

MR. ACKISS, Chaplain of the United States Navy, will speak at the mid-week service in the Lutheran Church this evening at 7:30 o'clock.

A cordial invitation extended.

J. P. CHRISTENSEN.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COLONIAL COUNCIL FOR ST. CROIX.

(Continued from yesterday's Avis.)

2nd Member for Christiansted Country District (*Berg*) in introducing the resolution said, —Mr. Chairman.—I do not think this resolution requires any considerable discussion on my part. The matter is well known and was dealt with at the last meeting when a resolution was passed by the Council to go to the Senate Committee. In that resolution the Council states "that it is our opinion that the present form of Government should continue until a change is requested which emanates from the people of the Virgin Islands." I am following that up with this resolution, which, to my mind, seems to be the most logical sequence that we ascertain the wishes of the people of this island as regards a change in the form of Government. I consider such a step is necessary. I do not know that any one can expect us to continue under the present form of government.

The present Senate Bill is a most conservative document and there is nothing in it that is detrimental to the interest of this island and it is for this reason I introduce this resolution. The spirit in which the resolution was forwarded to Congress was, it isn't that we do not want any change in the present administration, but it was merely unsuited to local needs. When I cast my vote I was not turning down the idea of having an American form of government in this island. I do not believe it is within the power of this Council to dictate to Congress. The Council may make suggestions which will be gladly received and acted upon by Congress. The Council has stated that nothing should be done until the consent of the people of this island is obtained. The consensus of opinion on this island is to have an American form of Government, and it is with that in view that I introduce this resolution.

Government Secretary (*Zane*) remarked: This is the first time Government has seen the text of this resolution and therefore I will confine myself to simply asking a few questions in order that Government may have the benefit of the replies in the future.

In the first place, I would like to ask whether, in so far as Honorable Members

are aware, a plebiscite has ever been taken under the existing Colonial Law on a matter of vital importance such as the matter herein dealt with?

2nd Member for Christiansted Country District (*Berg*) in reply to the Government Secretary said, —A plebiscite was taken in connection with the transfer of these islands during the time of Secretary Seward. I remember a vote having been taken, and it can be found among the records. I presume it may have been a plebiscite.

Government Secretary (*Zane*): Does the Colonial Law or Rules of Business for the Colonial Council provide for the method of either conducting a plebiscite or dealing with the legislative procedure which should be followed provided a plebiscite is taken?

2nd Member for Christiansted Country District (*Berg*): We have provided a committee to take care of that. I do not know whether the Colonial Law provides for that. I do not know that these legal questions are necessary.

Government Secretary (*Zane*): In other words, I take it from the remarks of the Honorable Member that he does not know what the procedure would be either for taking a plebiscite or for handling it after it is taken. The latter portion of it is, of course, the more important. This resolution provides for the appointment of a committee to draft regulations to take the plebiscite. It goes no further. And assuming then that a plebiscite is taken, I would like to ask the following question: By the term "all citizens of the Virgin Islands", does that include men, women and children?

2nd Member for Christiansted Country District (*Berg*): This measure is not yet passed upon. I do not know what amendments may be brought in. I have introduced this resolution for the benefit of this legislature—community—When it is passed upon it will go to the Honorable Government Secretary.

Government Secretary (*Zane*): Mr. Chairman. For the information of the Honorable 2nd Member for Christiansted Country District I make the statement that I am asking these questions in order that I may explain to His Excellency, the Governor, what is to be the basis of operation for this resolution. Of course if he can't answer what the term "all citizens of the Virgin Islands" means, I would like to ask one further question, and that is: How can the Colonial Council of St. Croix undertake a plebiscite of the Municipality of St. Thomas and St. John?

2nd Member for Christiansted Country District (*Berg*): I appreciate the Government Secretary's suggestions on this matter and I hope that one of my colleagues will bring in the necessary amendment during the course of the debate. I never knew that a member was cajoled when he brings in a bill before the Council. I thank the Honorable Gov-

ernment Secretary for his advice. I will gain a good deal on these points.

Government Secretary (*Zane*): Mr. Chairman. I do not intend to offer any suggestions. However, I am much gratified that I seem to have done so. I am merely seeking, as I say, information which I am certain His Excellency, the Governor would be glad to have when he sees the resolution. To summarize: I understand that no previous plebiscite has been taken within the knowledge of any Honorable Member present—at least in the island—and therefore the thing is a new venture, and I feel that it is not incumbent at this time upon Government to make any statement whatever with regard to any phase of this whole matter.

2nd Member for Frederiksted Country District (*Curry*): Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask whether the Honorable 2nd Member for Christiansted Country District is still in favor of the present form of government, and whether he wants it made permanent? I can name five different existing forms of American Civil Government: Porto Rico Government, Virgin Islands Government, the Government of the District of Columbia, Statehood Government and Federal Government.

2nd Member for Christiansted Country District (*Berg*): Mr. Chairman. Are we discussing this resolution or a form of Government which Washington may desire to grant to this island? It is not within our power to make the present form of government permanent. We are concerned about discussing a resolution to take a plebiscite.

2nd Member for Frederiksted Country District (*Curry*) remarked: Mr. Chairman. The Organic Act calls this government a civil government. It does say that it is a temporary act. The proponent of the bill says he wants a permanent form of civil government. I would like to ask him if he wants the word "temporary" in the present Organic Act changed to "permanent" and carry on. From the reading of this proposed resolution it is reasonable to believe that we would be taking a plebiscite to make the present form of government permanent. We cannot place this before the people to vote on, because they won't know what they are voting on. It was voted almost unanimously that the Senate Bill was not suitable to conditions in this island. If we take a plebiscite that we want a civil form of government and it goes to the Senate the Senate will say that those people want a civil form of government, but haven't the brain to say what form of civil government they want. We have to give the voters something of a concrete nature to vote on. We would be making ourselves a laughing-stock if we ask them to vote on such a measure as is now before the House. I wouldn't know whether I was voting to make the present form of government we