

TRADE UNION ORGANISATION AND
INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS IN TRINIDAD.



COLONIAL OFFICE

TRADE UNION ORGANISATION
AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
IN TRINIDAD

Report

by Mr. F. W. DALLEY

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THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES

I. Introduction

Sir,

1. I have the honour to report that as requested by you after consultation with the Trades Union Congress I went to Trinidad under the following terms of reference :

“ In view of the recent strikes and disturbances in Trinidad, to visit that Colony for informal discussions with the various parties concerned regarding trade union organisation and the state of industrial relations generally.”

2. I arrived in Trinidad by air on Maundy Thursday, 3rd April, 1947, and on Good Friday met Sir John Shaw, the newly appointed Governor, Sir Errol Dos Santos, the Colonial Secretary, and Mr. R. Alan Ross, the Acting Industrial Adviser, in conference to discuss the facilities I desired and the procedure I proposed to adopt. These were outlined and I was at once promised every assistance in making the contacts desired with the trade unions and employers, complete access to all relevant Government files and the cordial co-operation of the Heads of Government Departments concerned.

II. Procedure Adopted : Intimate talks with Groups and Individuals

3. The strikes and disturbances of last winter had naturally caused great concern throughout the Colony, and public interest in industrial relations had been further aroused by several spirited debates in the Legislative Council Chamber during which proposals had been made for a public inquiry. I was accordingly strongly pressed to address public meetings and to hold open inquiry. I had to explain to representatives of the Press and others interested that my terms of reference were to hold informal conversations and that I desired to eschew public meetings and to avoid undue publicity. (I may add that in order to give greater confidence and freedom of expression I refrained from having a note-taker at all the meetings I held save that mentioned in the next paragraph. I addressed only one open meeting. This was held in Port of Spain under the auspices of the British Council towards the end of my inquiry and there was a large and representative audience. Subject : “ The Traditions and Practice of British Trade Unionism.”)

4. I then proceeded with my arrangements. First, a preliminary meeting with representatives of the Trade Unions and the Trades Union Council—for list of registered Trade Unions see Appendix No. 1. This meeting took place in private in the Legislative Council Chamber on Monday, 14th April (members of the public who had gathered were asked to withdraw and did so with obvious reluctance), and I there outlined my provisional plans for conducting the Inquiry and for giving the fullest opportunity to all concerned to let me have their views and the full facts of the industrial situation as they understood them. Briefly, I asked that the Unions should submit, preferably

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by memoranda, though I was quite willing to receive this verbally, information under the following four headings.

(i) Relations with Government and Legislature. Trade Union Ordinances; Social legislation, etc. (Whether Unions quite free to develop, or whether any undesirable restrictions need to be removed or further positive legislation required.)

(ii) Relations with employers—private and public: recognition; collective bargaining and agreements; strikes and disturbances; police action, etc., etc.

(iii) Inter-union relations: scope of individual unions; Lines of demarcation, overlapping, etc. Affiliation to and authority of T.U.C.

(iv) Previous inquiries: recommendations still to be implemented. Which are more urgent?

5. I undertook on receipt of these memoranda to meet as might be desired, representatives of each Union separately to discuss points of detail, to clear up any difficulty or to enable the officers or executives of a Union to amplify their memorandum in order that their attitude and that of the Union in relation to the matters under inquiry should be made quite clear. After questions and discussion, the Unions present, with one exception, agreed to co-operate on the lines suggested. The exception was that section of the British Empire Workers' Peasants' and Ratepayers' Union represented by Mr. Tubal Uriah Buzz Butler and two other officers. (The split in this Union and the relation of Mr. Butler and his section to the Movement and to the recent strikes and disturbances will be dealt with later in this Report.) Most of the Unions duly submitted very valuable memoranda and the information given was amplified in subsequent discussions I had with officers and executive committee men.

6. I adopted a similar procedure with the principal employers' organisations and had frank discussions with the Committees of the Shipping Association; the Oilfields Employers' Association; the Sugar Manufacturers' Federation and the Chamber of Commerce. I also paid visits to the oilfields, the sugar estates, the docks and wharves, and the railways, and had talks there with managers, personnel officers, foremen and supervisors, trade union branch secretaries, shop stewards and collectors and with groups of rank and file workers as well as individual trade unionists and non-unionists.

7. The Heads of Government Departments gave me equal confidence and in addition to consulting those directly involved in the strikes of Government employees, namely the Managers and Superintendent of the Docks and Wharves, and Railway and Road Transport and the Director of Public Works, I perused the secretariat files relevant to the disputes and the recorded debates of the Legislative Council. I also had conversations with the Attorney General; the Registrar of Trade Unions; the Director of Agriculture and Professor Shephard of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture.

8. Beyond what may be termed these official sources of information I felt it desirable to get into touch as far as I could with responsible public opinion and accordingly had intimate talks with members of the Legislative Council and County and City Councils; doctors and nurses; members of the Bench and Bar, including the Acting Chief Justice and both prosecuting and defending Counsel in the Court cases arising out of the strikes and disturbances; the editors and reporters of the *Port of Spain Gazette* and *Trinidad Guardian*; and priests and ministers and leading laymen of the Churches, Roman Catholic and Protestant—in short as representative a cross-section of Trinidadians, coloured and white, as I could manage to fit in in the time at my disposal.

III. General Background

(i) POPULATION AND OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION

9. The population of Trinidad is given in the 1946 census (preliminary figures) as 557,862. Of this total, 210,544 are listed as "gainfully occupied"—that is "following occupations which bring in money (or goods or services in exchange) either to themselves or (if they are unpaid) to their employers or families."

The following table sets out the figures giving male and female as well as the total numbers gainfully occupied, etc.

POPULATION	*NOT GAINFULLY OCCUPIED	†GAINFULLY OCCUPIED		‡WAGE EARNERS		‡UNEMPLOYED	
		M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
557,862	347,318	210,544		150,669		9,514	
		158,483	52,061	117,535	33,134	7,284	2,230

10. As will be seen, the unemployment figure represents 6.73 per cent. of the total wage earners. The 141,155 wage earners at work were engaged in the following broad groups of occupation :

OCCUPATION GROUP	TOTAL WAGE EARNERS		MALE WAGE EARNERS		FEMALE WAGE EARNERS	
	NO.	PER CENT.	NO.	PER CENT.	NO.	PER CENT.
Farmers and Farm Managers ..	1,604	1.14	1,582	1.43	22	0.07
Farm Labourers ..	28,067	19.88	20,976	19.03	7,091	22.95
Other Primary ..	4,096	2.90	3,908	3.54	188	0.61
Factory and Work- shop ..	16,601	11.76	14,098	12.79	2,503	8.10
Building Workers ..	13,700	9.71	13,673	12.40	27	0.08
Transport Workers..	10,671	7.56	10,318	9.36	353	1.14
Trade and Com- mercial ..	6,530	4.63	4,725	4.29	1,805	5.84
Personal Services ..	16,599	11.76	4,434	4.02	12,165	39.37
Other services ..	11,865	8.40	9,127	8.28	2,738	8.86
Clerical ..	10,788	7.64	8,052	7.30	2,736	8.85
Labourers ..	20,619	14.61	19,350	17.55	1,269	4.11
Not stated ..	15	0.01	8	0.01	7	0.02

11. The strikes and disturbances of last winter centred round the oil industry, the dock and wharves and Government services and more recently the sugar estates, these being the principal employing groups.

The employment figures relating thereto are :

DIRECT EMPLOYEES OF THE SUGAR COMPANIES

Half-yearly average, 1946 : Crop season ..	18,350
Wet season ..	15,901
Maximum employed during any fortnight, 1946 ..	22,442
Minimum employed during any fortnight, 1946 ..	12,228
Latest fortnightly average—March, 1947 ..	21,167

* Mainly dependants of the gainfully occupied engaged on home duties and children and the aged and infirm ; but also persons of private means and pensioners.

† Includes persons seeking employment but not young persons under fifteen.

‡ Unemployed through illness, industrial dispute or lack of suitable employment.

OILFIELDS

Average number employed, 1946 :	
Directly by Oilfields Employers' Association	11,157
By contractors	3,154
Latest four-weekly average—April, 1947 :	
Directly employed	10,866
By contractors—estimated	2,877

ASPHALT (Fitch Lake)

Average number employed, 1946	586
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GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

Average number of daily paid employees, 1946	9,863
Number employed 31st March, 1946	10,978

(ii) RACES AND RACIAL DISTRIBUTION

12. The population of the Colony is one of the most cosmopolitan to be found anywhere. The two largest groups are known as East Indian and West Indian. The former are natives of India or their descendants—mostly descendants of the indentured labour brought to the West Indies from 1845 onwards for agriculture. The latter are descendants of West African Negro stock. There are many Chinese, but indeed every continent is represented and numerous countries and races. The bulk of East Indians are still engaged in agriculture which the Negro largely avoids, preferring the oilfields or labour at the docks or on public works, whilst the Chinese mostly enter trade or commerce. There is much inter-marriage, but none the less the groups keep distinct. The child marriage customs of the East Indians persist and aggravate the child-labour problem. It is gratifying to record that there is little racial antagonism.

(iii) INDUSTRIAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

13. There has been some improvement in industrial and social conditions during the war and many of the recommendations of the Forster and Moyné Commissions of 1937 and 1939 are by way of being implemented. There is, however, still much poorly-paid labour, and wages, save in exceptional cases, have not kept pace with the rise in the cost of living. Casual labour, that bane of all social workers no less than of trade unionism, still abounds; housing and sanitation in many quarters is deplorable and the percentage of illiterates remains alarmingly high.

14. The official cost-of-living Index registers a rise from the standard of 100 in 1935; 109 in September, 1939; 216 in December, 1946, and 221 in June, 1947. Price control and food distribution have not been an unqualified success and there is consequently complaint of "black market" prices, of excessive commercial profits and of the actual cost of living being far above that indicated by the official index. These complaints receive added force from the fact that there has been no food rationing, except for rice instituted as recently as 30th March, 1947.

IV. The Trade Union Movement**(i) SHORT HISTORY**

15. The Trade Union movement in the Colony is, of course, in its infancy. It was not until 1933 that the first ordinance was passed providing for the establishment of trade unions, and even so, a full four years elapsed before proper advantage was taken of it; apparently because of its limited and unsatisfactory character. There was in being at that time an organisation of workers known as the Trinidad Workingmen's Association. This was re-formed

round about 1920 and based on a previous Association founded some quarter of a century earlier. This latter bore the same name and was incorporated as a non-trading enterprise in 1906. On the passing of the 1933 Ordinance, it was urged that the Workmen's Association should be registered as a trade union, but its leader, the late Captain Cipriani, refused to do this in view of what he considered to be the shortcomings of the ordinance and the limited protection it afforded. He accordingly dissolved the Association and established the Trinidad Labour Party in its stead.

16. This dramatic move gave an additional impetus to a movement which had already captured the imagination and gained the support of large sections of working-class Trinidadians. The new party was, however, largely a one-man affair, despite its island-wide character and its numerous branches; and although its founder and leader had a great admiration for the British Labour Party he seems to have lacked a political philosophy or even a considered programme adapted to the needs of the situation. Not unnaturally the Party advocated immediate self-government, adult franchise, equal opportunities for natives; also, interestingly enough in view of present-day developments, the federation of the British West Indies. It also did excellent service in agitating for social legislation, and some definite results were achieved, including the setting up of a Wages Advisory Committee and the eventual passing of minimum wage legislation.

17. Unfortunately, for reasons already adumbrated, there was no equivalent development on the trade union side. Had there been, the whole situation might have been transformed. The facts are, however, that employers and managers generally were strongly, and in some quarters even bitterly, opposed to trade unions. (There are some even now who, while paying lip-service to the value of collective bargaining maintain that native workers are not sufficiently educated for modern trade unionism.) They resisted "recognition"; discouraged their employees from joining genuine unions by victimising members, encouraging non-unionists and assisting in the formation of "house unions". The Government also, in face of this, adopted to say the least, a cautious and ultra-conservative attitude and industrial conditions, bad as they were, deteriorated to such an extent that the general dissatisfaction culminated in the riots and disturbances of 1937. The Forster Commission appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to inquire into those disturbances reported that

"the true origin of the disturbances must be traced to the more or less general sense of dissatisfaction *for which there was no adequate means of articulation through recognised machinery of collective bargaining.*"

The Commission also stated that it was essential that the position should be remedied if better relations between employer and employed were to be secured and that since the strike, labour had made a serious attempt to organise itself in Trade Unions. The Commission also made recommendations regarding the encouragement of authorised unions along recognised Trade Union lines by a new Labour Department.

18. This spur to employers to revise their out-of-date attitude and to industrial labour to get organised on trade union lines given by the revelations of 1937 and by the appointment and public statements (and later the recommendations) of members of the Forster Commission received added force from the Royal (Moyné) Commission of 1938/9 and from the advice and encouragement of a member of that Commission, Sir Walter (now Lord) Crichton, then General Secretary of the British T.U.C. As will be seen from Appendix No. 1 to this Report, whereas only one trade union was registered

in 1936, half a dozen sprang into existence during the next few months and were later registered. These are still among the leading industrial organisations.

19. The history of the Oilfield Workers' Union formed on 25th July, 1937, yields an outstanding but by no means solitary example of difficulties encountered and overcome—discouragement and victimisation of its members, followed by the recognition of the Union (in March, 1938) and a succession of negotiated agreements which would have done credit to a British trade union—agreements not only hardly won but honourably adhered to in the most trying circumstances—see Section V : Strikes and Disturbances, and Appendix No. 3.

(ii) LEGISLATION : TRADE UNION ORDINANCES

20. There is general agreement among both employers' organisations and trade unions that Trade Unionism has now freedom for development under the existing Ordinances, although the better informed trade union officials are desirous that the Colony's laws shall be brought completely into line with the latest British legislation, as it stands with the repeal of the Trade Disputes and Trade Union Act of 1927. Some of the provisions of that Act—e.g., Section 1, aimed at the "general strike"; Section 5, relating to restrictions on established civil servants; and Section 6, prohibiting a Public Authority from making membership or non-membership of a trade union a condition of employment—were not at any time part of the law of the Colony.

21. The main provisions of the four Ordinances at present in force may be summarised as follows :

(a) The Ordinance of 1933 provided for the establishment of trade unions and defined their functions, powers and responsibilities in line with British legislation. It required the registration of every union and the rendering of annual accounts and balance sheets to the Registrar of Trade Unions; made provision for the establishment of political funds under specified rules and by the "contracting-in" method and laid down conditions for the amalgamation of unions. The Ordinance had certain serious limitations, however, for it contained no provisions authorising peaceful picketing or the protection of union funds from liability for tortious acts.

(b) The second Ordinance, 1938, made provision for an existing or apprehended dispute to be referred to the Governor of the Colony and for arbitration if agreed to by both parties to a dispute.

(c) The third—the Trade Disputes and Protection of Property Ordinance, 1943—was designed to fill in the serious gaps of the 1933 Ordinance and it did so by incorporating sections from the British Acts of 1875, 1906 and 1927 regarding peaceful picketing; prevention of intimidation; the removal from trade unions of the liability for tortious acts and the protection of the community against breaches of contracts by employees of Public Authorities involving deprivation of certain public services.

(d) The fourth Ordinance No. 46, 1943, made provision for the auditing of trade union accounts under the authority of the Registrar of Trade Unions.

Reference is made later in this Report to projected legislation repealing certain of those Sections taken from the British Act of 1927—see Section VI : "Recommendations".

(iii) PRESENT-DAY ORGANISATION AND INTER-UNION RELATIONS

22. Although the Trade Unions have done remarkably well, considering all the adverse circumstances, during the first decade of their existence, they

have some formidable tasks to tackle if they are to be recognised as the authentic mouthpiece of the workers and a responsible factor in the economic life of the Colony.

The Movement naturally shows many signs of youthfulness, a welcome exuberance and impatience; an understandable and laudable desire for drastic improvements in wages and conditions of employment, not unmingled with irresponsibility on the part of a few leaders and a dangerous disposition on the part of the rank and file—not unknown in more mature movements—to expect benefits to come automatically, to confuse “collective bargaining” with “mass action” and to look to the strike as the only weapon of the worker and its exercise as his only requisite activity. In this matter they receive encouragement from unexpected political quarters.

23. There is considerable overlapping and competition for membership among the Unions. This is especially serious in a Colony like Trinidad with roughly only 150,000 wage-earners as the total field of recruitment. A reference to Appendix No. 1 will show that although there are unions which by definition confine their activities to particular industries or occupations, nearly one-half of the total number purport to cater for *all* grades of workers in *all* industries. General Unions are, of course, very necessary and they play a most important part in the Trinidad Movement. They do not, generally speaking, enter into competition in the well-defined industries or services like Sugar, Oil, the Docks and Wharves and the Civil Service, but they extend pretty well everywhere else. Even as regards some of the other Unions, the lines of demarcation are not clearly drawn.

24. There are, for example, no less than six competing Unions, including the Civil Service Association, catering for the various grades of railway workers, who with “ancillaries” number only approximately three thousand all told. The exasperation and antagonism which this competition sometimes arouses among the rank and file are exacerbated by the suspicions and the lack of understanding and comradeship between some of the leaders who do not hesitate to express their pungent opinions of each other in public and in print. The unfortunate result is that the majority of railwaymen remain bewildered and unorganised and notwithstanding goodwill on the part of the Management, have no effective voice in their conditions of service. A similar state of affairs applies to other sections of the public services.

25. These “demarcation” troubles are complicated by the activities of that curious phenomenon Mr. Uriah Butler who claims all the natives of the Colony, regardless of whether or not they are wage-earners, for his British Empire Workers’, Peasants’ and Ratepayers’ Union. Significantly enough, Mr. Butler, although claiming the world for his parish, confines his activities in the main (but not his claims) to those industries and services where Unions are well established and have been for many years, and ignores the much wider field of the totally unorganised.

