

## YOUTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Keynote address delivered by

W. G. Demas

Secretary-General  
Commonwealth Caribbean Regional Secretariat

It is a great pleasure to have been asked to give the keynote address this afternoon. The invitation did come as something of a surprise, seeing that I am by no means an expert on youth. I can pretend to know a little about development, but I should warn you that my knowledge of youth problems is by no means extensive.

At the same time, I hasten to add that I did become very enthusiastic about the topic. This is so for two reasons. First of all, I think that the juxtaposition of youth and development is extremely significant. Its significance lies in the fact that it places emphasis on the development process where it ought to be - on people. Normally one is accustomed to hearing about industry and economic development, the role of agriculture in economic development and, even more recently, education and economic development. But I think that the theme of youth and development places emphasis where it should be, because youth are people and, although it may be a cliché, it would stand repetition to emphasize that economic development depends on people. It depends on people's capacity for work, their imagination and, equally if not more important, on their motivation. I think the juxtaposition of youth and development in the title is also significant in that it does serve to highlight an important fact about the Commonwealth Caribbean today - that is, the preponderance of young people in the population. I think that the papers from Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago have brought out this fact well and clearly. For example, it is stated that the percentage of the total of the Trinidad and Tobago population under twenty-five years of age is 62. One can say, perhaps guessing a bit, that in Trinidad and Tobago the age of the 'typical' person in a statistical sense is about eighteen years. In other words, the typical Trinidadian and Tobagonian (and I have no doubt that this

figure also applies to the rest of the Commonwealth Caribbean) is a person of about 18 years. This I think highlights the importance of the relationships between youth and development in the specific circumstances of the Commonwealth Caribbean.

I need hardly warn you that this is a vast subject and that owing to the nature of my address certain aspects will inevitably have to be omitted. For example, I do not propose to say anything about the problems of delinquent youth, nor will I say much about the role of women or young females. These subjects, as you know, raise special problems. I shall be speaking about youth in general, and I shall be dealing largely with economic development.

### The concept of development

I think it is worthwhile to examine closely this concept of economic development about which we hear so much these days. To most people economic development simply means an increase in per capita income or, more broadly, in material welfare. This is true. There must be a continuing increase in the levels of material well-being for people in modern societies to be satisfied. However, one has to go more deeply into the matter of economic development than thinking simply in terms of continuing increase in per capita income or of material well-being. We have to look, for example, at the distribution of income. If, let us say, the economy grows at a very high rate, perhaps at eight per cent per annum, but the increase in well-being is concentrated among the top ten per cent of the population, one cannot in any meaningful sense of the word speak of economic development in that kind of situation.

One also has to look at the employment situation. Again, if an economy is growing at eight per cent per annum but the percentage of unemployment in the total labour force is anywhere between 19 and 20, then one has to take this very important factor into account in judging whether that country is really developing in a satisfactory way and in a politically acceptable manner.

Apart from the distribution of income and the unemployment situation, there are other elements which also deserve attention. One of them is the extent of national control of the development processes. In the historical context of the Commonwealth Caribbean there has been a sort of development, almost a "bastard" kind of economic evolution, which has been imposed by people in organisations outside of the countries, and, what is more, this kind of development can continue only if the people

and organisations outside choose to promote such development. In other words, if one is really examining the concept of development beyond a superficial level, one has to look at the extent to which the springs of development come from within the country or from outside.

Finally, another important element, which I think is part of a satisfactory definition of the concept in the specific circumstances of the Commonwealth Caribbean, is the extent to which there is popular participation in the economy. There should not be too unequal a distribution of income. As you all know, there is no country in the world where income is perfectly distributed in the sense of everyone having the same income; for this reason, I say not too unequally distributed. But consideration should also be given to the extent to which ordinary people participate in the economy, in the sense not only of owning capital, owning shares, equities, industries and so on, but also in terms of running industries. Thus, in my opinion, one has to have this kind of well-rounded conception of development to make the term appropriate to the circumstances of the Commonwealth Caribbean and to the aspirations of the people in the nineteen seventies.

