

MINISTRY PAPER NO. 36

Visit of the Prime Minister to the Netherlands Antilles,
Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago from August 14 - August 25,
1968

As Members of this Honourable House are aware, at the invitation of the several Governments I recently visited Curacao, Aruba, Surinam, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago.

2. I was accompanied by:-

The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs
The Personal Assistant to the Prime Minister
The Assistant Director of Information Services
The Prime Minister's Secretary.

The Netherlands Ambassador to Jamaica, His Excellency M.P. Gorsira and Mrs. Gorsira also accompanied me on the visit to the Netherlands Antilles.

3. I left Jamaica on the 14th of August and returned on the 25th of August. The days spent on the tour were allocated as follows :-

Curacao and Aruba	...	August 14 - August 18;
Surinam	...	August 19 - August 20;
Guyana	...	August 21 - August 22;
Trinidad & Tobago	...	August 23 - August 24.

APPENDIX I

An outline programme of the tour is attached at APPENDIX I.

4. During my visit I took the opportunity to discuss a wide range of subjects of mutual interest with my opposite numbers. The discussions included :-

NETHERLANDS ANTILLES
(Curacao and Aruba)

(i) CARIFTA

The Minister President of the Netherlands Antilles expressed keen interest in CARIFTA. Most of the foodstuffs and other consumer goods used in the Islands are imported and it is felt that the Netherlands Antilles could benefit from membership of CARIFTA. He also observed that the balance of trade between Jamaica and the Netherlands Antilles was very much in favour
/of the ...

of the Netherlands Antilles and suggested that an increase in trade between Jamaica and that country would be one way of reducing this gap.

I assured the Minister President that Jamaica would welcome the expansion of CARIFTA to include the Netherlands Antilles and that pending their accession to CARIFTA, Jamaica would explore areas in which there could be an increase in trade between the two countries.

(ii) Tourism

The Minister President expressed the view that there could be an increase in the traffic of tourists between Jamaica and the Netherlands Antilles, provided that Air service could be improved. I promised to examine this matter.

(iii) Visits to places of interest included the Curacao Water Distillation Plant and the Government's Postal Cheque and Clearing Service Department. Both these services could be of interest to Jamaica in the future, and I was glad of the opportunity to see them in operation.

SURINAM

(i) CARIFTA

Again I found that the Minister President of Surinam the Honourable J.A. Pengel, is deeply interested in CARIFTA and he expressed the hope that if Surinam should wish to apply for membership in the future she would be welcomed. I told the Minister President that Jamaica would welcome their participation.

(ii) Bauxite

The Minister President raised the question of the development of the Bauxite Industry from which most of Surinam's revenue was obtained. He suggested that there ought to be close cooperation between the bauxite producing countries in the region so as to ensure that there is some uniformity in the arrangements under which the Companies are granted licences to operate. I expressed agreement with this view and informed the Minister President that Jamaica was willing to begin an exchange of
/information ...

information with Surinam.

As a result of this agreement, a team of officials from Surinam visited Jamaica early in September and held discussions with officials in the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

(iii) I discussed the border dispute with Guyana and expressed Jamaica's concern and anxiety for peaceful settlement. I received the assurance of Minister President Pengel of a willingness to seek a mutually satisfactory settlement of the issue.

GUYANA

(i) Regional Development Bank

Prime Minister Burnham urged that Jamaica should reconsider her position regarding the proposed Regional Development Bank. I told the Prime Minister that Jamaica was giving the matter further consideration as requested by the CARIFTA Council of Ministers, and was joining other Finance Ministers from the region in discussions in London during the Commonwealth Finance Ministers' Meeting in September.

(ii) Trade

We discussed the vital necessity for an International Sugar Agreement and the implications involved if the Conference which was due to resume shortly failed. We also exchanged views on the role which Canada might play in the matter eventually.

I also raised with Prime Minister Burnham the necessity for cooperation between the Bauxite producing countries in the area and the need for close collaboration and exchange of scientific, technical and other information, in order to ensure that each country received maximum benefits from this natural resource and national asset.

The Prime Minister agreed that this was essential and promised to give this early attention.

/(iii) ...

- (iii) Guyana/Venezuela dispute
Guyana/Surinam dispute

I raised these matters with the Prime Minister and again expressed the hope that talks could be resumed in an effort to find peaceful solutions to both problems. I also informed him of correspondence which I had sent to President Leoni and the encouraging reply which I had received.

Prime Minister Burnham assured me that Guyana had no aggressive intentions and would do her share to try to preserve peace in this part of the hemisphere. He also assured me that his Government was willing to continue talks on both issues.