(iv) THE TRADES UNION COUNCIL

26. This was formed in 1938 on the advice of the then General Secretary of the British T.U.C.—see Section IV (i), and was for some time fully representative of the Movement, but the Printers’, the Tailors’ and Garment Workers’ and the Shop Assistants’ and Clerks’ Unions were disbanded and others, notably the Federated Workers’ and the Railway Workers’ Unions, for various reasons having withdrawn, it is less so today.

27. It is gratifying to record, however, that as a result of recent revelations of the Movement’s weaknesses, there is a strong desire and intention on all

sides to renew the old unity and cordiality. This was especially evidenced at a meeting I held just before I left with the officers of most of the leading trade unions.

28. I think it well to point out that the way its elected officers (three of whom are also the officers of the Oilfield Workers' Union) have kept the Council in being and actively functioning during this "dry season" has been most praiseworthy. The movement is greatly in their debt.

V. The Strikes and Disturbances of 1946-1947

(i) THE HOUSING COMMISSION STRIKE

29. Four strikes are listed in Appendix No. 2. The first was a localised strike which began as "unofficial" but was later supported by the Federated Workers' Union. It was unsuccessful and has no special significance for and would not be mentioned in this Report save for the light it throws on the inter-union rivalries, misunderstandings and jealousies referred to in paragraphs 23 and 24.

The strike began on February 1st, 1946. On 5th February the secretaries of the Public Works and Public Services Workers' and the Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Trade Unions, without advising and unknown to the Federated Union, called personally on the Manager of the Planning and Housing Commission to inform him that their unions were not in favour of the strike and to ask for protection of their members who desired to work. Protection was promised. Yet, less than a year later, both the appellant Unions complained of and denounced the Federated Union for not supporting *their* strike.

(ii) THE WATERFRONT STRIKE

30. This stoppage had many special and important features. It was the first large-scale post-war strike in the Colony. It affected both public and private enterprise employment: that of the Shipping Association employing the stevedores, etc., and the Government Administration employing the workers on the docks and wharves. It was a stoppage called officially by the appropriate Union. Some of the methods employed during the strike involved action by the police. It was called off after a debate in the Legislative Council and the submission by the Governor of a formula subscribed to after modification by the representatives of the Government, the Wharves Administration, the Shipping Association and the Waterfront Union; and the after-settlement disagreements raised, *inter alia*, the important issue of the representative character of the Union and "recognition". For these reasons I set out events in some detail.

31. The Employers' Organisation known as the Shipping Association was formed in 1937 and now represents thirty Shipping Lines. It employs the stevedores, lightermen, launchmen and coopers with their foremen and associated labour. All are casual except the launchmen who are weekly-paid. The basic number employed by the Association is round about 2,500 expanding to 3,000 or even 3,500 in times of stress.

32. The Association recognised the Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Union prior to the war and signed an agreement with them on 5th December, 1938. This agreement, with only slight modification, was in operation up to 1946. During this war period, relations were satisfactory, work was plentiful and the Association speaks appreciatively of labour, which worked well.

In April, 1946, after some months of hard negotiating a new agreement was reached, including a basic change in the labourers' position. There was

a reduction in hours and a 20 per cent. increase in wages—the over-all benefit increase being reckoned as about 33 per cent.

There was also instituted a cost-of-living allowance rising or falling for each 5 points change.

33. It was part of this Agreement that it should “continue in operation until revised by mutual consent or terminated by either of the parties” and that “in the event of either party to the Agreement desiring to revise or terminate the terms thereof, three months’ notice shall be given, but where revision is required, accompanying such notice proposals for such revision shall be attached”. A further clause laid it down that “upon receiving notice for revision there shall be a joint conference between representatives of the parties within fourteen days of the receipt of such notice, or within a period that may be eventually agreed for the purpose of negotiating a revision”.

34. The Docks and Wharves Administration (a Government Department) which employs a larger number of men in the docks than the Shipping Association, did not take part in these negotiations but was kept informed and when they were concluded met representatives of the Union and agreed to apply similar conditions to the workers on the docks and wharves. No agreement was signed but the representations of the Union were taken into consideration.

35. The Seamen and Waterfront Workers’ Union naturally and properly used these negotiations and the resulting new conditions in Government and Shipping Association employ as a means of propaganda to recruit more members. Their membership grew, and with the influx there arose a demand for further improvements, and, it would appear, for a strengthening of the Union’s position in regard to the employment of non-unionists (the “closed shop” issue had been previously discussed with negative result with the Harbour, Wharves and Slipways Management). A new programme was accordingly drawn up and presented to the Shipping Association (and also to the Docks and Wharves Administration) claiming a revision of the April Agreement, including a 50 per cent. increase in wages, a reduction of hours, and a guaranteed day’s pay, and asking for a meeting date to be fixed to discuss the claim.

36. At the meeting which was duly held, the Shipping Association expressed surprise at what they considered to be uncalled for demands seeing that the ink was scarcely dry on the April Agreement which had embodied substantial improvements. They considered that before agreeing to discuss the claims they should be given some sound grounds on which such claims were founded. No radical changes, it was contended, such as would justify the claims, had taken place since the Agreement was signed. The Union resented this apparent refusal to discuss their demands. They instanced the increased cost of living and the casual nature of much of the labour as *prima facie* reasons but insisted on their right to have all the items discussed. The Shipping Association expressed willingness to consider one or two matters with the Union, such as how to reduce the amount of casual labour but remained adamant in their refusal to discuss the main items. Thus there was a deadlock.

37. At this stage, the Union took the view that the employers, by refusing to discuss their claims, had repudiated the Agreement and that they were thus free to take their own line. None the less they referred the matter to the Industrial Adviser as also provided in the Agreement. The latter called a joint meeting for October 30th at which, as Chairman, he endeavoured to bring the two sides closer together. In this he failed: the Shipping Association

adhering to their refusal to discuss the proposals in detail without adequate cause and the Union insisting they should be discussed. The Industrial Adviser then suggested both parties consider submitting the questions at issue to arbitration, but again met with no success: the employers were reluctant to agree and the Union insisted that negotiations should precede reference to arbitration. This they contended was in accordance with the Agreement which stipulated that in the event of changes being desired, "a joint Conference" should be held "for the purpose of negotiating a revision". The meeting ended with both sides being urged to give the matter further consideration rather than that "direct action" should be resorted to.

It should also be mentioned that in response to a letter from the Union on October 15th the Acting General Manager of the Wharves Administration had met the Union representatives on the 29th October but on the main issue the result had been negative. The Acting General Manager, however, intimated that he would be willing to renew discussions if this were desired and was informed that if the Union desired a further meeting he would be advised.

38. On November 7th, without any further communication, the Union gave both the Shipping Association and the Wharves Administration notice of a strike within 24 hours if no settlement was forthcoming. The Industrial Adviser was notified of this decision by a letter dated November 8th and at 10.15 a.m. the same day he telephoned to the General Secretary of the Union reminding him of the hope he (the Industrial Adviser) had expressed on October 30th that the issue might be settled by arbitration and that he believed the Shipping Association would be prepared to agree to this. The reply was that as the Shipping Association had refused to discuss the Union's claims the Union could not agree to suspend action or consider arbitration and that the decision to strike was final. This action both the Shipping Association and the Government considered was a breach of the Agreement which required three months' notice of termination. The Union's view is given in paragraph 37.

39. The strike began at 12 noon on Friday, 8th November. It was well organised and the stoppage was fairly complete. The docks were picketed Friday and Saturday and there were processions during the week-end. Everything was orderly and the police had no difficulty nor any reason to interfere. On Monday, however, some 2,000 men gathered at the gates and made access to the docks physically impossible. This "mass-picketing" was stopped by the police and only a reasonable number of pickets allowed in accordance with the Ordinances.

There was also some violence towards and "beating up" of non-strikers. Men were stopped on their way to work and taken to Union Headquarters for "disciplining". Two workers locked up there were released by the police. After arrests and prosecutions these tactics ceased and the strike was carried on in an orderly manner. Legitimate picketing continued. A notice was published in the press from the employers (Shipping Association and Wharves Administration) that all who did not report for duty by Tuesday, 12th November, "would be considered as no longer interested in further employment in the industry" and that thenceforward the employers "propose to obtain employees from whatever sources are available". It does not appear to have had any material effect on the strikers.

40. Attempts at mediation continued. Dr. Solomon, an elected member of the Legislative Council and medical adviser to the Union, wrote to the Governor on 12th November saying that the Union was prepared to submit to arbitration if an offer were made but that no offer of arbitration had been received by the Union. Copies of his letter and the reply of Sir Bede Clifford are given in Appendix No. 4. The Industrial Adviser and the Deputy Adviser

saw Dr. Solomon the same evening and acquainted him with what had really taken place. The latter expressed his satisfaction with the efforts of the Industrial Adviser and undertook to try to persuade the Union to accept arbitration. Subsequent events showed that he did not succeed for reasons he gave during the debate which took place in the Legislative Council Chamber on 29th November. A published explanatory statement of the Government's attitude to the stoppage is reproduced as Appendix No. 5.

41. On the morning of 15th November at a meeting of the Government Executive Council it was decided to make a special effort at mediation and agreed that Mr. Albert Gomes, another member of the Legislative Council and President of the Federated Workers' Union, should in association with the Industrial Adviser approach the Union. A meeting between these two and representatives of the Union was immediately arranged and took place at 3.15 p.m. the same day. After consideration of the issues involved the clearing up of a misunderstanding regarding the scope of the proposed arbitration and the urgency of the food situation, the Union representatives agreed to give a decision on the arbitration suggestion not later than 12 noon the following day.

42. For a short time it appeared that this effort would be successful. Later that evening the Union representatives agreed to arbitration subject to certain stipulations which were accepted by the Shipping Association. On their part the Shipping Association considered that the Arbitrator should be asked to consider the fixing of a period during which any new awards should operate. In his letter of acceptance dated November 16th the Union secretary stated that if the Shipping Association "is prepared to arbitrate our proposals fully then I am instructed by my Executive to say they would be very glad to have the matters in dispute submitted to arbitration", and that "we are still ready and willing to have a preliminary discussion of our proposals with the object of seeing which of them (if any) may be accepted or by agreement eliminated from the submission". This letter was handed in the same day.

43. Two days later, however, a further letter from the Union demanded as a condition of going to arbitration an immediate "token" increase of 20 per cent. in the basic wage rate of all employees involved in the dispute. The Industrial Adviser tried in a telephone conversation with the Union secretary the same morning to get a reconsideration of this demand, pointing out that it was in effect a repudiation of the Union's previously signed Agreement and offering to meet the Union Executive again. The secretary, however, defended the decision and the offer of a further meeting was never accepted. Prior to this, the Union had approached the Trades Union Council whose officers, after consulting its constituents, agreed to help, and after examining the correspondence and records of the Union publicly announced their support and approached the Shipping Association and the Industrial Adviser with offers of mediation.

44. The former, on meeting the T.U.C. officers drew attention to what they considered was an *ex parte* statement of the T.U.C. and to the anomaly of persons desiring to be mediators who had already committed themselves to one party in the dispute. The T.U.C. officers at once admitted their willingness to take the new evidence adduced into consideration and to announce this in the press. At their meeting with the Industrial Adviser and his Deputy held on 21st November, they went more fully into the facts and offered their services as conciliators. The Government considered, however, in the light of preceding events that no good purpose would be served by pursuing the matter further and so advised the T.U.C. on 24th November. The qualifying statement of the T.U.C. although prepared was consequently never issued. It is reproduced here as Appendix No. 6.

45. On 29th November the issue was debated in the Legislative Council, Dr. Solomon having tabled the following motion :

"That this House deplores the attitude of the Government in the industrial dispute which at present exists and hereby recommends that a move be made to bring the contending parties together for conciliatory talks."

An amendment to this was moved towards the end of the debate by Mr. Roy Joseph in the following terms :

"That this House considers that the Government employed every possible means of bringing about a settlement of the dispute but proposes that Government proceeds immediately to take such further steps as are necessary to bring both parties in the dispute together in conference to work out a formula for impartial settlement of the dispute."

This amendment was carried by 12 votes to 4 ; four elected members and eight nominated members voting in favour and four elected members against with one abstention.

46. The conference then decided upon was held on 2nd December under the presidency of the Governor, there being present representatives of the Government, the Shipping Association and the Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Trade Union. The conference lasted from 2 p.m. until 8.30 p.m. and the following formula was finally agreed upon by all parties under which work was to be resumed :

"The Wharves Administration is prepared to offer available employment to waterfront workers who may seek it and undertakes that, as soon as conditions become sufficiently normal and the military are replaced by civil labour, it will enter into negotiations with representatives of its employees for the purpose of drawing up a mutually acceptable agreement governing conditions of employment at the docks. The Waterfront Workers' Trade Union agreed to co-operate with Government in the above proposal.

"The Shipping Association has agreed to co-operate with Government and to offer to its employees the conditions of employment and the wage rates provided in any agreement that may be entered into between the Wharves Administration and the Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Trade Union, such wage rates to be adjusted so as to preserve the prevailing ratio between different types of workers.

"The Union Representatives agreed to advise the members of the Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Trade Union to return to work and undertook to supply through the Wharves Administration workers required for all classes of employment on the wharves and for shipping."

47. The resumption was not made without difficulty. Relations between the Shipping Association and the Union were still strained, but this difficulty was minimised by the final clause of the formula under which the Union undertook to supply all labour through the Wharves Administration. Other sections of the formula are not free from ambiguity and were variously interpreted. The fact that it was decided to retain the "voluntary workers," coupled with the casual nature of the employment, the consequent large daily surplus of labour and the Administration's exercise of its responsibility to choose what and how many men should be employed each day led to grave friction. Complaints of victimisation on the part of the unselected, especially

if they had been active strikers, became so widespread and so acute that the Union complained to the Governor who saw a deputation on December 5th, afterwards issuing the agreed press communique shown in Appendix No. 7 (A). The situation remained tense and at the request of the Union the Secretary of State was approached. The Union's telegram and the reply thereto are also given in Appendix No. 7 (B).

48. A further source of serious ill-feeling was the post-strike attitude of the Government and the Wharves Administration to the "recognition" of the Union. As pointed out in paragraphs 32 to 34, whilst the Shipping Association had recognised the Union for some years, and had negotiated the Agreement of April, 1946, with it, the Wharves Administration had not, but had had consultations and had applied, in effect, the terms of the Shipping Association Agreement to the Wharves workers. As will be noted, the formula governing the conditions of resumption after the stoppage refers to negotiations with "representatives of its (the Wharves Administration's) employees (paragraph 1), and also with the "Shipping and Waterfront Union" (paragraph 2). One of the early steps taken by the Administration was to advise the Union that the "voluntary workers" were entitled to be taken into account in framing new conditions of service and to call upon the Union to produce evidence that it represented the majority of Docks and Wharves employees. The effectiveness of the stoppage suggested by the Union as evidence of its representative character was not accepted, and on an examination of its register of members to which the Union submitted under protest, the membership as compared with the *total number* of Dock employees including the non-Union voluntary workers was declared to be only a minority. The Union was therefore informed that it was not entitled to recognition or eligible to negotiate an Agreement but only entitled to consultation. Such consultations have since been taking place.

49. In order to put all these matters in the right perspective it is necessary to point out that it was during the time of the Waterfront strike that Mr. Uriah Butler's activities came into prominence, for it was on 11th November, 1946, that he sent in a claim accompanied by an ultimatum, to use his own words, to "every known employer of labour (including Government and the American authorities) in the country". A copy of one of his handbills as distributed amongst waterfront and other workers is printed as Appendix No. 8.

(iii) THE OILFIELDS STRIKE, RIOTS AND DISTURBANCES

50. The strike in the oilfields and the subsequent resort to violence and sabotage recall the riots of 1937 inquired into by the Forster Commission which, as already related (paragraph 17) gave the true origin of the disturbances as the general sense of dissatisfaction "for which there was no means of articulation through recognised machinery of collective bargaining". The position last December was entirely different, for there was then and now is a competent recognised Union in the field, and collective bargaining has been the means of bringing about radical improvements in the conditions of work in the oilfields. A statement to this effect by you was published in "Hansard" on 29th January, 1947, and a more detailed history of events is given in the account issued by the Oilfield Workers' Trade Union reproduced as Appendix No. 3 to this Report. A perusal of that account, the general accuracy of which I have checked, will reveal that not only is a trade union agreement in operation regarding wages and general conditions throughout the oilfields, but that it provides for conciliation (there is a Joint Conciliation Board of which the Industrial Adviser is chairman) covering not only national negotiations but group grievances and individual discipline cases.

51. The radical changes in these respects are undoubted; the "constant" is Mr. Uriah Butler. Some further account, therefore, of his history, activities and mentality seems necessary. He is described in the Forster Report as "a fanatical Negro . . . showing considerable activity (in 1937) in villages near the oilfields and delivering speeches of an inflammatory nature. Born in Grenada . . . he was at one time employed in the oil industry. . . . He first came into prominence in 1933 when he organised and led to the Port of Spain a hunger march of some 120 men . . . unemployed in consequence of a 3-days' strike—of 300 labourers in the Apex Oilfield. He next appeared . . . in 1936 when, following his expulsion from membership of the Trinidad Labour Party on account of his extremist tendencies, he formed a Party of his own, known as the British Empire Workers' and Citizens' Home Rule Party. . . . His speeches and literature issued by his Party became conspicuous for their violent character and as his following included—as subsequent events confirmed—*many who were prepared to adopt violent methods* (my italics) Butler's activities came to be regarded as dangerous". Of ten of his followers chosen by Butler as a delegation to meet the (Government) Executive Council "five were subsequently arrested and three charged with murder". (Butler himself, after resisting arrest went into hiding. He was subsequently brought to trial and sentenced to two years' imprisonment, but on appeal to the Privy Council the conviction was quashed, on a technicality, after he had served 18 months of the sentence.)

52. That description of the man and his followers might well stand as applying to the Uriah Butler of today and his activities and those of his "warrior-workers" as he calls them. I have referred to him as "a curious phenomenon" and certainly in his personality, his phenomenal egocentricity, his worldly shrewdness and his crude speeches and leaflets with their Biblical and religious references, he would appear to be more akin to a 17th century "Fifth Monarchy" man than a 20th century trade union leader.

