government would want to hear a lot more from a lot more people than the Petroleum Technologist as to what precisely might be involved in the cession of Irois Bay as a possible alternative base.

We want to consider Caroni. To anyone familiar with these discussions it is quite obvious that nobody has yet agreed as to this all-important question of Caroni. How long would it take to fill the swamp? The Governor of Trinidad in 1940 said it would take 2 years, the Americans then said it would take 15 years; now the Commission

says it would take 7 years, and the Commission gives some estimates but was very careful to say that these estimates are no more than guesses. They are not in a position rightly or wrongly to be precise. There is a lot more to be said and that can only be said at a conference of these powers, so that we may ask here on behalf of the people of Trinidad, why in the face of all these facts—there is nothing I have said here which is not known by the British and the United States Governments—an attempt should be made to slam the door in our face. To publish two statements which are quite incorrect—the United Kingdom statement that the military superiority of Chaguaramas makes it impracticable—you do not get that from the Report; and the British statement about a reasonable cost; that does not follow from the Report at all. Why publish these statements? Why ask that this matter be treated in this unusual way? I can think of only one explanation, and that is an attempt on the part of the British Government to bluff the West Indian people into acceptance of a case whose fundamental weakness is well understood by the British and American Governments. I can think of no other. And to bluff them into this acceptance before public opinion in Britain could be mobilised in support of the West Indies. Am I being too far-fetched with respect to that, Mr. Speaker? I do not think so. The *Daily Express* has come out for the West Indies: Give them the capital; give back Chaguaramas to the West Indies. The *Daily Express* has said: "For, in 1941, without consulting the local population, Chaguaramas was leased by Britain to America for 99 years. The base enabled the Americans to defend their coast line, at a time when the security of the Western Approaches was in doubt. The danger was surmounted. The base no longer serves the purpose for



which it was conceded. The Americans should now abandon Chaguaramas. And so encourage the aspirations and hopes of the people of the West Indies.

And they go further, Mr. Speaker. "The people of the United States will understand this. They gave their backing to Persia and Egypt when the withdrawal of British installations and bases there was demanded." I am sure no Member opposite would say that the *Daily Express* is carrying on a vendetta against the United States. It amounts to this: A nationalist move is not without honour save in its own country and in its own house. Then, is Chaguaramas more important than Suez? Suez was given up. The *Manchester Guardian*, dealing with Mr. Manley's attack on the British Government for what he calls its insulting release, said: "The fact that the Base now lies idle on a 'care and maintenance' basis must be particularly galling to the West Indians in search for a capital. Mr. Manley thinks (as many others will) that the British Government should in any case have helped the Federal Government to make the best of its case with Washington"—and we have a good case, a very good case, Sir—"or allowed it to put its own case unembarrassed by adverse comment"—especially when that comment is not borne out by the Report to which it refers—"or at the very least consulted with it before issuing a statement which will make it much more difficult for the West Indies to pursue the matter." They concluded that "The decision may or may not be sound; it does not seem to have been very well handled. *The Times* does not take a firm stand but it certainly indicates the difficulties of finding a capital. It says that "the New West Indies Federation has suffered a stroke of bad luck . . . Chaguaramas fulfils two practical requirements of being near to Port-of-Spain, Trinidad's own capital

and Piarco, the international airport." Not an unsympathetic statement from *The Times*. The *New Statesman and Nation*, in a comment entitled "Abdicating Responsibility" states: "The considerations brought out in this report would have formed a suitable basis for a round-table conference between the British, American and West Indian Governments, which could then have discussed the best solution for the central problem of finding a suitable capital for the West Indies. Instead of proposing such a course, however, the British Government unilaterally declared that it would not ask the United States Government to move the Naval Base from Chaguaramas." But, Sir, it was we who asked them to move it. We could see nothing in this, Mr. Speaker, except a determination on the part of the British Government to bluff us into acceptance of a case which has no foundation whatever.

2.05 p.m. : Sitting resumed.

**Dr. Williams :** Mr. Speaker, I was indicating before the luncheon adjournment that, in our opinion, the only explanation that we could think of for this rather astonishing stand of the British Government is that an attempt was being made to force the West Indies into acceptance of a case fundamentally unsound and indefensible, and to do all of that before public opinion in Britain is formed or West Indies opinion could be mobilised in defence of West Indian interests.

I should like to say, Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of Members opposite, that when we received the first intimation of the likely British stand on this question, it was before the Members of the Trinidad Government—the Elected Ministers of Trinidad and Tobago, with the exception of the Chief Minister—before they had even received a



copy of the report. We got an intimation of the stand that the British Government would take, and we were asked to agree to it, before Ministers of the Government, with the exception of the Chief Minister, had even received a copy of the Joint Commission's Report.

I was also indicating, Mr. Speaker, the line that was taken by the *New Statesman and Nation* on the British stand on the question. I had indicated to hon. Members that the *New Statesman and Nation* had suggested that the Commission, which it said had done its work thoroughly and sensibly, that the Commission's Report should be referred to a four power conference. The *New Statesman and Nation* went on to deal with Mr. Manley's criticism of the British Government for the stand that it took. It said that "this tactless and untimely announcement had naturally angered West Indians . . . ; it is on a par with the miserly grant of £1 million for the building of the Federal capital. The impression is being created that as we no longer need the West Indies, we have little interest in their future welfare. This is surely the way to antagonise a friendly colonial people. After all, the base"—this is the *New Statesman and Nation* not the Trinidad Government speaking—"was leased to the United States by an act of a British Government without any consultation with the West Indians. Not unnaturally their pride is affronted when they are brusquely told now that the present British Government will do nothing to assist them to recover the use of their own land."

But, of course, Mr. Speaker, this is a little more than an affront to one's pride. It is much more than that involved—the strain, the very heavy strain on the West Indian taxpayers' pocket! And all of this for what, Mr. Speaker? For a report that does not say what some people claim that it says.

If you will allow me, Sir, to deal with the question asked me by the hon. Member for Caroni Central, I do not believe his question arises. I believe, Mr. Speaker, in all sincerity that he has misread this report for him to ask the question. I understood him to ask whether the Trinidad Government accepted or rejected the report. Am I correct? Here are the principal conclusions of the Commission, summarised by the Commission itself:—

"(1) Strategically the naval base in the eastern Caribbean should be on the Gulf of Paria."