If one has this kind of concept of economic development, and one examines the present day Commonwealth Caribbean economies, one might ask: How do these countries stand in relation to this particular concept of development? If one thinks about the matter just a little, one will see that judged by these criteria the Commonwealth Caribbean countries are under-developed. It is true that in some of these countries the per capita income is higher than in many other countries of the Third World - higher than in many of the countries of Asia and Africa and even Latin America. But when one examines the question more deeply and makes reference to some of the considerations I have mentioned above, one will find everywhere in the Commonwealth Caribbean a large degree of under-development.

#### Some factors of under-development

There is in all the Commonwealth Caribbean countries - whether they are large or small, whether or not they have mineral resources such as oil or bauxite, a tremendous amount of unemployment. One finds that unemployment of the labour force is generally somewhere between ten and twenty per cent. In some cases it even exceeds twenty per cent.

Further, in all the Commonwealth Caribbean countries, without exception, Agriculture, other than the traditional exports of sugar, citrus and bananas, is not in a very satisfactory condition. There are two types of agriculture. One is organised along lines of large estates, large plantations, producing mainly for export, and the other comprises smaller holdings, many of them very small indeed, and predominantly orientated to the domestic market. This is the sector of agriculture which supplies food directly for the region, and in all cases it is here that low productivity and slow growth in production are evident. One finds that in relation to other sectors of the economy, such as minerals or tourism or manufacturing industry, the part of the agricultural sector producing food for the home market is growing rather slowly, if at all. We cannot ignore this fact in judging the extent of under-development of the countries of this part of the world.

There are many other factors which suggest a high level of under-development. One of them is the extent to which, in relation to the export sector of agriculture, the countries of the region depend on preferential shelter in metropolitan markets. This is clearly a sign of under-development and dependence. Moreover, one finds a shortage of appropriate institutions, particularly financial ones, which can help to mobilise savings for productive investment within the countries. The list can be lengthened, but I will not do so since this is not a talk on development as such, but on youth and development.

I propose in the rest of my address to look at the subject in relation to two of the factors in under-development which I have mentioned earlier i.e. unemployment and the poor state of agriculture. I shall also refer to another factor, namely, the extent of popular participation in the economy, because I think that a greater realisation of this particular aspect of development is important, not only in its own right, but also in helping to solve or to alleviate the unemployment problem.

### Youth and unemployment

If we look at the situation of Caribbean youth in relation to these factors, one finds that unemployment affects the young people most heavily. The highest percentage of the unemployed in relation to the labour force occurs in the age group 15 to 25 years. This is true of all the Commonwealth Caribbean countries. Obviously, this situation is one which must be profoundly demoralising to the young people of the countries of our region and it seems to me that unless something is done in a fairly short space of time,

the situation will be most untenable. Of course, the economist has a rather longer term horizon than most people and, when I say a short space of time, I mean a decade or so. Unless something is done early, it will be impossible to contain the situation and to maintain the society in a viable way.

In the Caribbean youth is also profoundly alienated from agriculture and from rural life. Relatively few young people are thinking in terms of taking such action and such steps as would enable them to participate more directly in the economic life of the countries where they live.

In fact, because of the economic and social situation of the Caribbean, we find that Caribbean youth is today doubly alienated. On the one hand, it shares the general, at least the widespread, alienation of young people in most parts of the world, particularly in the more developed countries. Youth today is dissatisfied and has for some reason or other, or for various reasons which are too complex to analyse here, rejected all forms of authority, whether that authority is inherited in the form of institutions or whether the authority is exercised by individuals. In fact, it seems to me that particularly in the developed countries all forms of institutions are rejected among certain sections, particularly the so-called New Left. This is a fascinating question which for reasons of time I cannot explore here today. Caribbean youth shares in this general alienation of youth. At the same time, we find a second source of alienation of Caribbean youth which arises from the obvious source. Many of them find that they cannot play any kind of constructive or self-respecting role in their societies, given the present economic and social arrangements which result among other things in frighteningly high levels of unemployment. In the light of this, Commonwealth Caribbean Governments are under a double kind of pressure to do something about the youth problem - if I may term it that.