53. During World War 2 Mr. Butler was imprisoned for subversive activities. When released, he found that the oilfield workers, assisted by one of his former lieutenants, Mr. Rienzi, a young East Indian lawyer (now Second Crown Counsel) whose relations with Mr. Butler are outlined in the Forster Report, had established the Oilfield Workers' Trade Union (O.W.T.U.) with Mr. Rienzi as its first President-General. Mr. Butler, whose imprisonment had increased his popularity with some of the workers, and probably because of Mr. Rienzi's former connection with him, was given an organising post in the O.W.T.U. but his colossal egotism and refusal to be bound by any decisions but his-own led to constant trouble. Finally, for calling a regional strike contrary to the Agreement, he was dismissed. Once more (see paragraph 51) he set up his own organisation, this time the British Empire Workers' Peasants' and Ratepayers' Union, with himself as President-General under the self-conferred title of "Chief Servant". He then began an "island-wide campaign" to recruit every worker in every industry, but concentrated most of his efforts in the oilfields and particularly where Grenadians were employed. He then applied for registration of the Union. This was eventually granted but only after much difficulty over the badly-framed rules. These, as first submitted, notwithstanding the model set available, were semi-literate, badly drawn and unsatisfactory. They had to be returned by the Registrar several times for revision and when finally they were approved in time for Mr. Butler to use his new prestige to assist his candidature for the Legislative Council, this was conditional on certain revisions being carried out. His personal political campaign did not result in his election to Legislative Council.

54. After registration, Mr. Butler characteristically claimed that "My Union alone has the legal right to negotiate agreement—new agreements and smash, or ignore old ones as may be found expedient". Some of the oilfields employers accommodately began to accept representations from the new Union in respect of its members, and one employer, Mr. C. L. Vanderburgh of the Trinidad Lake Asphalt Operating Company, Limited, employing some 600 men, "recognised" the Union as a negotiating medium and entered into an Agreement. This, however, apparently embodied nothing but the terms already negotiated by the O.W.T.U. with the O.E.A.T. The connection of Mr. Timothy Roodal, another employer and now a member of the Legislative Council, with the Union and Mr. Butler is mentioned in Appendix No. 3 hereto.

55. However, internal trouble, a constant feature of all organisations with which Mr. Butler is connected, soon developed. So far as the officers of the Union were concerned, there was a constant succession of appointments and dismissals. Mr. James, a vice-president, now a member of the Legislative Council, was deputed to make representations on behalf of members to the oilfield employers but was removed for, as alleged by Mr. Butler, being "too co-operative"—i.e., with the employers. Mr. Babel, the General Secretary, was displaced in favour of Mr. J. A. Thomas and he in turn by Mr. Lionel Cross* all within the space of a few months. Members of the Executive Committee and less prominent men who opposed the "President-General" were treated in a similar manner. This history of internal strife is doubtless largely one of personal intrigue and ambition; much of it is both obscure and unimportant but as some of the events not only reveal Mr. Butler's unfitness to hold office in a responsible trade union but have a bearing on the oilfields strike and disturbances I think it desirable to set them out.

56. On 20th March, 1946, the branches of the Union were advised that the Executive Committee had authorised all payments to be made to the President-General, Mr. Butler. (He had apparently been personally receiving and disposing of contributions much earlier.) This practice seems to have continued after registration which took place on 29th June for the General Secretary appointed in July and who took up office in August states that he was secretary in name only; that he could not get full particulars of membership nor of cash received. This side of the work was kept under Mr. Butler's own control. However that may be, it is the case that the Registrar had to draw attention in September to the fact that the rules regarding benefits were being contravened and gave instructions that proper amounts were to be paid to members including those who had previously been underpaid. This matter was put in order by a circular dated 16th September advising branches of the decision to pay full benefits and convening a special Delegate Conference for 13th October to appoint officers and elect an Executive Committee. This Conference was held and the elections duly took place. Internal dissension immediately developed. The new Treasurer informed the Registrar that the accounts were so faulty that he declined to be responsible for any period prior to his appointment; the Executive Committee split into two camps, each claiming sole authority, with the result that the Registrar eventually took possession of the books pending a Court decision as to where the legitimate authority lies. This decision had not been made when I left the Colony.

57. In the meantime, an interim audit of the Union's books instituted by the Registrar revealed an unsatisfactory state of affairs. The books and

* Mr. Cross has resigned since this Report was prepared.

accounts were found to be inexpertly kept, and the audit had eventually to be held in abeyance in view of the lack of information. Apart from any question of "inexpert" bookkeeping, it is doubtful whether any satisfactory trade union accounts could be kept with an organisation like Mr. Butler's which becomes alternately a "Party" and a "Union" as suits his purposes.

58. As for his British Empire Union and the Oilfields Strike of December, the known facts are that a demand under threat of a strike was sent out on 11th November to all the known employers in the island, including the Oilfields Employers' Association (the O.E.A.T.) and that this was signed by T. Uriah Butler, President-General and Joseph A. Thomas, General Secretary. Letters to the Governor, the Colonial Secretary and the Industrial Adviser were similarly signed. *Subsequent* letters to the Industrial Adviser dated 16th, 23rd and 30th November, and to "Citizen Bede Clifford" dated 27th November were signed only by Butler himself, and one to the O.E.A.T. dated 9th December by T. Uriah Butler, President-General, and McDonald Stanley, Acting General Secretary (a Butler appointment). The correspondence with the O.E.A.T. is given in Appendix No. 9 (A) and the letter to the Governor in No. 9 (B). Butler's own account of these events was given to his adherents in a printed leaflet reproduced as Appendix No. 10.

59. As will be seen from this correspondence, the O.E.A.T. for adequate reasons refused the claim and the stoppage began on 19th December. On the first day, with ordinary picketing, the response was small and mostly affected the Point Fortin area where a good proportion of the workers were Grenadians. (This was Butler's stronghold in 1937.) At other places the response was negligible and the Point-a-Pierre Refinery, and other important places were wholly untouched. Then began the illegal methods—intimidation, molestation, violence, sabotage—described in Appendix No. 3. More and more men stayed away from work until Police action and other steps taken by the Government put an end to violence and interference. The public notices issued by the O.W.T.U. and the O.E.A.T. then had their effect and the return to work began.*

60. Subsequent events, the enactment of an Emergency Powers Ordinance; the ordering of Mr. Butler to leave the oil area; the trek to Port-of-Spain by some 1,200 of his followers (by no means all oil workers); the link-up with the Public Works Strike which began on 8th January—see next paragraph; the procession to "Red House", the Government Building housing the Legislature, the Secretariat and Civil Service; the occupancy of the building by the crowd and its clearance by the Police; the further behaviour of the crowd and the clearance of the Square by the Police and the raid on Butler's headquarters were described by you in your written reply to questions published in "Hansard" of 29th January. I have taken pains not only to inform myself fully on these events but as to whether the action taken by the authorities was justified or whether they went further than the events warranted; and especially whether the police activities—including those during the strike called by the Public Works and Public Services Union—could reasonably be said to have interfered with legitimate trade union agitation and activity. My conclusions are given in Section VI.

(iv) THE PUBLIC WORKS STRIKE

61. The distinguishing features of this strike were:

1. It arose out of genuine grievances regarding wages and service conditions.

* When intimidation had failed to prevent the return to work, Mr. Butler called on the O.E.A.T. to dismiss his Union's members from oilfields employment.

2. It was complicated by differences between Unions claiming to cater for industrial employees in Government Service, particularly as revealed by
 - (a) the failure of the two chief Unions concerned, viz., The Public Works and Public Services Workers' Union and the Federated Workers' Union to agree to joint negotiations, and
 - (b) the refusal of the former to give the number of its members in Government employment or to furnish reliable evidence of its representative character and the consent of the latter to do so ;
3. The refusal of the Government representative at one meeting with the Public Works Union representatives to agree to Mr. Ranjit Kumar, a member of the Legislative Council, but neither an officer nor member of the Union, to be present at the discussions ;
4. It illustrated the difficulties likely to arise when the Government, acting as employer, makes a distinction between " discussions " with a Union having a minority only of employees in membership and " negotiations " when there is a majority ;
5. The opposition of the Trades Union Council to the strike as expressed by its officers in advice to the Union ;
6. The " pact " between the Public Works Union and the " Butlerites " ; and
7. The refusal of the Government to submit the matter to arbitration.

62. The genuineness of the claim for improvement in wages needs no stressing for although there was undue delay—partly but by no means wholly due to the reasons mentioned in the preceding paragraph—a concession of an interim increase was made by the Government and a promise given of further review prior to the strike. As for the failure of the Public Works and the Federated Unions to co-operate, doubtless there were faults of personality on both sides, but the evidence available certainly goes to show that the Federated Union made every effort to get joint negotiations and that the Public Works Union declined. The reason given for this refusal was that the Federated Union had themselves earlier refused to co-operate. These, however, seem to be the facts. The strike sponsored by the Federated Union in February, 1946 (see paragraph 29) was precipitated by the workers themselves and only as a *fait accompli* recognised by the Union. It was ineffective and the Union eventually instructed its members to return to work. This strike was a cause of embarrassment to the Public Works Union (as no doubt it was to the Federated Union also) as they had lodged claims on behalf of their members some of whom, however, joined in the strike. The General Secretary of the Public Works Union, Mr. Hulder, as already related, disavowed the stoppage and did what he could privately and publicly to keep his men at work. This action could without doubt be justified, but he later (12th February) approached the Federated Union with the request *that the strike be prolonged* in order to help him to bring pressure to bear on the Government. As the Federated Union had already agreed to call the strike off this was declined. In the circumstances, it was to say the least disingenuous of Mr. Hulder to represent to me that the request for joint negotiations from the Federated Union in June was declined on the ground that the latter Union had refused to co-operate in February.

63. As regards disclosure of membership, the Federated Union Officers state that their experience has taught them there is nothing to be gained by concealing membership and consequently they do not decline to reveal

figures or to have their records examined provided there is no question of using information regarding individual members. (This claim is confirmed by the Industrial Adviser.) On the other hand, the question of victimisation does arise and I found to my surprise that fear of it exists in the Civil Service. Moreover, there is often such fluctuation in membership in General Workers' Trade Unions that a Secretary or Executive Committee may well hesitate to disclose figures to an employer, especially when it is believed that the men—Unionists and non-Unionists—are united in a just demand and that some workers (human nature being what it is) desire proof of a Union's effectiveness before joining. When, however, there are two Unions concerned, both responsible and both well established, and one is willing to disclose its membership and also agreeable to joint consultations and negotiations and the other declines to give figures, refuses to co-operate in negotiations and claims to be the only appropriate Union for negotiations, the latter puts itself in a false position unless it can make good its claim. The Public Works Union failed in this, for reasons which will appear. Had the desired co-operation been secured it is possible the two Unions together could have claimed such a substantial proportion of workers in their ranks as to have warranted full recognition and a negotiated agreement. As it was, the Government adhered to its policy of being willing to receive representations from a "Minority Union" but not to negotiate. The Public Works Union claimed that its representative character had not previously been impugned, but I find it difficult to believe that the Government's attitude was not known, or that Mr. Hulder, the General Secretary of the Union, whose representations had been received both in regard to individual and group grievances but who had never negotiated an Agreement did not thoroughly understand the position. It is curious if he did not, seeing that the Federated Union Officers did.

64. After the Public Works Union had refused joint working with the Federated Union, a meeting with the latter was arranged and held on 12th November, and its representatives informed that an interim advance in basic wages and in cost-of-living bonuses would be granted, with arrears, and further consideration given to the whole subject of wages and conditions. Advice of the proposed advances was later communicated, at a separate meeting held on 12th November, to the Public Works representatives; but the further consideration was apparently not made clear, probably because the Union declined to consider "the offer" and demanded negotiations on its own programme. (The Government's intention regarding further consideration was, however, notified in a letter to the Union dated 13th December.) The Union was informed by letter that a further meeting would be arranged to "continue the discussions" with the Financial Secretary in the chair. Further correspondence followed and was carried on until 3rd December, but proved abortive because the Union considered the Government evaded the issue which was in effect their demand for negotiations. The Union eventually, their request for arbitration being declined in view of their refusal to produce evidence of their representative character, called a strike for 8th January.

65. Before calling the strike, the Union consulted the Trades Union Council, and asked for support. This was declined and it was strongly urged by the T.U.C. officers that in all the circumstances such strike action should not be taken. It would be ill-timed and most ill-advised in view of the unconstitutional activities of Mr. Butler in the oilfields and the fact that the transport of oilfield workers would be affected. This advice was rejected, a pact was made with Mr. Butler and later his followers were used as pickets. Thus the Unions of the Oilfield Workers, the Transport and General Workers, and the Federated Workers all of which were involved were antagonised. The Government

issued a statement deploring the strike and announced that "those who obey the strike notice will not be re-employed". The Colonial Secretary stated during a discussion in the Legislative Council that Mr. Hamel Smith, the President of the Labour Party and legal adviser to the Public Works Union, had informed him that the strike was called not for a 50 per cent. increase but to demonstrate the strength of the Union. Mr. Hamel Smith denied this. I cannot attach much significance to either assertion or denial. Clearly, the Union, denied recognition on the grounds of its inadequate representative character, and having refused to prove the contrary by statistical evidence, had two alternatives, either to accept the offers of the Government and await a more favourable opportunity or to demonstrate its strength by showing that it had behind it the overwhelming majority of industrial employees in the public services and this by a stoppage. It took the latter course; the strike therefore was in effect one for recognition—or in other words to demonstrate the strength or representative character of the Union. One ironical by-product was that some 490 scavengers employed by the Port-of-Spain authorities not members of the Public Works or any Union came out on strike and were induced to return by promise of an increase in wages. The Public Works strike was abortive. The Union officials complained bitterly that this was due to a "strike-breaking notice" issued by the Government saying that "those who obey the strike notice will not be re-employed". It is the case, as the Government fully intended, that this drastic warning made many prospective strikers realise the seriousness of the position. Some railway "shop stewards" after giving "strike instructions" to their members went to work. Mr. Hulder, the Union's General Secretary (who had several times proclaimed that he had power to "paralyse the public services"), and Mr. Hamel Smith, its legal adviser and President-General of the Labour Party, considerably over-rated their influence and authority over public works employees (their effective membership was not really large), and in all the circumstances I have described it is not surprising the response was small. The Government claimed all along that most of those who struck were misled by their leaders. No doubt this was so, but that was all the more reason why, when the crisis was over they should, with reasonable precautions, have taken these deluded men back into employment. Strikers were still out of work during my inquiry, but I gather this is now having attention.

(v) SUGAR ESTATES STRIKE

66. There was one strike which is not listed in Appendix No. 2 and this took place on one of the principal sugar estates just as I was completing my inquiry and was busy collecting data preparatory to my departure from the Colony. It is not without interest that no trouble of this sort had occurred on the sugar estates last winter, no doubt partly because, although the sugar workers are among the lowest paid in Trinidad (as is usually the case with agricultural workers) there had been three successive trade union agreements in January, 1945, April, 1946, and March, 1947. These had provided for increases in wages; 7 days' holiday with pay per annum, subject to an attendance qualification; an 8-hour day for all daily-rated time workers, with extra rates for overtime, Sundays and Public Holidays, together with a Joint Consultative Committee to promote a better understanding, etc., settling of disputes and other matters arising out of the employment of field and factory workers. Each agreement was operative for twelve months with provision for renewal or revision.

67. The strike began on 5th May on the Perseverance Estate of Caroni Limited and according to the employing company eventually involved some 1,400 or so workers. This strike was also the subject of debate in the Legislature

on a motion submitted by Mr. Ranjit Kumar who pressed for an inquiry into the trouble. He stated that 8,000 workers on the Caroni Estates had come out on strike; that 1,500 tons of sugar were in danger of being lost, involving a financial loss of \$2 million; that "the strike was purely spontaneous"; that it was "only when the strike had started that I understand Mr. Butler's trade union heard of it and organisers of that union went to see what assistance they could give" and that the whole situation demanded a committee of inquiry by members of the Legislature. The Sugar Workers' Union he stigmatised as incompetent and in effect a mere tool of the employers. The indications were, he continued, that the strike would spread very much further and might encompass the whole of the industry. Mr. Butler had threatened that "if prompt action is not taken the strike may extend even outside the sugar industry to encompass other industries as well". Wages were quite inadequate. "The figure we quoted to Mr. Dalley as inadequate was 74 cents per day" but "on the Perseverance Estate they have never received anything like 74 cents: it is 61 cents per task or per day". Mr. Chanka Maharaj seconded the motion alleging that the cause of the outbreak was the payment of starvation wages. He was supported by other members of the Legislative Council who whilst being unable to support his figures thought an inquiry was desirable. Mr. C. C. Abidh, President of the Sugar Workers' Union, strongly repudiated the attack on the Union, drew attention to the improvements secured, denied that the strike was spontaneous, and condemned the action of members of the Legislative Council who had gone to the sugar estate instead of urging the workers to put their grievances up through their Union, had belittled the Union and its officers and had encouraged the unauthorised strike. Unrest was deliberately fostered and then the Legislature was asked to inquire into it. Mr. H. Robinson, a sugar estate owner, challenged both Mr. Kumar's figures and his inferences. The total number of employees on the Caroni Estates was never more than 5,000 and the number of strikers did not exceed 1,400. The unrest had been deliberately engineered as an attack on orthodox trade unionism. Mr. Kumar stated that not one labourer received 74 cents per day or per task; but the average wage for all field workers on Caroni was \$1.25 per day. As for improvements, in 1935/6 the sugar industry spent on wages \$1,936,000 producing a crop of 154,000 tons of sugar; during 1945/6, prior to the new wages agreement of March, 1947, \$4,532,000 on a crop of only 109,000 tons. The figure of 1,400 strikers was also supported by Mr. A. Gomes, President of the Federated Workers' Union, who said he had taken the trouble to investigate this. He also maintained that the evidence showed that the strike had been engineered by the same people and the same methods as the oil strike of last December; that it was a small affair until Mr. Kumar and others had gone into the area, and that largely through his agitation the number on strike had risen from 200 to 1,400. The Governor in winding up the debate took the unusual course of intervening and expressing a point of view, as he said it was a matter which was of such far-reaching importance in the conduct of industrial relations . . . it went to the root of industrial relationships. It was a question of whether, whenever trouble occurred in an industry, the Government should intervene or whether the normal channels of approach, the constitutional trade union machinery should be utilised. The latter method should in his view be used in the particular case under review. The motion was put and defeated by 10 votes to 5. The debate took place on 16th May. By the 21st the number on strike had diminished to approximately 900; by the 29th May to about 350, confined to two of the Caroni Estates and gradually the stoppage came to an end.