Well, for that matter, we do not care whether you accept or reject. They say so. It is all right with me; I do not know where it should be. But when they come to say that 75 miles are too far away, I do not know, but my eyebrows go up! And when they say one place is not as good as another, Sir, because you have to steam thirty miles and it takes a little more than two hours to do that—well, Sir, I am sorry, but whenever I hear this matter raised I see always the political, social, and economic considerations affecting Trinidad, and I am not going to put two hours of steaming time in the balance against the fundamental responsibilities of a Trinidad Minister to the Trinidad people.

Conclusion No. 2, Mr. Speaker—

"The site selected for such a base must be capable of conforming to the military requirements."

"(3) The present base at Chaguaramas fulfils the strategic and military requirements for a naval base in the eastern Caribbean."

We, for that matter, do not know, Sir; but assuming that a base is needed, if they say it satisfies, that is all right with us. But look at conclusion No. 4, Mr. Speaker:

"(4) The only alternative sites in the West Indies which fulfil the strategic requirements and can be made to conform to the military requirements



of a United States naval base in the eastern Caribbean are the Caroni Swamp, Waterloo North, Waterloo South, Savaneta, and Irois Bay—all situated on the west coast of Trinidad on the Gulf of Paria."

They say so, Mr. Speaker, and we accept it. We said in London: "Look for another base!" I said on behalf of Trinidad, "look at the Caroni Swamp!" The report comes back and says sure the Caroni Swamp is a base, and you have four others. What is meant by "accepting or rejecting?"

"(5) The cost of development to provide what exists at Chaguaramas today on these alternative sites would vary from \$226 million to \$425 million, and the time required to construct these facilities would vary from 5½ to 10 years."

What does the hon. Member want us to do when he asks about "accept" or "reject"? I do not know if it would take 5½ or 5¼ years. They say 5½. They say \$226 million; I do not know whether it should be \$227 million. Where does acceptance or rejection come in? They have stated what they were told to do—to consider the cost and time to develop any alternative sites in Trinidad.

A further conclusion: "The United States and United Kingdom Naval Representatives"—*Naval Representatives*—"agreed that if the Government concerned agree in principle to remove the base and the necessary funds are made available, for military considerations Irois Bay would be the preferable choice of the alternative site. But, in their opinion, Chaguaramas is the most suitable site for a naval base in the Gulf of Paria."

As the hon. Member for Caroni Central is aware by now, the Trinidad Government feels that that is not a matter to be decided by the Naval Representatives. But, if they say it is better, all right! We say that one of the reasons for a discussion at a higher

level than the military or the naval is that one is in a position to take into account fundamental economic, political, sociological and moral considerations which, as far as I am aware, have not in any way been touched by the military representatives concerned.

2.15 p.m.

They go on to say:—

"... there is no significant portion of usable area within the Chaguaramas Naval Base that is not essential to the Base's mission."

That might be so. Then one merely has to ask—this might be purely academic. I still do not see how we can accept or reject the Report of the Commission as the hon. Member would like us to do—academic, but perhaps of some importance—why is it in the light of this question that the United States Government officially approached the Trinidad Government three or four years ago with respect to the cession of part of the North-West peninsula to Trinidad for an agricultural plantation, for a hospital, for a teachers' training college, for all sorts of things—Tucker Valley area? But they say now, "there is no significant portion . . . . not essential to the Base's mission," although four years ago they had offered Tucker Valley for various reasons. Last year the United States Government—I am sorry I cannot show it to the hon. Member, he would enjoy it—in preparation for the 1957 Conference, put up a secret document, in which line by line on a certain page they kept on saying, "We cannot give up Tucker Valley" because of this, that and the other. It was quite obvious to all of us that it was a case of "the lady doth protest too much." They were ready to give up Tucker Valley, but now they say there is no significant portion that can be released. A lot of West Indians would not accept Tucker Valley area. A lot of West Indians refuse to conceive their Federal



Capital as the ham in a sandwich between the Naval Base belonging to a foreign power and the Capital of the most powerful unit of the Federation. It is totally unseemly for anybody to suggest putting the Federal Capital in the early stage in that position.

May I say that the Trinidad Government has scrupulously refrained from seeking to influence the Federal Government as to the site of the Federal Capital. We have gone along as one of the several units taking it as our responsibility to go along with the majority because the Federal Capital belongs to the Federal Government. Once the Federation decided on Chaguaramas the Trinidad Government has put its full weight behind the demand for Chaguaramas, and it does not propose to apologise to anybody for placing the rights of the new West Indian Nation above petty and paltry considerations.

As a final conclusion, "The partition of the Chaguaramas Base is not practicable." The hon. Member wants us to reject or accept. We never said it was practicable. If it were practicable I would object to the West Indies Capital being placed in that position. It is not a question of accepting or rejecting the Report. These are the facts as found by the Commission.

I tried to indicate this morning, whilst the Report is an extremely valuable one, there are certain facts which the Commission did not find, certain facts which the Commission refused to find, and certain facts the Commission found that lead us to certain conclusions. If the Commission did not draw the conclusions from these facts, maybe (I was not a Member of the Commission) the Commission behaved as the Commission thinks it ought to behave. But the Commission's Report is here now for the proper interpretation, proper, depending upon a political point of view, &c., proper, depending upon the destiny envisaged for the new

Nation. It is quite proper to place an interpretation, if one wishes to do so, on the facts brought out by this Commission. Now, nobody wants to consider this Commission any further. The British and American Governments say, "Do not consider it." It can only be that they do not want us to express our views on it now, as they have never permitted us to express our views on anything concerning Chaguaramas.

Ever since this question arose, Sir Roland Robinson, one of the principal Conservative Members of Parliament, asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the British Government would undertake to help the West Indies to get Chaguaramas for the Federal Capital—bring pressure on the Americans to say it would be a lovely gesture towards this new nation. This is the same British Government asking us on very questionable grounds about reasonable cost not to proceed any further, indicating that they do not wish to proceed any further, for one of the strangest arguments—may I put it in the record before I forget it—that "Although the United States Government are legally entitled to occupy the Base until 2040, Her Majesty's Government would have been prepared to consider inviting them voluntarily to surrender their rights as an act of generosity." I protest against that word! It is the West Indian people who have been generous. Where does this act of generosity come in in respect of this scrap price? Where does this act of generosity come in in respect of the agreement signed by the British Government on behalf of the West Indian people, which, for example, involved the Trinidad Government in a claim, un-met to this day, of over \$20,000 due by one of the U.S.A. War Agencies in respect of wharf services? Where is the generosity in respect of the damage done to Trinidad roads by American military vehicles? I have a claim here, never met, which the Department of