In looking at what can be done, and in what ways policy-makers and youth organisations themselves can get assistance from this kind of Seminar, I think it is useful to break the subject down into a number of parts. First of all, we have to consider what Government can do; second, we have to consider what employers, what business can do; then we have to consider third, what labour organisations, trade unions, can do; fourth, we have to consider what the under-privileged youth themselves can do; finally - and I think this is probably an area which is somewhat neglected in the Caribbean if not in other countries - what the relatively privileged youths can do for the less privileged ones.

## The role of government

Government, quite clearly, has an important role to play. The Government is responsible for overall economic policies and, of course, one of the most important aspects of economic policies in countries such as ours concerns employment.

## Causes of unemployment

At this stage I think that before we proceed any further, we ought to analyse the employment problem in the Caribbean for a few moments. I am sure that most of you here are familiar with this, but for the sake of completeness I think it would be useful for me to say a few words about the source of this serious unemployment problem which we are all facing today in the Commonwealth Caribbean. Unemployment is not a simple problem. There are several inter-related factors, of both an economic and a social nature, which have produced an appalling unemployment situation in the Commonwealth Caribbean.

## Population growth

First of all, there is the high rate of growth of the labour force which is a result of the number of births fifteen years before. The labour force today, in 1970, is determined - omitting emigration - by what happened or failed to happen in 1955. In a sense, therefore, the rate of growth of the labour force is determined by the rate of growth of the population fifteen years before. This is well known and I will not bore you with statistics. I think that the Jamaica paper has provided some very good statistics - demographic statistics - on the rate of growth of the population etc. Suffice it to say that in all the Commonwealth Caribbean Countries populations are growing at a fairly rapid rate - by which I mean more than two per cent per annum. In some cases the growth rate exceeds three per cent per annum.

When a population is growing at three per cent per annum as compared with 0.5 or one per cent per annum, that makes a tremendous difference. I think this is obvious to you. While the difference seems to be very small, however, the effect is very great, especially when it is realised that three per cent per annum means growth twice as fast as 1.5 per cent per annum and six times as fast as 0.5 per cent per annum. In most of the developed countries, for example Britain, the population is growing by 0.5 per cent per annum. If, therefore, in this part of the world, the population grows by three per cent per annum it is growing

six times as fast as in Britain. This gives you an idea of the magnitude of the problem.

### Inappropriate technologies

Apart from population growth, and hence the growth of the labour force, unemployment is caused by the fact that technologies which we use are not appropriate to our situation. We use highly capital-intensive technologies which are imported, like practically everything else in the West Indies, from outside. The West Indies have been and continue to be great importers. We import not only goods but technology, fashions, tastes, ideas, institutions. We import almost everything and our technology derives from the more developed countries where it is labour that is scarce and capital that is relatively plentiful.

In the Caribbean, we have the opposite situation. Capital is scarce and labour very plentiful. Therefore, when we have capital-intensive technologies we fail to generate much employment per unit of investment. For example, one finds that in the typical Commonwealth Caribbean country it costs something of the order of \$25,000 W.I. per annum to produce one job in the manufacturing industry. This gives an idea of the enormity of the problem posed by capital intensities. Let us not forget also that when countries like Britain were going through a similar phase of development, the amount of capital required to create a job in the manufacturing sector was much less. I will not give you precise figures but, as a rough guess, perhaps the cost of providing a job in industry was one-twenty-fifth of that amount (even after allowing for price changes.)

This shows then that the capital intensive technologies which we are now importing from the developed countries are hindering the expansion of employment opportunities. I think these two factors are well known - population growth and capital-intensive technology - and there is general agreement, I think, about them. There will not be much controversy about them.

### Wage rates

At this point I deliberately become more controversial and mention other factors. One of them is the pattern of wage rates which has been established, and which has come into being both because of the structure of our economies and because of the activities of Trade Unions, which - and here I will be very controversial - constitute an institution imported in a form which

has not been modified to suit our circumstances.

