

# FEDERATION, REFERENDUM AND PLANNING FOR INDEPENDENCE

## Co-operation call by Manley in Ministry Paper

The following Ministry Paper on the Referendum and Jamaica's Independence movement was laid on the table of the House of Representatives by the Hon. Norman Manley, Q.C., Premier.

The Ministry Paper is as follows:

"The Federation of the West Indies was formally commenced in 1958 and following elections in February of that year the West Indies Order in Council, 1957, came into full force and effect.

"In September/October, 1959, the Federal Government instituted a West Indies Inter-Governmental Conference with a view to providing for a revision of the Constitution of the Federation in order that the West Indies Federation made up of 10 Units as constituted by the West Indies (Federation) Order in Council, 1957, might become an independent nation.

"In the course of that Conference difficulties arose in respect of certain demands which the Jamaica Government with the approval of the House of Representatives had made in respect of matters which they would require to be provided for in the Constitution if Jamaica was to remain a member of the Federation.

"As a consequence of those difficulties representatives of the Jamaica Government met the Secretary of State for the Col-

onies in England in January, 1960, and secured agreement that if it should prove impossible for Jamaica to come to terms with the other members of the Federation as to the constitutional provisions which should take effect when the Federation achieved independence Jamaica would be free to withdraw from the Federation should she so desire.

### Referendum

"On the 31st May, 1960, the Jamaica Labour Party made an official announcement that they were in favour of Jamaica seceding from the Federation. The declaration of the Jamaica Labour Party stated "Jamaica, the West Indies and the world must understand that our decision that Jamaica should secede from the Federation of the West Indies is irrevocable."

"On the 1st June, 1960, the Premier on behalf of the Jamaica Government advised the House that it intended to provide for a Referendum to be held to decide the question whether Jamaica should continue in the Federation. The announcement referred to the fact that for 11 years both Parties had joined in all matters relating to Federation during which period it was right to assume that both Parties represented the voice of the people. The announcement went on to say:—

"Now that one Party, the Jamaica Labour Party, has officially resolved to oppose Federation it is right that the issue of Federation should, without the intervention of any other issue, come before the people for decision. It is right that those who believe in Federation should present a case for Federation to the people. It is right that those who do not believe in Federation should present a case against Federation to the people. It is right that the people should be asked to decide this great issue."

"Thereafter Law 53 of 1960 was enacted, being a Law to provide for the ascertainment by means of a referendum of the opinion of the people of Jamaica with respect to the continued participation of Jamaica in the Federation of the West Indies. This Law took effect on the 18th August, 1960, and provided that the elector should be asked to answer either "Yes" or "No" to the question "Should Jamaica remain in the Federation of the West Indies?"

### Negative answer

"In May/June, 1961, the West Indies Constitutional Conference was held and decisions were reached in regard to the Constitution of the West Indies which would have on achieving Independence, those decisions being subject, however, to the approval of the Unit Territories.

"Thereafter on September 19th the Referendum was held when the question "Should Jamaica remain in the Federation" was answered in the negative, the voting being for the negative 256,261, and for the affirmative 217,319. Thus the people decided in favour of Jamaica withdrawing from the Federation of the West Indies.

"Following on this result a delegation from the Jamaica Government consisting of the Premier, the Hon. N. W. Manley, the Minister of Education, the Hon. F. A. Glasspole, the Minister of Finance, the Hon. V. L. Arnett, with officials and advisers, was received by the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Right Hon. Iain Macleod, in London when a report was made on the results of the Referendum and arrangements concluded in respect of an orderly procedure whereby Jamaica might achieve Independence at the earliest possible time.

"The results of this Conference were announced in a statement made in London and Jamaica with the authority of Her Majesty's Government. The announcement is attached.

"Particular attention is called to the following salient points which are incorporated in that statement:—

- (a) that Her Majesty's Government accepted the result of the Referendum as a final indication of Jamaica's wishes;
- (b) that Her Majesty's Government would introduce legislation in Parliament to provide for Jamaica's withdrawal from the Federation as early as possible and that it is hoped that the passage of this legislation would be secured before the end of March, 1962;
- (c) that Her Majesty's Government was satisfied that Jamaica was fitted to sustain the role of a separate independent state and if Jamaica so desired was willing to seek the concurrence of the other Commonwealth countries to Jamaica becoming an independent member of the Commonwealth;

### January or February

- (d) that if Jamaica was ready with proposals for a new Constitution to take effect on the achievement of Independence, an Independence Conference between Her Majesty's Government and a delegation from the Jamaica Parliament would

be held in January or February, 1962, when the form of the Constitution would be settled and the date for Independence would be fixed. An assurance was given that the Independence date would be the earliest date in 1962 which was practicable having regard to the legal and other arrangements which would have to be made before the introduction of the new Constitution.

"After the Referendum took place the Jamaica Government gave an assurance that in regard to the Constitution which Jamaica would have on achieving Independence and other matters essential to be dealt with on a national basis before Independence there would be the fullest consultation with Parliament in Jamaica.

"It is proposed to ask the Honourable House of Representatives to establish a Committee of the House of Representatives for the purpose of preparing proposals for a Constitution for Jamaica and in due course a Resolution will be moved inviting the House to establish a Committee consisting of 11 persons of whom five would be named by the Government and five by the Opposition. It will be proposed that in addition to these persons the Premier of Jamaica shall be Chairman of the Committee.

"The Leader of the Legislative Council has been requested by the Government to invite the Legislative Council to establish a Committee of five persons to consider proposals for a Constitution for Jamaica on Jamaica achieving Independence. It is intended that there should be joint consultations between the Committee appointed by the House of Representatives and the Committee appointed by the Legislative Council with a view to ensuring that as far as possible all proposals in regard to the new Constitution shall be unanimously agreed on by both branches of our Legislature.

"It is the earnest wish of Government that all matters which now requires to be done on a joint and national basis before Jamaica achieves Independence will be done in a spirit of co-operation with a view to our country achieving Independence at the earliest possible date in 1962. It has not been in the best interests of Jamaica that differences of opinion should have divided the country as to the form of our future in Independence. Now that this issue has been decided by the vote and voice of the people themselves it is supremely in the interests of the country that we should achieve Independence with complete unity in regard to our future as a nation so that we may start on the arduous and challenging tasks that are ahead of us united as a people on the road on which we must now journey together."