



OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO, W.I.
PUBLIC RELATIONS DIVISION

PRESS RELEASE

Whitehall,
Maraval Road,
Port-of-Spain.
Telephone : 23141

No.106

✓
11th April, 1962.

Radio-TV
Radio-G ✓
Guardian 17/4-18/4
Even News
Nation 18/4
(Daily Post List)

The Secretary to the Cabinet has issued invitations to representatives of organizations and citizens who submitted comments on the Draft Trinidad and Tobago (Constitution) Order in Council, 1962, to a meeting to be held at Queen's Hall, Port of Spain, on Wednesday, April 25, 1962, at 9.30 a.m. and continuing on Thursday, April 26, and Friday, April 27.

Each organization is to be represented by two persons.

Credentials will be furnished to representatives of organizations and to citizens accepting the invitation so that they will be able to secure admittance to the meeting.

Copies of all memoranda received have been despatched with the invitations and the summary of memoranda will be sent as soon as possible.



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No. 111

E-kew of news
17th April, 1962,
Guardian 19/4
Nation 19/4
Radio T.V.
Radio 4

The Premier will preside over the meeting of citizens and representatives of organisations on the Draft Trinidad and Tobago Independence Constitution to be held at Queen's Hall, Port of Spain, on Wednesday, April 25, Thursday, April 26 and Friday, April 27.

Cabinet Ministers and the Constitutional Adviser to the Cabinet will be in attendance. There will be no public opening. The discussions will be held in private and the meeting will be open only to persons who have been invited to attend either as citizens who sent in memoranda or as representatives named by organisations which did so.

Admission tickets, which are not transferable, will be sent in the names of the citizens and representatives of organisations which replied to the invitation of the Secretary to the Cabinet. These will ensure their admittance to Queen's Hall on Wednesday. On Wednesday and on Thursday evening they will be handed tickets which will give them entry on Thursday and Friday respectively.

Citizens are expected to be at Queen's Hall by 9.15 a.m. each day to enable the meeting to begin at 9.30 o'clock.

Hours of sessions will be as follows:

Wednesday: 9.30 a.m. to 12 noon; and
2.30 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Thursday and Friday: 9.30 a.m. to 12 noon; and
2.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.

On Wednesday at 6.30 p.m. the Cabinet will be hosts to a cocktail party at Queen's Hall for the persons attending the meeting.



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Whitehall,
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As per Whitehall

25th April, 1962.

*Notion 26/4
Guardian 26/4
Radio T.V.
Radio 26/4*

No. 121

The meeting convened by the Government of Citizens and Organizations who submitted memoranda on the Draft Trinidad and Tobago Independence Constitution to discuss their views opened shortly after 9.30 o'clock this morning (April 25, 1962) at Queen's Hall under the chairmanship of the Premier of Trinidad and Tobago.

The text of the Premier's opening remarks of welcome is attached.

Shortly after the meeting began the two representatives of the African National Congress left the meeting on the grounds that the Press and Radio should have been admitted and that the Rules of Procedure automatically ruled them out of the discussions. The Chairman explained that it was a private meeting but that a release would be made at the end of the day's proceedings.

When the Chairman called upon the Constitutional Adviser to give a general outline of the proposed Constitution, Mr. A.S. Sinanan of the D.L.P. interrupted claiming that a steering committee should have been appointed to prepare an agenda. He persisted in retaining the floor in spite of the Chairman's repeated requests that he sit down and allow the meeting to proceed.

The Chairman explained that the terms of reference of the meeting, the procedure for selection of delegates and the presentation of credentials had been clearly stated. He therefore invited all those who were dissatisfied, who, in other words, had accepted the invitation under false pretences, kindly to leave.

Later, when the Attorney General, at the invitation of the Chairman, was proceeding to make an introductory statement on Chapter I (Citizenship), he was interrupted by Mr. Sinanan and Dr. R. Capildeo who later left the meeting along with the representatives of the Indian Association and of the Association of County Councils.