Let me develop this point by taking the question of economic structure first. In nearly all the Commonwealth Caribbean countries one has got two sectors of the economy in terms of productivity or output per man. One has got sectors such as oil or bauxite - mineral sectors - which have a very high productivity per man. In other cases one may have the modern tourist sector, luxury hotels and so on which can afford to pay higher wages. Then one has the less developed sectors, especially agriculture, which do not have the same output per head, and which therefore cannot pay the same rate of earnings as the modern sectors. To the extent that the high wages which are obtainable in the high productivity sectors affect the rest of the economy, to that extent is development retarded and the expansion of employment is hindered.

The classic example, of course, is Agriculture. Given the kind of wage one can hope to earn in an industry like oil or bauxite, or in a modern hotel, and given the level of earnings one can expect in the kind of agriculture we have, it is not surprising that the supply of labour for agriculture is reduced and is very adversely affected in this kind of situation in the Caribbean. At the same time, because of our economic structure, we find that salaries of certain individuals in certain large international companies which operate here tend to be pulled up to the level of the salaries which can be paid in the Metropolitan countries. And, of course, if a salary of a certain category of worker goes up, or is high, then it is very difficult to prevent an upward pull being exercised on other salaries of less "important" workers (if I may use this phrase), and of course of other wage earners. This is an extremely important factor which operates in the Commonwealth Caribbean. It is also aggravated by the "brain drain". The fact that qualified people from the Commonwealth Caribbean, can with a certain ease go to North America and earn high salaries corresponding to the productivity of the Metropolitan countries means in fact that more and more in the Commonwealth Caribbean an international market is being created for qualified people. More and more, too, this international market for these trained people affects other sectors of the labour market in the Commonwealth Caribbean countries.

#### Metropolitan model trade unions

To complete the picture, we have the Trade Unions. In my opinion they are very good agencies for several reasons.



They are a very important institution in any kind of non-totalitarian society, but at the same time simply because their practices are somewhat too closely modelled on those in metropolitan countries without sufficient adaptation to the circumstances, one finds that the Trade Unions tend to exert a lot of pressure to push up wages and this is not only exercised in leading sectors, but also in other lower-productivity sectors, such as the Government. This in turn does tend to aggravate the unemployment problem.

### Attitudes of secondary school leavers

Another factor in the unemployment situation is somewhat more nebulous. This factor belongs to the sphere of attitudes and values and it is rather intangible, but I think it does have tremendous importance in the Caribbean, especially in those countries which have advanced significantly in providing secondary education. One finds that (and this is well known, of course) secondary school graduates are extremely "choosy" about the kind of work they will do and about the level of remuneration which they will accept. In many cases, such attitudes have the effect of making them remain unemployed rather than accepting alternative kinds of employment, or salaries which are considered lower than those anticipated. Now this is a fact, and behind it lies a whole host of factors, which it would take too long to analyse here. It is, especially at the secondary level, partly the fault of an irrelevant education system which is part of the inherited values of the society, a very peculiar ex-colonial society where all sorts of aberrations flourish.

### Irrelevant mass media

However, it is also partly the result of the kind of perceptions and aspirations created by the electronic mass media in the Commonwealth Caribbean. Perhaps I have a bee in my bonnet about the mass media, but in considering the economic and social problems of the Caribbean, I always seem to come to this particular bee in my bonnet; and quite honestly I think it is an important factor. The electronic mass media, for the most part, are completely irrelevant; not only irrelevant but actually harmful in that they create the wrong values, the wrong perceptions. They raise consumption aspirations and they induce in the Commonwealth Caribbean, North American consumption standards and consumption aspirations. We have a situation where the economic basis can never satisfy, at least for hundreds of years, the kind of aspirations that are fostered nightly by the irrelevant mass

media in our midst.

This then is just an indication of some of the factors behind this set of attitudes (especially among the secondary school leavers) which are unfavourable in helping the unemployment situation or in promoting some kind of inclination towards agricultural work and rural development generally.

