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Cessation of the Transmission of Information:
Communication from the Government of Denmark
Concerning Greenland

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The following communication from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark was handed to the Secretary-General on 14 September 1953.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Denmark presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to refer to Resolution 222 (III), adopted by the General Assembly on 3 November 1948.

According to the said resolution it is essential, having regard to the provisions of Chapter XI of the Charter, that the United Nations be informed of any change in the constitutional position and status of any non-self-governing territory as a result of which the responsible government concerned thinks it unnecessary to transmit information in respect of that territory under Article 73 (e) of the Charter. The Members of the United Nations concerned are therefore requested to communicate to the Secretary-General, within a maximum period of six months, such information as may be appropriate, including the constitution, legislative act or executive order providing for the government of the territory and the constitutional relationship of the territory to the government of the metropolitan country.

Since 1946, the Danish Government have transmitted annually to the Secretary-General information on Greenland pursuant to the terms of Article 73 (e) of the Charter, and taking due account of resolution 66 (I) adopted by the Assembly of the United Nations on December 14th, 1946.

However, on 5 June 1953, a constitutional amendment was adopted, according to which Greenland has now become an integral part of the Danish Realm with rights corresponding to those of other parts of Denmark. Its population has obtained representation in Parliament on equal footing with the rest of the Danish population.

In the light of this change in the constitutional position and status of Greenland and its inhabitants, the Danish Government regard their responsibilities according to Chapter XI of the Charter as terminated and have therefore decided to bring the submission of information pursuant to Article 73 (e) to an end.

Enclosed as annexes to the present note will be found a memorandum giving the background of the constitutional development in Greenland, together with a translation of the Danish Constitution of 5 June 1953,^{1/} and of the records of the meetings of the Greenland Council (Grønlands Landsråd), at which the constitutional changes were discussed and unanimously adopted.

Copenhagen, 3 September 1953.

^{1/} Note from the Secretariat: Only excerpts from the Constitution are reproduced.



ANNEX I

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

In order to elucidate the developments which have led to the changes in the status of Greenland reported in the Danish Government's Note of 3 September 1953, the following information is submitted:

I. As the Secretary General will be aware, it has been the policy of the Danish Government, during the period of more than 200 years in which Denmark has been in charge of the administration of Greenland, primarily to further the economic, social and cultural welfare of the Greenland population, while Denmark, in her administration of Greenland, has never endeavoured to obtain any economic gain.

As will be seen from the reports on Greenland submitted to the United Nations, the Government of Denmark gradually reached the conclusion that the educational efforts had brought the Greenlanders to a stage of development where they must be considered able to take part, on equal terms with all other Danes, in economic, social and cultural life. Legislative measures aiming at establishing such equality in important fields were consequently enacted in 1950 and 1951.

In 1950 laws were enacted on the following subjects: the Greenland Council and Municipal Councils, etc.; Public Treasurers; Ecclesiastical Affairs; Education; Health Services; the Royal Greenland Trading Company; Trading; Establishment of a Trade Loan Fund in Greenland. In 1951 laws were enacted on the Administration of Justice in Greenland and on Import Duties in Greenland. A Criminal Code and a Marriage Act are in preparation and will be submitted to the Danish Parliament in a near future.

II. Up to 1953 Greenland's status has been that of a non-self-governing territory under the suzerainty of the metropolitan country. Consequently, Greenland has been under the ordinary administration instituted by the Danish Constitution, including the Danish Legislature, although the Greenlanders have not been represented in Parliament. The provisions of the Constitution have not, however, been applicable a priori to Greenland. As a general rule, Danish law has not been applicable to the population of Greenland who have been under the special Greenland law which has been based on Greenland tradition.

III. Already in the middle of the 19th century, a certain measure of self-government was introduced in Greenland, in keeping with the stage of development reached by the local population. By legislative measures enacted in 1908, 1912 and 1925, the scope of self-government was gradually extended in accordance with the growing maturity of the population.