There were forty-four speakers before the meeting adjourned for lunch after completing consideration of Chapter I. The emphasis in the overwhelming number of speeches was on the question of dual citizenship. The view expressed that persons who had resided in the Territory

/ for a long

for a long time ought to be allowed to retain their original citizenship and not be put to their election whether they should continue to be citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies even though they became registered as Citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. Alternatively, it was suggested that if this view was rejected, the time for election should not be as short as two years.

The contrary view was also expressed that persons who had lived in the Territory for a long time and came to love it ought not to find it difficult to elect to give up their ^{former} citizenship for the Citizenship of Trinidad and Tobago. In summing up the discussion, the Attorney-General gave the assurance that all the views expressed would receive consideration.

On the resumption at 2.30 p.m. the meeting proceeded to the consideration of Chapter II - Fundamental Rights and Freedoms of the Individual. The Constitutional Adviser gave a full explanation of the provisions in the light of the comments submitted and on the position existing under the present Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago.

He was followed by the representatives of the Law Society and of the Bar Council and eighteen other representatives of organisations and individuals spoke before the Constitutional Adviser wound up the discussion. There was a divergence of views as to the relative merits of the Fundamental Rights and Freedoms of the Individual as contained in the Draft Independence Constitution and of the Canadian Bill of Rights.

A suggestion was put forward of enlisting the aid of a committee of lawyers to arrive at a satisfactory re-draft of the provisions for Fundamental Rights and Freedoms. The Chairman, however, explained that he and his Ministerial colleagues were loth to trespass on the privileges of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament which would consider the Draft Independence Constitution. He pointed out that the Government had not yet taken any stand on the Draft but had merely published it for comment. In thanking the meeting for their

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wonderful patience and valuable guidance he gave the assurance that the sense of the meeting would be reported to the Joint Select Committee.

The meeting adjourned shortly after 6.30 p.m. until tomorrow morning at 9.30 o'clock. It is planned at tomorrow's sitting to complete consideration of Chapter III (Governor General), Chapter IV (Parliament) and Chapter V (The Executive).



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TEXT OF PREMIER'S SPEECH AT OPENING OF MEETING OF COMMENTATORS ON THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION AT QUEEN'S HALL ON 25TH APRIL, 1962.

Your Grace, My Lord Bishop, Ladies and Gentlemen: I extend, on behalf of the Government, a cordial welcome to all those citizens present, individuals as well as representatives of organisations, who have consented to abandon their daily chores and professional responsibilities and have accepted the Government's invitation to this meeting.

The presence of some 200 citizens from all walks of life, including representatives of religious, economic, labour, civic, professional and political organisations as well as governmental agencies, constitutes a landmark in the history of our Territory. To-day's meeting represents the closest approximation we have yet achieved towards the national community.

For we are here on a matter of national concern looking towards the national good. We don't all think alike. One's view of a particular section of the Constitution diverges from and even contradicts in some instances the other's view. One's particular penchant or interest is a matter of unconcern to his neighbour. But all of you added together, your collective views however divergent or contradictory, constitute a citizen's assembly the like of which has seldom been seen in the world.

Lawyers and solicitors, engineers and surveyors, teachers and civil servants, clergymen of various faiths and denominations, trade unionists and manufacturers, social workers and housewives, doctors and nurses, farmers and politicians - you are all here this morning, from all parts of the Territory, the nation in conference, an educated democracy in deliberation, a Government seeking advice from its citizens.

The Government is proud to be the sponsor of and the host to this meeting and to afford the citizens an opportunity to see and meet and get to know one another and to consider collectively the individual propositions they have submitted. The Government's role in this is to explain points of apprehension or doubt and to guide the discussions. A report of this meeting will be made available to the Joint Select Committee which will study the Draft Constitution.

And so, Ladies and Gentlemen, to work. I now have great pleasure in declaring this meeting formally open.



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Handwritten: 27/4
Nation
Radio T.V.
Radio L.I.

No. 124

26th April, 1962

The meeting of citizens and organisations discussing the Draft Trinidad and Tobago Independence Constitution continued for the second day at Queen's Hall under the Chairmanship of the Premier today.