Works and Hydraulics made out for the years 1941, 1942 and 1943 only, involving the sum of \$156,472 damage done to Trinidad roads by American military vehicles. Hon. Members can imagine what it would be to this date. The Trinidad Government is studying this question. One of the principal features of this proposed conference will be a revision of this Agreement to remove some of these features which would never have been accepted by anybody in Trinidad. They cannot be accepted today now that this question has been raised. I have here the effect of the American air traffic at Piarco. In 1956 there were 909 U.S.A. aircraft landings. In 1957 they increased to 1,668, and in 1958 for the first quarter they have increased to the rate of 696 landings. The weight of the aircraft increased from 60,000 lb. to 200,000 lb. The repairs to the runway, taxi tracks and the apron at the Piarco Airport as a result of this increased traffic was estimated at approximately \$17,000 in 1957. Damage done by U.S.A. heavy aircraft in 1958—the first quarter it was \$5,000, but for the period April to 10th May—one wonders why it has gone up in this period; I leave it for hon. Members opposite to hazard a guess—the cost in that period is \$8,600. These aircraft pay no landing fees. If they paid landing fees the Trinidad Government would have collected in 1957, \$41,000, and in the first quarter of 1958 they would have collected \$18,387.

We would want to have that treaty revised. When that treaty is revised, I for one, as the head of the elected Government of Trinidad and Tobago, will go into that Conference with the views of my Minister of Health! I would want to hear his views on Article 20 of the Agreement:—

“The United States shall have the right, in collaboration with the Government of the Territory and, where necessary, with

the Local Authority concerned, to exercise, without other consideration than just compensation to private owners, if any, such powers as such Government and Local Authority and the Government of the United Kingdom may possess of entering upon any property in the vicinity of the Leased Areas for the purpose of inspection, and of taking any necessary measures to improve sanitation and protect health.”

The Trinidad Government would have something to say on that. They would have something to say, as the Minister of Agriculture has already said, about areas leased to the United States under this treaty—thousands of acres of Crown lands without any payment, without any rent. Why should they pay rent in Morocco? Why should they pay rent in Libya? Why should they have Point Four Economic Assistance in Libya? What sort of international agreement is this that can be one thing for Trinidad and something totally different for other parts of the world? We refuse to be regarded as domestic servants of the old regime, to be pushed around when someone else chooses. We have something to say on this matter as a Government.

I do not wish hon. Members opposite to think that we are stalling for time. This is one of the most important questions facing Trinidad and the Federation. We will go into that Conference with one of the most powerful delegations the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has had on any occasion with a written brief—a case telling the entire world what our stand is on this question. This is not “old talk” or foolishness. We take this seriously. There is not the slightest basis for the continuation in 1958 of this agreement or any part of it and this Report itself is not a question of rejecting or accepting, it is a question of referring it to a higher level as a part of a larger question involving moral and legal



issues such as have never yet been raised in the consideration of this matter. We say pleasantly, we say without any passion, we say without any bitterness, this is a vital matter to the Nation; this is a vital matter to this country, one of the most important units of this Federation, and the one which is supposed to supply the base, supposed to supply the capital, and to satisfy through a Government legally responsible to its own people the economic and social aspirations of the people who put us where we are.

We are important too. We cannot be any less important than Suez, or any less important than the people of Egypt. We have some views in the matter too; let us discuss them, do not just let them push us around and file us away as if we were pigeon-holing the report of the Joint Commission. We refuse to be pigeon-holed. We demand a four power conference with Trinidad having equal status with each of the other three participants to decide the matter, which is, first and foremost, of importance to the people, and to the economy and to the finances of Trinidad and Tobago. We are a very pleasant people as everybody knows; easy going, quite disciplined in a way. But it would be a little unfortunate if people got the impression that, because we do not throw stones at distinguished visitors, we can be pushed around as everybody pleases.

We know all about the fact that in other parts of the world bases—I put it mildly—bases of no less importance than Chaguaramas have been surrendered as a result of the inevitable developing aspirations of the people among whom they have been located. There is no country in the world, not one country in the world in which questions of this sort have not been raised and have not been dealt with at new levels. There is not one country in the world since 1939 in which, to my knowledge, this question could be posed,

in the terms in which it is posed here today in 1958 with the suggestion that Trinidad takes it or leaves it. If I may paraphrase Mr. John Foster Dulles, "To get a Naval Base in Trinidad at the price of West Indian goodwill would be a very bad bargain for all people concerned." If we were to allow this to go through, if we were not to take the stand which we take today on behalf of the people of Trinidad and also, if we may be permitted to do so, on behalf of the West Indian people, if we were to allow this matter to stand, the United Kingdom and the United States attitude in this matter, as represented by their unilateral statements, will have the effect of casting a blight on the West Indian people just at the very time when we need aid. We all know how much we need aid. I do not mean by aid, material aid; I do not mean economic aid and technical assistance. You cannot properly talk about technical assistance for Trinidad. Nobody gives Trinidad technical assistance. Ask for some and they tell you go back on your own resources. They say we can develop things ourselves, and we are doing it. We do the best we can. Before you talk about economic or technical aid you have to sit down and talk about Trinidad getting full value for its economic and technical resources. To come and talk about economic or technical aid when you do not pay us our bills, when you get exemption from duty, to come and tell us about economic and technical aid when we do not get the rent we would properly charge for Crown lands is going a little too far. I am not talking in those material terms; I am talking of moral aid and spiritual encouragement and assistance to us as a new Nation trying to develop the democratic way of life. If this is allowed by Trinidad, it would be a blight on the full development of our consciousness as a Nation. It would be a means of encouraging disorder if the impression were to gain ground that, because we are a nice,



happy-go-lucky people who only think about the Carnival that is coming while remembering the one that has gone—a lot of people say that about us—it would be a great mistake if the impression were to gain ground that because we love Carnival we do not take anything too seriously; it would tend to demoralise the people as a whole, it would tend to jeopardise the very Federation of which we are a distinguished part, and in which we have, perhaps, a greater responsibility than any other part, a responsibility in the most difficult, formative years of the Federation to try to get it going, to try to get it in its own home, to try and allow it to stand on its own feet, without being propped up by anybody else or being bullied by somebody else, to try and give it a Capital of its own with some measure of dignity, something that would be a visible symbol of the long years of the yearnings and aspirations of the West Indian people for a better life with independent nationhood, instead of remaining under the old colonial regime.