Under the Administration of Greenland Act of 18 April 1925, the population of West Greenland could take part in the government of their own affairs through:

76 municipal councils ("kommuneraad")

13 district councils ("sysselraad")

2 national councils ("landsraad").

In the northern part of West Greenland (the district of Thule) and in East Greenland a fully corresponding municipal self-government did not exist.

However, the population of these parts of the country has influence on the administration of local affairs in the district of Thule through the so-called Hunters' Council and in East Greenland through the establishment in 1946 of two Colonial Councils (at Scoresbysund and Angmagssalik).

By the Act of 27 May 1950, the division of West Greenland into municipalities was reorganized. The two National Councils were combined into one National Council for the whole of West Greenland with greater powers and final authority to decide on certain matters.

At the same time, the District Councils and the Municipal Councils were abolished and West Greenland was divided into 16 municipalities administered by regular Municipal Councils whose authority was considerably greater than that of the previous councils. The funds at their disposal were also increased.

IV. The suffrage and the procedure to be followed for elections to the National Council and the Municipal Councils, and the powers vested in these bodies, are governed by the following rules:

The members of the National Council and the Municipal Councils are elected by universal suffrage. The rules on suffrage and eligibility are in principle the same as those governing suffrage and eligibility at municipal elections in the rest of Denmark. Every man and woman who (i) is a Danish subject, (ii) has attained the age of 23, (iii) has been permanently domiciled in Greenland for at least six months prior to the polling day, and (iv) who complies with certain special

conditions of the same import as those applying in the rest of Denmark, is entitled to vote and is eligible at elections for the Municipal Councils in Greenland and the National Council of Greenland.

The rules governing the powers vested in the National Council in relation to Legislature provide that all bills for measures affecting Greenland shall be submitted to the National Council for deliberation and recommendation before they are laid before the Danish Parliament (the Folketing). Similarly, all bills or proposals for administrative regulations which are of special importance to the Greenland community, shall be submitted to the National Council for deliberation and recommendation, before they are put into force in Greenland. Where, in an emergency, it has not been possible to submit in advance such bills or measures to the National Council, they shall, at the earliest possible opportunity, be submitted to that body for deliberation and recommendation.

Wherever possible, the National Council shall also be heard in other matters which are considered to affect the welfare of Greenland.

The National Council will decide on matters referred to it by Parliament or the Government. For instance, the National Council has authority to decide on the appropriation of the receipts deriving from the above-mentioned legislation on import duties in Greenland; the National Council's power to make decisions is particularly in evidence in the social-welfare services of Greenland.

Owing to the geographical conditions, the National Council holds ordinary sessions only once a year. Current matters are therefore decided upon by a small standing committee set up by the Council.

Finally, the National Council may submit proposals - also for appropriations - as well as inquiries and complaints to the Government on all public matters not delegated to the Council for decision.

The Municipal Councils are in charge of the social-welfare services within the individual municipalities. The scope of their other activities is comparable in some measure to that of municipal councils in the rest of Denmark.

V. The impact on the Greenland population of the gradual development of the activities of the local self-governing bodies has played a major role in training the Greenlanders for participation in political and administrative activities.

It is therefore only natural that the question of representation of the Greenlanders in the Danish Parliament has been brought up repeatedly, both by Danes and Greenlanders.

In its report of 1950 the Greenland Commission proposed several far-reaching economic, social and administrative reforms (see "Report on Greenland" 1950 and following years) and the question of Greenland's representation in the Danish Parliament was also raised.

In accordance with a recommendation submitted in 1948 by a joint session of the then existing two National Councils, the Greenland Commission suggested that as long as Greenland had no direct representation in the Danish Parliament, the Greenland National Council should appoint representatives to the Greenland Committee of the Danish Parliament (the standing committee set up in 1935, which in Parliament deals with special Greenland affairs). An arrangement on those lines was introduced in 1950, when provision was made for the National Council to appoint two delegates to the Greenland Committee.

