



Eighteenth session

INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES

POLITICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION ON
CARIBBEAN AND WESTERN ATLANTIC TERRITORIES
UNDER UNITED KINGDOM ADMINISTRATION

Note by the Secretary-General

DOMINICA, GRENADA, ST. LUCIA AND ST. VINCENT

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 Territories of Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia and St. Vincent.

This information, which was received on 11 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.

DOMINICA, GRENADA, ST. LUCIA AND ST. VINCENT

POPULATION

1. The population of the four Territories at the last census in 1960 was as follows:

Dominica	59,916
Grenada	88,677
St. Lucia	88,108
St. Vincent	80,042

The inhabitants are predominantly of African descent.

CONSTITUTIONS

2. Until 1960, the head of the administrations of these Territories was the Governor of the Windward Islands. New Constitutions incorporating a ministerial system came into force for the first time in all these Territories in 1956. The main features were as follows:

(a) The Executive Council was recognized as the principal instrument of policy and the Governor and the Administrator were required normally to accept its advice.

(b) The number of elected members in the Executive Council was increased from 3 to 4. There were in addition 3 ex officio members, one nominated member, one member being a person holding a public office in the Territory styled the "official member", and the Administrator. It was left to the discretion of the Council whether to include the official member; if included he was to have no vote. The Administrator or the Governor presided. When the Governor presided, the Administrator had no vote. Elected members thus had a voting majority on the Executive Council for the first time.

(c) Provision was made for three ministers: for trade and production, communications and works, and social services.

(d) The Legislative Council was composed of 8 elected members, 2 ex officio members, 3 nominated members and the Administrator. Election of members was based on universal adult suffrage.

3. The accession of these Territories to The West Indies in 1958 led to a desire for further constitutional advance, and conferences were held in March and June 1959 in Trinidad and London respectively. As a result, the present Constitutions came into effect on 1 January 1960. The dissolution of The West Indies on 31 May 1962 did not affect the Constitutions of these four Territories, except that functions formerly performed by the federation reverted to the Territories.

4. The main features of the present Constitutions are as follows:

Administrator

5. The post of Governor of the Windward Islands was abolished when the new Constitutions were introduced. The Administrator of each of the four Territories is the head of the administration of the Territory concerned. The present Administrators are:

Dominica	-	Lt. Col. Alec Lovelace
Grenada	-	Mr. L.A. Pinard
St. Lucia	-	Mr. G.J. Bryan
St. Vincent	-	Mr. S.H. Graham

6. The Administrators are constitutionally required to act on the advice of their ministers, except where they are required to act on the advice of some other authority (e.g., the Public Service Commission) or in certain limited cases requiring special procedures such as the maintenance of law and order, as to which see below.

Executive Council

7. The Executive Council in each Territory is responsible for the general direction and control of government. In each Council there are 5 ministers, the Chief Minister and four others (one being without portfolio) who are appointed on his advice. There is also one ex officio member (the principal law officer), and the Administrator presides. All ministers except the minister without

portfolio are appointed from among the elected members of the Legislative Council. The minister without portfolio may be selected from either the elected or the nominated members of the Council. The present members of the Executive Council are as follows:

Dominica:

The Administrator
The Attorney General ... Mr. N.A. Berridge
Mr. E.O. Le Blanc Chief Minister
Mr. N.A.N. Ducreay Minister of Trade and Production
Mr. L.C. Didier ... Minister of Communications and Works
Mr. W.S. Stevens ... Minister of Labour and Social Services
Mr. R.P. St. Luce ... Minister without Portfolio

Grenada:

The Administrator
The Attorney General ... Mr. E.A. Heyliger
Mr. H.A. Blaize ... Chief Minister
Mr. R.M. Bholá ... Minister of Trade and Protection
Mr. M.C.E. Welsh ... Minister of Social Affairs
Mr. W.E. Copland ... Minister of Communications and Works
Mr. L.A. Purcell ... Minister without Portfolio

St. Lucia:

The Administrator
The Crown Attorney ... Mr. W.L. Macintyre
Mr. G.F.L. Charles ... Chief Minister
Mr. H. Collymore ... Minister of Trade and Industry
Mr. M.J. Baptiste ... Minister of Communications and Works
Mr. J.A. Bousquet ... Minister of Labour and Social Affairs
Mr. G. Mason ... Minister without Portfolio

