

In the House of Lords — ST. KITTS AND ANGUILLA

20 June, 1968.

10.33 p. m.

THE EARL OF BESSBOROUGH rose to ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will make a statement concerning recent Press reports of the imminent invasion of Anguilla by armed forces from St. Kitts. The noble Earl said: My Lords, I regret having to raise the affairs of these Islands again in your Lordships' House. We discussed them in some detail on another Unstarred Question which I put down last year and which we discussed also rather late one night in July. Our remarks then centred around the arbitrary and dictatorial way in which certain British subjects had been imprisoned, and I think there was general agreement on all sides of the House that the arrest and treatment of these British subjects,

as well as the nature of the emergency regulations introduced in St. Kitts, gave your Lordships considerable cause for concern. Unfortunately, after a very careful study of what had happened up to that time, and in the light of replies given in another place, I had reluctantly to conclude that the Government in this country had repeatedly misjudged the likely course of events, had played down the situation with some complacency, and also that the course of events had been predictable and avoidable.

Dr. Herbert, the leader of the Opposition in these Islands, had already told the Government here what was going on in February last year, some 16 months ago. I hope this evening that the noble Lord, Lord Beswick,

who replied on the previous occasion — and I am glad he is with us tonight — will be a little more appreciative of our concern on this side of the House and, I think, on the other side of the House, than he was on the last occasion, and that he will be able to give answers to the questions I am raising and of which I have given him notice.

The fact now is that since Anguilla voted to be independent and the success of the Fisher-Chapman mission, Press reports have appeared

in *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph* to the effect that an invasion of Anguilla by special armed forces from St. Kitts was imminent. It was reported in the West Indian paper the *Democrat* of May 25 — I have given the noble Lord a copy of the cutting from this paper — that the Premier of these Islands, Mr. Bradshaw, had spoken as follows:

"Anguilla is temporarily in rebel hands. This will not be allowed to continue. When the time is ripe Anguilla will be brought back under the civil rule of this state".

Then a few days later, in a speech which he delivered on May 29 in the Assembly, he spoke as follows as reported in the *Democrat* of June 1:

"I repeat in this House

that if arms are taken up against law and order in this country the evidence will be put on the ground in blood, and let the jurors say Not Guilty. The evidence will be put on the ground washed in blood."

I have never met Mr. Bradshaw so I find these remarks a little difficult to interpret, but I hardly find them reassuring.

Noble Lords will recall that in another place on January 30 this year — that is nearly four months before Mr. Bradshaw made these statements — the Secretary of State said in col. 1074 that St. Kitts Government had agreed

"that the people of each Island would refrain from hostile actions against individuals or property of the other during the interim

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