The Premier called the meeting to order at 9.40 a.m. and attention was given to Chapter III dealing with the Governor-General. The Constitutional Adviser to the Cabinet in an introductory explanation, said that what was contemplated was a democratic Monarchy, the Draft Constitution indicating that the people of Trinidad and Tobago meant to continue along the path to which they had been accustomed. The Draft had followed the conventional pattern of the Governor-General as Her Majesty's representative; they could not pay lip service to this whilst following another ideal. He emphasised that that pattern required that there be no rift, no disharmony between Her Majesty's representative and Her Majesty's Government, which would be the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

He explained that although the relevant clause followed convention and did not mention it, the Governor-General would be appointed on the advice of the Prime Minister.

The discussion that followed during the morning session, when there were 20 speakers from the floor, was initiated by the Trinidad Incorporated Law Society. It took into account not only the three clauses of Chapter III but the powers of the Prime Minister, the provisions for which are contained mainly in Chapters IV and V, which were scheduled for consideration in the afternoon.

The proposition was put forward that the powers were too wide; that the Governor-General should be appointed not on the advice of the Prime Minister but after consultation with some sort of Privy Council; that some of them should be vested in the Governor-General and that the provision for the Chief Justice to act as Governor-General in the absence of any other person competent to act should be deleted.

(2)

During the course of the discussions Sir Errol dos Santos asked to dissociate himself from any proposition about consultation of the Opposition in the making of appointments. He said he was speaking as a former civil servant who had served in the Executive and Legislative Councils; he belonged to no party but was willing to help any good government. After hearing the outburst of the Leader of the Opposition yesterday and for the first time seeing the gentleman he felt it his duty to resist any form of consultation with the Opposition. Several of the speeches in the course of the discussion endorsed this view.

In his reply the Constitutional Adviser said when one spoke of vesting in the Governor-General certain extra powers that were not vital one was on very weak ground. If they were not vital there was no need to deprive the Prime Minister of them. If they were vital and you must depart from them then what was being set up was a duality of control. They would be setting up a president in the guise of a Governor-General and putting him up against the Prime Minister.

The afternoon session, which began at 2.40 o'clock, opened and completed discussion of Chapters IV and V simultaneously. The discussion was initiated by the Honourable Attorney General. Matters raised included composition of the Senate, proportional representation, the method of amendment of the Constitution and the entrenchment of provisions, the composition of the Boundaries Commission and of the Committee on the Exercise of the Prerogative of Mercy, the method of appointment of Permanent Secretaries, the idea of consultation of the Leader of the Opposition in the making of appointments, the disqualification of Senators and Members of the House of Representatives.

In the course of a comprehensive submission covering most of the above points, Mr H.O.B. Wooding, on behalf of the Bar Council, strongly condemned yesterday's walk out by the Democratic Labour Party.

(5)

Twenty-six persons had spoken before ^{the} Attorney-General was called upon to sum up the discussion. ✕

The meeting adjourned at 6.00 p.m. to convene again tomorrow at 9.50 a.m. for the final day.



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Ms. 125

✓
27th April, 1962.

Radio TV ✓
Radio 9 ✓
Gleaner 2/4 ✓
Even News ✓
Nation ✓
London Office ✓
(Rep. of Dist. Lt.)

The three-day meeting of citizens and representatives of organisations called to discuss the Draft Trinidad and Tobago Independence Constitution under the chairmanship of the Premier ended tonight at Queen's Hall.

The meeting resumed its discussions at 9.40 a.m. and the Chairman announced amidst applause decisions taken by Cabinet on Thursday night on some of the suggestions made in the course of the previous two days' discussions.

The Premier said that the written comments and the suggestions made at the meeting had received preliminary consideration. Further detailed consideration would be given to them but already certain decisions had been taken.