68. It seems necessary to supplement the foregoing by recounting the results of my own inquiries and observations. The day after the strike had

begun, a telephone message was received for me in my absence from Mr. Butler's headquarters to say there was trouble on the sugar estates and that Mr. Butler had "himself left to settle it". Much earlier than this I had received intimation that his followers were at work in both the oilfield areas and on the sugar estates, and I had myself heard and seen it going on. Moreover, there was other evidence of Mr. Butler's peculiar influence, for as stated in the Legislative Council debate, it was true as far as I could learn that neither from any official trade union source nor from any local group or leader or individual worker was any claim submitted or grievance voiced or mentioned to the Caroni management at headquarters or in the field. I was informed at first hand that when the first group of men on the Perseverance Estate were asked why they were not turning out they merely shrugged and said they "couldn't say". Was it a question of money? "Not more money boss; we told not to come out and we don't come out". This atmosphere has to be experienced to be fully appreciated, but it is a "Butler atmosphere", partly superstitious but partly also dread of physical violence—and not without cause.

69. It is patent to me that when Mr. Butler could no longer disguise from his "warrior-workers" that I had not come to Trinidad as a result of his personal influence with the British Government and that my primary mission was not to compel the O.E.A.T. to reinstate those of his deluded followers who had refused to return to work (some of whom were certainly guilty of acts of violence and sabotage) he began once more to try to work up a strike on an island-wide scale. This effort culminated during the very week Mr. Kumar's motion was debated when Mr. Butler wrote to the Governor to grant him an interview as the only means of avoiding a general stoppage of work which he would otherwise call in 48 hours. I cannot disguise from myself, either, that Mr. Butler's influence with the East Indian has hitherto not been at all commensurate with that of Mr. Kumar, himself an Indian speaking their language, and understanding their way of life, and that had not he, Mr. Kumar, personally visited the Caroni Estates and fanned the flames, the strike would, notwithstanding Mr. Butler's efforts and those of his followers, have remained insignificant. As it was it cannot be denied that the figures rose rapidly and considerably during Mr. Kumar's campaign assisted by another member of the Legislative Council, Mr. Chanka Maharaj, who not only spoke to sugar estate workers but also visited the oilfields to assist Mr. Butler to induce the oilfields workers to strike. A public man has the right—it is rather his duty—to expose what he believes to be injustice and to champion the cause of the under-paid; but he does *himself* an injustice and misleads others if he disclaims responsibility for his work or argues that the revolt which he inspired was a spontaneous act.

70. There is this further to be said. In the course of my inquiries I met members of the Victoria County Council of which Mr. Kumar is ex-officio Chairman. The meeting was arranged by him, but I stipulated it should be informal and private, and not a public meeting as he proposed, as I wished those present to be free to give me any confidential information they desired. However, I found the meeting had been announced as an open one, but at my request the pressman present made only a formal report of the proceedings. I was given some quite helpful facts and views regarding task-work rates of pay, housing, child labour, etc., on the sugar estates some of which I was able to confirm and some of which I found to be inaccurate. I was asked for and gave advice on certain aspects of trade unionism, of the functions and *locus* of the County Council in the matters under discussion and of the help the County Council and workers present could legitimately give, especially through the Sugar Workers' Trade Union.

71. Mr. Kumar arrived at the meeting some half-hour after it had been in progress and I advised him of what had already transpired. He gave some additional facts but denounced the Sugar Workers' Union : said it was quite ineffective and its leaders mere "stooges" who were using it for political ends. I at once strongly deprecated this attitude, told Mr. Kumar that he was making similar charges to those made by others against him ; that such weaknesses of the Union as had been exposed were in no small measure due to the lack of Trade Union education and principle amongst the sugar workers, and that the object of all concerned should be to strengthen the Union not to belittle and obstruct it. I then switched back the discussion to its proper channels, in which course I was supported by the Treasurer of the Union. I found later to my surprise that *on the day following the settlement made by the Sugar Workers' Union on 11th March, 1947*, the "Economics Committee" of the County Council "decided" that the settlement was not satisfactory and recommended that the position be not accepted *and action be taken in the matter*. Now the County Councils are Advisory Bodies established as part of the new electoral constitution under an Ordinance of 1946. Their functions are clearly laid down in the Ordinance and, of course, they have no authority whatever to take any part in regulating wages in any industry. The attitude of the Victoria Council, however, reveals some of the cross-currents in the political and trade union movements of Trinidad ; also the difficulties a Union catering largely for illiterate labourers has to encounter in its efforts to establish satisfactory collective bargaining. It also sheds light on two other matters of interest : one, Mr. Kumar's views as to the role of the Council of which he, as the Elected Legislative Councillor for the County is ex-officio chairman ; and, two, the line he took during the Legislative Council debate on the Sugar Estates strike.

72. Mr. Kumar undoubtedly feels most acutely the low standard of the East Indian Sugar Workers. In this, of course, he is not alone. Where he parts company from his fellow elected legislators is in his attitude towards trade unionism. His opinion of the Sugar Workers' Union is not uninfluenced by personal antipathy to its President and by recent political rivalries. Apart, however, from his opinion of this "stooge union" as he inaccurately and unworthily calls it, he evidently takes the view that none of the Trade Unions in Trinidad is an effective bargaining instrument and, further, *that none of them can ever become so*. I do not think I am misrepresenting him in the slightest when I report that he holds that the strikes and riots of 1937 originated Trade Unionism and that the strikes of 1947 will for all practical purposes destroy it, and that all that is really needed is a people's Government and for that Government to lay down, in all the principal industries, terms and conditions of service. (This would even save the workers the necessity of paying Trade Union contributions !) Hence his attitude to the functions of the County Council ; his refusal to co-operate in the building up of a sound Trade Union (he contended he had not the time) ; his actions during the strike ; his unhesitating temporary alliance with Mr. Butler, and his appeal (which he confessed he knew would be futile) to the Legislative Council to take action. Had a tithe of this energy been devoted to getting such complaints as were justified dealt with through the existing conciliation machinery and getting the workers to recognise these channels are available for them to use and assisting to build up the strength of the Union, some additional really worthwhile results could have been achieved and more would be in prospect. Mr. Kumar told the Legislative Council that Mr. Butler is a desperate man, as he undoubtedly is, but is it the function of a legislator to assist desperate men in their desperate courses ?

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations.

(i) GENERAL CONDITIONS

73. Apart from wages and actual working conditions in industry and the public services, the problems which are still in most urgent need of attention are the cost of living; housing, including water supplies and sanitation; education, social welfare and the decasualisation of labour.

(1) *The Cost of Living : Minimum Wage : Trade Boards*

74. The Colonial Government has under active consideration at the moment how to reduce the cost of living and to prevent its future rise and in the absence of full information I can only say that it seems to me doubtful, in view of British experience, whether the desired result is likely to be achieved without rationing and a much more effective price control than exists at present in Trinidad.

75. There are, as was to be expected, complaints of the faulty basis of the present Cost-of-Living Index and its consequent alleged futility as a guide to the actual cost of living. In this connection, both the Federated Workers' Trade Union and the Chamber of Commerce drew my attention to the Report dated July, 1941, of Mr. F. A. Norman, former Labour Adviser to the Comptroller for Development and Welfare in the West Indies, and in particular to the following extract :

"While agreeing with the critics that the cost of living index figure is open to criticism as it rests on a theoretical basis rather than on an actual examination of real budgets, I do not consider that the present time is opportune for including additional items of necessary expenditure, neither do I recommend that any change in the weights of the existing items should be made, but as stated in paragraph 39, I fully endorse the Government's intention to conduct a post-war budgetary inquiry, and I would emphasise this by adding that the proposed inquiry should be conducted under the direct supervision of experienced officers on a fairly comprehensive sample system which in turn should form a basis for a new cost of living index system."

The Union urged that the time is now ripe for a fresh compilation more in accord with post-war standards of living. The Chamber of Commerce contended that conditions have not yet returned sufficiently to normal to warrant a post-war budgetary inquiry. In addition they submitted valuable evidence giving a comparison between the Trinidad Cost-of-Living Index and one constructed on the much more elaborate computations of the Esso-Standard Oil Company. This comparison showed that there was strikingly little difference between increases in the cost of living shown by the two indices. The Chamber accordingly concluded that "whilst admitting its imperfections, the present computation of the Cost-of-Living Index has served as an excellent yardstick of general trends".

76. This evidence goes to confirm the conclusion arrived at by the Tudor Davies Commission on the cost of living in Nigeria (Colonial No. 204, 1946) as to the inclusion of a larger number of items of expenditure being of little value as an indication of the trend of prices. There are, however, other important aspects of the matter. The Trade Unions complain that the present minimum wage legislation in Trinidad is a dead letter, and it is the case that whilst the present Cost-of-Living Index has doubtless served as a yardstick of general trends, there is no reliable survey of what constitutes a reasonable

minimum standard of life. Moreover, if such a survey and the compilation of the post-war budgetary inquiry envisaged by Mr. Norman are to be postponed until normal conditions prevail they will be postponed to the Greek Kalends. In contradistinction to the Chamber of Commerce, therefore, I urge that the new survey be carried out as soon as the necessary experienced officers, as recommended by Mr. Norman, can be secured to supervise it. I further strongly recommend that the carefully considered proposals of the Tudor Davies Commission, with the necessary modifications to suit Trinidad, be adopted—namely that the Government, in consultation with representatives of the organised workers, “compile properly thought-out statements in terms of a small number of essential items of expenditure of what in fact the cost of living is if people spend their money wisely. These compilations would be both a record of movements of cost of living and an indication of the best expenditure patterns”. (See Appendix No. 11.) Some of the vital work of the Departments of Agriculture and Social Welfare in relation to nutrition would be considerably helped by such a survey and such compilations. They would also be most valuable in connection with the work of Trade Boards and the establishment of minimum wage rates which my inquiry has convinced me are most desirable.

77. The Forster Commission recommended that “the Government might well consider the establishment of Trade Boards similar to those at present operating in Great Britain”. The Government did so and went so far as to draft a Bill for the Legislative Council in 1939. The measure did not meet with acceptance, however, and was dropped. The attitude of the Trade Unions was not dissimilar to that of important sections of the British movement two generations or so ago and even more recently: they believed the setting up of Trade Boards would militate against Trade Unionism and that a minimum rate would always tend to become a maximum. The whole history of the Boards in this country has, of course, proved quite the contrary—so far from militating against Trade Unionism, the establishment of responsible Unions and the development of collective bargaining was helped not hindered by such Boards. The Trinidad Unions have now modified their views and would welcome the necessary legislation. The Chamber of Commerce, however, which also opposed the original measure as being inapplicable to Trinidad still maintains that point of view. Its Secretary states:

“Having regard to the generally unsettled economic conditions in the Colony at present time and Government controls imposed on Industry and Commerce in the matter of commodity prices, it is my Committee’s considered view that the establishment of Trade Boards is impracticable today. Furthermore, it is felt that conditions will remain far from normal, and for so long a period ahead, that it would be unwise to regard the establishment of Trade Boards in Trinidad as other than a long range policy for possible implementation to fill in the gaps after responsible Trade Unionism has firmly established itself in the Colony.”

78. I confess I cannot see the force of these arguments. No one who knows Trinidad can deny that precisely those conditions which Trade Boards are designed to remove exist in the Colony. They cannot wait until “normality” returns, nor even until Trade Unions have covered the unorganised trades. The “gaps” require filling in at once. If there were no Trade Unions in the Colony such surveys as are outlined in paragraph 76 and the fixing of minimum rates of pay by some similar machinery to the Trade Boards would be needed. As it is, there are responsible Trade Unions actively functioning and such a measure as advocated would help to plant those

Unions more firmly as well as establish, later, collective bargaining where it does not at present exist and where it is sadly needed. The wages of the unorganised and particularly some shop assistants and women wage-earners imperatively demand speedy action. I strongly urge that such action be taken.

(2) *Housing : Water Supply : Sanitation*

79. In his Report on Development and Welfare in the West Indies just published (Colonial No. 212) Sir John Macpherson points out that "Town Planning in the modern English sense—co-ordinated housing and community planning—had not been studied in the West Indies before 1944. Housing and slum clearance schemes had been undertaken to only a very limited extent . . . confined to Jamaica and Trinidad". Certainly the deplorable housing conditions in Trinidad are such that a newcomer cannot but be shocked by them. It is not only that the slums are as bad as anything in some of the back alleys of our large towns and cities (and certainly I never saw anything to equal, say, the John John site in Port-of-Spain or the "barracks" of the Sugar Estates) but that, as Sir John points out there are . . . "far greater areas of 'slum' than exist proportionately in the British Isles". These conditions constitute a terrible legacy and repeated attention has been drawn to them and to the necessity for radical remedies—e.g., in the reports of the Royal Commission, 1897, the Olivier Commission, 1930, the Forster Commission, 1937, and the Royal Commission, 1938/9. The redeeming feature today is that the problem is being tackled. I was supplied with information as to what is being done under Government auspices (see Appendix 12) and inspected some of the slum clearance and building schemes; also the housing schemes for their staffs on the Oilfields and Sugar Estates.

Excellent progress has been made in the oilfields themselves, where a good deal of the housing is of a high standard and extensions are in hand, but in the surrounding villages little or nothing has been done. They are still, as in 1937, places without any apparent regulation or control or observance of elementary rules as to structure, space or sanitation and are the rendezvous of hooligans and undesirable elements. They make an ideal recruiting ground for "Butlerism". On the Sugar Estates, too, although staff housing is good, the "barracks"—lived in rent free—are absolutely unfit for human habitation and should be demolished. Other houses and conditions are deplorable. The difficulties, as the Forster Commission recognised, are formidable, but they should be faced and the moral, as apart from legal obligations of the Sugar Estates, should be accepted so that in co-operation with the Government, who should survey and replan such areas in accordance with previous authoritative recommendations, these plague spots may be eradicated.

80. It will be apparent from the foregoing that what has already been achieved, limited though it is, due to shortage of materials and other difficulties, would be significant if the legacy of the past were not so shocking and the problem not so vast and so many other problems requiring men, material and finance did not need attention. It is clear that housing must have a high priority in the Ten-Year Development Plan, and I am satisfied that the Governor who, with Lady Shaw, has visited all the different centres and seen at first hand the condition of the people, is fully seized of the importance and urgency of the problem and of the necessity for this priority. A similar urgency applies to a water supply both for the large centres and rural areas, and I noted that several schemes, both large and small, are in progress.

(3) *Social Welfare : Education*

81. It would seem, too, that the effectiveness of much social welfare work is dependent on satisfactory housing and planning—home pride, decency, child welfare, community organisation and so on. A plan of priorities in social welfare work itself would also appear to be desirable.

Education, though it has a most important bearing on responsible Trade Union membership and activity—as, of course, on every aspect of life—is somewhat out of the scope of this Report and in any event is dealt with at length in Sir John Macpherson's latest Biennial Report. Reference is made to the education of workers in Trade Union principles in paragraph 105.

(4) *Casual Labour*

82. The difficulties surrounding any efforts to bring about the decasualisation of labour in this country are well enough known : those in Trinidad are different in many respects and in some more intractable. They are described in Sir John Macpherson's Report : e.g., the custom of leaving work as soon as earnings reach a desired amount, so characteristic of both rural and urban workers : the dislike of regular work if this includes that when absence is desired, notice should be given, and so on. The subject is already under discussion so far as the Docks and Wharves are concerned (one of the contributory causes of the Waterfront strike was the small wage-packet of the men working only a few days each week) and I understand that substantial progress is being made ; attention needs to be given to it so far as the Public Works Department is concerned. There can be no satisfactory social conditions while there is so much insecurity and so much under-employment aggravating the problem of unemployment.

(5) *Child Labour on the Sugar Estates*

83. It is widely stated that child labour persists on some but not all of the sugar estates with the consent if not the connivance of the employer. Children of school age are of course forbidden by law to work there, but it seems to be clear from the census and school attendance figures that numbers of children are not attending school at any rate. No doubt on some estates a much closer watch could be kept, but I satisfied myself that the Sugar Estate Managements had issued written instructions on the subject to their overseers (who knew they would be in serious trouble if they ignored them) and I was assured that "spot checks" were made from time to time. I confess that although I made some such "spot checks" myself both with and without the knowledge of the employers I was not able to discover any under-age children. Several boys I judged to be not more than 11 or 12 years of age turned out to be 14 and 15. One in particular I saw in a clinic. He had been kicked by a mule. I was confident he was under age and I immediately got the personnel officer to go along with me to make inquiry, but the boy turned out to be personally known to the overseer ; his birth certificate showed that he was 14. Other individual investigators claim to have shown that children who have been working for a year and more in the chip-chip gangs are only just of school-leaving age.

84. One would think that insistence on the production of a birth certificate would be simple and would settle the business ; but British standards cannot be applied in these matters to a people who still believe in child marriage and who for so long resented even civil marriage registration as an attempt to convert them to Christianity. Those who think East Indian customs can be easily over-riden or ignored need to have some experience before coming to ready-made conclusions. I was credibly informed and this was confirmed

by a schoolmaster in the area, that not only do parents connive at this child labour but that boys produce their elder brother's birth certificate and that another difficulty is that some of these certificates simply show "boy child". (The same schoolmaster pointed out that many East Indians look for partial support in their "old age"—i.e., towards the end of their working life, from age 50 onwards, from their grandchildren and contended that old age pensions are a necessary adjunct to the abolition of child labour.) Time and time again specific complaints are made that under-age children are being employed on a certain estate or in a certain area, but when it comes to producing evidence the complainants (individuals and societies) will not give such information as would lead to action. I myself encountered individuals who said they had "inside knowledge" that children under age had been employed and when asked why they had not reported the matter to the appropriate authority said they would "have got into trouble"—if not with the employer, with the parents. I had to point out to my informants that they should have been willing to face the risk and that in any event there was the Trade Union and there was the Industrial Adviser, either of whom would have taken appropriate action without necessarily revealing the source of information.