We have identified five factors in the unemployment situation. I will not try to give them relative weights except to point out that the easiest one of them to control, in my opinion, is the first one - that is, population growth; and I think that in many of the Commonwealth Caribbean countries, Governments over the last few years have been successfully beginning to implement family planning programmes. Of course, this solution takes a long time to show results, because even if one halves the birth rate today, and this is impossible, even if one halves the birth rate in one year, it would be another fifteen years before the rate of growth of the labour force would also be halved - leaving out of consideration emigration.

Thus it is a long-term solution. But because it is long term does not mean that it ought to be neglected. The other four are much more difficult and this is where I think youth programmes have relevance.

I have taken a rather circuitous route to come to the main point but I thought traversing the route would have been worthwhile to the understanding of some of the difficulties and complexities of the problem.

### Policies for reducing unemployment

Before we examine what various groups can do, let us try to make a rough synthesis of the kinds of policies which can be adopted to reduce or eliminate unemployment in the Commonwealth Caribbean. The first, which we have just mentioned, is an attempt popularly known as Family Planning. There are others. For instance, quite clearly, there must be profound changes in the education system, both of the formal education system and of out-of-school programmes. There must also be profound changes in the orientation, content and objectives of the mass media, because these media shape the values and aspirations and motivation of the people. Further, there must be some attempt to have what is now known as an Incomes Policy. The term "Incomes Policy" is sometimes misunderstood. It does not only

mean some kind of restraint in wages. It includes a lot more than wage restraint. Because of the irrational pattern of wages and salaries in our economies, clearly something has to be done soon about the whole complex of elements included in the concept of Incomes Policy.

We must also make an attempt to modify some of the technologies which we import from the Metropolitan countries. We have to explore all the possibilities of what are known as "intermediate technologies" which are now being promoted in other parts of the Third World, in the Commonwealth countries such as Tanzania, for example. I think there is a group in Britain known as the Intermediate Technology Development Group, which is doing some very good work in this field. They are advising many British firms on the use of so-called intermediate technology. From what I know about the situation, these intermediate technologies are being more widely used in Britain than they are in the Commonwealth Caribbean. There is also the whole field of technological innovation and adaptation which we in the Commonwealth Caribbean have not yet begun to touch.

In terms of general policies to alleviate this very complicated problem of unemployment, we have to do something about rural development. Let us be realistic. We cannot hope to stem the drift from the rural areas to the urban areas, but by an appropriate kind of rural development, by the focussing of general development strategy in a particular way, we could do something to slow down the rate of outflow from the rural areas to the urban areas.

Finally, the desire to create jobs must inform the actual content and orientation of development plans much more than is the case at the moment. In all development plans, not only the Commonwealth Caribbean but all over the Third World, we find lip-service being paid to employment objectives. There are fashions, of course, in all these things. Among one's aims, it is usual to speak of, for example, "the maximisation of employment opportunities," or some such nice phrase. But normally planners simply pay lip-service to this idea of creating additional employment opportunities, forget all about it, and go along to think purely in terms of economic growth, in terms of the growth rates of different sectors, production possibilities in different sectors, and so on. The result is that in terms of the actual details of the plan (policies and projects) employment is forgotten and in the end just sheer economic growth gets major consideration.

One of the things which the post-war economic history of the Commonwealth Caribbean has taught us is that economic growth is not the same thing as the expansion of employment opportunities. When the now developed countries were developing, economic growth and expansion of employment opportunities moved in the same direction. There was, as it were, a one-to-one correlation between the two things. But nowadays the Third World countries face the paradox that growth and employment appear to be conflicting tendencies. This has very grave implications for economic policies and the approach to development in countries such as ours. We simply cannot afford to look at employment as a by-product of economic growth. We have to plan integrally for employment along with other objectives. Employment objectives must be deeply embedded in every single facet of development planning and development policy. It has been argued in some places that one should simply allow economic growth to take place and forget about employment. In other words, they say: try to solve the employment problem by a kind of redistribution of income. When we have growth we would use the proceeds of this economic growth to create jobs. But experience has shown that this approach does not offer a feasible solution.