I hope that I have been able to show the broader issues, the important problems that lie behind this Resolution; I hope I have been able to show what it means for the Nation's future. I hope I have been able to show that in a spirit removed from passion, a spirit suggestive of the possibility from negotiations as long as our point of view is given adequate opportunity for self-expression; I hope I have been able to do it in an atmosphere—without in any way trying to influence hon. Members opposite—in which it would be possible for us at long last to speak with a united voice on a matter which concerns all of us in this Chamber.

Whatever I have said, I have said on behalf of us all in a spirit of serious study. I am pretty certain that none of the parties to this question has given it the study that

we in Trinidad have given it. The discussions which some are trying to close are only now beginning. They will not be settled by one conference. I would like to see, for example, the Minute of my hon. and learned Friend, the Attorney General, when we ask him to go through this Agreement, Article by Article, Clause by Clause. This is not going to be settled briefly. It is not a matter that will be here with us today and we can dispose of it. And we have not begun to give it study yet! It is going to be a long drawn out matter on which the Trinidad Government proposes to concentrate with the greatest care; in which the Trinidad Government intends to prepare its serious case with all its ramifications for everybody to see where we stand. We hope, at least, it will be agreed that the point of view expressed here today on behalf of the Government and the Party to which we belong—because we have consulted them—we have consulted the governing body of that Party, and we are rather struck by the fact that the line of that governing body was, "Go ahead, do not back down; you have a case, a strong moral case; put it before the eyes of the world. Above all, if your Federation backs down now, your Federation is going to be kicked about from pillar to post until the end of time." So I speak here not only for my Colleagues with whom the general lines have been discussed; I speak with a mandate from the governing body of the Party to which we belong, and I hope it will at least be agreed that an attempt has been made to present the point with the utmost seriousness, and in an atmosphere which—if I may put it inoffensively—will not in any way retard or prevent the development of a spirit of unity on a question which is fundamental to the nation to which we are all proud to belong.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move.



**Dr. Williams :** Mr. Speaker, since you have called on me to reply, if you will allow me to do so and to continue my reply whilst my hon. Friends opposite make up their minds as to what they want to do, it seems a little curious that they should come here and talk all day about this Motion, they said all sorts of things, and then I understood the hon. Member for Tobago to say that he wanted your leave to withdraw.

**Mr. Butler :** At least one fellow would not dare to follow him.

**Dr. Williams :** If I exercise my right to reply, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make it clear that it is merely because I want to clear the record of some intemperate things that have been said. Some of the charges that have been made are quite unfair to myself, to my Colleagues, and to the Party to which we belong. I categorically deny that in bringing this Motion here—I will pause while they leave—

*(At this stage certain hon. Members of the Opposition left.)*

**Mr. Butler :** May I enquire, Sir, whether it is in accord with parliamentary practice to have the Leader of the Opposition alone to receive the reply for them? In their absence he is going to accept the reply.

**Mr. M. G. Sinanan :** If the Chief Minister wishes to reply, certainly I think he ought to be allowed to do so. I shall remain and take the reply for them.

**Dr. Williams :** I am grateful to the hon. Member. As everyone is aware, he is the only one on his side today, save the hon. Member for St. Patrick West and the hon. Member for St. Patrick Central, who has

tried in any way to deal with this question in a constructive way. Of course, one saw the difficulties into which he got himself. I have never heard him stammer more. He does not know what to say. He has no case, and no one knows it better than himself. I do not say that in any way to hit a man when he is down. This is a serious matter; he has understood the seriousness of it. He tried to make some contribution, ultimately got himself tied up, and eventually made the greatest confession of failure and paid a tribute to the Government side. I will tell you in due course what that is.

We entered this debate in no spirit of agitation; there was no tirade on my part, no hatred was expressed. We decided the line we were going to take, how matters should be stated. To have an hon. Member opposite come here with his consummate impertinence and talk about buffoonery and then walk out before he can take what is coming to him, that is what I object to. No attack was made, no attack was intended, on the integrity of the members of the Commission. We stated that the Commission did not consider all aspects of the question; we indicated the aspects which it did not consider; we indicated those which it considered, but which were susceptible to different interpretations, and I stated our interpretations.

A lot has been said today about Chaguaramas, its impact on the economic development of Trinidad, by hon. Members opposite, including the hon. Member for Caroni Central. But, Mr. Speaker, what was obvious was that nobody bothered to give any figures at all. It has been very difficult to get them, but I have a few here. I do not understand what the fuss is about. The wartime peak of employment on the United States Base in 1942 was 28,000, and it declined at the end of the war in 1946 to



5,878. Heaven knows what happened to the 22,000 in between—with all this talk about “don’t antagonise,” and “don’t estrange”—and by 1950 the figure of the persons employed on the base was 1,066.

A few years ago, Mr. Speaker, 1953 if I am correct, the United States Government—as the West Indies were warned by the United States Attorney General in his opinion in 1940 stating that the United States was under no obligation to continue any base, or even to start one on the areas acquired from the United Kingdom—approached the Trinidad Government and said that in view of a very large retrenchment programme in the United States, employment on the base in Trinidad, already low, would be severely curtailed unless the Trinidad Government stepped in to fill the breach, and since there was no decline in dollar appropriation could it be arranged for the Trinidad Government to employ these people, or take over the responsibility of employing them, the United States paying the Trinidad Government out of its dollar appropriation. In this way the jobs of some 300 people were saved.

7.00 p.m. :

I am not too familiar with the details. That was before our time. I mention it only to show the insecurity of employment at the base. It is subject to the vagaries of the United States Congress, and whatever appropriations it can make for military installations overseas.

According to the Report of the Chaguaramas Joint Commission, page 10, paragraph 55—

“As a general guide to the present level of base operations it may be stated that there are now supported on the Base or employed thereon approximately 1,200 people, about one quarter of whom are military personnel.”

At most, 900 local people are employed there. My own information as a Minister of the Trinidad Government is that the figure of 900 is too high. Trinidad and Tobago and the West Indies must be in a desperate position if they can afford to ignore the moral, legal, political and sociological considerations in this issue for the sake of 900 people employed on this Base. I am tempted to ask the hon. Member for Caroni Central in this context the same question put to him by my hon. Colleague, the Minister of Health, is this supposed to be a *quid pro quo*? The Economic Development Programme is to provide work for these people. We might not succeed; we might fail. With recession in the world, decline in prices in the world, what can we do in Trinidad? What can we do to stop world trends? We can do very little. If we succeed, we succeed. If we fail, we fail. If the people do not like it they know what to do about it. But do not come and tell me the moral and political issues in this question, the question as to whether we should accept a unilateral statement by two Governments instead of going further on and expressing our views, must be determined by what happens to 900 persons employed on the American Base. They can close down the Base if they want to go. They have closed down Waller Field. They can close down Chaguaramas. If they want to go elsewhere, they have been invited to go elsewhere. I do not see how anybody can raise this issue and say that we have been deliberately antagonising the U.S.A. You notice how my hon. Friend, the Member for Caroni Central, got coy when I asked him to read from the book a passage about what Mr. Nehru said about American assistance to Pakistan in the Kashmir issue. He knew what I was getting at. The American Government does not base an economic arrangement of \$360 million, or the giving of wheat in famine, on whether they like a



country or not. In fact, the more they dislike a country the more they are likely to give.

