

BOOK NUMBER

1/DP/Jq 3028

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Africa Cages

GOLD COAST



GOVERNMENT

REPORT
of the
ACHIMOTA CONFERENCE

GOLD COAST

Printed and published by the Government Printer, Accra. To be purchased from the Government Printing Department (Publications Branch), Accra, Gold Coast, and from the Crown Agents for Oversea Governments and Administrations, 4 Millbank, London, S.W.1.

1956

PRICE—SIXPENCE

FOREWORD BY THE CHAIRMAN

The Report of the Achimota Conference that follows is full and self-explanatory: but, having been privileged to take the chair at that Conference, I am reluctant to quit it without writing a few words of introduction and farewell.

The Recommendations of Sir Frederick Bourne, which it was the primary duty of the Conference to examine, are now, as he is himself the first to admit, in many respects more realistic and perhaps more acceptable generally. We all regret that movements and parties in declared opposition to Government have not seen their way to give us the benefit of their advice. Nevertheless the Recommendations have, so far as was possible in circumstances beyond the Conference's control, been subjected to a critical examination from the opposition standpoint.

Of the other matters discussed not the least interesting and important is the proposal to charge a member of the Cabinet in addition to his normal portfolio with special responsibilities for the Northern Territories and Togoland.

It would be improper to differentiate between the work of the various delegations. The Conference as a whole worked harmoniously in a spirit of public service. But I am sure I shall be voicing the feelings of us all when I commend in particular the undaunted efforts of the Joint Provincial Council delegation on our behalf to obtain some constructive response from the Asanteman Council and from the National Liberation Movement and its allies.

My association with the Conference has been congenial and I trust the results we have achieved may not prove valueless.

The Joint Secretaries, Mr. Duncan and Mr. Alton, spared no pains to facilitate the work of the Conference: the matters for discussion from day to day were set out clearly and factually and the proceedings of each meeting were recorded and circulated before the next meeting started. The mechanics of the Conference worked without a hitch. I personally am very grateful to them for their ready and invaluable assistance without which the Conference would not have been fully and impartially briefed on all aspects of the subjects on its agenda and could not have completed its task with the high degree of efficiency and despatch it has achieved. I wish also to record my thanks to Miss C. A. Jones, Mr. C. A. Quist and Mr. R. A. Armah of the Prime Minister's Office who undertook most satisfactorily the considerable clerical work of the Conference.

Our report is dedicated to the Chiefs and people of the Gold Coast: we ask for their cool and dispassionate judgment of our recommendations.

C. W. TACHIE-MENSON

INTRODUCTION

The Conference to consider the Report of the Constitutional Adviser, Sir Frederick Bourne, K.C.S.I., C.I.E., and matters arising therefrom was convened by the Prime Minister of the Gold Coast, the Honourable Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, M.L.A., LL.D., who later agreed that the terms of reference of the Conference should be enlarged to include matters raised in correspondence by the Asanteman Council and by the National Liberation Movement and its allies.

2. Mr. C. W. Tachie-Menson, C.B.E., Member and Acting Chairman of the Public Service Commission, accepted the Prime Minister's invitation to act as Chairman of the Conference which, meeting at the Assembly Hall, Achimota School, has come to be known popularly as "The Achimota Conference".

3. Sir Frederick Bourne also accepted the Prime Minister's invitation to continue his task as Constitutional Adviser, took part in all meetings of the Conference and assisted the Chairman and the Conference Secretariat in all aspects of their duties.

4. Unfortunately not all the political parties and movements and other bodies invited could see their way to accepting the Prime Minister's invitation to be represented by a delegation at the Conference. A list of the delegations attending the Conference and their membership is to be found at Appendix "A".

5. The Conference held its first meeting on the 16th February, 1956. In his opening address the Chairman said,

"Nananom and Gentlemen,

At this, the first meeting of the Conference convened by the Prime Minister to consider the Report of the Constitutional Adviser, Sir Frederick Bourne, and matters arising from that Report, I desire to offer you all a cordial and hearty welcome. I trust that our deliberations will serve the best interests of the Gold Coast as a whole, and that they will be a significant contribution towards the solving of the constitutional problems which must be overcome by the peoples of the Gold Coast while they stand on the threshold of full self-government.

As our first act, I am sure you will join me in offering our humble duty to Her Majesty the Queen and an assurance that she has been constantly in our thoughts during her journeys to and from the United Kingdom and her tour of Nigeria, the first visit paid by a reigning Monarch to a territory in British West Africa.

As our next act, I invite you to join me in welcoming back to the Gold Coast the Constitutional Adviser, Sir Frederick Bourne, whose Report published in December last year will provide the basis for a major portion of our deliberations. The Conference will, however, not be precluded from adding to the Agenda any other relevant matters such as those proposed by representative bodies which have not so far accepted the Prime Minister's invitation to attend the Conference. Sir Frederick will be available to assist the Conference as a whole with his advice whenever that is requested, and to aid individual delegations or members who wish to seek his counsel.

In submitting to His Excellency the Governor his recommendations for constitutional changes in the Gold Coast intended to secure an adequate degree of transfer of power from the centre to the Regions, Sir Frederick stated that he had not been able to achieve all of the objects of his mission. Our object at this Conference will be to proceed further with the task which the Constitutional Adviser began last September. Building on the foundation he has laid, we shall aim to produce recommendations for the constitutional framework of an independent Gold Coast which will command a substantial and significant measure of support among all political parties, groups and movements in the Gold Coast.

We shall have to consider the number of Regions which are required for efficient and democratic administration; how the proposed "Regional Assemblies" should be constituted and what powers and duties should be allotted to them. We shall examine the position of Chiefs in our modern state, and the measures necessary to safeguard the traditional role of chieftaincy in the Gold Coast and to enable that supremely valuable institution to develop freely and naturally. In examining these problems we shall be reviewing the whole field of Government activity at the centre and in the Regions. We shall be ascertaining how decisions taken in Accra or at one of the Regional headquarters affect the daily life of the common man in the remotest hamlet. And we shall be called upon to consider whether the machinery of Government can be improved; or whether its working can be made more intelligible, more intimate and, therefore, more acceptable to the ordinary citizen whose labours provide the revenue which finances the whole of Government's enterprises.

We shall be required to review conflicting opinions on complex subjects such as the varying roles of the Central Government, the "Regional Assemblies" and Local Government bodies; the relation of Central to Local Government finance; the procedure for introducing major and minor legislation; and the activities at the centre and at the periphery of the Ministries which control the technical departments.

But at all times we shall be weighing these conflicting opinions from the point of view of the non-expert, the point of view of the man in the street and the man in the village. I ask you in our deliberations to seek above all the true interest of the peoples of the Gold Coast as a whole.

Each of you has a dual function: your first and most obvious task is to represent the interests and to present the point of view of the party or body that appointed you as its delegates; but your second, and by far your more important, duty is to use your own personal knowledge, and the combined wisdom and experience of those whose delegates you are, to seek and to promote the true welfare of the country.

It is idle to deny that the abstention of those bodies which have not found it possible to accept the Prime Minister's invitation to attend this Conference has deprived us of the services of many whose counsel would have assisted us in our task. I trust that some of these bodies will yet be prepared to reconsider their decisions. The Prime Minister's invitation to them still remains open and, I am sure, you will all welcome any who may later decide to join us.