#### Possibilities for employment creation

The important thing, in my opinion, is to look at some of the possibilities which have not yet been utilised for creating employment among the people. Let us now examine what Government, first of all, can do in this situation to create employment opportunities for young people, to interest young people in agriculture in rural development.

#### Appropriate content of education

I mentioned earlier changes in the educational system - this is extremely important. In my opinion, all of us in the Commonwealth Caribbean, without exception, need to re-think the entire formal education system. First of all, we have to re-think the curriculum content. In an area such as the West Indies where this profound unemployment problem exists and where it is important to encourage self-employment and co-operative endeavour, it is surprising that the subject of cooperatives is not a compulsory subject in all secondary schools and even primary schools. In our countries, where there is this aversion to self-employment among large sections of the population, it is surprising that elementary business practices (I am not speaking

of "highbrow" business management or about managerial theory) are not taught and made compulsory in all secondary schools. This need not be taught as a separate entity in itself. One can gear, for example, the whole teaching of arithmetic and mathematics to small-scale business situations involving self-employment. To take an illustration, compound interest is ideally suited to be taught against this background.

Another example is that the manner in which Applied Science is taught could be related in the lower forms of the secondary schools or even in the higher classes of the primary schools to Agriculture. While I am not a professional agriculturalist, I think that most of the Science subjects in an applied sense could be taught around West Indian Agriculture.

### Child oriented teaching methods

One needs also changes in the approach to teaching. Again, I must warn you that I am not a professional educator, nor an educational psychologist; but I see no reason, a priori, why in teacher-training courses the teacher could not be taught such pedagogic methods as would enable the child whom he or she subsequently teaches to learn to be more innovative and creative as a person rather than what has been called by our social psychologists the authoritarian type of personality, or in other words, the uncreative sort who simply follows set rules, who cannot think out things for himself or herself in a given situation. What we really want is to create problem-solving children, innovative children, rather than children who simply accept set formulae and learn by rote. I am now treading on rather dangerous ground, I know, for I am not really qualified to speak on such matters; but, a priori, I see no reason why this kind of approach to the teaching of the child, and therefore, the formation of the personality of the child should not be done. Perhaps I should add that things might have improved since I was at school in Trinidad. It may be that the emphasis now is on turning out the sort of child I have described much more than it was in my time.

### Mass media

Apart from these changes in the educational system, Government can do something about the mass media. I think everyone would agree that the mass media in the sense of the radio and television, if properly utilised in the Caribbean, can be a powerful educational force in the very broad sense of the

word. More than that, these media can influence deeply and perhaps even change the values of the society in generally acceptable directions. One has got to be careful here. I am not suggesting that the Government should try in some kind of sinister "1984" way to shape the minds of people; but I would suggest that, if one takes a typical Caribbean society, one would find that there is general consensus that certain things are desirable, such as making the person more interested in his Caribbean environment. I think everyone, including the most reactionary in the Caribbean, would accept that making people, especially the young people, more oriented towards agriculture and the rural way of life is desirable. To the extent that the mass media can be geared towards achieving these generally acceptable objectives, to that extent the mass media can help to change the values and attitudes in directions relevant to employment creation and rural development.

### Out of school education

Finally, the Government has a large responsibility for out-of-school training. The question is one of priorities, as it always is in economic and social planning. What emphasis, for example, should governments give to expenditure on the formal school system as against out-of-school training? This is the sort of question we need to ask and answer. We all know in the Caribbean that the Governments should do a lot more about out-of-school training-whether it is vocational training after working hours, whether it is Youth Camps, Trade Centres or rural settlements of young people and so on. Ultimately, we return to the question of establishing priorities.

My guess is, and I am only guessing here, that this has to be quantified especially in terms of relative cost. Many people forget that Youth Camps and rural settlements are, or can be under certain circumstances, relatively expensive propositions, perhaps even more expensive than formal secondary schools, so the matter cannot be decided on easily. It has to be based on detailed quantitative work. My judgement would also incline me to the view that in most Caribbean countries there should be a marked shift in expenditure, away from the formal school system, especially the secondary school system as it is now practised in the West Indies, and towards out-of-school training in various forms. In fact, I would go so far as to say that in many, probably all, Commonwealth Caribbean Countries the secondary school system is counter-productive in terms of the objectives we have been talking about such as the creation of employment, orientation of young people towards agriculture and rural

development. This being so, I think the societies can shift the balance away from the formal school system towards informal training without any loss.