The U.S.A. Government give quite a lot of money to North Africa. The Americans told the French Government the other day they did not care how much they were accused by the French Government, they were giving assistance in accordance with their programme. They had a fight on their hands and they wanted people to help them. They would deal with Spain. They would deal with everybody. Why do you think they would not deal with Trinidad? They would deal with Trinidad. If they do not, they do not. I do not see what we will get by coming to this Legislative Council and saying to the whole world that we have got to get down and eat dirt in order to get assistance. I do not know about Members on this side, but if there is one person who is not going to eat dirt it is myself. You get assistance if you can get it in honourable ways. After all, I am sorry that the hon. Member for Naparima is not here for me to give him the assurance that whatever he might say, I am an honourable man. He said here—and I want to correct it—that the Commission rejected the Caroni Swamp as a base. This is an unfortunate thing going around. My hon. Friend for Caroni Central came perilously close to it when he talked about accepting or rejecting the Report. The hon. Member for Naparima got into a trap when he said that the Commission rejected the Caroni Swamp for a Base. We pulled him up and asked him to quote what the Commission said, and everybody could hear that what he quoted was not a rejection.

I draw the attention of the hon. Member for Caroni Central to the statement on page 11, paragraph 62—

“It is not for this Commission to conclude that any specific site is or is not too expensive to develop.”

They quite obviously left it for somebody else to decide whether a site is or is not too expensive to develop.

The hon. Member was a little confused about this last conference. I do not know why. Possibly, it was because of his long absence from the seat he occupies, which we regretted. Perhaps it left him a little less familiar with what had been going on than he normally would have been.

The position is very simple. We of the Standing Federation Committee asked for an opportunity to discuss this question with the United Kingdom and the United States Government. That opportunity was afforded to us last June in a special conference convened in London. It was at that conference that :

- (a) it was decided to set up a Joint Commission to establish certain facts, and
- (b) it was at that Conference that on behalf of Trinidad and Tobago I raised the issue of the revision of the entire agreement.

The action taken by that Conference was to set up a Joint Commission—not for me to set it up as my hon. Friend over there would say—it was set up by each of the four participating countries. That was the action taken by the Conference. No action was taken on the proposition advanced properly to the United States through the United Kingdom Government, that the Trinidad Government wished to have a review made of the 1941 Agreement under Article 28 of the Agreement. So the submission of the Trinidad and Tobago Government today is simply that now that the Joint Commission has reported, in accordance with the terms of reference assigned to it by the London Conference, it is only proper from the standpoint of commonsense, it fits all the codes of diplomatic propriety, that this Report should be submitted to a conference, so to speak, of persons



higher up in the hierarchy than mere fact finding experts, that is to say a conference of representatives of the Governments, who would decide on what action to take on this Report. It is our submission that this conference, in fact, is only a resumption, as the hon. and gallant Member for St. Patrick West has appreciated. But I suppose he knows we are not dealing all the time with persons like himself, and therefore it was necessary for us to go around and manoeuvre with something where, if he were involved, we would operate in a totally different way. I apologise to him for it. The waste of time is as great to us as it is to him. It is at this resumed conference that we should go back to the matters suspended at the last conference, and take up the question of the revision of the 1941 Agreement. It is to this conference that the Trinidad Government propose to go with a carefully worked out case, a case involving all the economic and sociological factors which have not been dealt with by the Chaguaramas Joint Commission—a case involving every single clause of the 1941 Agreement, as it affects every particular Ministry of this country, a case involving all the changes that we would put up for negotiation and discussion with all parties. In all that this Government would be fortified by information about this question of bases the world over as to how it has been done.

The hon. Member for Naparima speaks as though this is some matter here in Trinidad which has never arisen before. What we want in Trinidad is more facts about the situation in Newfoundland, in Okinawa, Morocco, Libya, Ceylon and so on. That is how we will go about it. We see no reason to be in any way perturbed. It is a normal exercise of any Government. The question is whether the Government should take this exercise, whether we should go about with our hands in prayer like the hon. Member for Naparima who says that we ought to be glad, and should get down on our knees and thank the

British Government for inviting our views in 1957, or whether we should go about like the hon. Member for Caroni Central saying, softly, softly, "You are not as big as Nehru, you do not have the power of Ceylon, you cannot say this, you cannot say that." But may I ask, where has Ceylon got all this maturity from now? You take it when you become mature. You achieve maturity by taking it. Why should the hon. Member for Caroni Central, a man who has always distinguished himself in the past—one can never tell what some of these fellows will do in their old age—he has always been, as far as I know, on the side of constitutional reform—why should he come here and say that if he was convinced that we would get the United States and the United Kingdom to revise their attitude and to re-open the conference (words to that effect) he would be the first to give us unanimous support. Are we to take it that this is an indication of the extent to which he has moved away from his Colleague of yesteryear? Does he not know, with all his experience, that by his denying us that unanimous support he is telling those boys not to re-open it? Do I have to say to hon. Members opposite that the explanation of all this is very simple? If it were not for the attitude of the Opposition Party in Trinidad and elsewhere there would be no problem in this issue.

Somebody comes here and talks about oath of allegiance. I did not take any oath of allegiance to defend a 1941 Agreement which deserves all the epithets that the hon. and gallant Member for St. Patrick West used. I took an oath of allegiance in a parliament heading for self-government in a Federation where Her Majesty, to whom we pledge allegiance, would act on the advice of Her West Indian Ministers.

I am loyal to the people who put me here; to the people who put me here to carry out the programme. My pledge of allegiance to



Her Majesty the Queen was to move heaven and earth to carry out this programme. If Her Majesty the Queen's Ministers are opposed to my politics—I owe no allegiance to them. They do not pay me a cent. The money comes from Trinidad; but if Her Majesty the Queen's Ministers do not like what we are saying let them come down here and fight it out. There is no necessity for anybody to get hot about that. We are carrying out the normal policy of any Government. In fact, Mr. Speaker, this Government in a sense represents the British tradition in Trinidad as it has never been represented before, because we represent all that is best in that tradition which we are determined to introduce into Trinidad political life. It is a travesty of that tradition, the bastardization of British Democracy that has been injected into Trinidad through the Colonial system producing relics of Colonialism like the hon. Member for Naparima. It is they who are responsible for all this.