St. Vincent:

The Administrator
The Attorney General ... Mr. B.F. Dias
Mr. E.T. Joshua ... Chief Minister and Minister for Local Government
Mr. A.C.G. Allen ... Minister of Trade and Production

Mr. C.L. Tannis ... Minister of Communications, Works and Labour
Mr. S.C. Slater ... Minister of Social Services
Mrs. I.I. Joshua ... Minister without Portfolio

Legislative Council

8. The Legislative Councils consist of 10 elected members each in Grenada and St. Lucia, 9 elected members in St. Vincent and 11 elected members in Dominica. Each Council has in addition one ex officio member (the principal law officer) and 2 nominated members appointed by the Administrator. The Legislative Council is presided over by a Speaker elected by the Council either from within or without its own membership and having only a casting vote.
9. The maximum life of each Legislative Council is five years. Elections are in single-member constituencies and by universal adult suffrage.

JUDICIARY

10. A Supreme Court and a Court of Appeal for the Leeward and Windward Islands (and for the Virgin Islands) were established by an Order in Council in 1939. Fresh provision regarding these Courts was made by an Order in Council of 1959, which also provided for the establishment of a Judicial and Legal Service Commission composed of the Chief Justice of the Joint Supreme Court of the Leeward and Windward Islands, a Federal justice, a judge or ex-judge of a Supreme Court of any part of Her Majesty's Dominions, and the chairman of two of the advisory Public Service Commissions in the Territories served. Judges of the Supreme Court (other than the Chief Justice) were appointed by the Governor-General of the West Indies on the recommendation of the Commission, and the Chief Justice was appointed by the Governor-General after consultation with the Federal Chief Justice. Some changes were necessary following the dissolution of the Federation of the West Indies. A Justice of Appeal of the British Caribbean Court of Appeal replaced the Federal Justice on the Judicial and Legal Service Commission; and judges are now appointed by the Commission with the approval of a Secretary of State, except the Chief Justice who is appointed by a Secretary of State. Judges are removed from office only if the Judicial Committee of the

Privy Council advises removal for inability or misbehaviour. The Judicial and Legal Service Commission advises the Administrators on the appointment, dismissal, etc., of magistrates, registrars and law officers. The expenses of the Joint Court (including the emoluments of judges) and of the Commissions are borne by the eight Territories in proportions specified in the relevant Order in Council of 1959, and the sums required to meet these expenses are charged on the revenue of each Territory by the Order in Council. The Chief Justice and all the puisne judges are West Indian.

PARTICIPATION OF LOCAL INHABITANTS IN GOVERNMENT

11. The Chief Ministers and other ministers, and all elected members of the legislative councils, are local inhabitants. In addition, the Administrators of Grenada and St. Vincent are West Indian.

ELECTORAL SYSTEM

12. As stated above, elections are in single-member constituencies and by universal adult suffrage.

POLITICAL PARTIES

13. The main political parties are as follows:

Dominica:

Dominican Labour Party (Government)

Dominican United Peoples Party (Opposition)

Grenada:

Grenada National Party (Government)

Grenada United Labour Party (Opposition)

St. Lucia:

St. Lucia Labour Party (Government)

National Labour Movement)
Peoples Progressive Party) (Opposition)

St. Vincent:

Peoples Political Party (Government)

St. Vincent Labour Party (Opposition)