In the light of the far-reaching changes which the economic and social structure of Greenland has undergone since 1950 - see the reports submitted to the United Nations - it was natural that the desire of the Greenlanders for direct representation in the Danish Parliament should become increasingly pronounced; this desire was emphasized at the session of the National Council in 1951.

This question was then taken up by the Constitutional Commission set up by the Government to prepare a draft for a new Constitution.

VI. In February-March 1952 the new Constitution was the subject of discussions in the Greenland Committee of Parliament, in which the committee members appointed by Legislature and the delegates appointed by the Greenland Council took part together with leading officials of Danish government departments.

In the course of these discussions the Greenland delegates declared that the course of events had inspired a general wish in the Greenland National Council that the national status of Greenland should be bound closer to that of Denmark by a clause in the Constitution to the effect that Greenland was no longer a Danish colony but an integral part of the Danish realm, and that the Greenland

population, according to provisions to be laid down in the Elections Act, was to be represented in Parliament on equal terms with the population in the rest of Denmark.

The Greenland Committee then recommended that the Government should refer this question to the Constitutional Commission for deliberation and formulation of the necessary draft clauses to the new Constitution and rules on suffrage.

VII. In July-August 1952 a special Sub-Committee of the Constitutional Commission submitted a recommendation to the effect that the new Constitution should lay down that the Constitution should in future apply to all parts of the Realm of Denmark and that Greenland, consequently, was to be represented in Parliament. However, deviations from a few of the clauses in the Constitution should be permissible by legislation with respect to Greenland in so far as local conditions warranted such deviations.

These recommendations had been accepted by the Government in advance, but before the Constitutional Commission was to reach a final decision, the question was submitted on 8 September 1952, by the representative of the Danish Government, the Governor of Greenland to the National Council of Greenland.

VIII. From the enclosed translation of Extracts from the "Minutes of the Greenland Council", covering meetings held in September 1952 (Annex II) it will be seen that the National Council had the opportunity to freely debate the draft proposals prepared by the Constitutional Commission concerning the status of Greenland in the Realm of Denmark and, by free vote, expressed its attitude in the following unanimous resolution:

"At its meeting on 9 September 1952 the Greenland National Council has unanimously adopted the draft for a new clause in the Constitution by which the Constitution of the Kingdom of Denmark is extended to comprise Greenland and by which Greenland is to be represented in the Danish Parliament.

"The National Council endorses the reservations proposed in the draft with respect to sections 71, 72 and 78.^{1/}

"The National Council recognizes that in their administration of Greenland the changing governments and the Danish Parliament have always had regard to the special conditions prevailing in Greenland and expect this practice to be continued also in the future formulation of laws and regulations."

^{1/} With reference to these reservations, see "Extracts from the Minutes of the Greenland Council", p.2 and para. IX of the present Memorandum.

After adoption of this resolution the Greenland Council - cf. the Extracts from the Minutes of the Greenland Council - discussed in some detail the question of the most expedient method of election of Greenland representatives to the Danish Parliament.

IX. The draft for new Constitutional provisions on Greenland, prepared by the special Sub-Committee of the Constitutional Commission and endorsed by the National Council, was incorporated in the draft Constitution which was submitted by the Constitutional Commission and subsequently - after approval by the Government - submitted to Parliament.

Already in section 1 of this draft Constitution it was laid down that the Constitution applies to all parts of the Realm of Denmark, and consequently also to Greenland.

A more detailed examination of the matter, however, revealed that it was unnecessary to make special reservations for Greenland in the Constitution, except in two cases of very limited importance. One refers to section 71 (3) dealing with arrest, reading:

"... Where the person taken into custody cannot be released immediately, the judge shall decide, stating the grounds in an order to be given as soon as possible and at the latest within three days, whether the person taken into custody shall be committed to prison, and in cases where he can be released on bail, the judge shall determine the nature and amount of such bail".