He announced that at the Joint Select Committee of Parliament to begin on Monday the Government representatives would propose the following:

1. The insertion of a preamble in some appropriate place preferably at the beginning of the Draft Constitution, of a suitable reference to Almighty God.
2. A careful examination of Section 2 sub-section (1) dealing with Citizenship with a view to extending the period within which an application may be made for registration as a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago.
3. The substitution for Chapter II of a Bill of Rights along the lines of the Canadian Bill of Rights with appropriate modifications, including the introduction of safeguards.

in Section 28

4. The omission/of any reference to the Chief Justice as a possible acting Governor-General.
5. The amendment of the composition of the Senate without departing from the principle of representation of religious, economic and social interests.
6. The tightening of the amendment procedure for entrenching the provisions by requiring a satisfactory majority of both Houses of Parliament.
7. The deletion of sub-section (3) of Section 40; in other words, permitting an appeal from the decision of a judge granting or refusing leave to institute election petition proceedings.
8. Making such amendments to the Draft as will ensure that the life of the Parliament in existence on the date of independence does not exceed five years except as permitted by Section 54 sub-section (3), namely in time of war.

The morning session was devoted to consideration of Chapter VI (The Judiciary) which the Constitutional Adviser, in his detailed explanatory remarks, described as the keystone of the Constitution. There were fifteen speakers and the burden of their comments was the need for removal of any suspicion of political interference from the appointment and removal of Judges, the nature of and the title of the High Court, appointments to the Judicial Service Commission and the right of appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

The session ended at 1.16 p.m. and the afternoon

/session

session opened at 3.15 p.m.

The Chairman pointed out the need for working to a schedule in view of the fact that several representatives of organisations had indicated to him the necessity for them to leave before the end of the day's sitting.

In the afternoon
The meeting immediately began consideration of Chapter VII (Finance) following the introductory remarks by the Constitutional Adviser.

Fifteen speakers had commented before the discussion ended on schedule at 4.00 p.m. The main points were the need for presentation of the Budget much earlier in the year than in early April and the manner of presentation of the report of the Director of Audit on the Public Accounts.

Discussion of Chapter VIII (The Public Service) began after an introductory explanation by the Attorney-General.

Matters dealt with by the speakers of whom there were included 17, the question of providing for a separate Service Commission for teachers, the Concordat on Denominational Schools in the light of the provisions for appointment of teachers by the Public Service Commission, the methods for appointment of civil servants, the provisions for removal of the Director of Audit, the extension of the jurisdiction of the Police Service Commission to the Fire Services.

His Grace the Archbishop of Port of Spain and several other speakers expressed gratitude to the Government for having been given the opportunity of meeting to express their views on the Constitution, and the hope that a similar procedure would be adopted in future on matters of national concern. His Grace

congratulated the Chairman and his Government on having thrown open to discussion the Draft Constitution. For him it had been an education to listen to the many opinions, particularly by the legal profession, and he had been greatly

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struck by the harmonious manner of expression of views, even when those views themselves were slightly discordant. It was a harbinger of a great constitutional future for our country.

His Grace again congratulated the Premier and his Cabinet and expressed deep appreciation for the attention given to all the views expressed. He ended by invoking a blessing upon the Government and its works and on the future of our country.

The Attorney General, in a brief reply would up the discussion on Chapter VIII.

These followed several congratulatory speeches from the floor, among them one by Mr. R.J.W. Struthers (Employers Consultative Association) who praised the Attorney General, the Constitutional Adviser, the Secretary to the Cabinet and the Secretariat of the meeting for its success. The view was expressed that similar meetings should be held on matters of national importance.

The meeting came to an end at 7.10 p.m. after the Chairman had declared it to have been a triumph for the citizens. He said that in the course of conversation with the Rev. Mr. MacKean at their get-together at the end of the first day of the meeting, Mr. MacKean had expressed the view that the interest exhibited had arisen because the people were worried about what had been happening in Ghana, in Ceylon, in South Africa.

The meeting, however, had shown the existence of an alert public opinion which was the best safeguard.

The Chairman doubted whether there was any country in the world in which there had been ^{such} a demonstration of civic pride and civic responsibility on the part of citizens in all walks of life. They had struck on a new procedure which would be followed on matters ^{like} the Development Programme and law reform. He and the members of the Cabinet had learnt a great deal sitting for the three days and listening to their views.