Mr. Speaker, it is not an accident that the hon. Member for Caroni Central has stayed behind. He tried to be gallant about it (*Hear, Hear!*) by saying that he had spoken against the Chief Minister and wanted to give the Chief Minister the courtesy of replying. That is fine. Let us have some more of that. The point is that he is not with the Opposition on this issue. I understand that he is not with the Opposition at all. It is quite possible that the colleague on his left is in the same position too. He is not with the Opposition on this issue. I understand that he is not with us. I did not ask him. He has certainly tied himself up. When a man attacks himself, why should I attack him? But he is not with them. There has been none of the venom. There has been none of the bitterness, none of the dishonesty that characterised the statement of the hon. Member for Naparima; to come and say that we must be grateful to the British Government for allowing us to present a case; that we should not be dis-

loyal; asking us whether we want to secede. What is the impertinence behind this question? Dominion status means the right to secede. Has India seceded? Has Pakistan seceded? Has the Irish Republic seceded? Has Ceylon seceded yet? Has Nkrumah seceded yet? If we want to secede, we want to secede. What business is it of his? That is the sort of thing, Mr. Speaker, which has done untold harm to the West Indian cause.

Mr. Speaker, one of the unfortunate suspicions that is gaining ground in this country—it is stronger in my mind this afternoon—is that certain Members opposite, when they speak, are the mouthpieces of a foreign power. Mr. Speaker, words were used this afternoon—I could not believe them when I heard them—when somebody was quoting a document, the hon. Member for Naparima, and without the slightest hesitation, I say that the document he was quoting coincided with a document I have here marked "Secret"—a document consisting of 8 pages (No. 2 of ten copies) presented to me, as a member of the Chaguaramas Conference, as the United States' memorandum on the United States Naval Base, Chaguaramas, Trinidad, B.W.I. I ask, Mr. Speaker, how could the hon. Member for Naparima have this document? There were ten copies, eight pages. My colleagues here have not seen this document, and he quoted word for word from the document. This document, Mr. Speaker, I will not quote it . . . . Tucker Valley . . . such a request would appear, the United States feels this . . . the radio station, difficult and expensive . . . access could be, would presumably be, highly unsatisfactory, Tucker Valley, Tucker Valley . . . .

We said no, and the West Indies decided that they did not want Tucker Valley. That would mean partition of the base, and partition would be unacceptable. Tucker Valley was defeated by a majority



of West Indian votes. But we asked the Commission to consider the release of Chaguaramas, beginning with such parts of the base as were least essential to its continued functioning as a Naval Base.

After the West Indies and United Kingdom delegates in London felt, on the basis of this document, that we could go to the Americans and ask for partition of Tucker Valley, ask for partition of Chaguaramas, they now come up and say that no part of the base can be released. The entire base is needed for the functioning of the base, and the release of Tucker Valley is out of the question. Stiffening of attitude. The same document says, this Secret document, that in June of last year the United States would be prepared to consider the release of a part of Waller Field. Everything in this document, if it means anything at all, would mean that they cannot consider the release of Waller Field. They have said the Naval Base demands this as an essential part of its operation, an adjoining airfield of sufficient size to give it the necessary air support. That is why we asked them to consider one combined base—naval and air—to prevent the dispersion of the base facilities between two places in Trinidad, involving contact through the Trinidad capital. They say here, too, it is implicit in this document, that they cannot give up Waller Field. Stiffening of attitude again.

Mr. Speaker, last year the United Kingdom was, as far as it was humanly possible for politicians to be, sympathetic to the West Indian cause. The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was the Chairman of the Conference, but he was replaced by the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies. The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ormsby-Gore, was most sympathetic to the West Indian cause; the Under-Secretary of State

for the Colonies, Mr. Profumo, was not unsympathetic, at least he knew when the time came to stop when he had been prodded sufficiently. There were two branches of the American Navy speaking in London. But we did not bother. They were naval men. What was the point of attacking them? It is the British Government now that takes the attitude, and Mr. Profumo himself who said in an answer in Parliament that there is division in Trinidad; there is division in the West Indies.

Mr. Speaker, it is people like the hon. Member for Naparima who talks his tripe and runs away because he knew what was coming. That is the type of man who wants you to be a doormat, who wants to be the shoe-shine boy of the American Government, who wants to say be grateful to the Americans for this and that. Let us speak as a Government. Be grateful to them for what? Be grateful to them for introducing into Trinidad life a pattern of behaviour as a result of which there were 1,134 incidents of various kinds involving members of the United States Forces from 1941 to 1958, including 281 for assault, including 29 for obscene exposure, including 18 for wounding and a number for rape or attempted rape. A lot of people in Trinidad feel that this was the cause of a decline in our moral standards of which one hears so much from our pulpits, unfortunately preached by a lot of people who had no right to preach about moral standards to anybody. The talk among the older families was that it was through all this money which came from the American Base that this behaviour developed. Trinidad must pay the price for this. One of the things that the Trinidad Government would want to do when this question is re-examined would be to emphasise that we are a society as well as a base, we are a community with family



life and tradition, as well as a community in which a lot of soldiers and sailors are let loose. The point of view we want to emphasise is that certain things will not be permitted to the United States Forces, which the local Government considers incompatible with the dignity of the inhabitants or the social customs familiar to the place. Must we sit down all the time and eat dirt? Must we be abused because we ask for our right to defend our people?

We come with proposals involving money, involving taxes, involving legislation. We ask that we should have the right now, as an elected Government, to determine the direction in which this community is to go. We do not expect that when we come here with a proposal involving the most fundamental issues that the hon. Member for Naparima who has got to get a cheque authorised by the Chief Minister to pay him, should come here in public and attack the Chief Minister because we refuse to come here and behave like the shoe-shine boy that he is in heart and wants to be in practice today. That sort of thing will not be tolerated at all. The Americans will move. You are asking them for nothing impossible. You are stating that this is your territory. You have not been consulted before. You insist on being consulted now. You have various claims to satisfy. The moment you put a base here everybody knows the bombs will come. If we are going to contribute to Western Hemispheric Defence, let us decide where the bombs are going to fall. Let them fall a little further away from Port-of-Spain and let them fall further from the Federation. Possibly an academic point. Possibly it may not affect too many of us here. We do not know where they would fall. Possibly my colleagues from San Fernando may say let the bombs fall a little further from San Fernando,

But, Mr. Speaker, we are insisting that we have a responsibility—the responsibility of protecting this vast trade; the responsibility of making this contribution to Hemispheric Defence; the responsibility for taking part in the placing of the capital or the site of it. The base is an essential part of this responsibility. O.K. Never in the history of this world has so much responsibility been placed on the shoulders of so few people in return for so little. Why should we take it? If we have the responsibility, let us share it.