This article contains a reservation to the effect that:

"This provision may be departed from by Statute as far as Greenland is concerned, if for local considerations such departure may be deemed necessary".

The expression "local considerations" only refers to geographical conditions, i.e. difficulties of communication.

The second reservation refers to section 86 of the draft Constitution which contains exceptions for Greenland and the Faeroe Islands with respect to the voting age for municipal councils and congregational councils, reading:

"The age qualification for local government electors and congregational council electors shall be that applying at any time to Folketing electors. With reference to the Faeroe Islands and Greenland the age qualification for local government electors and congregational council electors shall be such as may be provided for by Statute or fixed in accordance with Statute".

The draft Constitution was amended in some respects which, however, did not affect the questions referred to here, and was then adopted by Legislature and later approved by the Danish people in a referendum. The new Constitution entered into force on 5 June 1953.

X. With special reference to Greenland's representation in the Danish Parliament, section 28 of the Constitution reads:

"The Folketing shall consist of one assembly of not more than one hundred and seventy-nine Members, of whom two Members shall be elected on the Faeroe Islands, and two Members in Greenland".

Sections 31 and 32 of the Constitution refer to the possibility of enacting special rules on the representation of Greenland in Parliament and on the commencement and termination of the mandates of Greenland members of Parliament. Such rules were laid down by a special Act No. 173 of 5 June 1953, which entered into force at the same time as the new Constitution; the only essential deviation from the election rules in force in the rest of Denmark is that it has been possible to simplify the electoral procedure in Greenland where one-man constituencies have been found practicable instead of the system of proportional representation in force in the rest of Denmark.

The representation thus provided for Greenland (2 members out of 179) exceeds the number warranted by the mathematical proportion between the Greenland population (23,642 as of 31 December 1950) and the total population of Denmark (4.3 millions).

XI. Since Greenland, after the entry into force of the new Constitution, has acquired equal status with the rest of Denmark, and since the Greenland population has the same rights as the rest of Denmark's population, Greenland can no longer be considered to be one of the non-self-governing territories referred to in Chapter XI of the Charter of the United Nations. The Danish Government, therefore, considers itself neither entitled nor under obligation pursuant to Article 73 (e) of the Charter to transmit in future information on Greenland.

ANNEX II

EXCERPTS FROM THE CONSTITUTION OF THE KINGDOM
OF DENMARK ACT

5 JUNE, 1953

Part I

1. This Constitution Act shall apply to all parts of the Kingdom of Denmark.

2. The form of government shall be that of a constitutional monarchy. The Royal Power shall be inherited by men and women in accordance with the provisions of the Succession to the Throne Act, 27 March, 1953.

3. The legislative power shall be vested in the King and the Folketing conjointly. The executive power shall be vested in the King. The judicial power shall be vested in the courts of justice.

4. The Evangelical Lutheran Church shall be the Established Church of Denmark, and, as such, it shall be supported by the State.

Part III

19. (1) The King shall act on behalf of the Realm in international affairs. Provided that without the consent of the Folketing the King shall not undertake any act whereby the territory of the Realm will be increased or decreased, nor shall he enter into any obligation which for fulfilment requires the concurrence of the Folketing, or which otherwise is of major importance; nor shall the King, except with the consent of the Folketing, terminate any international treaty entered into with the consent of the Folketing.

Part IV

28. The Folketing shall consist of one assembly of not more than one hundred and seventy-nine Members, of whom two Members shall be elected on the Faeroe Islands, and two Members in Greenland.

29. (1) Any Danish subject whose permanent residence is in the Realm, and who has the age qualification for suffrage provided for in subsection (2) of this section shall have the right to vote at Folketing elections, provided that he has not been declared incapable of conducting his own affairs. It shall be laid down by Statute to what extent conviction and public assistance amounting to poor relief within the meaning of the law shall entail disfranchisement.

