

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COLONIAL COUNCIL FOR ST. CROIX.

(Continued from yesterday's Avis.)

2nd Member for Christiansted Country District (*Berg*) remarked: Mr. Chairman. A bill introduced in the Senate by Senator McLean was repudiated and considered worthless, so I am not surprised if the resolution which I have introduced is considered worthless by a member of this august body. Since this Council assert that Mr. Rothschild Francis has acted without the consent of the people of this island I thought it incumbent upon me, particularly as I cast a vote on the resolution, to ask the opinion of the people on this matter. If a plebiscite has not yet been taken, let us do it. It was not asked whether there was a transfer before. We made a transfer. I am not here asking for ways and means to do things for the people. I am here doing things for them. I am not here to filibuster. If the Honorable 2nd Member for Frederiksted Country District thinks that this measure is not suitable to conditions in this island he may bring in something which he thinks is suitable. It seems as if the eighteen members sitting here are casting aspersions upon themselves, and by doing so they make me their leader. Why don't they come forward with a proper bill? Congress cannot please them, I cannot please them. If the present form of Government is considered a civil form of government, then I do not know what is a civil form of government. I can ask the Honorable Member many technical questions and I am sure that he will not be able to construe them with American concepts. Mr. Arthur Warner, a representative of the "Nation", an American newspaper, was here the other day, he studied conditions in this island, if you call his paper a radical paper then take the "Science Monitor", another American newspaper, both papers think we should have a civil form of government. What the Federal Commission has to say as regards conditions in this island? They were entertained here as Americans. They have given their verdict, and I have seen everything in this verdict to urge a civil form of government for this island. Any suggestion members may offer which may be beneficial to this island and its inhabitant will be acceptable.

2nd Member for Frederiksted Country District (*Curry*) remarked: Mr. Chairman. I voted to forward this resolution; I voted for it to come on. I wanted to discuss it. I will carry out my oath as a legislator, but I don't think I would be doing it if I favored this resolution. I would be inconsistent just as my Honorable Friend

is. He wants to leave it up to Congress as to what kind of civil government we should have. I will retire from this Council if the Honorable Member can show me any inconsistency in the resolution passed by this Council at its last meeting. Concerning the Senate Bill, he quotes from the Resolution the following:

"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."

That's all he read, but the paragraph goes on to say, which he did not read:

"After they have given deliberate thought to the subject and have proposed a measure embodying adequate provisions to care for special local conditions."

The speaker continuing.—Can any one show me what there is in the resolution introduced by the Honorable 2nd Member for Christiansted Country District to take care of conditions in this island? The people would not know what they would be voting for if this resolution is passed and a plebiscite is taken. The Resolution passed by the joint Council in joint Session should be taken care of. We voted for it, practically unanimously. Things are not perfect here. I do not know of any government that is perfect. We have troubles and inconveniences, it is true. If we are to build up this little garden it is going to take time and co-operative thought and I will be there to help with all my legal knowledge that my honorable friend has given me credit for, and I hope he will be there too.

2nd Member for Christiansted Country District (*Berg*) remarked: Mr. Chairman. Certainly the resolution says to take care of local conditions. That does not mean that the Colonial Council should draw up the permanent form of government. I cannot see where the present resolution is inconsistent.

1st Member for Frederiksted Town (*Jackson*) remarked: Mr. Chairman. I have an amendment to bring in, but before doing so I want to go over what has been said by the Honorable 2nd Member for Frederiksted Country District.

As regards the resolution now before the House it is perfectly proper and in order. This Council went on record by joint resolution of April 4 by stating that they are not "unalterably opposed to civil government, but that it is their opinion that the present form of government should continue until a change is requested which emanates "from the people of the Virgin Islands after they have given careful thought to the subject, etc." How can any one say that this matter has not been given careful thought by the people of this island. The bill has been published in extenso by the press of this island; it has been discussed editorially by each paper in the island. What this resolution is asking

is to take a plebiscite and members of this Council have a chance to go on record that they are sincere. I see no harm in this resolution. Why not say yes, we are ready now to carry out the wishes of the people? Why not say appoint a committee of five, seven or nine members for the purpose of taking a plebiscite? Gentlemen it seems to me that there is no need to take offence. The Federal Commission says that the inhabitants of this island are 97% literate. I offer this amendment which, I believe, will take care of one or two of the questions propounded by the Government Secretary.

4th Member for Frederiksted Country District (*Andersen*) remarked: Mr. Chairman. When you go out to the people to take a plebiscite you certainly have to put something tangible before them. You don't want to go to them and say you want a change for the worse. No, you want to talk to them about a change for the better. And if you do who is going to see that they get something better? The Honorable 1st Member for Frederiksted Town is talking for himself and the other Members, but it is my earnest belief that the people in the country do not know whether the change would be for the better or for the worse. I spoke to many of the people in the country about this matter and the question was invariably asked whether the change will bring work, so that they can earn a daily bread. I cannot see my way to vote for this resolution until it is made plain to me that it is something that will be for the betterment of the island and its inhabitants.

2nd Member for Christiansted Country District (*Berg*) remarked: Mr. Chairman. There are people in this community who criticised the stand I took when I voted for the resolution. There are people who know what the change would mean. We cannot expect everything from the people, but this is a way to get their opinion. We have said here that the people don't want the change. Let us find out whether they want it or not. Why are we afraid to ask their opinion.

(To be concluded.)

LOCAL

We had the privilege yesterday of inspecting a sample of excellent brown crystallized sugar manufactured by the St. Croix Sugar Factory. It is of a very light grayish-brown color, and 98.9 test. The Factory has made some 200 bags of this strike and is retailing it at \$18 a bag of 250 pounds, English weight. With the advancing price of sugar it would be well for merchants here to take advantage of the local sugar market as imported sugar is likely to be high later on. If the factory could be assured of sale for this sugar locally it would be prepared to furnish the trade, as it could not