Nevertheless, what is more important than mere numbers is the spirit which animates our labours. Let us approach our task in the spirit of dedication to the national interest that guided and inspired the labours of the Committee on Constitutional Reform which sat under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice Coussey—as he then was. Let us hearken to his exhortation to set aside all the prejudices, all the preconceived opinions that we may have formed. Let us bear in mind the quotation from Burke which Sir Henley Coussey used in his opening address to his Committee, 'We are on a conspicuous stage and the world marks our demeanour.' As he rightly forecast, his Committee's conclusions have been discussed in many lands. The peoples of Africa and of the rest of the free world have watched with sympathy and with interest the achievements of the peoples of the Gold Coast and their elected representatives in implementing the proposals of the Coussey Committee on Constitutional Reform, in guiding the destinies of this young country, and in preparing the Gold Coast for full nationhood.

As the Gold Coast approaches the goal of its political aspirations the peoples of many lands are still watching us keenly. Our friends in other lands and in other Continents hope that in this Conference, using our traditional democratic method of frank and free discussion, we shall, despite the absence of some delegations, be able to resolve our differences of approach, to reconcile our conflicting ideas, and to ensure that all sections of the nation receive their due.

Proverbially, all beginnings are difficult. Nevertheless, the beginning of the rapid process of constitutional advance which was inaugurated by the setting up of the Coussey Committee was not attended by any great difficulties. Paradoxically enough, it would appear that it is at the beginning of the end of the Gold Coast's period of non-independent status that difficulties are being encountered.

An important part of our task will be to determine how great and how real these difficulties are. It may be that, at a period when the nation has been united in its fundamental political aspirations, the politicians, by seeking to fan the embers of political controversy, have unwittingly over-emphasized the importance of the issues that at present divide the political parties and movements. I do not wish to forecast, or in any way to influence, the outcome of our deliberations. Nevertheless, speaking as a loyal son of the Gold Coast, I cannot but voice a hope which will, I am sure, be shared by many of our fellow countrymen. My hope is that the conflicts of opinion, which are made to appear so fundamental and so insuperable on the hustings or even on the floor of the Legislative Assembly, will in the course of our calm, frank and searching analysis be found to be less formidable. There are solid grounds for my belief that this hope will be realised. I am confident that, if we display the shrewd commonsense and the disinterested patriotism which have always been outstanding attributes of the Gold Coast peoples in their national politics, we shall be able to find solutions to the problems which confront the country. If we succeed in this endeavour the Gold Coast will have put one foot firmly across the threshold of full self-government".

6. After agreeing on simple and flexible rules of procedure the Conference adjourned until Monday, the 20th February.

7. At the second meeting of the Conference the Joint Provincial Council delegation, referring to the fact that the Prime Minister's invitation to the Conference was still open to those who had not yet accepted, stated that in the J.P.C.'s view the problems before the country were not impossible of solution, and it was essential that every effort should be made to achieve the fullest representation at the Conference; otherwise there might well be criticism, after the Conference had reported, that in making recommendations on such matters as the position of Chiefs and Regional Assemblies the views of very important interests had not been considered. The J.P.C. delegation therefore recommended to the Conference that, in accordance with its mandate, every effort should be made to secure representation at the Conference of those who had not yet accepted the Prime Minister's invitation; the delegation was prepared to act to this end on behalf of the Conference, if the other delegations so wished.

8. The Conference unanimously endorsed the J.P.C.'s views and empowered the J.P.C. delegation to the Conference, acting on its behalf, to contact the Asanteman Council and those parties and bodies which had not so far accepted the Prime Minister's invitation to attend the Conference. To facilitate the delegation's task the Conference then adjourned until the 27th February.

9. Neither the Asanteman Council nor the National Liberation Movement and its allies met during this adjournment to consider the representations of the Conference's delegation. The Conference considered that it could not adjourn indefinitely. It proceeded with its agenda but decided that any body or movement which agreed to join the Conference at a later date would not only receive copies of the minutes and other papers dealing with decisions already taken by the Conference, but would also be given full opportunity to place their views on these subjects before the Conference and to record their dissent from, or agreement with, these decisions which could, if necessary, be modified by the enlarged Conference.

10. Eventually, on the 8th March it was possible, in response to invitations, for two members of the Joint Provincial Council delegation—Nene Azzu Mate Kole, Konor of Manya Krobo, and Nana Otu IX, Omanhene of Abura—acting on behalf of the Conference to proceed to Kumasi to meet the Asanteman Council and the National Liberation Movement and its allies. In the meantime the other two members of the Joint Provincial Council delegation remained to attend the Conference which proceeded with its agenda, but without haste, in order to ensure that, in the event of other delegations deciding to attend the Conference, it would not have finished its deliberations before their arrival.

11. When Nene Mate Kole and Nana Otu IX returned to the Conference on the 12th March they reported the failure of their mission to Kumasi. The Conference placed on record its deep appreciation of the unsparing efforts which the entire Joint Provincial Council delegation and, in particular, the Konor of Manya Krobo and the Omanhene of Abura had made on behalf of the entire nation, and its regret that they had not been crowned with the success they merited. The Conference then decided that it could not take any further steps to secure the attendance of delegations which had not accepted the Prime Minister's invitation to the Conference.

12. Late on the 12th March, after the Conference had completed consideration of all matters laid before it, Nene Azzu Mate Kole, who had left the meeting earlier that day on the grounds of indisposition, informed the Chairman that he had decided not to participate further in the work of the Conference. The Chairman in a letter to the Konor expressed his regret at this decision, which both he and the Leader of the Joint Provincial Council delegation asked him to reconsider.

13. The Conference met for the last time on the 16th March to approve and sign its report and for its formal closing session.

14. The Conference places on record its appreciation of the constructive nature of the Joint Provincial Council delegation's paper on the position of chieftaincy. That Council's statesmanlike approach to this controversial subject facilitated the large measure of agreement reached by the Conference.

15. The Conference further places on record its deep debt of gratitude to Sir Frederick Bourne who has at all times readily placed himself at the disposal of individual delegations and members as well as of the Conference as a whole. His wide experience of public administration and constitutional procedure and practice, and his ability to find a formula which reconciled divergent views have been of immense assistance to the Conference.

16. The conclusions of the Conference are set out in the following paragraphs.

CONSTITUTIONAL ADVISER'S RECOMMENDATION I—

THE FUTURE COMPOSITION OF THE REGIONS

17. **The Conference agreed** that it was not possible to make recommendations affecting Northern or Southern Togoland until after the result of the plebiscite. If as a result of the plebiscite all or most of Togoland under United Kingdom Trusteeship joined the Gold Coast, a suitable arrangement would be one Region for the Northern Territories and one Region for Trans-Volta/Togoland, each including such part of Northern and Southern Togoland respectively as joined the Gold Coast.

18. **The Conference noted** that the original Colony Region had been found to be unwieldy. After the Trans-Volta/Togoland and Accra Regions had been established as separate administrative units, it was decided on the balance of administrative considerations to divide the remainder into two Regions (Eastern and Western). Having compared the distances from Cape Coast to District headquarters (which in 10 cases is in the range 100–250 miles) with the distances from Kumasi to similar stations (which in no case exceeds 100 miles), the Conference recommended, *with the J.P.C. delegation dissenting*, that the Eastern and Western Regions of the Colony should be retained.