(2) The age qualification for suffrage shall be such as has resulted from the Referendum held under the Act dated the 25th March, 1953. Such age qualification for suffrage may be altered at any time by Statute. A Bill passed by the Folketing for the purpose of such enactment shall receive the Royal Assent only when the provision on the alteration in the age qualification for suffrage has been put to a Referendum in accordance with subsection (5) of section 42, which has not resulted in the rejection of the provision.

30. (1) Any person who has a right to vote at Folketing elections shall be eligible for membership of the Folketing, unless he has been convicted of an act which in the eyes of the public makes him unworthy of being a Member of the Folketing.

(2) Civil servants who are elected Members of the Folketing shall not require permission from the Government to accept their election.

31. (1) The Members of the Folketing shall be elected by general and direct ballot.

(2) Rules for the exercise of the suffrage shall be laid down by the Elections Act, which, to secure equal representation of the various opinions of the Electorate, shall prescribe the manner of election and decide whether proportional representation shall be adopted with or without elections in single-member constituencies.

(3) In determining the number of seats to be allotted to each area regard shall be paid to the number of inhabitants, the number of electors, and the density of population.

(4) The Elections Act shall provide rules governing the election of substitutes and their admission to the Folketing, and also rules for the procedure to be adopted where a new election is required.

(5) Special rules for the representation of Greenland in the Folketing may be laid down by Statute.

32. (1) The members of the Folketing shall be elected for a period of four years.

(2) The King may at any time issue writs for a new election with the effect that the existing seats shall be vacated upon a new election. Provided that writs for an election shall not be issued after the appointment of a new Ministry until the Prime Minister has presented himself to the Folketing.

(3) The Prime Minister shall cause a general election to be held before the expiration of the period for which the Folketing has been elected.

(4) No seats shall be vacated until a new election has been held.

(5) Special Rules may be provided by Statute for the commencement and determination of Faeroe Islands and Greenland representation in the Folketing.

(6) If a Member of the Folketing becomes ineligible his seat in the Folketing shall become vacant.

(7) On approval of his election each new Member shall make a solemn declaration that he will adhere to the Constitution Act.

33. The Folketing itself shall determine the validity of the election of any Member and decide whether a Member has lost his eligibility or not.

34. The Folketing shall be inviolable. Any person who attacks its security or freedom, or any person who issues or obeys any command aiming thereat shall be deemed guilty of high treason.

Part V

41. (1) Any Member of the Folketing shall be entitled to introduce Bills and other measures.

42. (8) Rules for Referenda, including the extent to which Referenda shall be held on the Faeroe Islands and in Greenland, shall be laid down by Statute.

Part VII

69. Rules for religious bodies dissenting from the Established Church shall be laid down by Statute.

70. No person shall for reasons of his creed or descent be deprived of access to complete enjoyment of his civic and political rights, nor shall he for such reasons evade compliance with any common civic duty.

Part VIII

71. (1) Personal liberty shall be inviolable. No Danish subject shall in any manner whatever be deprived of his liberty because of his political or religious convictions or because of his descent.

(2) A person shall be deprived of his liberty only where this is warranted by law.

(3) Any person who is taken into custody shall be brought before a judge within twenty-four hours. Where the person taken into custody cannot be released immediately, the judge shall decide, stating the grounds in an order to be given as soon as possible and at the latest within three days, whether the person taken into custody shall be committed to prison, and in cases where he can be released on bail, the judge shall determine the nature and amount of such bail. This provision may be departed from by Statute as far as Greenland is concerned, if for local considerations such departure may be deemed necessary.

(4) The finding given by the judge may at once be separately appealed against by the person concerned to a higher court of justice.

(5) No person shall be remanded for an offence that can involve only punishment consisting of a fine or mitigated imprisonment (haefte).