85. It is clear that concerted action is necessary if this problem is to be tackled effectively—the employer, the trade union, the teacher, the attendance officer and last, but not least, the parent, are all involved and have their share of responsibility. So far as the Government is concerned, the Director of Education and the Industrial Adviser and possibly the Welfare Officer could take the initiative as regards their respective departments. There would be no difficulty, I am assured, as between the employers and the trade union officials. The law is adequate and the suggested all-round co-operation should ensure the removal of this blot on the industrial life of Trinidad.

(ii) THE POLITICAL MOVEMENT: THE LABOUR PARTY

86. The development of the political side of the Labour Movement has been outlined up to about 1935 (see paragraphs 15 and 16). Even in the lifetime of the late Captain Cipriani, however, and he had an acknowledged hold on the vast majority of coloured workers, the Labour Party's alleged ineffectiveness as a means of improving the standard of life of the worker led to a considerable falling-off in membership and to the formation of the rival "Citizen's League" in 1935 with which Mr. Butler was connected until he formed his own Home Rule Party. (See paragraph 51.) Subsequently, a gradual deterioration set in until both the Party and the League became practically moribund. An attempt to revive the Labour Party was made last year by Mr. Hamel Smith, formerly the secretary and moving spirit of the defunct "Progressive Democratic Party" (described as "a Capitalist Party" by Trade Unionists) who became President-General, but it has no real roots in the working-class movement and is a shadow of its former self. Mr. Hamel Smith became the legal adviser of the P.W. and P.S. Union and as already related took part in the discussions preceding the strike called by that Union.

87. The Elections to Municipal Councils and the Legislature of 1946 under the adult franchise of the new constitution caused a big switch of attention from direct Trade Union affairs to politics and there was plenty of personal rivalry but no organised labour effort. It is freely alleged that connection with the Trade Unions was then made merely as a stepping stone to a political career by candidates for the Legislative Council, and this led to personal feeling which has by no means subsided. It would certainly appear that candidates who sought the support of Uriah Butler have paid and will continue to pay, in meal or in malt, for that support. (The irony of the weakness of

the industrial side of the Movement in 1937 and of the political in 1946 will be readily appreciated.) There was no unity in the political field. The so-called Labour Party had no influence on the elections and was not even considered as having any by the candidates—Trade Union or other. A proper relation between the industrial and political movements is yet to seek. They should each be a tower of strength to the other but “politics” is unfortunately a source of division at present and not of unity.

(iii) THE TRADE UNION ORDINANCES

88. I have already mentioned that the better-informed Trade Union officials are desirous that the Colony's laws shall be brought completely into line with the latest British legislation. A Bill is already in draft to repeal certain sub-sections of the 1943 Ordinance based on the 1927 Act. I suggest that representatives of the Trades Union Council be fully advised and consulted on this. It is desirable that Trade Union leaders should be fully posted in these matters. The question of the mishandling of Union funds by unscrupulous officials has been under consideration. The provisions dealing with the liability of officers in charge of funds of registered Trade Unions should be extended to cover Trade Unions in formation, and I anticipate this will be done. In some quarters strong objection is raised to “mushroom” unions springing up and “muscle-ing in” where already accredited Unions are operating, and it is suggested that the Registrar should be empowered to refuse to grant registration in such cases. There must, in my opinion, be no ban on the right of workers to form and join the Union of their choice: but I see no objection, having regard to the youth of the Movement, to the Registrar being authorised to consult the T.U.C. and the appropriate Union or Unions and then advise the applicants, if necessary, that the wage-earners concerned are, in the opinion of the Movement, already adequately catered for. He should not have power to refuse registration if the newcomers persist and in other respects the Regulations are fulfilled. The education of the rank and file is referred to later.

(iv) LESSONS OF THE STRIKES

89. It will be appreciated that in the comments I make on the strikes, it will be a case of “wisdom after the event”; but at any rate I shall try to take an objective view.

(1) *The Waterfront Strike*

90. Difficulty first arose because the Shipping Association felt that the demands of the Union were entirely unreasonable coming so soon after the settlement of April and that “a responsible Union” would never have presented them, or, alternatively, would have been able to produce good reasons for calling for a revised agreement. Quite possibly; but it is no use Trinidad employers sighing for British trade unions or even imagining that *British employers* consider the more mature British unions are invariably reasonable in their demands or in the presentation of them. Doubtless a more experienced Union would have sent a formal three-months' notice, accompanying this with a request for a meeting and a list of claims to be considered in order that agreement on a revision might be reached before the notice expired. That the Union did not do so in that form was hardly a sufficient reason for declining discussion. There was perhaps something more at the back of the minds of both the Association and the Union. Dr. Solomon in the Legislative Council said the Union was young and that the mistakes of youth are forgivable. The Union, however, from the angle of the Shipping Association and the Wharves Management looked upon itself as “mewing its mighty youth” and being determined to soar—to the “closed shop”, via the strike! To be

convinced about intentions and motives is one thing. To deny discussion of legitimate—if considered unreasonable—claims is another. I do not think the Shipping Association would have lost anything by freely conceding the Union's claim to have all its items—reasonable and unreasonable—fully presented.

91. When the Union, balked of the opportunity to discuss its claims, referred the deadlock to the Industrial Adviser it showed wisdom; but when this failed to resolve the difficulties its leaders would, I think, have been well advised to agree to refer the case to arbitration. On the point of the scope of the arbitration, I find it difficult to believe that the Industrial Adviser ever intended or suggested that only the narrow issue of whether the Union could claim to have its claims discussed should be submitted—indeed the records indicate the contrary and, in any event, when that misunderstanding, if there was a misunderstanding, was removed and full arbitration had been agreed to it was fatal to go back on it. This may well have been a "mistake of youth" but it was surely a sign of internal dissension. There must have been some undisclosed motive or powerful unrevealed influence behind this revocation. All Unions should understand that once a signature is on the paper or a decision given, there must be no hedging. Confidence and mutual trust can never otherwise be secured and maintained.

92. When the Government tried mediation, they should, I think, have gone to the T.U.C. as Sir Bede Clifford himself did at a later stage. It was a mistake for Mr. A. Gomes to try to mediate, seeing that he was looked upon as the leader of a rival Trade Union. In saying this, I must make it clear that after a close examination of the records and first-hand accounts of what transpired, I am convinced that Mr. Gomes' advice as to the alternative courses before the Union was admirable and such as I should have been happy myself to have given, but—he was suspect by some of the leaders of the Waterfront Union and the mediation attempt, although within an ace of succeeding, consequently failed.* It is true the Shipping Association was not favourably disposed to T.U.C. mediation (see paragraph 44) and this, together with the failure recorded above no doubt influenced the Government to tell the T.U.C. General Secretary that no useful purpose would be served by pursuing the matter. I appreciate, too, that when a bottle filled with ordure and filth has been flung through one's window, smashing on the furniture and narrowly missing one's family (an actual occurrence) it is not easy for an employer to take a detached view of how to settle an industrial dispute. At any rate the Government showed wisdom when—notwithstanding its declaration that everything had been tried—it eventually, as a result of a Legislative Council debate, made another and this time successful effort to bring the stoppage to an end. I conclude that up to this stage the Union's charges, that the Government had taken the part of the Shipping Association and had acted as strike breaker were inaccurate and unjustified. It was bound to protect the people's food and did so. The action of the police is dealt with separately.

93. I pass over the non-reinstatement of many of the strikers for such a long period on account of the decision—made clear at the time of the settlement but not appearing in the "formula"—to retain the "volunteers". That some of the strikers were "difficult" I have no doubt. I have equally no doubt—the evidence is too strong to admit of doubt—that there was discrimination for a time against those who were looked upon as "trouble makers", and an expressed desire that these men "should have a lesson".

* The leaflet issued later by the Union was most unworthy and I deprecate and deeply regret its publication.

Such incidents after this kind of strike are almost inevitable, although they certainly leave a nasty taste in the mouth. However, as all are now back at work, I think all concerned would do well to let bygones be bygones. From a visit I paid to the wharves before I left I believe they will do so. I had every evidence of the good feeling between the General Manager and the workers; and it was gratifying to note that "strikers" and "volunteers" displayed no antagonism.

94. I cannot, however, approve of the attitude of the Government towards "recognition" of the Union after the strike. Granting that, in all the circumstances, the Government was justified in not immediately dismissing the "voluntary workers"; granting the soundness of the Government's general policy of "discussion but no negotiations" with Unions who cannot satisfy the test of a majority membership, it was, in my opinion, entirely wrong for a Government claiming to be desirous of encouraging Trade Unionism to decline recognition on the ground that *the number of non-Unionists engaged during the strike made the Union unrepresentative*. If the voluntary workers are to stay, and while they stay, the Government should not only declare that they desire all the wharves employees to become Trade Unionists and take their responsible share in the work of the Union, but should frankly concede recognition on the basis of the Union's representative character at the time of the strike. This was sufficiently demonstrated by the strike itself. In any event its percentage of members then, on the audit figures, was sufficient to warrant recognition on the basis of the British Postmaster General's recent declaration, notwithstanding the casual nature of the employment. The Wharves Administration should also be prepared to make a signed agreement with the Union at the conclusion of the present negotiations. It is not dignified for the Wharves Administration to wait until the Shipping Association (which is again willing to grant recognition of the Union) has concluded an agreement and then after "listening to the Union's representations" to apply the same conditions to the larger number of dock and wharves workers in Government employ. It is not without significance that Sir John Macpherson mentions in his Report that "a greater readiness on the part of Governments to sign with Trade Unions joint agreements regarding wages and working conditions of the kind that are so familiar in private industry might bring an improvement (in industrial relations with subordinate employees and manual workers employed by Government Departments)".

95. It is equally necessary to point out to the Union that it went a long way towards forfeiting the public sympathy it originally held by resorting, if only for a time, to physical violence, mass-picketing, taking non-strikers to headquarters for disciplining and other illegal methods. That all the officers or the whole of the Executive Committee, let alone the bulk of the members were parties to these tactics I do not believe—the West Indian though emotional and often most naïve and credulous is not generally addicted to violence—but that some of the leaders not only tolerated but encouraged these tactics I have convincing evidence. These were not the "errors of youth", but I deeply regret to say wrongful acts knowingly and deliberately committed. At the risk of emphasising the obvious I would impress upon the Trade Unionists of Trinidad that although a strike is quite legal, physical violence is not. "American mass picketing" and obstruction are not. Interference which goes beyond peaceful persuasion with those who wish to go to work is not. Even if immediately they seem successful, such tactics damage the Union and degrade those who practise them. From a subsequent statement made by the Union its officers were of the opinion that there was no protection in the Ordinances for peaceful picketing, immunity from tort, etc.; but of course this is quite a mistaken notion.

(2) *The Oilfields : the Sugar Estates and the Public Works Strikes*

96. On these first two strikes, I think I need only say in this paragraph that when Mr. Butler sought an interview with the Governor under threat of a general strike he was informed by the Governor after a prolonged and patient hearing on 19th May, that he would *not* act as negotiator between his (Butler's) Union and the Oilfields Employers' Association. Sir John Shaw also said : " I have authority to say, and let there be no misunderstanding about this, that three Employers' Associations, viz. :

- (i) The Oilfields Employers' Association ;
- (ii) The Sugar Manufacturers' Federation ; and
- (iii) The Shipping Association of Trinidad ;

as well as three Trade Unions, viz. :

- (i) The Federated Workers' Trade Union ;
- (ii) The Sugar Estates and Sugar Factories Workers' Trade Union ; and
- (iii) The Oilfield Workers' Trade Union ;

do not approve the methods pursued by the ' Butler Union ' which they consider disruptive to trade relationships and agreements. These organisations are not willing to have any dealings with the British Empire Workers' Peasants' and Ratepayers' Trade Union led by Mr. Butler". I firmly endorse those decisions.

I do not think responsible Trade Unionism and " Butlerism " are compatible or can exist side by side.

I have already deprecated the attempted link-up of the sugar strike with Mr. Butler's efforts to call another strike in the oilfields as part of a general stoppage. Granting that the sugar workers had grievances it is not possible to defend Mr. Maharaj's visit to the oilfields and his propaganda there. In Appendix 13 will be found correspondence with Mr. Butler relating to the scope of my inquiry—see paragraph 5. Later his two principal officers sounded me as to the prospects of co-operation. I told them my position had been made quite clear. If they co-operated their help would be welcome. If not, I should have to manage without it. I asked to see Mr. Butler personally. This was promised and confirmed by letter. I undertook to approach the O.E.A.T. as to the possibilities of a meeting and additional reinstatements of the 1946 strikers. I soon found that the tactics of Mr. Butler and his followers had estranged workers as well as employers. Nevertheless I found that there were possibilities of further reinstatements, but all my efforts were nullified by the illicit activities of Mr. Butler and his henchmen, culminating in the threat of a general strike. He eventually declined to meet me and his actions made mediation quite impossible. All who have dealings with him sooner or later discover that he is definitely abnormal and not open to reason.

I do not think the Public Works strike calls for much additional comment. I consider the Government spokesman was justified in objecting to Mr. Ranjit Kumar's presence at the meeting with the Public Works Union representatives. Mr. Kumar may have wished to get data for another debate in the Legislative Council, but he had no connection with the Union and no other legitimate claim to be present. Other matters are referred to in paragraph 101. The general sugar situation is dealt with in paragraphs 110 and 111.

(v) THE POLICE

97. In examining the policy and activities of the police, I have had regard to the past history of disturbances in Trinidad and have carefully compared recent events with previous happenings—in particular the riots and disturbances of 1921 and 1937 when the authorities were blamed for hesitancy and for

displaying both weakness and then undue severity. I have also looked into allegations that the Commissioner of Police and other officers were not familiar with the Trade Union Ordinances and the laws regarding picketing during strikes; that the police were not only over-zealous but acted as strike-breakers; were definitely provocative and interfering as regards legitimate strike activity and that undue severity was used, particularly in the dispersion of demonstrators after their invasion of "Red House" on 21st January and during the raid on Butler's headquarters immediately afterwards.

(1) *General*

98. It will be appreciated that it was not easy to arrive at the facts so long after the occurrences themselves, but I have availed myself not only of the accounts of the Trade Unions and individual workers, the Employers and the Police, but of those of independent witnesses—including the Press—some of them first-hand and compiled at the time—and have checked them with each other.

Certain facts stand out:

1. That during a period of strikes, riots and disturbances, such as took place in 1937 and 1946-7 in Trinidad, the Government and the Commissioner of Police have a heavy responsibility to shoulder and that errors of either commission or omission may have very serious results;
2. That the account given by you on 29th January last, in a written Parliamentary reply to questions regarding violence and sabotage in the oilfields, was a very restrained factual account of what actually took place;
3. That whereas in 1937, once the disturbances had broken out "a hesitant policy on the part of the Government in dealing with the hooligan element" contributed to "the spread of trouble over a wide area" (Forster Report), in 1946-7 prompt action prevented such a spread;
4. That Mr. Butler who was unknown outside a limited area of the oilfields in 1937 had become a notorious national figure with a large following in 1946 and had been preparing and organising his forces (including many of the worst elements in the oil areas—not oilfields workers) for months beforehand; and
5. That although there were several deaths, both of rioters and police, in 1937, there was no loss of life last winter and very few persons received serious injury and not one was dangerously injured by police action. One man was shot in the leg. He and others were attacking the superintendent and a constable who had been "rushed" and knocked down.

(2) *The Oilfields*

99. Even those who have complained of police action elsewhere acknowledge that here the police showed great restraint, and that when action was taken (when violence was unmistakable) it was speedy and effective. The more the evidence is examined, the clearer this becomes.

(3) *The Waterfront*

100. I can discover no substantial evidence that legitimate Trade Union activity was interfered with. Complaint was made by the Union that there was "police provocation and that having failed to excite the workers to disorder, the police raided the Union Hall . . . under the pretext that blacklegs were imprisoned on the premises"; also that the police acted as strike-breakers,

and would not allow picketing. These complaints I am afraid will not bear examination. They have for the most part already been dealt with in the course of this Report. The establishment of an "American picket line" which no one must be allowed to break through was, of course, stopped. Some workers were genuinely surprised that this was not legal; or that the police were merely carrying out their duties when they escorted a worker or workers who wished to work, through the gates. It is hard for an unsophisticated striker to agree that a "blackleg" has any legal rights, or that "peaceful persuasion" is all that the law allows to a picket. That pickets were allowed in reasonable numbers cannot be disputed. Photographs taken daily show this. So far as the responsible leaders were concerned, "mass picketing" was a "try-on". The "raid" was not a *pretext*. An indictable offence was committed in locking up non-strikers. Not only the police but all citizens, including strikers, have the duty of upholding the law. Not all Trinidadians appreciate this but they must not blame the police for doing their duty when the law is deliberately, or even ignorantly, broken.

(4) *The Public Works*

101. This strike never really materialised, only a small proportion of workers responding to the call. The Union and the Trinidad Labour Party made a fatal error in linking up with the "Butlerites" when the leading Unions were opposed to the strike. They added to their error when, knowing of the behaviour of so-called pickets in the south they employed the "Butlerites" as pickets ("to keep them occupied" as was naively confessed) in Port-of-Spain. "Evil communications corrupt good manners", and although such Public Works Union members as confined themselves to peaceful picketing were allowed to carry on, the "call-out" being ineffective, others inevitably linked up with Mr. Butler's "warrior-workers" whose activities from the start both when in, and after leaving the oilfields areas, were definitely lawless and violent. It will be appreciated that I do not defend the actions of every individual constable (it would be a miracle if in the midst of so much violence and lawlessness no mistakes were made and no tempers lost), but the policy and general discipline exercised by the Commissioner of Police and his officers. It was alleged that the Commissioner not only had not carried out the law regarding strikes but was not himself familiar with the Ordinances. I found on the contrary that he had made a special study of them and had himself compiled a booklet on the subject for the information of his officers and that all the constables were supplied with a leaflet as to their duties and responsibilities for which they had to sign as having received and understood.