### Private sector

I must now turn to what the private sector can do. I think the answer here is obvious. The private sector can do quite a bit more for training in vocational skills. It is partly a question of resources, it is partly a question of whether they regard their responsibilities to the entire community as being part of their business responsibilities. Now we will not go into this because it involves very well known considerations, and this ground has been trodden on many times before. But quite clearly the private sector can certainly increase its contribution in the form of vocational training, both by having apprentices at work under work conditions, or by conducting special training schools, as many of the bigger firms do. This is very obvious and there is nothing controversial here. More novel, I think, is the idea that the private sector - organised firms - can do much to help young people who try to create self-employment. Young people who may set up small business or co-operative groups can be assisted without much cost or with little or no cost by trained and experienced people from the private sector. I am thinking of people like Managers and Assistant Managers, Accountants, Engineers and other technical people. If the private sector really mobilises its personnel in Engineering, Accountancy, Management, Finance and so on, I think they can do a tremendous amount of training in fields such as Accounts and Business Management which would enormously assist the young people in creating employment for themselves. Very little of this has so far been done in the Commonwealth Caribbean.

Turning now to the under-privileged youths themselves, I call them under-privileged, because I assume that they are not at work. Many have been asked to submit themselves to training. I think a word of caution is required here. We certainly need a lot more specific training in the Caribbean, training for specific skills at various levels, but I have always been concerned with the question of structure. I have always been inclined to question the rather crude assumption which exists in the Commonwealth Caribbean that the way to solve the employment problems is simply to train more people. In other words, if in Country A, there are 40,000 unemployed people and one trains all of them, hey presto! there will be 40,000 jobs. Life is not quite as simple as this, unfortunately. It is clear that there is not a one-to-one

correspondence between training and employment. In other words, if we train everyone, that in itself will not guarantee absorption of all into employment. I am not questioning the value of training - I am simply saying that one should be careful about making the assumption that the only route towards the solution of the problem is through the provision of training in specific skills. In any event, I think that the under-privileged youths of the Caribbean ought to be much more ready to submit themselves for training when such opportunities are presented to them.

Another point-and a rather controversial one-which I should take up later is that when young people in the Caribbean, and I may probably be accused of moralising here, happen to get training in technical skills, they immediately think of going abroad, to North America for example. This will not really help the situation at all, because, to the extent that trained people leave the Caribbean, to that extent the Caribbean is exporting capital to the more developed countries. I have met several youths in Trinidad and Tobago who are undergoing training and who intend that, once they have got the certificates or they have passed their course, they will get the next boat or next plane out to the United States. I know there are various reasons for this state of affairs. All I am saying is that if this is the attitude adopted towards training and if training is done specifically to get people out of the country this attitude will not in the long run help the development of the Caribbean. In other words, I think we should be very careful about the doctrine, which seems to be growing in some quarters of the Caribbean, that we should train our young people for export. We cannot build a society on the basis of giving the young people a mental outlook whereby they look forward to exercising their skills abroad. I will take up this question later.

In terms of what the young under-privileged people can do for themselves, I think that the most important thing, even more important than training and undergoing training, even more important than not going abroad and trying to seek a job at home, is the desire for self-employment either on an individual basis or on the basis of co-operatives. I think this is an area which has not really been sufficiently exploited or encouraged in the Commonwealth Caribbean. We all assume that it is the end of the matter that young people should be trained, but it is not simply a question of training; it is also a question of motivation of the young person so that on leaving school, even a secondary school, he or she would be motivated to create work for himself or herself, or for a group of young people. This relates to the



kind of educational system and educational experience which a child undergoes, how his personality is formed at school and at home, the kind of values which he imbibes both from the formal system and from the mass media and the general environment. It is also a very important function of something I will come to later.