19. **The Conference noted** that, in view of the growing importance of Accra as the national capital under a Ministerial form of Government and the foreseen role of Tema as a major port, it had been decided that direct contact between Ministries and the Accra/Tema area was necessary to facilitate the efficient discharge of public business. The Accra Region, coterminous with the Accra District and consequently still containing some predominantly rural areas, was accordingly set up.

20. **The Conference recommends** that the Accra Region should be merged with the Eastern Region, subject to the provisos that:

- (i) the administration of the municipality should continue as at present to be channelled from the Senior Government Agent to the Central Government direct;
- (ii) in urgent matters such as those involving law and order in the municipality the Senior Government Agent would have direct access to the appropriate Ministries.

21. **The Conference further noted** that Government's declared policy, enunciated when the Tema Development Corporation (Amendment) Ordinance, 1955, was passed into law, is to administer Tema in the not very distant future as a municipality. **The Conference recommends** that its proposals in respect of the municipality of Accra, made in paragraph 20 above, should apply *mutatis mutandis* to Tema both until and after it develops into a municipality.

22. The J.P.C. delegation did not offer any opinion on this decision since it maintained its view, already recorded in paragraph 18 above, that the Eastern and Western Regions of the Colony should be administered as one.

23. **The Conference noted** that the Ashanti Region is a compact area well served by roads and railways radiating from Kumasi. Certain Brong States and Brong elements in other States advocate that a portion of the Ashanti Region should be made into a separate Region which, it is averred, would be predominantly Brong. Nevertheless there is some controversy as to which parts of the Brong area wish, or do not wish, to sever their administrative connection with the Ashanti Region.

24. **The Conference unanimously decided** that the representations made by the Brong/Kyempem Council delegation are weighty in material and fact. **The Conference recommends** to Government, therefore, that, when Regional Assemblies come to be set up, the case for a separate Assembly for the Brong area should be given very careful consideration. **The Conference noted** in this connection that, in accordance with recommendations of the Conference, the views of the State Councils and local government councils concerned would have to be sought by Government before a final decision was reached.

25. In considering the Constitutional Adviser's views on the procedure for the alteration of inter-Regional boundaries, **the Conference noted** the complexities of the present position:

- (a) The Northern Territories, Ashanti and the Colony are defined in the Gold Coast (Constitution) Order in Council, 1954, **as areas but not as Regions**. These definitions are by reference to other Orders in Council which can be varied only by the making of amending Orders in Council.
- (b) Southern Togoland (which is not a separate Region) is defined in the Gold Coast (Constitution) Order in Council, 1954, as an area.
- (c) The Gold Coast (Constitution) Order in Council, 1954, contains a definition of the Trans-Volta/Togoland Region, which is governed by Gold Coast Ordinances from time to time in force, i.e., this definition can be amended by an Ordinance passed by the Gold Coast Legislative Assembly.
- (d) It is legally possible to amend the definition of the Northern Territories **Region**, the Ashanti **Region**, or the (former) Colony **Region**, or even to set up Regions within these areas, e.g., the Colony, simply by amending the Schedule to the Public Officers and Government Departments (Changes of Designation) Ordinance (Cap. 28), provided that such amendments do not conflict with the prevailing definition of the Trans-Volta/Togoland Region.
- (e) The boundary between Eastern Region and Trans-Volta/Togoland is not considered as finally settled.

- (f) Save in exceptional cases, local or urban council boundaries are not accurately defined on the ground. Such definitions can be varied by Instrument approved by the Cabinet, and municipal council areas can be varied by Order made by the appropriate Minister.
- (g) Although electoral districts are defined in terms of local, urban and municipal council areas, or parts thereof, the composition of an electoral district may be varied only by an amendment to the Electoral Provisions Ordinance, 1953.

26. **The Conference recommends** that the areas comprising each Region should be set out in a schedule to each Regional Assembly Ordinance specifying its area in terms of Municipal and Rural Electoral Districts. Alterations to Regional Boundaries would then be made either by transferring a complete Electoral District through an amendment to the Regional Assembly Ordinance concerned, or by alterations to Electoral Districts through an amendment of the Electoral Provisions Ordinance, 1953.

27. **The Conference further recommends** that the State Councils concerned as well as local government councils should be consulted before action is initiated to alter any inter-Regional boundary.

CONSTITUTIONAL ADVISER'S RECOMMENDATION II—REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES

28. As it is assumed that on the attainment of independence the Legislative Assembly will become the Gold Coast National Assembly constituted as a Parliament, **the Conference considers** that the term "Regional Assembly" would be more acceptable than "Regional Council".

29. Having regard to the fact that

- (i) there are only two District Councils in the Eastern Region
- (ii) it has not so far been possible to set up District Councils in the Western Region.
- (iii) it is desired to establish Regional Assemblies as far as possible simultaneously, in all Regions

the Conference recommends that

- (a) the composition of Regional Assemblies need not be uniform in each Region,
- (b) the establishment of District Councils should not be a condition precedent to the setting up of a Regional Assembly,
- (c) there should be consultation with the Region concerned through the local government councils before an Ordinance to set up a Regional Assembly is introduced, and
- (d) a Regional Assembly should not be imposed if it was ascertained that the Region concerned did not wish one to be established.

CONSTITUTIONAL ADVISER'S RECOMMENDATION III—THE POSITION OF CHIEFS

30. **The Conference considered** that the preamble and the two clauses in Recommendation III of the Report of the Constitutional Adviser were acceptable, subject to certain modifications and additions. Stress was laid on the unique position of chieftaincy in the Gold Coast, whereby a chief occupies the stool which itself enshrines the customs and traditions of his people.

31. **The Conference considered** that wherever a Regional Assembly is established in a Region provision should be made for a House of Chiefs. It is thought that such a House could be set up in every Region, although it is appreciated that special provisions may be required to suit the differing circumstances of Regions; in this connection **the following points were agreed by the Conference** :—

- (i) The J.P.C. as a whole should become the House of Chiefs in relation to the Eastern and Western Regional Assemblies, but would be able to deal with these two Regional Assemblies, when it so decided, through eastern and western sections of an enlarged Standing Committee.
- (ii) The special consideration which the Conference recommends should be given to the question of the number of Regional Assemblies to be established in Ashanti would also involve special consideration of the number of Houses of Chiefs in Ashanti.
- (iii) Whilst it was appreciated that no Council of Chiefs existed at present in the Northern Territories and that there were difficulties of varying language and custom, the Conference considered that these difficulties were not insuperable and that the same aim and principles should be maintained for a House of Chiefs in the Northern Territories as in the other Regions.
- (iv) Special emphasis was laid on the importance of the early conduct of the enquiry into the status of paramount and divisional chieftainships in the existing Trans-Volta/Togoland Region which the Prime Minister had promised would be held as soon as possible after the forthcoming plebiscite. If a Regional Assembly is established in Trans-Volta/Togoland after the result of the plebiscite is known, the Conference considered that a House of Chiefs should also be established and that the Standing Committee of such a House might perhaps with advantage include separate wings for :—
 - (a) Anlo, Tongu and Peki
 - (b) Ho and Kpandu districts
 - (c) the Buem/Krachi district.

32. The Conference **makes the following additional recommendations** in respect of:

- (i) The establishment of a House of Chiefs in relation to a Regional Assembly.
- (ii) The functions of such Houses of Chiefs.
- (iii) The place of Chiefs in local government.
- (iv) The establishment of a Local Constitutional Commission.