(5) *The Red House Invasion and the Raid on Butler's Headquarters*

102. So far as the Red House invasion and the subsequent happenings in the adjacent square are concerned, I was fortunate enough to secure, in addition to the evidence from the usual sources, the testimony of an eye-witness of unimpeachable integrity, himself a Trinidadian who knows his fellow-countrymen intimately and is both sympathetic and understanding. You have already received a very full report of what transpired. For myself I am satisfied that the Commissioner of Police, the officers and constables, both in ejecting the crowd from the Red House and dispersing a larger one from the square and in charging and making arrests from among the unruly and hooligan element, acted with judgment, with discipline and determination, using no more force than was necessary to deal with a highly critical and dangerous situation.

I have come to a similar conclusion in regard to the raid on Mr. Butler's headquarters—both as to its necessity and the way it was carried out. Much publicity has been given to damage done to Mr. Butler's printing machine, allegedly

by the police. It is hardly possible at this date to ascertain definitely when and by whom the damage was done. The Butlerites say the police did it; the responsible police officers involved categorically deny that police caused any damage. There are special reasons why the police should *not* have done it. I have every reason for believing—again on first-hand evidence, entirely distinct from police or official sources, which I am convinced is reliable—that other damage alleged to have been caused by the police was in fact done by Mr. Butler's own followers—and from the same source I have received information which goes to confirm the police denials about the printing press. It is not conclusive but it amounts to probability.

(vi) THE FUTURE OF THE TRADE UNIONS

103. There is general agreement among the Trinidad Trade Unions that the Movement has reached a definite and perhaps critical stage in its history. The difficulties to be faced and overcome could hardly be better put than in a statement supplied to me by one of the leading Unions :

1. "The Trade Union way of life is a new business to Trinidad ;
2. "The common folk have no organised tradition and consequently no historical resources upon which they can draw ;
3. "Poverty and ignorance are widely spread among the population ;
4. "The common man has been exploited for so long a time that he has developed a chronic character of suspicion : he is distrustful of everything and everybody, even at times, of himself ;
5. "Trouble starts with the leaders. The intellectual limitations of some of us are a great handicap, but much more serious is the insincerity and lack of integrity among those who, intellectually equipped, are out to use the Unions to advance their individual political ambitions. These exploit the ignorance of the masses, make extravagant promises, vilify the accredited leaders and divide the ranks of the workers "

104. It is a pretty severe indictment and self-criticism, but one which could be paralleled here and in almost any country at some particular period, and of course it misses out the assets ; but let it stand as a sign that Trinidad Trade Union leaders realise what they are up against. Some of the remedies are perhaps easier to name than to apply. So far as concerns the lack of equipment for the job of the leaders, this is being steadily overcome. It is the slower because distance from the Mother Country makes personal contacts with experienced Trade Unionists difficult, because standard books on Trade Union History and practice are scarce and being mostly out of print are unobtainable, and when obtained do not always contain the sort of advice and help which is most needed. This, I suggest, needs the consideration of the Labour Adviser to the Colonial Office, the T.U.C. and the publishers. John Price's little book on Trade Unions (available for export only !) is very good and is becoming known. The T.U.C. Educational Scheme should be extended to cover correspondence courses for Colonial Trade Union Students, adapted to their needs and special circumstances. Personal contacts are exceedingly important. Trade Unionists in the Colonies like to feel and to know that the British Trade Union Movement and British Trade Unionists are interested in, have sympathy with, and understand their struggles and aspirations. The visits of Walter Citrine and the late John Jagger are remembered and treasured. The renewal of such visits even at long intervals would be a great stimulus. A scheme for training West Indian Trade Union Officers in this country has now been prepared by the Colonial Office in consultation with the Trades Union Congress and the Ministry of Labour and National Service, and will shortly come into operation. Details of the scheme are given in Appendix No. 14.

Sir John Macpherson rightly draws attention to the valuable assistance provided by Labour Departments—I can confirm this as regards the Industrial Adviser's Department in Trinidad—and stresses that “developments in structure, scope and responsibility might progress a stage further if potential labour leaders were given a practical training in the United Kingdom.”

105. Equally important, if not more fundamental, and this is almost an unworked field, is the provision of leaflets and educational literature for the rank and file explaining in the simplest language, not in Marxist dialectic, what Trade Unionism is: what are the rights, duties and responsibilities of the individual member, the collector, the shop steward and the branch secretary. It is essential to bring home to the intelligent Trinidadian that a Trade Union is a *continuous* association of wage earners, and that his minimum responsibility is a regular weekly contribution, and the maintenance of contact with the work of the Union through his collector or shop steward. In this connection, employers, including Government Departments, employing industrial labour, who realise the value of a responsible Trade Union and collective bargaining, might well afford reasonable facilities to branch officers of a recognised Union to collect Trade Union subscriptions on pay days.

106. The lessons taught by the recent strikes of the dangers and disabilities of disunity have not gone unheeded. The Federated and the Public Works Unions are already discussing closer working and if agreement is reached this should go a long way towards promoting all-round harmony, and lines of demarcation should be easier to adjust. If the meeting with the principal Union leaders held just before I left is followed up (as I believe it will be) the outcome should be a rejuvenated Trades Union Council. I feel convinced that if the leaders will overcome their suspicions of each other and forget personal jealousies and really co-operate, the rank and file will respond.

When the individual Union finances are healthier an increase in affiliation fee to the T.U.C. will need to be considered, so that the nucleus of a separate T.U.C. staff may be established.

107. It is my firm conviction that all the Trade Unions and not only the three who have already done so, should dissociate themselves from Uriah Butler and his methods. This is not a matter of “lines of demarcation” or of trade union rivalry. Responsible Trade Unionism and “Butlerism” cannot exist side by side; they are incompatible, and the workers of Trinidad should be helped to realise this by all the responsible elements in the Colony. It is natural enough for the credulous, uneducated, simple-minded, religiously-inclined and long-exploited West Indian to give ear to his specious appeals and messianic promises; but intelligent, educated men who know Mr. Butler's family history, his own mental abnormality, the violence which his followers practise, are surely not deceived. It is not creditable to the leaders of public opinion in Trinidad—in the Trade Unions, in business, in the churches and the Legislature, that Uriah Butler holds the position he does among the unlettered population. At any rate it is surely not too much to expect that legislators who claim and look forward to self-government should decline to be bound any longer to his chariot wheels or to laud him in public and confess in private that “I do so only because I owe my election to him”. Integrity can hardly be expected of the humble newly-enfranchised *elector* if the exalted *electee* discard it.

(vii) NEGOTIATING MACHINERY

108. So far as the oilfields are concerned both the Oilfields Employers' Association of Trinidad and the Oilfields Workers' Trade Union are satisfied that the present machinery is adequate and I see no reason to disagree. The sugar industry needs, I think, special treatment and I refer to it in the next sub-section. The waterfront strike revealed a weakness and it would appear

that it may be a recurring trouble if one side or the other declines to submit a case to an independent tribunal. The Civil Service Association also complain that, so far as their organisation is concerned, they are at a disadvantage under the Arbitration Ordinance, as compared with a Union catering for private enterprise. At one stage in the waterfront dispute, the Union secretary bore out the reference to "suspicions" mentioned in paragraph 103 by declaring bluntly "The workers do not trust anybody appointed by the Government to arbitrate". The Unions generally are opposed to compulsory arbitration (in this they would probably be supported by British Trade Union opinion) and the employers seem no more willing. The Forster Commission recommended the setting up of an Industrial Court, and I am informed that the very expression "Court" has a favourable psychological effect on the West Indian mind. It would be better in my view for a reference to such a Court to be part of negotiating machinery and for a "finding" to be issued as recommended by the Commission—this procedure is followed, for example, on the British Railways—than for a dangerous deadlock like that of the waterfront to recur. There is always a tendency to resist arbitration if suggested when a crisis has already developed.

109. A minor matter, but one which is apt to give rise to a good deal of trouble is the method of dealing with personal delinquencies—discipline cases. Here again there are elaborate arrangements in the oilfields which provide for inquiry preceding punishment. The General Manager of the Government Railways is improving the procedure in his Department. Consideration should be given to the introduction of similar arrangements in other Government Departments, and for a worker to have the assistance of a Trade Union advocate in all serious cases.

(viii) ECONOMIC SURVEY AND DEVELOPMENT

110. Summing up my impressions, I can but endorse the view you put before Parliament in January last, viz., that the solution of the difficulties in Trinidad (apart from such immediate and partial remedies as I have indicated) must be looked for in the development of the economic potentialities of the Colony. To assist this, an adequate economic survey of possibilities is requisite and I learn with satisfaction that it has been decided to appoint an Economic Adviser to the Government and a Statistician. I am convinced, however, that even prior to this general survey, there is a special need for one covering the sugar industry. I may say that the conclusions I express on this had taken shape in my mind prior to the strike on the Caroni Estate, were uninfluenced by that stoppage, and were simply confirmed by the debate in the Legislative Council.

111. In the first place, without such a survey, it is doubtful whether the conditions exist for continued satisfactory collective bargaining. There was, for instance, much confusion about figures and arguing at cross-purposes during the Legislative Council debate referred to in paragraph 67. First as to "a task". The statement supplied me by Mr. Kumar and his County Council colleagues showed that a basic task (of weeding 5 chains) took 2½ hours. For this (on the St. Madeleine Estate) the payment was 74 cents which was stated to be inadequate; but Mr. Kumar in the debate reiterated that a task was a day's work and that the Caroni workers never had received anything like 74 cents per task or per day. Their remuneration was 61 cents per task or per day. Yet on the figures supplied me by Mr. Kumar himself, and checked by me with the Management, the payment on the St. Madeleine Estate for the first task is 75 cents and for two tasks in one day \$1.30 (Mr. Kumar gave \$1.35). On the Caroni he gave the amount for the first task as 61 cents and for two \$1.32. Again, the average of \$1.25 per day given by Mr. Robinson related, as the speaker said, to field workers. Factory workers, let alone the

Management were not included as Mr. Kumar inferred. These complications, however, and the variations from estate to estate are only a beginning. The Sugar Estates and Factory Workers' Trade Union is faced with complicated methods of work and remuneration which would tax a well-equipped British Trade Union to deal with, especially having regard to the fact that most of the workers are illiterate.* The Union has done well and should be encouraged. The employers should enable the Union to check their members' statements with official figures; but even so help of a special kind is needed. For example, no one was in a position to give me a really satisfactory answer as to why the percentage of cultivation workers on one estate working less than 156 days in a year was as high as 80 and on another estate only 40. Again, I was informed that *two-and-a-half "tasks" was an average day's work* for a reasonably fit man. This appeared to be easily borne out by an examination of records. The Caroni management said that a good cane cutter would do $2\frac{1}{2}$ tasks in about 5 hours and I was shown earnings of \$4.81 and \$5.04 per day. Yet the explanations why, if that were so, some workers on certain estates appeared to be satisfied to do one, or one-and-a-half tasks, were varied and contradictory: e.g., poor physique due to wrong diet or hook worm (the ravages of this disease are devastating)—yet some of the same men had worked much longer on American contracts; satisfaction of having reached the desired amount of earnings (the Union would not accept this—although see Report of Comptroller for Development and Welfare in the West Indies for 1945-46 (Colonial 212), paragraph 14, page 124); the need and desire to get back to cultivation on their own "little patch"—but they don't all possess such patches—and so on. There is also the problem of how far standardisation of rates for task work is feasible. The Union has pressed for this but variations in soil and other conditions raise issues too complicated for it or its members to handle. Further, if the standard of the workers is to be raised materially, more mechanisation is involved. These questions cannot be answered by the amateur or a committee of the Legislature, but postulate the sort of inquiry made by Professor Shephard of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture into the sugar industry in Barbados. I strongly recommend that such an inquiry be put in hand.

VII. Appreciation and Thanks

112. I desire to place on record my warm thanks to the Governor, Sir John Shaw, for the personal interest he took in this Inquiry, for arranging for every facility I needed to carry out an interesting but trying series of investigations and for the helpful suggestions he made without in any way trying to influence my judgment. Cordial thanks are also tendered to the Colonial Secretary and the Heads of Government Departments for their ready co-operation and their complete frankness; to the Trade Union officials and members who took such pains to prepare and present their views; to the Employers and their representatives who did not hide the "black spots" but were clearly desirous that I should get a true picture of the whole situation and to the many individuals, including Legislators, members of the legal and medical professions and ordinary citizens who so readily and freely gave of their time and knowledge to assist to make my inquiry fruitful.

A special word of appreciation is due to Mr. Ross, the Industrial Adviser, and his Deputy, Mr. Hochoy, without whose exceptional knowledge of events

*Illiteracy does not of course necessarily imply lack of intelligence. Some of these workers are shrewd bargainers within narrow limits.

and persons and of where and how information could be gleaned, my inquiries would have been much more prolonged and much less effective.

Finally, I thank my stenographer, Miss Sealey, for her willing and courteous service and for her brave and successful battling with what must at times have seemed a strange vocabulary.

FRED W. DALLEY.

July, 1947.

APPENDIX No. 1
WORKERS' TRADE UNIONS FUNCTIONING 1947

TITLE	DATE OF REGISTRATION	DESCRIPTION
Amalgamated Building and Woodworkers' Union	30.3.36	For all building trade workers
*Federated Workers' Trade Union	27.8.37	For all workers in all trades and industries
*Oilfields Workers' Trade Union	15.9.37	For workers in Oil Industry
*Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Trade Union	19.11.37	For all waterfront workers
*Public Works and Public Service Workers' Trade Union	26.11.37	For all workers in trades and industries
*All Trinidad Sugar Estates and Factories Workers' Trade Union	8.6.38	For workers in the Sugar Industry
*All Trinidad Transport and General Workers' Trade Union	8.6.38	For all workers in all trades and industries
*Railway Workers' Trade Union revived 1945 after lapse of four years	25.7.38	For all male workers of the Trinidad Government Railways
*Civil Service Association of Trinidad and Tobago	23.3.39	For all officers on the fixed establishment of the Civil Service
*Trinidad and Tobago Teachers' Union	10.2.45	For all teachers in schools
Southern Taxi Owners' and Drivers' Association	11.7.45	For taxi owners and drivers
*British Empire Workers' Peasants' and Ratepayers' Trade Union	29.6.46	For all workers in all trades and industries
Tobago Peasants' and Industrial Workers' Trade Union	4.1.47	For all workers in all trades and industries
National Chinese Seamen's Union	27.3.47	For all Chinese Seamen
Petroleum Workers' Trade Union	May 1947	For all junior staff workers in the oil industry
†Women Workers' Trade Union	—	For all female workers in all trades and industries
*†British Colonial Taxpayers' and All Workers' Trade Union	—	For all workers in all trades and industries

* Sent representatives to preliminary meeting 21st April, 1947

† Furnished information

APPENDIX No. 2
STRIKES IN TRINIDAD 1946/7

INDUSTRY AND OCCUPATION	TRADE UNION CONCERNED	NO. OF WORKPEOPLE WHO WENT ON STRIKE	DATE		CAUSE OR OBJECT
			BEGAN	ENDED	
Government and Municipal Departments : (Building and Construction Electricity Supply Transport and Sanitation)	Federated Workers' Trade Union	1,522	1.2.46	18.2.46	Reduction in wage rates of 26 Lorry Loaders of Planning and Housing
Waterfront : (Stevedores & Dock Workers)	Scamen and Waterfront Workers' Trade Union	2,000 (approx.)	8.11.46	5.12.46	Wages and working conditions
Oil : (All classes of workers)	British Empire Workers' Peasants' and Ratepayers' Trade Union	3,220	19.12.46	petered out after 15.1.47	Non-recognition of Trade Union as bargaining body on behalf of workers
Government Departments : (All Industrial Employees)	Public Works and Public Service Workers' Trade Union	858	8.1.47	petered out after 4.2.47	Wages
P.O.S. City Council : (Scavengers)	Unorganised	490	8.1.47	24.1.47	Wages

APPENDIX No. 3

STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE OILFIELDS WORKERS' TRADE UNION
ON THE STRIKE IN THE OILFIELDS, DECEMBER, 1946

THE OILFIELDS Workers' Trade Union which represents the vast majority of oil workers in this Colony is recognised by the oil industry as the collective negotiating medium for wages, hours and working conditions for the labour factor of said industry. Such recognition was conceded on the 29th March, 1938. The Union itself was formed on the 25th July, 1937.

There has been no break in industrial relationship between our Union and the industry. The first major dispute was settled by arbitration, the award of which was issued on 21st January, 1939. Wage increases, holidays with pay and certain improvements in working conditions were obtained as a consequence.

On the 2nd February, 1940, a further agreement with the industry was executed. This agreement provided for yet further general increases on basic wage rates, together with establishment of principle of payment of cost of living bonuses on sliding scale over and above basic rates to be regulated by movement of Government Official Cost of Living Index Figures; and creation of Joint Conciliation Board for Industry, having equal number of representatives for Employers and Union. This agreement was for duration of the war and six months thereafter.

At close of war new agreements were negotiated and executed. On 18th December, 1945, and 30th January, 1946, the existing agreement and supplementary agreement were signed, again providing for further wage adjustments, improvements in working conditions, continuation of payments of cost of living bonuses, and apart from continuation of Joint Conciliation Board at the centre, the principle of establishing joint consultative committees of Employers' and Workers' representatives in each oilfield was agreed to. The industry also undertook to permit the exhibition on notice boards on their plants notices dealing with Union matters and to provide permits to Union officials wishing to enter company plants on Union business outside working hours. This agreement is operative for a period of two years. At any time after 12th September of current year either party may give to the other three months' notice in writing of its desire to amend or intention to terminate this agreement.

