

## SOCIOLOGY

# Problems of Caribbean

Scientists are contributing to our knowledge of the political, social and economic problems of the Caribbean peoples at a time when this information is extremely important.

THE EXTREMELY complex and diverse social and political problems of peoples in the Caribbean were discussed by a group of social scientists in a two-day conference in New York.

Recent political changes in the Caribbean because of their importance to U.S. economy and national defense intensified interest in the conference, called "Social and Cultural Pluralism in the Caribbean." Dr. Morton Klass of Columbia University told the Conference that the term "plural society" is inadequate to describe the differing value systems, religions and cultural organization present on even the single island of Trinidad.

Two large ethnic groups of almost equal size, "West Indians" and "East Indians," make up the bulk of the population, Dr. Klass reported.

In the West Indian "Creole" culture, greater prestige is accorded to European rather than African-derived cultural and physical traits so that color, even in such an overwhelmingly black society, is a factor in determining status.

The majority of Trinidad East Indians, rural Hindu cane laborers, derive their values from India. Color, or absence of it, is relatively unimportant to them, but caste membership is significant.

The West Indian group want assimilation and a single socio-cultural system. The East Indians want a separate and equal status. This desire seems to be intensifying and the East Indian population in Trinidad is growing rapidly.

One attempt to reach a solution of problems in the Caribbean was the establishment on April 22, 1958, of the West Indies Federation, which brought together in a single organization ten British island colonies, including Jamaica and Trinidad.

A survey of the opinions of 238 Jamaican leaders concerning the Federation was reported by Dr. Wendell Bell of the Center for Latin American Studies, University of California, Los Angeles.

More than half of the Jamaican leaders believe that Jamaica has more to lose than gain by being part of the West Indies Federation.

Their attitude toward independence is very different. Only a fourth believe that Jamaica would lose rather than gain by political independence from the United Kingdom. There is strong sentiment, Dr. Bell found, in favor of Jamaica's striking out for herself and becoming an independent nation in her own right, but this sentiment is not shared evenly by all segments of the "elite" group.

Dr. Bell's survey was conducted during the summer of 1958.

The political relationships between the

French West Indies and France—integrated as départements of the mother country—are unique in the Caribbean and rare throughout the colonial world, Dr. Michael M. Horowitz of Columbia University said.

Not all socio-economic groups are in sympathy with the new status. The white plantocracy, fearing loss of political control, would like a return to colonial status and maintains an estate-like relationship toward others that has been rare in France since the 18th century. The intellectual and professional group, composed largely of Martiniquans of color, has been more in sympathy with the values of contemporary France.

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## CONSERVATION

## Federal, Local Workers Aid Watershed Programs

"LOCAL PEOPLE" in charge"—this is the strongly appealing feature that sets the watershed program apart from many others involving governments from local on up to Federal level.

The Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954 closed a gap in the nation's water conservation program, Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson told the Sixth National Watershed Congress in Washington. Since this legislation became law, there has been a way to manage water as it flows through thousands of small watersheds.

As a result, Secretary Benson said, for the first time in American history we now have sound programs "under which Federal, state and local people are attacking the conservation problem on every front," conserving soil, water, timber and human resources.

So far some 436 applications have been approved for help in planning watersheds—land areas that drain into particular bodies of water. Of these, 164 work plans have been developed and approved by the USDA. This means that effective flood controls and water conservation methods will be in operation in many areas. Each community depends on the water intake and output of its own watershed. The experts agree that problems of water shortage, floods, pollution or sedimentation must be met within the confines of each watershed.

Secretary Benson pointed out four steps the Federal Government can take to increase the effectiveness of the watershed program: 1. promote "more harmonious action" among the Federal agencies concerned with the program; 2. complete needed land treatment and structural work

in the 11 authorized major watersheds; 3. strive for better Federal-state working relationships; and 4. show citizens how they can take action.

Persons attending the watershed congress toured through the Rockcreek Watershed in the District of Columbia and nearby Maryland. This watershed, its problems and development are typical of many urban-rural areas throughout the nation. Plans for its development are, however, largely in the early stage.

Some 25 organizations representing farmers, conservationists, industry and Government participated in the congress which celebrated five years of progress in water and soil resources programs.

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