The establishment of a House of Chiefs in relation to a Regional Assembly

33. **The Conference recommended** that a House of Chiefs should be constituted in each Region where a Regional Assembly is established. The House of Chiefs should be composed of Paramount and Head Chiefs, (except perhaps in Trans-Volta/Togoland) or their representatives according to the circumstances of each Region. Non-Chiefs should not be eligible for membership. The existing provision for traditional membership of local government councils and the eligibility of traditional members for election to Regional Assemblies should not be affected by these recommendations.

The functions of House of Chiefs

34. **The Conference recommended** that the functions to be exercised by a House of Chiefs should include the following:—

- (i) consideration of matters referred by Government to a House of Chiefs in its consultative and deliberative capacity,
- (ii) advice on matters relating to African social customs,
- (iii) advice on matters relating to African customary law,
- (iv) advice on constitutional matters of a traditional nature,
- (v) the power to initiate policy in matters under sub-clauses (ii)–(iv), and
- (vi) the power, on notice given, for a House of Chiefs to consider a Bill affecting its functions and referred to it, for a period not exceeding three months; and where a House of Chiefs considered that such a Bill had particular Regional importance, was of a controversial nature or had far-reaching effects, the House of Chiefs should also be empowered to recommend that the Bill, after receiving its First Reading, should be referred to a Select Committee of the whole Legislative Assembly. The establishment of a convention should be encouraged whereby the Government on receiving such a recommendation from two or more Houses of Chiefs should refer the Bill to a Select Committee of the Legislature. ✓

The place of Chiefs in local government

35. **The Conference recommended** that provision should be made either by amendment of existing law or, where appropriate, by administrative direction.

- (i) for the Chairman of a local government council to be formally installed in office by the Chief as President of the Council, and for the President to be empowered to send for the Chairman at any time for discussion,
- (ii) for Chiefs as Presidents of local government councils to
 - (a) be consulted where necessary by the Chairmen of local government councils in the execution of their duties;
 - (b) open the estimates session or the first session of the Councils in any current year;
 - (c) be kept in touch with all the Council's proceedings and furnished with copies of minutes, estimates, trial balances, etc. ✓

36. A further suggestion was made that all acts and bye-laws of a local government council should be expressed as done in the name and with the knowledge of the Chief as head of the area and President of the Council. It was appreciated that because of specific difficulties in particular areas it was not at present possible to arrange for this, but **the Conference recommended** that the problem should be studied and solved so far as possible on the lines suggested.

The establishment of a Local Constitutional Commission

37. The Conference was aware that it was Government's intention to introduce legislation to establish a Local Constitutional Commission at the forthcoming meeting of the Legislative Assembly, and therefore confined itself to **recommending** that the necessary legislation should be enacted as soon as possible.

38. **The Conference particularly records its hope** that its four recommendations on the vital and controversial subject of the position of chieftaincy will prove fully acceptable to Government and, where appropriate, constitutional provision will be made accordingly.

CONSTITUTIONAL ADVISER'S RECOMMENDATION IV—THE OBJECTS FOR WHICH REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES ARE TO BE ESTABLISHED

39. **The Conference considered** that it was desirable that the objects for which Regional Assemblies are to be established should be set out as a guide to legal draftsmen, and that the objects listed by the Constitutional Adviser should be elaborated as the basis of a declaration of Government policy.

40. **The Conference recommends** that these objects should be:—

- (a) to afford an effective link between Regions and the Central Government and thereby to remove any danger of excessive centralisation;
- (b) to provide for the formation and ventilation of local opinion on matters of national importance;
- (c) to ensure that the Chiefs and people in each Region are consulted before important legislation, or legislation closely affecting Regional interests, is introduced;
- (d) to afford to Regions an effective role in the framing and implementation of Regional Development Plans;

- (e) to procure the use of local knowledge and experience to ensure that legislation is devised and implemented and schemes and projects involving expenditure in the Region designed, and the required money provided in a manner suited to the circumstances of the region concerned;
- (f) to enable Government to divest itself of a large measure of administrative work primarily of Regional interest and importance.

CONSTITUTIONAL ADVISER'S RECOMMENDATION V—THE METHOD OF ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES

41. **The Conference considered** that, as recommended, supreme legislative power should remain at the centre and the establishment of an Assembly in any Region should be effected by a separate Government Ordinance.

42. **The Conference recommends** that

- (i) each Regional Assembly should be established by a separate Ordinance;
- (ii) Regional Assemblies should be established simultaneously so far as possible in the light of the procedure for consultation suggested under Recommendation II.

CONSTITUTIONAL ADVISER'S RECOMMENDATION VI—COMPOSITION, DURATION AND PRESIDENCY OF REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES

43. **The Conference considered** that it would be premature to provide exactly for the details of membership of each Regional Assembly, which ought to be worked out, subject to the broad recommendations set out below, after full local consultation.

44. **The Conference further considered** that the disadvantages attached to Members of the Legislative Assembly being *ex-officio* members of Regional Assemblies outweighed the advantages, and provision should accordingly not be made for their *ex-officio* membership. There should, however, be no bar to Members of the Legislative Assembly being elected to Regional Assemblies by the appropriate electing local government council. In addition Regional Assemblies should make special seating arrangements for prominent visitors, similar to a "distinguished strangers gallery", and Members of the Legislative Assembly from the Region should have access to these seats.

45. **The Conference recommends** that Regional Assemblies should be composed of members from local government councils, including municipal councils, with the addition of a proportion of co-opted members, as follows :—

- (i) Where District Councils were fully established in a Region, they should normally form the electing units. It was **agreed** that District Councils should be required to elect from amongst their own members. The J.P.C. delegation dissented from this opinion, but were in agreement that it was necessary that the members to be elected should have signified their willingness to serve and should have personal connections with the area from which they were to be chosen.
- (ii) Where there were only a few or no District Councils established, representation should be arranged from Local and Urban Councils.
- (iii) It might be necessary to permit representation from both District and Local/Urban Councils in the Northern Territories and Trans-Volta/Togoland Regional Assemblies (when established), though the provision set out in sub-paragraph (i) should be maintained as a principle; the alternative system might be permitted for the first term of the Trans-Volta/Togoland Regional Assembly.
- (iv) Municipal councils should elect an appropriate number of members to Regional Assemblies.
- (v) The elected members of Regional Assemblies should be empowered to co-opt up to twenty per cent of their number, **provided that** no person who had stood for election to Municipal, Urban or Local Councils and had failed, should be co-opted. This disqualification should apply for a period of three years, or the current life of the particular Assembly, whichever is the longer period. An essential qualification for co-opted members should be residence in the Region. The term of office of co-opted members should be one year, but retiring members should be eligible for re-appointment. Co-opted members should have voting powers, but should not be eligible to hold any office in a Regional Assembly.

The Trades Union Congress and Trans-Volta/Togoland Council delegations dissented from the above recommendations concerning co-opted members, as they opposed the principle of co-optation.

46. **The Conference recommends** that the normal duration of a Regional Assembly should be three years.

47. **The Conference further recommends** that there should be an office of President in each Regional Assembly, and that this office should be *ex-officio* filled by the President of the House of Chiefs in the Region, subject to the following reservation :—

The Presidencies of the Eastern and Western Regional Assemblies should be filled by the President and Vice-President of the Colony House of Chiefs, who are by tradition drawn from the two different Regions.