Throughout the industrial relationship between our Union and oil industry both parties at all material times have scrupulously observed every agreement to which their accredited representatives have attached their signatures.

To evaluate existing situation it is necessary to appreciate the foregoing background. In September, 1945, Tubal Uriah Butler who had been previously interned for conducting activities inimical to the successful prosecution of the war, appeared in the oil belt and commenced propagating hostile propaganda against O.W.T.U. Vulgar abuse of its leadership and ridicule and contempt of democratic procedures were the lines harped upon. Permission to form a union had been obtained by Butler and his colleagues from the Registrar of Trade Unions. This Union was registered towards end of June, 1946.

Whilst industry is executing terms of existing agreement with O.W.T.U. Butler, in name of his Fascist Union, served demands on oil companies demanding compliance within 48 hours otherwise he would call strike in industry. This occurred during November, 1946. O.W.T.U. promptly reminded and instructed workers of their duty to honour existing industrial agreements and not pay any attention to frothy propaganda of irresponsible demagogues. No strike eventually took place.

But Butler again served notice that on the 19th December, 1946, he would bring about strike in oil industry as he was not satisfied with reply he had received from representatives of industry and Government. In printed circulars he publicly proclaimed his belief that he "alone had legal right to negotiate agreement and smash or ignore old ones as may be found expedient".

O.W.T.U. again countered by pointing out to workers and public that it had no

dispute with oil companies at the present time and was not calling, supporting nor associating itself with any strike in the oil industry. Workers were warned to remain on their jobs and perform their work and to ignore foolish and irresponsible advice given by Uriah Butler.

The vast majority of oil workers heeded O.W.T.U. advice and instruction. A very small minority, however, stopped working in obedience to Butler's call. The normal operations of industry were not seriously affected by this abortive strike. Instead of accepting the logic of events which indicated clearly that the vast majority of oil workers had no faith or belief in Butler's unorthodox and Fascist methods, unlawful strategy was then employed. Intimidation and molestation in certain areas of those going to work started by strikers and hooligan elements who had not been employed in the industry.

Crude oil was thrown in the public road with a view to capsizing buses conveying workmen to work; bottles and stones were thrown at passing vehicles, particularly at nights; and crowds at certain points would block vehicles and pull out workmen on their way to work, forcibly relieving them of their breakfast baskets and tools and turning them back from work.

In the early stages the Police Authorities were exceedingly tolerant. The oil companies issued a statement in local press revealing to the public the nature of the correspondence they had with the Butler group and then issued public notices fixing a date for strikers to resume work. Situation became tense as O.W.T.U. followers became increasingly resentful and dissatisfied with intimidation and molestation tactics of the Butler group and began arming themselves with lethal weapons to protect themselves in going to and from jobs.

The Police then took a firm hand in dealing with the situation. All attempts at mob rule were put down. Government issued certain emergency regulations. Official posters indicating local labour laws relating to strikes, picketing and protection of property were conspicuously displayed for information of all concerned.

Firm handling by Police brought about an immediate cessation of intimidation and molestation tactics. But a new strategy was immediately embarked upon. Sabotage began. Fire was set to a number of oil wells, and water reservoirs in one district were emptied. The Legislative Council at this stage enacted an emergency powers ordinance and under its provisions the Governor issued a proclamation ordering Butler to leave the oil area and imposed a nine-hour curfew in one of the oil districts. These measures had the effect of curbing mob rule hooliganism, arson, sabotage and terrorism. Viewed in its correct perspective the strike was not primarily called for improvement in the conditions of employment for oil workers but to usurp the position of collective negotiating medium for the workers held by O.W.T.U. for the past ten years. The plea for better conditions had been used as a smoke-screen to disguise the real objective. Adequate machinery already exists for ventilating workers' grievances in oil industry as the established record clearly reveals. Butler's Fascist group is a disturbing element and his outlook is that of the charlatan. I was labour candidate for St. Patrick seat in the last July Legislative Council Elections. Butler opposed my candidature. He was in the service of Timothy Roodal a local millionaire who owns an oilfield at Fyzabad. The Roodal field is not a member of the Oilfields Employers' Association which represents the Trinidad Oil Industry in industrial negotiations with the O.W.T.U. Division in the labour vote created by Butler's queer activities caused capitalist millionaire Roodal to win the election.

Wage rates and conditions of employment on the Roodal field are inferior to and worse than those obtaining in the industry generally, which Butler has miserably failed to dislocate. Garbled and sensational reports having little or no relation to reality have recently been cabled to the London *Daily Mirror* by the New York correspondent of the same journal who came to the Colony after the events he is writing about had occurred. These reports have painted an entirely inaccurate picture of the true situation and it is very peculiar that the O.W.T.U. has never been once approached with a view to ascertaining facts in our possession. People abroad not knowing the

facts may be misled into believing that bad industrial relations exist in our oil industry when that is not the case. The right of oil workers to bargain collectively with them has long been recognised by the captains of this industry and since this recognition of O.W.T.U. all wage rates, hours of work and working conditions in the industry have been regulated by agreements executed from time to time. Whilst there is room for improvement and having regard to the prosperity of the industry it is only fair to state that the highest wage rates and cost of living bonuses paid anywhere in Trinidad and Tobago are those paid by the oil industry. Let it be clearly understood, however, that it is not O.W.T.U. view that the millenium has been established here. O.W.T.U. is honouring its existing agreement which has eleven months to run whereafter, as in the past, legitimate steps will be taken with a view to advancing and protecting workers' welfare. Meanwhile O.W.T.U. will continue to fight vigorously any Fascist intrusion seeking to destroy our democratic trade union.

JOHN ROJAS,

PRESIDENT-GENERAL.

CPD/AMM
3rd March, 1947.

APPENDIX No. 4

LETTER FROM A MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND
REPLY BY SIR BEDE CLIFFORD

(See paragraph 40)

12th November, 1946

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

THE UNION Secretary, Mr. Hartley, has made certain specific statements as follows :—

1. Since giving official notice of the strike, they have received no communication whatever from Government or the Shipping Association. No offer of arbitration has therefore been received.
2. If such an offer is made, the Union is prepared to submit to arbitration the proposals which they have put forward to the Shipping Association and which the Association have declined to discuss.
3. The ultimatum published in this morning's Press ought properly to have been sent formally to the Union.
4. If arbitration should take place, the Union will expect all strike-breaking action to cease during the period of negotiations.

I have the honour to be,

P. J. SOLOMON.

12th November, 1946

DEAR MR. SOLOMON,

I was busy in Council when your letter arrived and sent a message asking you to place your proposals before the Industrial Adviser. I have sent your letter to him and have asked him to see you about it, but Paragraph 4 suggests that you contemplate the strike continuing while arbitration is going on. This as you know is not at all in accord with practice since if both sides accept arbitration and pledge themselves to be bound by the award of the arbitrator (which is usually made retrospective) there can be no purpose in remaining on strike.

In haste,

Yours sincerely,

BEDE CLIFFORD.

APPENDIX No. 5

WATERFRONT STRIKE: GOVERNMENT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED TO MAKE THEIR ATTITUDE CLEAR TO BOTH STRIKERS AND PUBLIC

THE STRIKE called by the Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Trade Union on the 8th November, which still continues, has involved a complete stoppage of work on the Port of Spain wharves.

In order to ensure that food supplies do not fall below the level required to maintain life, the Government has invoked the assistance of the Military to off-load essential food which would otherwise be carried away in the ships bringing it whose departure cannot be delayed.

Both the Union and the Shipping Association of Trinidad have published statements relating to their case. The Association is not, however, the only employer of labour involved in the dispute, since the Wharves Administration also employs dock labour and the number it employs is actually larger than that employed by the Association. It is desirable, therefore, that Government should state the position of the Wharves Administration as an employer of labour involved in the dispute. The facts are these. On the 15th October the Union submitted representations and proposals to the Wharves Administration for a revision of wages and working conditions and requested that they might be discussed. Discussion was held on the 29th October when no agreement was reached but the acting General Manager of the Department made it clear that he was prepared to arrange a further meeting if desired by the Union. The Union representatives replied that should a further meeting be necessary they would communicate with the acting General Manager. The next communication received from the Union was a notice that the Union would create a stoppage of work within 24 hours. The Wharves Administration immediately reminded the Union that it had been and was still prepared to arrange a further meeting if desired. The Wharves Administration is prepared to submit the case to arbitration, if the Union agrees, provided work is resumed. A communication in this sense has been sent to the Union.

The responsibility of Government in the situation which has arisen is not of course confined to that of an employer of labour. The procurement of supplies to maintain life in the Colony and the preservation of law and order are primary Government responsibilities. The steps taken to off-load essential food have been mentioned. In the matter of law and order the Commissioner of Police has been instructed to take all necessary measures to prevent breaches of the peace.

APPENDIX No. 6

ADDITIONAL STATEMENT PREPARED BY THE T.U.C. OFFICERS ON THE WATERFRONT DISPUTE BUT NEVER ISSUED

ARISING out of exploratory conversations which T.U.C. mediators had with the Industrial Adviser and representatives of the Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Trade Union and the Shipping Association of Trinidad on Thursday, 21st November, it was revealed that while representatives of the Shipping Association were not disposed to discuss during the joint conference held between the Association and Union's representatives on 21st October, and later 30th October, when the Acting Industrial Adviser was Chairman, the portion of the Union's demands which dealt with wages increases and hours of work: the Association's representatives maintained that they had expressed willingness to conduct conversations on several other matters arising out of the demands which in their view were less contentious.

That being so, representatives of the Association stated that the portion of the T.U.C.'s statement which appeared in the daily newspapers on 13th November, viz.:

“ Viewing all surrounding circumstances, the Council are forced to place on record their unqualified condemnation of the attitude and behaviour evinced throughout by the employers which goaded the workers into taking direct action ”, was an inaccurate pronouncement which was rather uncharitable to them.

T.U.C. mediators explained that prior to the release of that statement the full history which led to the dockers' strike was read from the Union's official files which contained the relevant correspondence and minutes, and after careful analysis of those documents had come to the conclusion which was expressed in the statement. But now that the parties to the dispute have all agreed that the minutes were not verbatim but rather a record of the substance of what transpired at the joint conference of 30th October, T.U.C. mediators have admitted that if the full picture now given to them was produced in the minutes the pronouncement referred to might have been of a different character.

APPENDIX No. 7 (A)

COMMUNIQUE TO THE PRESS

REPRESENTATIVES of the Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Trade Union were received at their request by His Excellency the Governor this morning at Government House. The Colonial Secretary and the Acting General Manager of the Wharves Administration were present.

The Trade Union representatives complained that, although the Wharves Administration had “ Called on ” 800 men at seven o'clock this morning, no opportunity to work was available at the Harbour Engineer's branch. It was pointed out that among the requirements for work this morning which had been communicated to the Trade Union yesterday, men of the Harbour Engineer's branch had not been specifically included. The Union representatives stated that they had assumed from the terms of the communication made to them, which mentioned “ a number of other workers in the industry ”, that some of the men for this branch would be required. It was explained that, as a result of the strike, work at the Harbour Engineer's branch had been reduced to a minimum and that some days must elapse before work at that branch would return to normal. There was reason to anticipate that in the course of the next few days expansion of work in the branch would enable a few more men to be engaged. The Wharves Administration would investigate the position in this respect and undertook to explore the possibility of including in the roll of casual labour engaged for other branches of the department some of the men offering themselves for employment with the Harbour Engineer. The position in the branch under the Harbour Engineer's control is exceptional in that it contains so many former workers who are still at work.

It is to be noted that a return submitted on 30th November showed that of 116 men engaged in the Harbour Engineer's department 60 were men employed there prior to the strike, that of the 79 men at present employed on the slipway all were employed prior to the strike and no new men had been taken on, and of the 193 at present employed by the Harbour Master only 34 were new men.

His Excellency reminded the Union of the terms of the formula accepted by all parties at Government House on the 2nd December, and expressed regret and disappointment that 800 men had been delayed and kept from work for the sole purpose of discussing the question of the employment in the Harbour Engineer's branch of a number of men for whom no work was immediately available. It was felt that investigation of the position of these men could have been undertaken while work was proceeding elsewhere on the docks.

In the course of the discussion it was agreed that it must be the exclusive responsibility of the Wharves Administration to determine what men and how many of them should be employed.

5th December, 1946.

APPENDIX No. 7 (B)

(See paragraph 47)

EXTRACT FROM TELEGRAM FROM GOVERNOR OF TRINIDAD TO SECRETARY OF STATE

SECRETARY of Trade Union has now requested me to communicate following cable to you.

(Begins) Waterfront Workers Union call off strike harbour and wharves at Government request. Mass discrimination against Union members, volunteer labour replace regular dock workers. Grave dissatisfaction. Governor approached, situation unchanged, General Manager and Wharf Superintendent antagonistic, removal advocated. Please intervene. (Ends)

REPLY SENT TO UNION BY THE GOVERNOR AT THE REQUEST OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

I am glad to learn of the formula adopted at Government House on the 2nd December in accordance with which work has since been resumed. I learnt with regret of the misunderstanding which arose on the 5th December as explained in the official communique which appeared in the local press next day. I feel that in the light of the circumstances set out and the principle accepted in the communique, it should be possible to avoid friction in the application of the formula agreed to at Government House. I have received the Governor's assurance that the Wharves Administration will continue to do all it can to assist in this respect, and that he looks forward to the time which I trust will not have to be delayed when, with harmonious relations restored and normal conditions prevailing, the negotiation of the agreement such as was envisaged at Government House may begin.

APPENDIX No. 8

COPY OF HANDBILL ISSUED BY THE BUTLER UNION DURING THE WATERFRONT STRIKE

' Touch not mine Anointed and do my Prophets no harm '

BUTLER GIVES NOTICE!

STATE OF EMERGENCY DECLARED.

SHALL THERE BE PEACE OR "WAR"?

MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE WORKERS PEASANTS AND RATE-PAYERS UNION in every Industry in this Country are hereby notified that the Union's Executive have, in view of their insistent and universal cry for "MORE PAY AND BETTER WORKING CONDITIONS", declared that a State of Emergency now exists in the Union following upon the drafting of Demands upon Oil, Sugar, Transportation, Shipping, Housing and Planning and every known employer of Labour (including Government and the American authorities) in the country, for more pay and better working, living and dying conditions for members of our Union specifically, and everybody in the Colony generally. You are also notified that this Union shall in no way give support to strikes of the "Unofficial Brand" and that they must wait for the order to Strike which can only come from Butler and Butler alone—in the name

of the Executives of course. To those who are yet outside our Union we should like to say this : JOIN OUR UNION NOW or you are bound to be sorry if you don't. We do not believe in a closed shop. But we do most certainly believe in Justice and in Right, and it is not just and right that Caesar should enjoy the things that are Won at the Price of the Liberty and the Life of Uriah Butler and his warrior-workers. So join with us now in the great fight now on. Share with us the heat and burden of " D Day " and you shall enjoy as by Right the fruits of the Victory that God Himself shall give us. Yes, sir, Victory Shall be Ours. For GOD IS WITH US.

Issued by U. BUTLER,
President-General B.E.W.P. & R. Union

APPENDIX No. 9 (A)

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE BRITISH EMPIRE UNION AND THE OILFIELDS EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION

THE BRITISH EMPIRE WORKERS', PEASANTS' AND RATEPAYERS' UNION

Head Office,
7A, St. Joseph Road,
Port-of-Spain.

11th November, 1946

UNION DEMANDS

WE RESPECTFULLY beg to submit for, and on behalf of the members of our Union in your employ, the following demands :—

(1) A general all-round increase of ten (10) cents an hour for all hourly paid workers.

(2) An increase of eighty (80) cents per day for all categories of workers, not including monthly paid employees, and

(3) An increase of twenty (20) dollars per month for all monthly paid employees.

Further to the above-mentioned demands which we respectfully beg that you grant within forty-eight (48) hours after you shall have received this letter, we are to demand that at such time and place as shall be convenient to you, to meet representatives of our Union with a view to start negotiations for the signing of an Agreement, that shall guarantee Peace in Industry during our time.

In conclusion, we are to inform you that, among the many things, we shall ask that you agree to, will be the following :—

(1) The handing over to our Union of one penny on every barrel of oil produced in our Country.

(2) That lay-offs and dismissals shall take place only with the knowledge and consent of the Executives of our Union.

(3) That certain contracts you now give to private individuals, be given to our Union.

(4) That gangs and departments now under strength, shall be brought up to strength.

(5) That " Tasks " be greatly reduced ; and that where there is an eight (8) hour shift, a six hour shift be introduced.

(6) Free technical training for deserving employees ; and the granting of jobs to workers so trained before all other applicants—native or foreign, and

(7) A simpler and more just and comprehensive form of promotion to the higher Grades of workmen, for the employees who qualify themselves for such promotion.

These demands can bear long discussions, but we require you to know and to realise that our demand for more pay brooks of no delay whatsoever.

Failure to reach an agreement within (48) forty-eight hours, will of course place us before Government, with a view to secure their good offices in getting us to agree. If Government fails, then we shall be forced to take "Strike Action".

Yours for Peace in Industry,

Sgd. T. Uriah B. Butler

T. Uriah B. Butler—Pres.-Gen.

Sgd. Joseph A. Thomas

J. A. Thomas—Gen. Sect.

THE OILFIELDS EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION OF TRINIDAD

7 Pointe-a-Pierre Road.

P.O. Box 9,

San Fernando,

Trinidad, B.W.I.

14th November, 1946

The British Empire Workers', Peasants' & Ratepayers' Union,

7A, St. Joseph Road,

Port-of-Spain.

DEAR SIRs,

Members of this Association have received and forwarded to me copies of a communication from your Union dated the 11th November, 1946, setting out various claims for wage increases and other demands.

Wages and working conditions in the Oil Industry in Trinidad are governed by the Agreement of 18th December, 1945, and 30th January, 1946, entered into between this Association and the Oilfields Workers' Trade Union, and duly filed with Government. These Agreements were negotiated by joint consultation between representatives of the Employers' Association and the Trade Union under the Chairmanship of the Government Industrial Adviser, who was a signatory to the Agreements.