Finally, we have to ask ourselves: what can the more privileged youths do in the specific context of the Commonwealth Caribbean? I feel that the more privileged youths, in the sense of those who have a good education, who may have been to university and acquired some professional qualification, can do much by helping to train young people in their spare time as some sort of voluntary community service. This is very important obviously. But second, and even more important it seems to me, is that the more educated young people, the more privileged in the Caribbean, must try to influence the values of the not-so-privileged younger people. This they can do by striking out on their own in new fields. Let us take an example. If and when agricultural graduates (people who have done Agriculture at the U.W.I.) go and start farms for themselves, if graduates in business management from the universities either in the West Indies or abroad go and open up small establishments for themselves, I think that kind of example would be worth millions and millions of dollars spent on precept. In other words, the more educated young people, it seems to me, should themselves engage in economic enterprises even on a small scale, and this in the specific context of the Caribbean - where everyone knows everyone else - would act as a tremendous kind of example to the not-so-privileged people to start doing things for themselves.

Now what can the Trade Unions do? The Trade Unions themselves can help of course in so far as the Movement consists of many highly skilled workers. I have always felt that they could help quite a bit in the free voluntary training of under-privileged youth. They can help by working out, along with the other sectors in the situation - for example, Government and the private sector - some kind of framework for an Incomes Policy which would counteract the unfavourable effect of the distorted wage and salary structure I referred to above. As I said earlier, this does not only mean wage restraint. For example, to the extent that the better paid workers use their wage increases or use part of their higher wages for investment whether in co-operatives or in their own business, to that extent they are helping the under-privileged youth by creating employment. But if, like almost everybody else in the Caribbean society, the Trade Unions

spend all their earnings on high consumption, quite clearly they will not be helping the under-privileged. I am not saying that only Trade Unions can help. I have listed the roles which other groups can play, the Government, the private sector, the under-privileged youth and the privileged youths. I am not trying to suggest that the Unions alone should make a contribution to solving this extremely difficult and explosive problem.

### Conclusion

Time does not permit me to explore certain questions involved in youth programmes such as administration, implementation, involvement of young people in both the planning process and in the execution process, so I will omit that part of what I intend to say and come to my conclusion.

You will have noted that all along I have tried to stress the idea of motivation of under-privileged youth in the Caribbean. It seems to me that this is really the central issue. Training has its place, there is no doubt. Opportunities provided by Government's economic policies for the creation of jobs for employment also have their place and an extremely important one. The whole development strategy, particularly the Government's development strategy, must be oriented in an employment-creating direction. This, too, is extremely important. But I think that what is most important is the correct motivation of the boy or girl in the Caribbean, motivation to create resources, to create employment opportunities, to add, if you wish, to the production of the society by his own efforts, or her own efforts or by group efforts. In other words, to refer to a point I made earlier, I think that resolving the employment problem in the Caribbean is not simply a question of re-distributing the fruits of economic growth to alleviate the problem although this element is important. It also means mobilising the unused capacity which we now have in the form of unemployment so that more resources will be created while employment opportunities are being created at the same time. In other words, it involves trying to use the spare capacity in the system.

What is extremely important in all of this is something I have referred to already in another context: the need for an ideology of development and social change in the Caribbean. Unless there is this specific ideology related to our own specific conditions in this part of the world, our own historical experience, our own aspirations, our own style, if you wish, I do not see how the motivation can be created. I do not see how any changes in

the educational system or any changes in the mass media can be effected. What we need above all in the Commonwealth Caribbean is a relevant ideology of development and social change so that everyone, including the unemployed, the under-privileged young people, will be motivated to create employment for themselves, either in sole proprietorships or in co-operatives and to orient themselves more towards agriculture and rural development.

So I have to end on this note. The more I reflect upon the economic problem of the Caribbean, the more I see the need for this kind of ideological impetus towards a solution of the problem. So you have the paradox here, then, of an economist who has ended up by looking at the problem in terms of the need for a relevant ideology.