



Seventeenth session

INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES: SUMMARIES OF  
INFORMATION TRANSMITTED UNDER ARTICLE 73 e OF THE CHARTER OF  
THE UNITED NATIONS

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

CARIBBEAN AND WESTERN ATLANTIC TERRITORIES

Turks and Caicos Islands

In accordance with the statement of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on 27 September 1961, the Government of the United Kingdom has transmitted to the Secretary-General the following political and constitutional information on the Territory of the Turks and Caicos Islands.

This information, which was received on 19 April 1962, is herewith submitted to the General Assembly at its seventeenth session.<sup>1/</sup>

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<sup>1/</sup> In accordance with General Assembly resolution 1700 (XVI) of 19 December 1961, this information is also submitted to the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories.

## TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS

### POPULATION

The population of the 1960 census was 5,985, most of whom are of African or mixed descent.

### GENERAL

The Turks and Caicos Islands were formerly a dependency of Jamaica. They were administered by a Legislative Board with an elected majority which had full legislative and budgetary powers, subject to the assent of the Governor. Laws of the Jamaica Legislature were applicable to the Islands but only when it was expressly so stated.

In 1959, a new Constitution was introduced under which the Islands ceased to be a dependency of Jamaica or to have any formal link with its Government except through the Governor of Jamaica, who is also Governor of the Turks and Caicos Islands. The Legislative Board was replaced by executive and legislative councils, and a general election under universal adult suffrage was held in the same year.

### THE CONSTITUTION

The Governor of Jamaica is ex-officio Governor of the Territory. The day-to-day administration is in the hands of the Administrator (at present Mr. G.C. Guy). In the exercise of his powers, he is obliged to the Executive Council on all important matters.

### EXECUTIVE

The main executive authority in the Islands is the Executive Council, consisting of two elected members elected by the nominated and elected members of the Legislative Assembly from among the Assembly's elected members, one nominated member appointed by the Governor, two official members and the Administrator.

## LEGISLATURE

The Legislative Assembly consists of 9 members elected by universal adult suffrage, 3 nominated members appointed by the Governor, 2 official members and the Administrator. All the members sit as independent members. Elections are held every 3 years. The Assembly has power to legislate on all the Island's affairs, subject to the Governor's assent. Legislation is normally examined in Jamaica before its introduction, but in practice the process of examination and approval is a formality. Jamaica legislation may also be applied to the Islands at the request of the Government of the Territory.

## JUDICIARY

In a reform of the administration of justice in 1957 a Stipendiary Magistrate was appointed. There are three courts in the islands: the Grand Court, the Quarterly Petty Court and the Petty Sessions Court. The Magistrate has taken over a greater part of the summary work of the Petty Courts and Petty Sessions Courts from the justices of the peace and, in the absence of appointment of a judge on the islands, the Magistrate has jurisdiction as judge of the Grand Court except in cases of capital offences.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The administration of local government is in the hands of the justices of the peace and vestrymen, who have from the beginnings of administration in the islands played an important part. Owing to the small population and its dispersion over at least three islands there is no demand for an elected system of local government. Nevertheless, the administration is seeking to encourage such a development.

## THE FUTURE

Geographically the Islands are part of the Bahamas with which most of their inhabitants have family connexions and they are remote from the other Territories which constitute the Federation of The West Indies. Following Jamaica's decision to withdraw from the Federation, the Turks and Caicos Islands indicated that they would not be prepared to participate in any successor federation which

might be formed from among Territories in the Eastern Caribbean. The Islanders are still discussing whether their future should lie in forging closer links with the Bahamas, with Jamaica or with the United Kingdom, and no decision has yet been reached.

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