CONSTITUTIONAL ADVISER'S RECOMMENDATION VII—CONSULTATION WITH REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES REGARDING LEGISLATION

48. **The Conference considered** that it would not be practicable for Regional Assemblies to be consulted on both the principles and the final drafts of Bills dealing with matters substantially affecting the life or well-being of the inhabitants of Regions. It was thought essential for consultation to be held on the principles, but that early publication would suffice instead of formal consultation on the final drafts of such Bills. The onus would then be on each Regional Assembly, acting through one of its standing committees, to examine all Bills, and to submit to the Government their comments and criticisms, if any; or, in important cases, to refer the matter to the Regional Assembly for debate with a view to the formulation of considered and representative Regional opinion on the Bill.

49. **The Conference recommends** that the following procedure should be adopted in respect of such Bills, other than those certified by the Minister of Finance as requiring budgetary secrecy, by the Prime Minister (so long as the Attorney-General is an official) as urgent, or by the Attorney-General as purely formal:—

- (i) After consideration by Government, the principles of proposed legislation should be submitted to Regional Assemblies for their views, which will be considered by Government before final drafting instructions are given.
- (ii) All such Bills should be published at least two months before their First Reading in the Legislative Assembly, in order to afford opportunity to Regional Assemblies for further consideration of the Bill in final form, and if necessary for submission of further representations to Government.

Note.—The consultation between Regional Assemblies and “ recognised Councils of Chiefs ” (now to be read as “ Houses of Chiefs ”), suggested in clause (ii) of Recommendation III of the Report of the Constitutional Adviser, will have to be taken into account in allotting time for consultation under this Recommendation.

CONSTITUTIONAL ADVISER'S RECOMMENDATION VIII—THE DEVOLUTION OF POWER BY GOVERNMENT TO REGIONS

50. **The Conference considered** that the transfer of some degree of power in stated subjects should be laid down as obligatory in the Constitutional Instrument, and that such powers should in this way necessarily be given to each Regional Assembly on its establishment. Thereafter additional powers should be transferred in accordance with the capacity of each Regional Assembly. **The Conference further considered** that the minimum powers for transference could only be worked out after full consideration, perhaps by an *ad hoc* committee including a select official element, but that certain broad principles could be laid down.

51. **The Conference recommends** that the principles should be as follows:—

- (i) All powers and functions under the Local Government Ordinance, except such as in each Regional Assembly Ordinance may be reserved to the Centre, should be constitutionally transferred to the Regions.
- (ii) It should also be obligatory under the Constitutional Instrument for Government to provide in each Regional Assembly Ordinance for the transfer of some degree of responsibility under:
 - Agriculture, Animal Health and Forestry,
 - Education,
 - Communications,
 - Medical and Health,
 - Works,
 - Town and Country Planning, and
 - Housing.
- (iii) Wherever responsibilities are transferred to Regions it would be for the Central Government to ensure that adequate staff to meet such responsibilities is established in the Regions.
- (iv) From time to time such further transfers of responsibilities should be made as may be found to be practicable and expedient.
- (v) As is proposed in Recommendation XIV responsibilities so transferred, apart from the minimum laid down in the Constitutional Instrument, could be increased or diminished only by amendment of the relevant Regional Assembly Ordinance.
- (vi) Within the limits of the responsibilities transferred Regional Assemblies should be empowered to make regulations, bye-laws, etc., subject to their being certified in advance by the Attorney-General as not being *ultra vires* of the relevant principal Ordinance.

52. **The Conference further recommends** that Government should reserve the right in respect of Boards, Corporations and Committees of national importance to select suitable representatives from Regions without officially consulting Regional Assemblies: in respect of other Boards, Corporations, and Committees of an inter-Regional character Regional Assemblies should be asked to nominate representatives and such nominations should as a rule be accepted by Government. To this end an early review of the relevant Ordinances should be undertaken by Government.

CONSTITUTIONAL ADVISER'S RECOMMENDATION IX—
THE RIGHT OF MINISTERS TO ADDRESS REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES

53. **The Conference considers** that the recommendation regarding the subjects on which Ministers should be empowered to address Regional Assemblies is unduly restrictive. **The Conference recommends**, therefore, that it be varied to provide for cases in which the Government finds it expedient to charge a Minister with the task of presenting to a Regional Assembly Government's views on a matter not included in his portfolio but closely affecting that Region.

CONSTITUTIONAL ADVISER'S RECOMMENDATION X—
THE POSITION OF THE (CHIEF) REGIONAL OFFICER

54. **The Conference considers** that there is no need to define the position or functions of (Chief) Regional Officers in relation to Regional Assemblies since each of these Assemblies will have its own Clerk.

55. **The Conference noted** that it is for the Government to prescribe the duties of (Chief) Regional Officers and that there is no need to include any reference to these duties in the Constitution.

CONSTITUTIONAL ADVISER'S RECOMMENDATION XI—
THE POWER OF REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES TO APPOINT COMMITTEES

56. **The Conference accepts** this Recommendation with an additional proviso that only members of the Regional Assembly should be eligible to serve on its Committees. There would of course be no objection to other persons being invited to attend, e.g., for advice or consultation on specified points.

CONSTITUTIONAL ADVISER'S RECOMMENDATION XII—
REGIONAL PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING AND PREPARATION OF ESTIMATES
OF EXPENDITURE

57. **The Conference considered** that consultation between the Government and Regional Assemblies could take place only within the framework of broad allocations made by Government, and should be confined to such parts of development plans (exclusive of national projects in a Region) as affect the Region concerned, i.e., the procedure suggested would not be concerned with allocations made to Regions to cover their own direct expenditure or grants made to them for purely Regional development (such as those at present made to Regional Development Committees).

58. **The Conference further considered** the question whether it was preferable for the outline plan relating to such parts of the development plan, within the definition given in paragraph 57 above, as affected Regions to be made first by Government or whether Regions should be asked to draw up a plan within their allocation and forward it to Government for consideration. The avoidance of conflicts between the Central Government and Regions was noted as an important consideration.

59. **The Conference recommends** that since Government and not the Regions must provide the funds for development and be ultimately responsible for planning, the best procedure would be for Government to draw up at any rate the outline plan and to invite Regional observations on it.

60. **The Conference considered** that any fixed allocations of sums to be provided for development expenditure in Regions which were framed mainly on a formula proportionate to population would lead to conflict.

61. **The Conference recommends** that Government should decide on and publish yearly a minimum equal allocation to all Regions, based on the essential requirements of the smallest Region. Government would then increase this stated minimum allocation in respect of any Region in accordance with the financial position of the country and such ascertained needs of each Region as Government accepted.

62. In the light of the foregoing decisions **the Conference considered** that it was unnecessary for Regions to be consulted on estimates of annually recurrent expenditure and **recommends** that consultation should be limited to road and development funds estimates.

CONSTITUTIONAL ADVISER'S RECOMMENDATION XIII—THE NEED FOR A SPECIAL
DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES

63. **The Conference agrees** that it is necessary at present to give special consideration to development in the Northern Territories. **The Conference considered**, however, that a Ten-year Plan, as suggested by the Constitutional Adviser, was unsuitable, having regard to the difficulty of forecasting the country's financial position over such a lengthy period.

64. **The Conference recommends** that Government should undertake a yearly review of the progress achieved in development in the Northern Territories, and that whilst special deficiencies last they should receive special consideration in each yearly allocation under the development plan.