They said in 1957 that there was no alternative site for the base. You have five here, if you leave out Friendship Bay being 75 miles away. If we were ready to abandon the Tobago airport, where it is, we would have a sixth for a base. Friendship Bay, they say, fits all the requirements. It is a question of money. Are you going to put money against the trade to be defended? Money as against the contrary interests involved?

The hon. Member for Naparima said that we should take the alternative sites for the base and consider them as alternative sites for the Capital. Why should we? Chaguaramas is much better for a capital, with Irois Bay as a base, than Irois Bay as the Capital and Chaguaramas as the base. People come from outside to help you to defend themselves. What we are saying they understand correctly, even my hon. Friend from Caroni Central—certainly the hon. Nominated Member who never misses the point. I know him from a long time ago. We have had our arguments about slavery and West Indian History. A man's view of the past is conditioned by his outlook of the present. If he and I differed about our interpretation of the past, we are bound to differ about the actualities of the present. He represents an old school. We represent a



new one, and these fellows here are with that school. What they are opposing is self-Government for Trinidad; what they are opposing is Dominion status for the West Indies. One of their commentators said so in the Press. He gave the most astonishing definition of Dominion status I have ever seen. We are not going to get Dominion status because it would jeopardise vital American interests. I always thought, Mr. Speaker, that Dominion status was given to a place—pardon me, Sir, nobody ever gives anybody anything—Dominion status was achieved by a place by its own efforts in order that it should be able to defend its own interests against rivals whether within the Commonwealth or outside. That we should have somebody in Trinidad, a representative of the Trinidad Government in the Federal Parliament, stating that we should not get Dominion status because vital American interests would be jeopardised—that is the conflict Mr. Speaker,—for or against self-Government, for or against Dominion status,—men walking upright, or shoe-shine boys with their backs bent shining somebody's shoes? Those are the alternatives. We know where we stand; that is, solidly on the side of self-Government. There has been no antagonism, no bitterness; but, Sir, political issues which we are going to fight in political terms. All my language is political.

Perhaps my hon. Friend for Caroni Central who we know does not belong there—he is not with them on this issue. However, do not get excited. We do not go about things that way; it seems that he is ready to walk over right now [*Laughter*]. My hon. Friend for Caroni Central would no doubt get a little more assurance if he realizes that what we are going through, other countries have gone through, but not more so than Canada. I want to give him an example of an incident

in Canadian history, and it is very important, Sir, because Canada has now inherited all the problems involved in the Bases Agreement with Newfoundland, although the problem there is slightly different in that Newfoundland was joining a Federation that already existed, whereas the Trinidad agreement—the agreement in respect of Trinidad—now involves a Federation which did not exist when the Base Agreement was drawn up. I would leave it at that; I would like to say no more of that, Mr. Speaker, until I have the man at my back, the hon. and learned Attorney General, give me the precise difference between the Canadian situation and our situation. But you will see how this is something for discussion. There are precedents, but we want to find out the extent to which the precedents apply. The Canadian Government found itself in great difficulties with the United States of America for years and years, and as the hon. Member, my Friend for Caroni Central, would recall, the Canadian Government became a Federation long before it became a Dominion; long before it got what we today call Dominion status. It became a Dominion in 1867 just, so to speak, with the Federal Government acting superimposed on the existing provincial Governments, and it inherited one of the most bitter disputes with the British Government in peacetime, that the British Government has had with the United States—a dispute over Canada involving the use of Canadian inshore waters by American fishermen. The British Government had attempted to settle this by a Convention in the year 1818 prohibiting the entry of American fishing vessels into the inshore waters of Canada, except for purposes of getting wood or water, or for shelter, or for repairs.

By 1886 the Canadians could no longer stand this constant violation year after year of their inshore waters, and at one and the same time started an intensive campaign of



their own coastguard against American fishermen caught in Canadian waters, whilst they introduced a Bill to tighten up these enforcement regulations. The American Government, the American people, and the American press began a campaign against what they called these bumptious colonials in Canada, this primitive colonial dependency. The Secretary of State for the United States claimed that the Canadian Dominion had no authority to give either legislative or executive effect to treaties entered into with the United States by what he called the Imperial Government. Canada, as far as he was concerned, did not exist. He would deal with Canada through the United Kingdom. It is quite true, Sir, Canada did not have what we call Dominion status then, and the Canadian people were in at the conference with the United Kingdom as advisers to the United Kingdom, and one of them has left—one of the chief Canadians of those days—a letter to the Canadian Prime Minister, the father of Canadian federation, Sir John MacDonal, well known, I am sure, to the hon. Member for Caroni Central. In the year 1890, this man left us some advice through Sir John MacDonal which would help to bolster up the hon. Member's doubts and make us feel that we are just going the way of all flesh, that the way of the transgressor is exceedingly difficult; and when he is a colonial transgressor, God help him against those forces in the world powerfully arraigned against the Colonial territories, moreso when they pay lip service to Dominion status and independence. This is the advice of Sir Charles Tupper, the Canadian High Commissioner, to Sir John MacDonal after a conference in Washington on this perennial fisheries problem. He said:

"I cannot refrain from urging that in future negotiations with the United States, no British Minister at Washington should act for us. It is apparent that there is

always present on his part a desire to make his future residence in Washington as pleasant as possible, and he is to some extent therefore unable to take and keep a firm independent position."

