



SIR HAROLD ALLAN in serious conversation with Rt. Hon. James Griffiths, Secretary of State for the Colonies, at the House of Commons.

BRITAIN AND JAMAICA

Answers To Questions by Sir Harold Allan

COLONIAL visitors to the Festival of Britain, as delegates invited by His Majesty's Government, sought the opportunity in a meeting with the Secretary of State for the Colonies, to put forward measures in the interest of their respective territories.

The following is a list of questions put forward by the Hon. Sir Harold Allan, O.B.E., in the interest of Jamaica and the West Indies and the written replies by Mr. James Griffiths.

A full discussion followed the answers to the many questions by delegates. Subsidiary questions were permitted.

QUESTION:

In view of the value of the Cigar Industry to Jamaica's economy, will His Majesty's Government consider a review of the proposed agreement with Cuba in regard to the importation of cigars? Is the agreement finalised? Were the proposals considered as part of the negotiations on the G.A.T.T. at Torquay? Is the G.A.T.T. ratified by the various Governments, concerned?

ANSWER:

His Majesty's Government have been informed of the views of Jamaican cigar producers through the Government of Jamaica, through the visit of the Secretary for Overseas Trade to the British West Indies and through the Jamaican deputation which recently came to London. His

Majesty's Government have taken those views fully into account.

Negotiations between the United Kingdom and Cuba are proceeding but final agreement has not yet been announced. The proposals were not part of the negotiations on G.A.T.T. at Torquay. G.A.T.T. has not been accepted definitively either by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom or by the Government of Cuba, but Governments are applying the agreement provisionally under the Protocol of Provisional Application.

QUESTION:

Will His Majesty's Government be prepared to consider the re-establishment of the West India Regiment for obvious reasons?

In view of its potential and strategic value will His Majesty's Government consider establishing factories or assembly plants in the West Indies for producing war equipment?

ANSWER:

As regards the first part of this question, His Majesty's Government have for some time been considering the possibility of establishing a second local full-time battalion in the West Indies. Preliminary discussions have been held with the Departments concerned in London and I am now on the point of consulting with the local Governments. As the House of Commons was told on Wednesday last, that is all that can be said pending local consultations.

As regards the second part of this question, His Majesty's Government are anxious, as has been stated in Parliament, to help the development

of industry in the West Indies as elsewhere in the Colonies and have had the question of production for rearmament in the Colonies examined. The conclusion reached was that because of shortages of machine tools and raw materials possibilities of production specifically to meet the needs of rearmament are slight. But His Majesty's Government are ready to consider any practicable proposals that may be put forward.

NOTE (by Sir Harold): This is very urgent. Raw materials come across the Atlantic to U.K. why not to Jamaica from U.S. and so on? Military uniforms and hundreds of thousands of small articles could be made.

QUESTION:

In view of the grave unemployment situation in Jamaica will His Majesty's Government consider measures which will facilitate the employment of Jamaicans in the United Kingdom by industrial Corporations or other bodies, or by individual employers of labour who desire to import Jamaican labour?

ANSWER:

There is no restriction on the entry of British subjects into Great Britain and if employers desire to bring workers from the Colonies His Majesty's Government would consider in what way they could assist. I fear, however, that it would be wrong to allow the impression to grow up that it is easy for large numbers of workers from abroad to be absorbed into employment in this country.

The main reason for this is that although there is little unemployment in Great Britain today, there is a serious shortage of housing accommodation, particularly in those centres where most work is available. It is also naturally more difficult for workers from abroad to find employment in this country than for those who have grown up here, although the resources of the Ministry of Labour are put freely at the disposal of all British subjects seeking employment in this country, whether they are from the United Kingdom or the Colonies.