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

14. In Dominica the last general elections were held in January 1961, when the Dominican Labour Party defeated the Dominican United Peoples Party by 7 seats to 4.
 15. In St. Lucia the last general elections were in April 1961, when the St. Lucia Labour Party retained control of the Government, winning 9 out of the 10 seats. Following the general elections, however, there was a split in the party and the Government now have only a narrow majority among the elected members of the Legislative Council. The splinter group have formed a new party (the National Labour Movement) which at present tends to work with the Peoples Progressive Party.
 16. In St. Vincent, the last general elections were held in April 1961, when the Peoples Political Party retained control of the Government, winning 6 seats to the 3 won by the St. Vincent Labour Party. In November 1961, one member of the Government resigned and crossed the floor of the House, thus reducing the Government's majority from 6-3 to 5-4.
 17. In Grenada, general elections were held in March 1961, when the Grenada United Labour Party, led by Mr. Gairy, defeated the Grenada National Party by 8 seats to 2. Mr. Gairy's party thereupon assumed office, although he himself could not stand for election to the Legislative Council at the time since he had been disqualified for five years, from December 1957, because of an electoral offence committed during the 1957 general elections. The new Legislative Council passed an Ordinance in July 1961 which substituted a disqualification of only three years for the offence of which Mr. Gairy had been found guilty. Mr. Gairy was elected to the Legislative Council, and became Chief Minister and Minister of Finance, in August 1961.
 18. In February 1962, because of suspicions of financial irregularities, the Administrator, with the approval of the Secretary of State for the Colonies and of the then Federal Government, appointed a Commission of Enquiry into the control of public expenditure in the Territory during 1961 and thereafter. The Commission was presided over by a West Indian judge.
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19. It reached the following general conclusions:

(a) The Minister of Finance had disregarded and contravened the laws and regulations governing the control of expenditure.

(b) Expenditure had been incurred wastefully or unnecessarily through failure by ministers to seek or refusal to accept the advice of the civil servants.

(c) The Executive had deliberately destroyed the morale of the civil service by an undesirable interference with administrative duties and by improper threats against the security of office.

(d) The civil service had been induced by this interference and these threats to commit or condone improprieties or irregularities in the expenditure of public funds.

20. The Secretary of State for the Colonies decided that he could not allow ministers to remain in office whose exercise of their public responsibilities had been the subject of such grave criticisms on the part of a Commission of Enquiry. Under the Constitution there was, however, no means by which the Government could be immediately dismissed from office; the Legislative Council could have been dissolved and a general election announced, but it might not have been practicable to hold fresh general elections before the elapse of between two and three months; and the Government would, of course, have remained in office until the results of the general election were known. On 18 June 1962, the Secretary of State therefore temporarily suspended those provisions of the Constitution relating to the Executive and Legislative Councils. After a period of direct rule by the Administrator, the suspended provisions of the Constitution were restored and fresh general elections held on 13 September. At that time a few modifications were made to the constitutional provisions in order to provide the Administrator with more effective powers to deal with any similar situation which might arise in the future (e.g., the Administrator was empowered in his discretion to appoint an official as Minister of Finance). As a result of the general elections, the Grenada National Party were restored to power, gaining 6 out of the 10 elected seats, the remaining 4 being won by the Grenada United Labour Party. The leader of the Grenada National Party (Mr. Blaize) was appointed

Chief Minister and, upon his giving satisfactory assurances to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Minister of Finance.

21. The political development which has most dominated the scene in all of the Windward Islands during the past year has been the question of their constitutional future. The decision of Jamaica and Trinidad to withdraw from the earlier Federation of the West Indies and to proceed to independence alone led to the dissolution of the Federation on 31 May 1962. The Governments of the remaining eight Territories of the original federation (Barbados, the Windward Islands and the Leeward Islands, excluding the Virgin Islands) announced their desire to continue together in a new federation. Following two local conferences, a conference was held in London in May 1962 under the chairmanship of the Secretary of State for the Colonies.^{1/} This conference prepared broad proposals for a new federation which were ad referendum the legislatures of the Territories concerned. During the visit of the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the West Indies in December 1962-January 1963, representatives of these Governments publicly reaffirmed their desire to go forward to a new federation and it is expected that a further conference will be held in London in June 1963 to draw up final plans.

22. Meanwhile, the Grenada National Party, which won the last general elections in Grenada, is publicly committed to a policy of union with Trinidad and Tobago as an alternative to joining the new federation. In December 1962, the Chief Minister of Grenada had exploratory discussions with the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, and it is understood that the proposals are now being studied in greater detail by local experts. It is not possible at this stage to anticipate the final outcome; but the remaining seven Territories have indicated that they would wish to go ahead with their plans for setting up a new federation even without the participation of Grenada.

^{1/} United Kingdom: East Caribbean Federation Conference. Report. Cmnd. 1746.