Prime Minister Burnham expressed Guyana's willingness and desire to participate in the Denuclearization Treaty for the Latin American region and discussed with me the difficulty which Guyana was experiencing in becoming a signatory to the Treaty.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

In Trinidad my discussions with the Prime Minister covered a wide range of subjects. The main topics were :-

- (i) CARIFTA;
- (ii) Jamaica's attitude to the Regional Development Bank;
- (iii) Regional Shipping Service;
- (iv) International Sugar Agreement;
- (v) Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference.

At the conclusion of our talks, the Press Release attached as APPENDIX II was issued.

APPENDIX II

5. Throughout my visit I emphasised that Jamaica was ready and willing to cooperate with the other Caribbean countries in many areas so long as it is kept clearly in mind that the question of a resurrection of political federation was not involved.

6. I am satisfied that my visit has helped to dispel any misunderstanding as to Jamaica's policy towards the other Commonwealth Caribbean Countries.

H.L. SHEARER
 Prime Minister and
 Minister of External Affairs.
 9th October, 1968.

NETHERLANDS ANTILLES

August 14-18

1. Informal discussions with His Excellency Dr. N. Debrot, Governor of the Netherlands Antilles.
2. Discussions with His Excellency C.D. Kroon, Minister President of the Netherlands Antilles, and Members of the Council of Ministers.
3. Discussions with the Lieutenant Governor of Curacao, Mr. C.R.A. Beaujon, and Members of the Administrative Council.
4. Reception given by His Excellency the Governor.
5. Visit to the Water Distillation Plant and discussions with the Manager and Chief Engineer.
6. Visit to the Girodienst (Clearing Department) and discussions with the Board of Management.
7. Visit to Aruba and discussions with the Lieutenant Governor, Mr. O.S. Henriques, and Members of the Administrative Council.

SURINAM

August 19-20

1. Informal discussions with His Excellency the Governor Dr. Ferrier.
2. Discussions with the Minister President the Honourable J.A. Pengel.
3. Discussions with Minister President Pengel and Cabinet.
4. Reception given by Minister President Pengel.
5. Visit to Suralco Aluminium Processing Plant and discussions during Lunch with the Management.

GUYANA

August 21-22

1. Civic Reception by the Lord Mayor of Georgetown - received Freedom of the City.
2. Discussions with Prime Minister Honourable Forbes Burnham and Members of his Cabinet.
3. Recording of Speech for Conference on Human Rights Year.
4. Reception by Jamaican residents in Guyana.
5. Reception given by Prime Minister Burnham.
6. Visit to McKenzie. Welcome given by the Christianburg-Wisman McKenzie Local Authority and Tour of Alumina Plant.
7. Tour of Dorabece Bauxite Mine and Kaiteur Falls.
8. Press Conference.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

August 23-24

1. Official call on the Governor General His Excellency Sir Solomon Hochoy.
2. Visit to the University of the West Indies at St. Augustine. Opportunity taken to meet Jamaican students.
3. Reception given by the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago the Honourable Dr. Eric Williams, in honour of the Jamaican Prime Minister.
4. State Banquet given by the Governor General of Trinidad and Tobago.
5. Laying of wreath at Cenotaph.
6. Discussions with the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago and Members of his Cabinet.
7. Luncheon with the Cabinet.
8. Press Conference.
9. Reception by the Jamaican High Commissioner.

NEWS RELEASE

25th August, 1968

The discussions lasted an hour and a half and covered a wide range of topics relating both to the Caribbean and to the world scene in general.

Mr. Shearer reiterated his support for regional co-operation as evidenced by Jamaica's accession to the CARIFTA Agreement. He also stated that the Jamaica Government had been giving careful study to the request to Jamaica to reconsider its decision on participation in the Regional Development Bank.

Both Prime Ministers agreed to give study to the question of the feasibility of a third ship for the Regional Shipping Service and to consider areas of cooperation between Air Jamaica and BWIA.

It was also agreed that the Report of the Committee of Officials of Commonwealth Caribbean Governments dealing with co-ordination in the field of external representation would get early attention.

With regard to Hemispheric questions, a very useful discussion was held on the Venezuela-Guyana boundary dispute as well as on the question of Jamaica's attitude towards membership in the Organization of American States.

They also discussed the wider world scene including the present situation in Czechoslovakia and there was a useful exchange of views on the forthcoming Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference.

In addition, both Prime Ministers expressed the view that the success of the shortly to be resumed Conference to work out an International Sugar Agreement was of vital importance not only to their two countries but also to the entire Commonwealth Caribbean.

The discussions were frank and unreserved and took place in an atmosphere of great cordiality.