CONSTITUTIONAL ADVISER'S RECOMMENDATION XIV—AMENDMENT OF ORDINANCES
ESTABLISHING REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES

65. **The Conference recommends** acceptance of the procedure for the amendment of Regional Assemblies Ordinances suggested in Recommendation XIV of the Report of the Constitutional Adviser.

CONSTITUTIONAL ADVISER'S RECOMMENDATION XV—RULES OF BUSINESS
OF REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES

66. **The Conference considered** that the proposals in this Recommendation of the Constitutional Adviser were generally acceptable, although the provisions suggested were illustrative rather than mandatory and it might well be discovered in time that provision for other details would be required.

67. **The Conference recommends** acceptance of the proposal in Recommendation XV of the Report of the Constitutional Adviser that Regional Assemblies should be empowered to make their own rules of business, perhaps guided by model rules prepared by Government.

CONSTITUTIONAL ADVISER'S RECOMMENDATION XVI—
PRESCRIPTION BY GOVERNMENT

68. **The Conference considered** that, as recommended by the Constitutional Adviser, Government should be empowered in the Regional Assemblies Ordinances to prescribe for details on the lines set out in Recommendation XVI, but **agreed** that the responsibility for convening the initial meeting of a Regional Assembly should lie in the hands of the President-designate of the Regional Assembly, if one already existed at the time of the initial meeting. Where there was no such President-designate at the time, the responsible Minister should convene the meeting, delegating his power at his discretion.

69. **The Conference recommends** that with the above amendment the proposals set out in Recommendation XVI of the Constitutional Adviser's Report should be accepted as a guide to the matters to be prescribed by Government.

OTHER MATTERS PLACED ON THE AGENDA OF THE CONFERENCE AT THE
REQUEST OF DELEGATIONS

(i) **The need for a Minister charged with special responsibilities for the Northern Territories.**

70. This subject, which was placed on the Agenda at the request of the delegation representing local government councils in the Northern Territories, was examined with special reference to the functions and duties of the Secretary of State for Scotland. Although there are some valid grounds for comparison of the situation in Scotland with the position of the Northern Territories, any temptation to strain the analogy must be resisted. Nevertheless, **the Conference notes** that:

(a) "The Secretary of State is regarded as the mouth-piece of Scottish opinion in the Cabinet, and is expected to express Scottish views on many questions which do not directly concern the Departments for which he is responsible. Moreover, there is an increasing tendency among Scottish people to appeal to the Secretary of State on all questions affecting the social and economic life of Scotland. These factors are reflected in an extension of the sphere of Scottish Office activity."*

(b) "The Scottish Office is regularly consulted by United Kingdom Departments on points arising out of the Scottish application of legislation affecting the United Kingdom, although the legislation may be on a subject for which no Scottish Department has responsibility. In practice it is necessary for the Office to watch all legislation in order to ensure that points peculiar to Scotland are duly considered, and moreover, apart from legislation, United Kingdom Departments frequently consult the Scottish Office in order that they may get the benefit of local knowledge on particular points."*

71. **The Conference further notes:**

- (a) the remoteness of the Northern Territories and their need for special development;
- (b) the need for special consideration of the effect on the Northern Territories of all legislation;
- (c) the contribution made by the Northern Territories especially in respect of the country's labour force, the police, and the army.

72. **The Conference recommends** that, although there should not be a separate Minister charged with special responsibilities for the Northern Territories, special responsibility for the Northern Territories should for a period be added as a subject to be combined with the existing portfolio of a Minister.

(ii) **The need for a Minister charged with special responsibilities for Togoland.**

73. The Trans-Volta/Togoland Council delegation to the Conference urged that in view of its recent history as a part of a German Colony, then as a Mandated Territory, and now as a Trust Territory, Southern Togoland merited special representation in the Gold Coast Cabinet.

74. **The Conference recommends** that special responsibility for the affairs of Southern Togoland, if it joins the Gold Coast as a result of the forthcoming plebiscite, should be added to the responsibility of the Minister combining with his portfolio special responsibility for the Northern Territories.

(iii) **The policy regarding the Maintenance of Traditional Authorities.**
(Considered at the request of the Brong/Kyempem Council delegation).

75. **The Conference noted** that complaints had been made as to the inadequacy of the present formulae for allowances to Chiefs. **The Conference considered** that

- (a) the issue was a difficult one, since it appeared that Government's wish to make adequate provision for Chiefs must be reconciled with due economy, and
- (b) the character of chieftaincy would be damaged if all chiefs were to be largely dependent upon Government for allowances.

76. **The Conference recommends** that, since the institution of chieftaincy is of such importance to the country, every effort should be made to find a satisfactory solution to the problem.

(iv) **The Amendments to the State Councils (Colony and Southern Togoland) and (Ashanti) Ordinances.**

77. The J.P.C. delegation, in introducing this subject, referred to the objections made by the Joint Provincial Council and the Asanteman Council when the draft amendments were first published.

*Report of the Committee on Scottish Administration (Cmd. 5563 of 1937), Appendix III, paragraph 6 (iii)-(iv).

78. The Conference noted that when the Bills were introduced in the Assembly an undertaking had been given (*vide* paragraph 37 above) that it was Government's intention to introduce, as soon as practicable, legislation establishing a Local Constitutional Commission, and that it was known that such legislation would be introduced at the forthcoming meeting of the Legislative Assembly.

79. The Conference therefore repeats its recommendation under paragraph 37 of this report that the necessary legislation to establish the Local Constitutional Commission should be enacted as soon as possible.

(v) Other matters considered, on which it was decided not to make recommendations.

80. The Conference considered the following matters at the request of the delegations named, but decided not to make recommendations on them, since they could more appropriately be dealt with in other ways.

- (a) The Place of Islamic Law (The Gold Coast Muslim Council delegation)
- (b) The Management of Stool Lands (The Joint Provincial Council delegation).
- (c) A memorandum by the Gold Coast ex-Servicemen's Union delegation.
- (d) "Gong-gong" and Oath Procedure (Mr. Kofi Baako, M.L.A., of the C.P.P. delegation).

Signed at the Assembly Hall, Achimota School, this 16th day of March, 1956.

C. W. TACHIE-MENSON
Chairman

AGYEMANG BADU
Leader, Brong-Kyempem Council Delegation

K. A. GBEDEMAH
*Leader, Convention Peoples' Party
Delegation*

PRINCE YAO BOATENG
Leader, Gold Coast ex-Servicemen's Delegation

MUTAWAKILU
*Leader, Gold Coast Muslim Council
Delegation*

ANNORKWEI II
*Leader, Joint Provincial Council
Delegation*

F. E. TACHIE-MENSON
*Leader, Trades Union Congress
Delegation*

TOBGE TEPRE HODO III
*Leader, Trans-Volta/Togoland Council
Delegation*

E. A. MAHAMA
*Leader, Local Government Councils in the
Northern Territories Delegation*

JOHN DUNCAN }
E. B. S. ALTON } *Joint Secretaries.*

APPENDIX A

MEMBERS OF THE CONFERENCE

CHAIRMAN : Mr. C. W. Tachie-Menson, C.B.E.

MEMBERS : **Brong-Kyempem Council Delegation**

Nana Agyemang Badu, Dormaahene
Mr. J. E. Buanya
Mr. A. A. Munufie
Mr. E. G. Ntow.

Convention Peoples' Party Delegation

Hon. K. A. Gbedemah, M.L.A.
Hon. J. H. Allassani, M.L.A.
Mr. Kofi Baako, M.L.A.
Mr. K. A. T. Amankwah, M.L.A.