The Agreements, which remain operative at least until December, 1947, have been scrupulously observed and applied by the parties thereto and orderly procedure for the extension or amendment of the Agreements, if desired at their termination, is provided.

In these circumstances I am to inform you that neither my Association nor any of its member companies is in a position to entertain your claims and demands.

Yours faithfully,

F. E. HUNTER,

Secretary-Treasurer,

THE OILFIELDS EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION
OF TRINIDAD.

*THE BRITISH EMPIRE WORKERS', PEASANTS' AND
RATEPAYERS' UNION*

Office,

Main Field Road,

Point Fortin.

9th December, 1946

Please reply to

stated address :

The Oilfields Employers' Association,

San Fernando.

GENTLEMEN,

I am directed by the President-General of the above-mentioned Union to inform you that, following upon your very silly and stupid reply to the demands made on your Association by our Union for More Pay, etc., etc., for its members in your employ,

and of Government's failure to date to bring us together, the Executives of the Union desire you to take notice that strike action to win our rights will be taken at any time between now and December 19th, 1946.

You will appreciate that this is a pretty long warning notice. But, with an obvious desire for a peaceful settlement of all grievances motivating this letter a long notice of strike action is deemed essential to a last minute effort on your part to maintain peace in the Oil Industry.

Faithfully yours,

T. URIAH B. BUTLER (Pres.-General).
MCDONALD STANLEY (Act. Gen. Sec.).

APPENDIX No. 9 (B)

LETTER FROM Mr. T. URIAH BUTLER TO THE GOVERNOR

THE BRITISH EMPIRE WORKERS', PEASANTS' AND RATEPAYERS' UNION

Head Office,

7A, St. Joseph Road,
Port-of-Spain.

27th November, 1946.

From Citizen Uriah Butler
to Citizen Bede Clifford :
Governor of Trinidad & Tobago.

My dear Distinguished Fellow Citizen,

I deeply regret having to record my very strong disapproval of the action of Government to date in re our humble request to have Government bring Oilfields Employers and my Union (the legal bargaining Trade Union in the industry today) together, with a view to a peaceful settlement of the dispute arising out of the demands of more than fifty per cent. (50%) of Oilfields Workers, through my Union, for more pay, etc., etc., at the hands of their Employers—demands which were duly forwarded to the Employers concerned, and, of course, very rudely and contemptuously ignored.

Now, what I want you to know is this : The Members of my Union have insisted, and quite rightly so, that you be kept fully informed as to our every move towards betterment of their conditions. I therefore beg to inform you that on receipt of a letter from Government, through the Industrial Adviser or anyone else in authority, stating his inability to bring my Union and Oilfields Employers together to talk things over freely and frankly, with a view to establish Peace in the Oil Industry and not "War", for which you seem anxious to have, I shall be forced to give notice of a Strike to establish our clear right to bargain for Oilworkers, and to win for them a better, brighter and more secure and progressive day in the Oil Industry.

In conclusion I am to inform you that two very necessary and important telegrams have already been dispatched to London, England—one to His Majesty the King, and one to the British Colonial Secretary—our Fellow Citizen Creech-Jones.

I shall be pleased to discuss them with you. On your invitation I am prepared to visit you at any time of the day or night—Strike or no Strike, and without any "Safe Conduct" consideration, if you please. May Peace in the Oil Industry Prevail !
Thanks in anticipation of an early reply.

Faithfully yours,

T. URIAH B. BUTLER.

APPENDIX No. 10

BUTLER UNION DEMANDS IGNORED

BUTLER SERVES NOTICE OF STRIKE.

*BUTLER STARTS (\$100,000·00) HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS STRIKE
FUND—SERIES OF MEETINGS PLANNED.*

THE EXECUTIVE Committee of the Butler Union, some thirty-one days ago, made demands on the Oilfields Employers' Association of Trinidad for more pay, etc., for members of the Union in their employ.

The reply of the Association has been received, and is considered by me to be very silly, stupid and contemptuous, in that it (Ostrich-like) hides its "head" in the "sand" of the so-called agreement between the Oilfields Workers' Trade Union (without legal rights to bargain for Oilfields Workers) and the Association and refuse "talks" with my Union which, from September, 1945, alone has the legal right to negotiate agreement—new agreements, and smash or ignore old ones as may be found expedient.

Fools, cowards and traitors on the executive of my Union planned another jail term for Butler as a necessary preliminary to a "sell-out" of the workers' cause. But, Butler, the man who has Championed that cause as no one has ever attempted or done before him, is no fool. He has decided to expel or suspend all traitors from the Union: and to accept the challenge of Government and the Association concerned to prove his Union's right to bargain for everybody in the Oil Industry of the Colony.

Notice of a Strike in the Oil Industry by 19th December, 1946, if the Oilfields Association fails to meet me, to talk things over with a view to a peaceful settlement of all our Union's grievances, has already been handed to the O.E.A. and of course Government with the hope that these "inseparables" will at last do something to show that they want peace and not "war" in the Oil Industry. And as I told the Industrial Adviser in an informal talk on Monday, 9th December, I am planning to have Mr. Clyde C. Vanderburgh, Mr. Gerald Wight, and the Bishop of Trinidad intervene to save the Industry from "war", whereas a legitimate Strike is concerned, with all its attendant pain and sufferings and all its frightful possibilities and probabilities and potentialities.

In conclusion, I am to notify British Empire Workers and Citizens all over the Colony that a Hundred Thousand Dollar STRIKE FUND has been launched by the Butler Home Rule Party, to back the Strike, if and when it comes. All members of the Butler Movement are asked to hand in donations to the nearest Union Branch Secretary; for transmission to: Uriah Butler, Chief Servant of the Home Rule Party, Butler Field Headquarters, Main Field Road, Point Fortin.

May God bless us all: May He crown our United efforts with success.

APPENDIX No. 11

EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY
INTO THE COST OF LIVING IN NIGERIA—COLONIAL No. 204, 1946

PARA. 69. Those methods (of compiling the Cost of Living Index) are derived from the Ministry of Labour's pamphlet on the cost of living index published in the United Kingdom. But the Commission does not consider that cost of living indices in Nigeria should take precisely the form designed by the Ministry of Labour for use in the United Kingdom. That form is open to criticism even there—firstly, of course, because in the main it ignores change in expenditure-patterns, so that the index-numbers derived

from it become in course of time inaccurate ; and, secondly, because it is rather complicated, so that people whose incomes in part depend on it are not really aware why their incomes are increased or decreased—and it is for four reasons certainly not applicable, without adjustment, in Nigeria. In the first place certain items play a part in many people's expenditure-patterns in Nigeria for which it seems difficult to find a place in so formal a scheme of analysis as the United Kingdom scheme. Illustrations are expenditure on dependent relatives ; whatever the word "relative" may mean ; expenditure on the purchase of wives ; expenditure on personal debt-service ; and, if an article in a recent number of *Africa* analysing the expenditure of 16 Ibos is to be believed, expenditure on corruption. In the second place it is doubtful if it is possible to obtain the co-operation by the public on which the accuracy of the United Kingdom index, if it is accurate, in part depends. Investigation by means of the household budget, in fact, is useless if the people supplying the budgets do not give the facts. In the third place it is difficult to feel that the system of checks whereby the Ministry of Labour can satisfy itself that the figures which it is handling are accurate exists or can be brought into existence in Nigeria. Finally, it is difficult to feel that so easily misled a race as the Africans should be left without guidance regarding the best expenditure-patterns for their own purposes : the Government is in fact missing an opportunity to guide expenditure along sound lines if it is content instead merely to investigate expenditure upon unsound lines.

Para. 70. The alternative to cost of living surveys of the Lagos type, in fact, and much to be preferred to them, is the compiling by the Government, in consultation with representatives of the African Civil Servants, of properly thought-out statements, in terms of a small number of essential items of expenditure, of what in fact the cost of living is if people spend their money wisely. These compilations would be both a record of movements of cost of living and an indication of the best expenditure-patterns. They would do something towards drawing the attention of literate Africans towards the fact that except in the lowest income groups part at least of their expenditure is at present mere waste of money and that getting sufficient food, clothing, house-room and so forth is a matter of wise spending as well as a matter of sufficient spending.

Para. 71. The task of arriving at simple statements of the best expenditure-pattern and of the movement of prices of the commodities involved would not be formidable. Thirty-five items of expenditure in Lagos and other towns and twenty-five items in rural areas would give quite as accurate a result as would many more items. It is important that the indices thus prepared should be based on a reasonable assumption regarding the size of the normal family : for example, on the assumption that the normal family comprises husband, wife, one other adult, and five children, and that the total of eight persons considered together are equivalent to five adults. By this means the indices would be not only studies in the movement of cost of living but also studies of the essential minimum expenditure and so of the essential minimum wage. It is the Commission's view that the Government should begin work on this suggestion as soon as it can obtain the services, presumably from the United Kingdom, of a team consisting of at least three statistical officers and one nutritionist who will be able to visit the areas in which indices will have to be constructed and to initiate them on right lines. The indices thus arrived at should be prepared each quarter and should not be regarded as being confidential or secret but should be published both in the official Gazette and in the Press.

APPENDIX No. 12

HOUSING

THE PROBLEM

The Royal Commission in their report stated that in both town and country the present housing of the large majority of the working people in the West Indian Colonies left much to be desired ; in many places it was deplorable ; in some the conditions

were such that any human habitation of buildings occupied by large families must seem impossible to a newcomer from Europe ; it was no exaggeration to say that in the poorest parts of most towns and in many of the country districts a majority of the houses were largely made of rusty corrugated iron and unsound boarding ; quite often the original floor had disappeared and only the earth remained, its surface so trampled that it was impervious to any rain which might penetrate through a leaking roof ; sanitation in any form and water supply were unknown in such premises, and in many cases no light could enter when the door was closed. These decrepit homes, more often than not were seriously overcrowded, and it was not surprising that some of them were dirty and verminous in spite of praiseworthy efforts of the inhabitants to keep them clean. In short, every condition that tended to produce disease was to be found in a serious form.

In his tuberculosis survey of Trinidad in 1944 Dr. Gilmour stated that housing must receive early attention. The conditions of housing, overcrowding and inadequacy, were such that special measures of tuberculosis control would inevitably fail till housing was improved.

ACTION TAKEN SINCE THE ROYAL COMMISSION REPORT

A Slum Clearance Committee has been appointed and slum clearance and housing legislation enacted. Government expenditure on housing and slum clearance 1942-46 was \$5,130,000 in spite of shortage of materials, compared with an expenditure of \$1,300,000 in the previous five years.

Developments in housing and slum clearance are financed from loan funds to be raised by Government. Slum clearance operations have been proceeding within the area of Port-of-Spain and San Fernando. At the 30th September, 1946, the Housing Commission had erected 34 one-bedroom apartment buildings, 18 two-bedroom apartment buildings and 48 three-bedroom apartment buildings in Port-of-Spain, and 12 three-bedroom apartment buildings in San Fernando. There were also under construction at that date 12 two-bedroom apartment buildings and 10 three-bedroom apartment buildings in Port-of-Spain, and 16 one-bedroom and 24 three-bedroom apartment buildings in San Fernando. 288 families and 62 single persons in Port-of-Spain have been displaced from slum areas required by the Housing Commission and with the exception of two families and four single persons have all been re-housed by the Commission.

The main housing schemes on which the Housing Commission is engaged are at Morvant, Monripos and Navet. At the 30th September the Commission had erected the houses shown hereunder :—

	One-bedroom houses	Two-bedroom houses	Three-bedroom houses
Morvant	168	460	117
Monripos and Navet	38	304	60
Broadway	—	30	22

Work on the preparation of additional building sites at Morvant is in progress.

Two rural housing schemes are in course of construction on lands which were given to Government for the purpose free of cost by Caroni, Limited and St. Medeleine Sugar Company, Limited. The layout plans of these settlements have been approved after consultation with the Town Planning Adviser to the Comptroller. Selection committees have been appointed for the purpose of recommending selected tenants and the amount of subsidy which should be granted to them.

THE FUTURE

In the sketch plan of the Ten Year Development proposals \$4,700,000 have been allotted to the Planning and Housing Commission (this is exclusive of the slum clearance programme for which a loan of \$5,000,000 was floated in 1945). In addition \$2,050,000 have been allotted for rural housing. These proposals are, however, still under consideration and have not yet been approved by the Legislative Council.

APPENDIX No. 13

CORRESPONDENCE WITH T. URIAH BUTLER REGARDING THE SCOPE OF THE INQUIRY

From THE BRITISH EMPIRE WORKERS', PEASANTS' AND RATEPAYERS' UNION,

7A, St. Joseph Road,
Port-of-Spain,
Trinidad, B.W.I.
16th April, 1947.

Mr. Fred W. Dalley,
The Colonial Secretariat,
Red House,
Port-of-Spain,
SIR,

I am directed by my Executive to inform you that as a result of your expressed lack of authority to settle the existing dispute between my Union and the O.E.A., the hopes, the joys and even the very crown of rejoicing of thousands of our members affected by the Oilfields Strike now four (4) months (less four days) old, which your coming to our country quite naturally inspired and sustained up to yesterday, have all been shattered to pieces and placed at the feet of our distinguished fellow-citizen, Citizen Creech-Jones, the British Colonial Secretary.

In the circumstances my Executive deem it expedient in the interests of members of our Union on strike and in the interests of peace in Industry, and for the general good of the Colony as a whole, to make every constitutional effort to bring about a settlement in the aforementioned dispute.

With this end in view I am directed to ask that you cable the British Colonial Secretary asking him for the necessary power and authority to settle current disputes between Trade Unions and Employers of labour (including Government of course) in our country as a necessary pre-requisite for the success of your Mission in so far as the Butler Movement in the Colony is concerned.

Copies of this letter have been sent to the Governor, the Colonial Secretary and the Industrial Adviser.

Faithfully yours,

T. URIAH B. BUTLER,
President-General.
E. LIONEL CROSS,
General Secretary.

To His Excellency Sir John Shaw,
Governor of Trinidad,
Government House,
Port-of-Spain,
SIR,

16th April, 1947.

Sadly disappointed in the Mission of Mr. Dalley and still fully resolved to win for Oilfield Workers who are members of my Union a better, a brighter and a more happy

and progressive day in the Oil Industry, I beg to enclose a copy of a letter sent to Mr. Dalley at the instance of my Executive and to ask that you be good enough to use your good offices to assist in establishing Peace in the Oil Industry of the country.

Meanwhile we shall continue to lift or resolve to help ourselves higher and higher in the firm belief that the God of Heaven who helps those who help themselves will again turn our sorrows into joys and our crosses into crowns in Jesus Almighty Name.

Faithfully yours,

T. URIAH BUTLER,
President-General.

Stamped :
British Empire Workers',
Peasants' and Ratepayers' Union.

COLONIAL SECRETARIAT,
Red House,
Port-of-Spain.

DEAR SIR,

18th April, 1947

I have received your letter of 16th April. In order to prevent any further misunderstanding I am, as promised at the meeting of trade union representatives held on Monday last, sending a copy of the terms of reference of my Inquiry as given to me by the Rt. Hon. A. Creech-Jones, M.P., His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, and announced by him in the British House of Commons.

I made it clear at the meeting that such matters as the recent strikes and disturbances—including the non-reinstatement of strikers—come within the scope of my investigations, and this was confirmed by the typewritten list of points I handed to you as being among those I wished to discuss individually with the representatives of your Union.

You, however, spoke of the "power to settle disputes". Now, whatever may have been the beliefs and hopes of your members (hopes which I trust may yet be realised), I must say I find it hard to believe that you, at any rate, with your background and experience, could have conceived that I had come here with powers which, in effect, would have entitled me not only to impose a settlement on employers and workers but to ignore existing machinery and even to over-ride His Excellency the Governor of Trinidad. Nor must you put me down as so innocent as to credit that if I were to try to impose a settlement with which you disagreed you would accept it.

No. I must make it crystal clear : I am not here to dictate or to impose ; but to inquire, to advise, to persuade, to co-operate—and to report. I have no doubt whatever, that this is definitely understood by the rest of your trade union colleagues, and I shall continue to work for the co-operation of the members of the British Empire Workers' Union.

I note that you intend to make every constitutional effort to bring about a settlement in "a dispute between your Union and the O.E.A.", and I need hardly say that such efforts are in line with my own desires and intention.

Yours faithfully,
FRED W. DALLEY.

Mr. Uriah Butler,
7A, St. Joseph Road,
Port-of-Spain.

APPENDIX No. 14

SCHEME FOR TRAINING WEST INDIAN TRADE UNION OFFICIALS
IN CONSULTATION with the Trades Union Congress and the Ministry of Labour and National Service, a scheme has been prepared in the Colonial Office which will continue the correspondence courses for West Indian trade union officials, provided by the Trades Union Congress in 1942-43.

Ruskin College correspondence courses will be provided free of charge by the Trades Union Congress to 15 officials annually for a period covering, if possible, the next nine years. In addition, during the second, third and fourth year of the period it is intended to provide ten scholarships at the expense of the Colonial Development and Welfare Vote to enable selected students, who have completed the correspondence courses, to take a six months' practical course in Trade Union work in the United Kingdom. The plans for the practical course are that the selected Trade Union officials will spend their first month in this country in full time study on an intensive theoretical course conducted by the Trades Union Congress as part of their permanent provision for the technical education of trade unionists. This will be followed by four months' attachment to Trade Unions in this country, and the sixth month will be spent in seeing industrial machinery at work at the Ministry of Labour and National Service. The continuance of the practical training courses after the initial three years will be reviewed towards the close of that period, when it should be possible to determine whether funds for further scholarships can be provided over and above the original ten.

Selection of Candidates. For the annual correspondence course, the trade unions or the representative trade union organisations in each Colony will be invited by the local government to suggest a field of candidates. The names will next be communicated through the Colonial Office to the Trades Union Congress and the Governing Body of Ruskin College accompanied by observations on the merits of each candidate. Ruskin College will then select 15 candidates from the list submitted.

As regards the practical course, selection will be by joint collaboration between Ruskin College, the Trades Union Congress, and the Colonial Office.

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