They were brought up the hard way, Sir, and today they are with the United States Joint Defence Board but they have inherited the problems of Newfoundland. They have worked them out. Apparently, they have worked them out in a spirit of negotiation and compromise. We have to begin to learn, too, Sir—we will begin to learn—that the one way to get self-respect from people abroad is that we are not to get up in our own Legislative Council and tell people in advance that we are prepared to eat dirt. Then they will come and expect all of us to eat dirt, and when those of us on this side of the House say 'no, thank you, we are a little more fastidious', then they say, it is a vendetta. They go on to say this, that, or the other. But, Sir, they have no case. I am quite satisfied that British public opinion will be entirely with the West Indies. I am quite satisfied that American public opinion is totally indifferent, totally ignorant, and I am quite satisfied that the division in West Indian society today is purely an artificial and meaningless one. I am quite satisfied that the mass of the people are either indifferent or confused, or are ready to go ahead, and I see no reason to sacrifice West Indian interests. It is the politicians; it is the people like that. If he were a little different I would call him Uncle Sambo to Uncle Sam. That is the type, that is the one responsible for the daily denigration of the name of this new nation. That is the one responsible for all this talk about you have just got to go and give a little bit of money and these boys will shut up.

Mr. Speaker, I protest in the name of this Government against the imputations, the unworthy imputations that came from the



hon. Member for Naparima, that we just have to behave like boot blacks and the American Government would build a nice new capital for us. Where? May I ask in the Caroni Swamp? Because if they want to build it in the Caroni Swamp I want to say, Sir, that I have a lot to say about the type of capital. I would not mind doing a little research on architecture because if they want to build one for us I could find one that would cost \$1,000 million dollars.

I object strenuously to the suggestion here, Mr. Speaker, that this is a matter concerning the Federal Government and that the Trinidad Government should keep its mouth shut. I speak for my Colleagues. I speak for my Party to which I belong and nobody is going to play fast and loose with Trinidad's property, with Trinidad's resources, with Trinidad's soil except with the consent of Trinidad's Ministers. I defy the Federal Government to find any explanation, any reason that would convince us that this matter of the use of Trinidad's soil; this matter of a location of a Base in Trinidad; this matter of the location of a capital in Trinidad is not a matter which, as of right, is to be referred to the Trinidad Government. For the sake of the record, Mr. Speaker, may I have it noted please, a copy of the Report that I have is a copy with an introductory letter, dated 25th March, 1958, from the Chairman of the Chaguaramas Joint Commission, Sir Charles Arden Clarke and addressed to His Excellency, Sir Edward Beetham, Governor of Trinidad and Tobago. Paragraph 3 reads: "A letter in similar terms has been addressed to The Right Hon. Alan Lennox Boyd, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies, The Hon. John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State, Department of State, Washington, and His Excellency the Right Hon. Lord Hailes, G.B.E., Governor-General of The West Indies." There were four parties to this Commission. This copy

was sent, as of right, to the Governor of Trinidad and Tobago who distributed copies to the Executive Council of Trinidad and Tobago. We were an independent party to this Commission and I would have it recorded, Mr. Speaker, that until Federation came His Excellency the Governor, and through my hon. Friend, the Colonial Secretary, exercised constitutional responsibility for external affairs. Having got the line straight with my Cabinet Colleagues and decided what we were going to say, I specially asked for an interview with His Excellency the Governor to advise him out of courtesy so that he should not read in the newspapers what the elected Ministers proposed to say in this Debate.

My hon. and learned Friend, the Attorney General will advise you that in London at the Chaguaramas Conference I notified him very hurriedly, very privately (I had only just found the information), and His Excellency the Governor, what line I proposed to take at the London Conference on Chaguaramas. In no sense was this something done thoughtlessly; in no sense was it done on the basis of a one-man decision, or a hunch by one man, I had to make a snap decision in London, Mr. Speaker. I did it. There was nothing else to be done. I came back here and got (I could have got the opposite) the full support of the Cabinet; I got the full support of my Party, and it is absolutely inaccurate, absolutely dishonest for the Member for Naparima at this stage after all that has gone into the records of *Hansard* to come here and say that we are dishonouring a pledge entered into by the Party. Tell him for me, Mr. Speaker, when you see him again, that when the Members of Government want to keep faith with the Party, it is the Party that judges that; we don't want any assistance from the hon. Member for Naparima. Tell him I do not believe that he could spell the word 'honour.'



That is our decision, Sir. It is people like him who are responsible. There is no problem with the United States, no problem with the British Government; we just don't like what they say. We have our own views; we have not begun to do our research yet. We will. We are quite satisfied that we have a right, a responsibility to the people of Trinidad to intervene in this issue, and we are not going to stand up quietly, Mr. Speaker, and take any nonsense from anybody suggesting, it does not matter who he is, that the road for the future of this Government is the road of Colonialism which we are pledged to destroy. When we wish to decide who and when to go into the Federal Government, we do so. That is not their business. We have taken our line on the Federal Government; we will pursue it.

We are satisfied, Mr. Speaker, quite satisfied, that in presenting this Motion today, in attempting to give the Members of the Legislative Council as a whole some part in this great fundamental decision, we could have done it on the basis of the Government's statement. I could have made a statement answering the hon. Member for Caroni Central's question. You might have said we could not debate it. I wanted to give him an opportunity to speak. He made the greatest contribution today in saying, as I pointed out before, that if we were sure they would agree he would give us unanimous support. He knows that what we are saying is correct, and he knows perfectly well, too, that in the eyes of the public he cannot run away with that alibi; he knows they would tell him that is a lot of nonsense. The community is too politically conscious today. Would you tolerate the word "nonsense" in this context, Sir? That is a lot of nonsense. You have just got to come in and confirm that they would re-open the question and we are quite satisfied. The issue is political. We are quite satisfied that in taking this line, Sir, we not

only establish in the eyes of the world our true position but our outlook for the future. This has gone abroad, Sir.

We have a letter in our office from Hong Kong saying that the Hong Kong papers were full of Mr. Manley's attack on the British Government, and the letter stated, the American relations with the local population will not be improved by this development. We did not write the letter. It came to our office.

7.45 p.m. :

The eyes of the world are on this question. There is a lot of experience in the world on this problem of bases and the bullying of local people, and local people retaliating against this bullying. We are quite satisfied we have taken the line of dignity. We are quite satisfied, Mr. Speaker, that we have taken a line on which, let us say, this Nation can start to build foundations rooted in dignity, rooted in self-respect, and rooted in an understanding of its own problems which, however large they may loom on this small restricted local scene, are only an infinitesimal part of the larger international problem which faces the world.

On behalf of the entire Government, on behalf—if I may be allowed to introduce him, Sir, because I particularly asked him—on behalf of His Excellency the Governor to whom we explained the line we were going to take, in the name of the Party to which we belong I have the honour, especially in the light of this unseemly, disgraceful Opposition represented by the Member for Naparima, to move the Motion that stands in the name of the Government signifying the new, shall we say, the new dawn of this dignity of the new infant West Indian Nation.

Question put, and agreed to.