Gold Coast Ex-Servicemen's Union Delegation

Prince Yao Boateng
Captain J. E. S. de Graft-Hayford
Mr. W. Daniel Hayford, Junior
Mr. James Owusu.

Gold Coast Muslim Council Delegation

Malam Mutawakilu
Mr. Z. B. Shardow
Mr. I. L. Abibu
Alhaji Issah Ollenu.

Joint Provincial Council Delegation

Nene Annorkwei II, Manche of Prampram
Nana Baidoo Bonsoe XIII, Omanhene of Ahanta
Nene Azzu Mate Kole, O.B.E., Konor of Manya Krobo*
Nana Otu IX, Omanhene of Abura.

Trades Union Congress Delegation

Mr. F. E. Tachie-Menson, M.L.A.
Mr. I. L. Ohene Djan
Mr. J. K. Tettegah
Mr. C. K. Torkornoo.

Trans-Volta/Togoland Council Delegation

Togbe Tepre Hodo III of Anfoega
Mr. S. W. Kumah
Mr. C. K. Lardi-Glawu
Mr. J. K. Mensah.

Local Government Councils in the Northern Territories Delegation

Mr. E. A. Mahama
Mr. J. B. Fuseini (Lamashina)
Mr. J. M. Adda
Mr. Nicholas Adochim.

In Attendance :

Sir Frederick Bourne, K.C.S.I., C.I.E., Constitutional Adviser
Mr. J. Duncan
Mr. E. B. S. Alton, M.B.E., M.C. } *Joint Secretaries.*

*Nene Mate Kole informed the Chairman on the 12th March, after the Conference had completed consideration of the matters on its agenda, that he wished to withdraw from the Joint Provincial Council delegation to the Conference.

APPENDIX B

CLOSING SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE CHAIRMAN
MR. C. W. TACHIE-MENSON, C.B.E.

Nananom and Gentlemen,

Exactly a month ago today, on the 16th February, I bade you welcome to this Conference.

Since then we have achieved much. We have reviewed the whole field covered by the Report of the Constitutional Adviser, Sir Frederick Bourne, and many subjects connected with it. We have examined each of Sir Frederick's recommendations in the light of our local knowledge and existing Gold Coast legislation, and we have reached conclusions which are, in practically every case, unanimous.

A month ago I asked that we should approach our task in a spirit of dedication to the national interest. I can fairly say that that spirit has animated all our deliberations.

Our recommendations provide for our Chiefs a position in the body politic which will remove them from the undignified hurly-burly of party politics; but which, nevertheless, will enable them to play a vital and statesmanlike role in the highest councils of the nation, and make it possible for the Chiefs in each region to act collectively as the fathers of their people.

We have made provision for a reasonable measure of delay being imposed when legislation is regarded as having particular Regional importance, as being of a controversial nature or having far-reaching effects.

We have suggested the establishment of a convention which, if acceptable to all concerned, will facilitate the smooth working of our future constitution.

We have advocated special consideration being given to the needs of the Northern Territories, not only in regard to physical development but also over the whole political field.

In addition we have dealt with a mass of practical administrative problems which must be clarified for the guidance of the legal draftsmen who will prepare the constitution of a self-governing Gold Coast.

In my inaugural address, and in the Conference's Press Releases, it has been emphasized time and again that the door has been kept open, to admit the delegation of any political party or movement or any other body which had initially not found it possible to accept the Prime Minister's invitation to this Conference. I am confident that future historians will agree with me when I declare that the nation as a whole owes a debt of gratitude to Nananom of the J.P.C. delegation to the Conference for their undaunted efforts to persuade the Asanteman Council, and the N.L.M. and its allies to join us, even at the eleventh hour. At first glance it appears that their mission to Kumasi was a failure. But I am sure that any of our fellow-citizens who may not be directly represented at this Conference must have been impressed by the fact that the fathers of the land considered that those who abstained from participation in this Conference could better serve our country by taking part in our deliberations.

I have permitted reasonable adjournments of the Conference. But I was not prepared to let the Conference drag on indefinitely.

The Gold Coast is passing through the last phase before the attainment of full self-government. Since the inauguration of the present constitution Her Majesty's Government has, steadily and methodically, been preparing for our next constitutional advance to take place smoothly.

It is essential, therefore, that everyone in the Gold Coast who wishes that the transition to full self-government should be effected without friction, and in the happy atmosphere of a coming-of-age celebration, should bear in mind words used by the Right Honourable Herbert Morrison, M.P., then Lord President of the Council, in his address to the Secretary of State's African Conference held in London in 1948. Herbert Morrison charged us to "keep our eyes on the clock and on the calendar".

I have borne that exhortation in mind throughout this Achimota Conference. Our task has not been to produce a report which is an academic treatise, a weighty tome larded with quotations from all the great constitutional lawyers from Dicey to Jennings. Our aim was to draft a workmanlike report, a document which can guide the Gold Coast Government and Her Majesty's Government. I am confident that we have achieved this modest but practical objective and I dedicate our report to the Chiefs and people of the Gold Coast.

APPENDIX C

CORRESPONDENCE IN CONNECTION WITH THE WITHDRAWAL OF NENE AZZU MATE KOLE,
KONOR OF MANYA KROBO, FROM MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT PROVINCIAL COUNCIL
DELEGATION TO THE CONFERENCEAT ACCRA,
12th March, 1956.

(1)

Sir,

I am most unhappy about the decision of the Conference on the report which we submitted this morning on our Ashanti mission.

2. The Asanteman Council, the Northern Territories Council and the other groups made it quite clear that to continue and conclude this Conference without them would mean closing the door to further association.

3. The points made during the Kumasi meetings were weighty and should have been explored further in view of the obvious consequences. The question that disturbs my mind is:

“ Are we discussing a constitution for the Gold Coast Colony only or one for the whole Gold Coast ? ”

4. I feel that at this stage a new situation has arisen on which the Joint Provincial Council should be consulted. We are faced with possible secession of the two regions and under the present circumstances I cannot continue on the Conference without going back and laying bare the facts to the Joint Provincial Council for their fresh mandate.

5. I feel that I would be serving the country best if I withdrew now from the Conference and I hereby withdraw.

I am,

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) AZZU MATE KOLE

*Konor.*THE CHAIRMAN,
THE ACHIMOTA CONFERENCE,
ACCRA.

(2)

OFFICE OF THE ACHIMOTA CONFERENCE,
PRIVATE POST BAG,
ACCRA.

13th March, 1956.

My Dear Nene,

It was with considerable regret that I received your letter of the 12th March announcing your withdrawal from membership of the Joint Provincial Council delegation to the Achimota Conference.

2. It was the unanimous wish of the Conference that the Joint Provincial Council delegation, acting on behalf of the Conference, should in the over-riding national interest use its good offices to secure the attendance at the Conference of those political parties and movements and other bodies which had not seen their way to accept the Prime Minister's invitation to the Conference. In this, the Conference endorsed the sentiments which formed the key-note of my opening address; and in its Press Releases the Conference has emphasized the fact that, even at the eleventh hour, it will welcome, and offer full facilities to any delegation which then decides to attend the Conference.

