



Eighteenth session

INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES

POLITICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION ON
AFRICAN AND ADJACENT TERRITORIES UNDER
UNITED KINGDOM ADMINISTRATION

Note by the Secretary-General

ST. HELENA

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 St. Helena.

This information, which was received on 1 March 1963, is herewith submitted to the General Assembly at its eighteenth 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.

ST. HELENA

POPULATION

1. St. Helena covers an area of 47 square miles and had an estimated population of 4,578 at 30 June 1961, St. Helena was uninhabited when discovered and there is thus no truly indigenous population.

CONSTITUTION

2. The present Constitution dates from 1956, and provides for a Governor, an Executive Council and an Advisory Council. Prior to 1956, the Executive Council consisted of civil servants and the Advisory Council consisted of six non-official members appointed by the Governor. Under the 1956 Constitution, the Executive Council was expanded to include up to three non-official members and the Advisory Council to include up to eight non-official members. The 1956 Constitution was amended in October 1962, to provide, after elections in the near future, for the Advisory Council to consist of twelve unofficial members of whom eight would be elected. Elections will be on a basis of single member constituencies and universal adult suffrage.

3. The main features of the present Constitution are as follows:

Governor

4. The Governor (at present Sir John Field) is head of the administration of the Territory. In the exercise of his powers he is advised by an Executive Council, and normally acts in accordance with the advice he receives from it.

Executive Council

5. The Executive Council consists of three civil servants and three non-official members, who are local residents. The present members of the Executive Council, under the chairmanship of the Governor, are as follows:

Mr. E. J. Moss

Mr. H. J. Corker

Mr. J. A. Thorpe

Mr. B. J. Weston (Government Secretary)

Mr. J. O. Talbot-Phibbs (Colonial Treasurer)

Mr. R. B. Johnson (Agriculture and Forestry Officer)

Advisory Council

6. The Governor alone passes laws for the government of the Territory, but submits the drafts of all laws for the consideration of the Advisory Council before enactment. Until after the elections the Advisory Council will comprise seven to ten members, of whom five represent the five districts of the island, and two represent the Friendly Societies (which play an important part in the life of St. Helena). After the elections eight out of twelve unofficial members will be elected. Hitherto all members of the Council have been appointed by the Governor after consultation with the various district associations and Friendly Societies.

7. The present members of the Advisory Council are:

Mr. E. J. Moss
Mr. H. J. Corker
Mr. J. A. Thorpe
Mr. D. H. Thorpe
Mr. K. W. Joshua
Mr. O. N. Duncan
Mr. T. C. Mairwaring
Mr. F. C. Graham

JUDICIARY

8. The Supreme Court of St. Helena has full criminal and civil jurisdiction and deals with cases according to English procedure as far as local circumstances permit. The trial of a person is by a jury of eight. Appeal under certain circumstances lies to the Privy Council. In view of the small number of cases, the Governor acts as Chief Justice; when cases occur which are unsuitable to be heard by the Governor in his capacity as Chief Justice, a judge from outside the Territory is appointed Chief Justice as a temporary measure. There is also a Magistrates' Court, which may be presided over by the Magistrate (who is the Government Secretary) or by any two justices of the peace. In addition, there is a Small Debts Court and a Juvenile Court.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

9. Certain welfare and municipal services in Jamestown (such as control of markets and street lighting) are administered by a local board.
