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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

Trinidad and Tobago

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 Trinidad and Tobago.

This information, which was received on 20 April 1962, is herewith submitted to the General Assembly at its seventeenth session.^{1/}

^{1/} 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.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

POPULATION

The population is at present estimated to be about 850,000. A percentage distribution by racial origin at the 1946 census gave the following break-down:

	(per cent)
African	47
East Indian	35
Coloured	14
European	3
Chinese	1

GENERAL

The Territory of Trinidad and Tobago has had elections on a basis of universal adult suffrage since 1946, and a majority of elected members in the Executive Council and a ministerial system of government since 1950. In 1956, a new Constitution was introduced under which the number of ministers was increased from 5 to 8 and the office of Chief Minister was created. The Chief Minister was elected by the Legislative Council to be the Leader of the Government in both the Executive and Legislative Councils. The Executive Council consisted of the Chief Minister, 7 other ministers elected by the Legislative Council, 2 ex-officio members (Colonial Secretary and Attorney General) and the Governor as chairman. The Legislative Council consisted of 24 elected members, 5 nominated unofficials and the same 2 ex-officio members as sat on the Executive Council. In July 1959, a new Constitution was introduced providing that instead of the Chief Minister being elected by the Legislative Council, the Governor should call upon the leader of the majority party to form a government. At the same time, the title of Chief Minister was changed to that of Premier, and the two ex-officio members of the Executive Council were no longer entitled to vote in that body. A select committee of the Legislative Council was appointed to consider further measures of constitutional advance, and after discussions with the British Government, the present Constitution was introduced in late 1961. This Constitution established full internal self-government.

Trinidad became a member of the Federation of The West Indies on its inception in 1957 and in the following year its capital, Port-of-Spain, became also the federal capital. The Trinidad Government pressed throughout the history of the Federation for a closer association between its members. Following Jamaica's decision to withdraw from the Federation, a Special Convention of the People's National Movement adopted in January 1961 a resolution calling on the Trinidad Government to seek separate independence for Trinidad while maintaining links with other members of the Federation. The Trinidad Government has adopted the terms of the resolution as its policy. It is expected that Trinidad will become independent in the near future.

THE CONSTITUTION

The Governor

The present Governor (Sir Solomon Hochoy) is a Trinidadian. Although he is appointed by Her Majesty the Queen on the advice of the British Government, there is an understanding that the Colonial Secretary will informally consult the Premier before the Governor's appointment. He is virtually a "constitutional monarch", being obliged to act in accordance with his Cabinet's advice. He is not himself a member of the Cabinet, although he has access to Cabinet papers and is informed by the Premier of Cabinet decisions.

The Executive

Executive authority is vested in the Cabinet which consists of the Premier and not less than eleven other ministers, appointed on his advice, who are collectively responsible to the Legislature. Nine members of the present Cabinet, including the Premier and Minister of External Affairs, Dr. Williams, are members of the House of Representatives (the Lower House) and three are members of the Senate (the Upper House). There are also seven parliamentary secretaries. The Cabinet controls all aspects of the internal affairs of Trinidad, the British Government retaining responsibility only for certain aspects of defence and external affairs. The present ministers are:

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Dr. Eric Williams (Premier and Minister for External Affairs)
Dr. P.V.J. Solomon (Deputy Premier and Minister for Home Affairs)
Mr. D.C. Granabo (Minister for Health and Housing)
Mr. J. O'Halloran (Minister for Agriculture, Industry and Commerce)
Mr. G. Montano (Minister of Works)
Mr. K. Mohammed (Minister for Public Utilities)
Mr. R.E. Wallace (Minister of Labour)
Mr. A.N.R. Robinson (Minister of Finance)
Mr. S. Mohammed (Minister for Local Government and Community Development)
Senator Pierre (Minister for Education and Leader of the Senate)
Senator G. Richards (Attorney-General)
Senator W.J. Alexander (Minister without Portfolio)

Legislature

The Legislature is bi-cameral and consists of the House of Representatives (the Lower House) and the Senate (the Upper House). The House consists of thirty members elected by universal adult suffrage in single member constituencies. At present, 20 members belong to the People's National Movement and 10 to the Democratic Labour Party. Elections must be held at intervals of not more than five years. The Senate has 21 members, 12 appointed by the Governor on the Premier's advice, 2 on the advice of the Leader of the Opposition and 7 after consultation with persons representing special interests. The Legislature legislates on all internal matters and on some matters concerning external affairs and defence. The Senate may delay bills passed by the House for not more than one year or two consecutive sessions of Parliament, except for money bills which it has no power to delay. The Governor's right to refuse assent to legislation, which in practice is most unlikely to be used, is limited to legislation affecting the British Government's international obligations, the rights of Trinidad Government stockholders, the royal prerogative and laws inconsistent with the Constitution.

Judiciary

There is a Supreme Court consisting of the Chief Justice and such number of judges as may be prescribed by the Legislature. All except two of the present

Judges are of West Indian, though not all of Trinidadian, origin. In criminal cases, a judge of the Supreme Court sits with a jury of 12 and in other cases with a jury of 9. Final appeals may be made from the Supreme Court to the Privy Council in the United Kingdom.

There are three types of inferior courts - magistrates courts, petty civil courts and coroners courts - all of which are courts of summary jurisdiction. Justice in these courts is administered by the Chief Magistrate and 18 stipendiary magistrates who function in the 7 magisterial districts into which the country is divided.

PARTICIPATION OF LOCAL INHABITANTS IN ADMINISTRATION

There were 9,712 officers employed in the Trinidad Public Service at the end of 1960. Of the 457 employed in the higher levels, only 97 were recruited from overseas. Of this number, 82 were pensionable and 15 were non-pensionable.