3. Neither the Asanteman Council nor the National Liberation Movement and its allies arranged to meet the Joint Provincial Council delegation during the Conference's adjournment from the 20th to the 27th February. Nevertheless, to enable the J.P.C. delegation, acting on behalf of the Conference, to meet that Council and those political groups, the Conference re-arranged its programme of work so that its consideration of the agenda would not end before the outcome of your mission was known. The Constitutional Adviser has postponed his return to the United Kingdom.

4. I have accepted for inclusion on the agenda of the Conference any items, proposed by delegations attending the Conference and known to be of particular interest to the Asanteman Council or the National Liberation Movement and its allies; and I have permitted full discussion of them. To this I would, if the occasion had arisen, have made only one exception: I would have explained that, as the dissolution of the Legislative Assembly is a matter for the Prime Minister alone, I could not allow the Conference to discuss any proposal regarding the date of the next general election.

5. I have made no secret of my opinion that the absence of any body or political party invited by the Prime Minister deprives the Conference of valuable counsel. Nevertheless I am satisfied that, when our report is published, all sections of the public will agree with me that the Conference has done much useful work, and has not limited the scope of its deliberations to those aspects of its agenda which affect the Colony alone. On the request of the delegation representing certain local government councils in the Northern Territories, we have examined the need for a Minister charged with special responsibilities for the Northern Territories. This proves that in our discussions we have thought of the nation as a whole.

6. In conclusion I must inform you that I cannot agree with your opinion that at this stage a new situation has arisen on which the Joint Provincial Council should be consulted. When your Council decided that it should be represented at this Conference, selected its delegation, and entrusted it with a mandate, it was common knowledge that some political parties and movements had declined the Prime Minister's invitation to the Conference. I consider, therefore, that no new situation has arisen: rather, despite the efforts of the J.P.C. delegation, acting on behalf of the Conference, the former situation has continued without improvement. Nevertheless, the door which the Conference has so patiently held open is not yet closed. It will remain ajar until the Conference's report is signed on the 16th March. There is, therefore, still time for you to reconsider your decision and to determine whether you will not serve our country better by attending the closing session of the Conference. Although the Conference as a body feels that it can now take no further steps to secure the attendance of delegations from the Asanteman Council and the National Liberation Movement and its allies, it is still open to the Joint Provincial Council, acting of its own motion, to use its good offices with all concerned.

I am, Nene,
Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) C. W. TACHIE-MENSON
*Chairman,
Achimota Conference.*

(3)

14th March, 1956.

Sir,

I thank you for your letter of the 13th March to which I have given careful consideration.

2. At the time that the J.P.C. appointed its delegates, it was deeply conscious of the need for having Ashanti and the Northern Territories fully represented at the Conference, and this was the reason for the resolution which gave us our mandate.

3. It became clear from our visit to Ashanti on behalf of the Conference that if the Conference concluded its discussions without representatives from Ashanti, and the Northern Territories Council, the door for future association might be closed. This constitutes a very dangerous threat to the unity of the country, and is a situation the seriousness of which does not appear to be sufficiently appreciated.

I regret I still feel that a new situation has arisen. I feel it my duty to report to the J.P.C. on the composition of the Conference and on the implications of the new situation, in the light of the case put to us by the representatives we met in Kumasi.

I am, Sir,
Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) AZZU MATE KOLE
Konor, Manya Krobo.

MR. C. W. TACHIE-MENSON, C.B.E.,
CHAIRMAN, ACHIMOTA CONFERENCE,
ACCRA.

(4)

AT ACCRA,
12th March, 1956.

Nene/Nana,

You will remember that during the discussion last Saturday when we gave you our report of our Ashanti mission, we the two delegates pointed out that a new situation has arisen about which we should consult the J.P.C.

2. I feel very strongly that this should be done and I have therefore written to the Chairman of the Conference intimating my withdrawal in order to be able to seek a fresh mandate from the J.P.C., in view of the new light which our mission to Ashanti has thrown on the situation.

3. I attach for your information a copy of my letter to the Chairman.

I am,

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) AZZU MATE KOLE
Konor, Manya Krobo.

NENE PRAMPAM,
NANA ABURA,
NANA AHANTA.

(5) NENE ANNORKWEI II,
LEADER OF J.P.C. DELEGATION,
c/o ACHIMOTA CONFERENCE,
ACHIMOTA, ACCRA.

13th March, 1956.

Nene,

I acknowledge receipt of your letter of yesterday's date which was delivered to me by your bearer late last night. I note with surprise your intention to withdraw from membership of the J.P.C. delegation to the Achimota Conference, intimated in your letter to the Chairman of the Conference, which was copied to me.

2. As you are aware, the Conference concluded its consideration of its agenda before noon yesterday, shortly after you left the meeting on the grounds of indisposition. The Conference has adjourned until Friday, the 16th March, when it will re-assemble to consider and approve its report.

3. We, the members of the J.P.C. delegation to the Conference, have already discharged our obligations under the mandate entrusted to us. Having contributed to the Conference's decisions, we as a delegation are bound by these decisions as recorded in its daily minutes. I am, therefore, at a loss to understand the reasons for, or the objects you hope to achieve by, this proposed last-minute withdrawal from membership of the J.P.C. delegation.

4. In conclusion I must emphasize the fact that the members of our delegation were appointed by the Joint Provincial Council and as all of us, yourself included, expressed our willingness to accept the Council's nomination, you can resign your membership in the present unusual circumstances only with the consent of the Council. I accordingly have no alternative but to request you to re-consider your decision and to inform you that, as leader of the J.P.C. delegation, I propose to sign the Conference's report on behalf of that delegation.

I am,

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) ANNORKWEI II,
Leader, J.P.C. Delegation to the
Achimota Conference.

KONOR, MANYA KROBO,
ODUMASE, MANYA KROBO,
GOLD COAST.

Copies to: 1. The Chairman, Achimota Conference,
Accra.
2. Nana Ahanta, Accra.
3. Nana Abura, Accra.

NANA BAIDOO BONSOE XIII,
c/o ACHIMOTA CONFERENCE, ACHIMOTA,
ACCRA.

(6)

15th March, 1956.

Nene,

In acknowledging receipt of your letter dated 12th instant, I have to state that I fully endorse the points raised by Nene Annorkwei II, Leader of the J.P.C. delegation in his letter of the 13th instant to you and copied to me.

In addition I would state that the mandate from the Joint Provincial Council of Chiefs simply asked us the members of its delegation to advise the Conference to explore all possible avenues "to bring about peaceful understanding between the Government and our brethren who now feel aggrieved to join us so that all the component parts of the country could march together as one people, having one aim, one hope, one destiny".

This mandate does not in any way ask us to withdraw from the Conference if the Asante-man Council, the N.L.M. and its allies, together with the N.T. Council refused to attend the Conference. And that was the reason why we disagreed with you on Saturday last when you told us that a new situation had arisen about which the J.P.C. should be consulted.

You did not inform us of your intention to withdraw on Saturday last when you gave us a report of your mission and you did not also make mention of it, when you attended the Conference on Monday the 12th instant.

When you read your report of the Ashanti mission you were thanked by the Chairman of the Conference. You then stated that you were not well and asked for permission to go home.

I would suggest that you re-consider your decision in order to attend the Conference on Friday next being 16th instant.

I am,

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) BAIDOO BONSOE XIII
Omanhene of Ahanta.

KONOR, MANYA KROBO,
ODUMASE, MANYA KROBO,
GOLD COAST.

- Copies to: 1. The Chairman, Achimota Conference,
Accra.
2. Nene Prampram, Accra.
3. Nana Abura, Accra.