(6) Outside criminal procedure the legality of deprivation of liberty which is not by order of a judicial authority, and which is not warranted by the legislation dealing with aliens, shall at the request of the person who has been deprived of his liberty, or at the request of any person acting on his behalf, be brought before the ordinary courts of justice or other judicial authority for decision. Rules governing this procedure shall be provided by Statute.

(7) The persons mentioned in subsection (6) shall be under supervision by a board set up by the Folketing, to which board the persons concerned shall be permitted to apply.

82. The right of the municipalities to manage their own affairs independently under the supervision of the State shall be laid down by Statute.

Part IX

86. The age qualification for local government electors and congregational council electors shall be that applying at any time to Folketing electors. With reference to the Faeroe Islands and Greenland the age qualification for local government electors and congregational council electors shall be such as may be provided for by Statute or fixed in accordance with Statute.

Part X

88. When the Folketing passes a Bill for the purposes of a new constitutional provision, and the Government wishes to proceed with the matter, writs shall be issued for the election of Members of a new Folketing. If the Bill is passed unamended by the Folketing assembling after the election, the Bill shall within six months after its final passing be submitted to the Electors for approval or rejection by direct voting. Rules for this voting shall be laid down by Statute. If a majority of the persons taking part in the voting, and at least 40 per centum of the Electorate has voted in favour of the Bill as passed by the Folketing, and if the Bill receives the Royal Assent it shall form an integral part of the Constitution Act.

ANNEX III

EXCERPTS FROM THE MINUTES OF THE GREENLAND COUNCIL^{1/}

Meetings held at Godthaab, Greenland, September 1952

Meeting on Monday, 8 September 1952, at 4.30 p.m.

Item 5 on the agenda:The Future Constitutional Status of Greenland

The Chairman (Governor P.H. Lundsteen) opened the discussion by stating that Mr. Augo Lynge had proposed to have this question discussed during the Council session, and at a later date the Chairman had also been requested by the Prime Minister's Department to submit the said question to the Greenland Council.

The Chairman continued as follows:

As the members will know, the Greenland Commission stated on page 36 of the 2nd volume of its report that it must be regarded as very desirable if the Constitution Commission would consider the inclusion in its proposals for a revision of the Danish Constitution of a section which would make it possible to settle the constitutional status of Greenland by ordinary legislation.^{2/}

In accordance herewith the Constitution Commission has discussed the question of a possible change of the constitutional status of Greenland so as to make it a co-equal part of the realm of Denmark in the representation in the Danish Parliament.

The Commission believes that the intended change of the constitutional status of Greenland can be implemented by providing in the Danish Constitution that the Act shall also apply to Greenland and that, consequently, Greenland shall be represented in the Danish Parliament. At the same time the Constitution Commission, however, calls attention to the fact that for practical reasons the application of some of the sections of the Constitution Act must be modified in the case of Greenland; this for instance is the case with some of the provisions of the Constitution concerning administration of justice. I may

^{1/} Beretninger vedrørende Grønland nr. 3, 1952: Grønlands landsråds forhandling 1952.

^{2/} i.e. without the special procedure required for amendments of the Danish Constitution.

mention in this connexion that the provision of Section 78^{1/} of the Constitution Act stating that an arrested person shall be brought before a judge within 24 hours of his arrest cannot, of course, be carried into effect up here. This is equally the case with the provision of Section 72^{1/} of the Constitution on jury cases and that of Section 71^{1/} on the irremovability of judges.

The Danish Government has authorized me to submit to the Greenland Council for its consideration a proposal prepared by the Constitution Commission to the effect that a provision be introduced in the coming Constitution which will secure representation of Greenland in the Danish Parliament in future.

This proposal has been circulated to members, but before it is brought up for discussion I should like to make a few comments.

If the said constitutional amendment is adopted, various practical difficulties will arise in connexion with the manner of electing the prospective Greenland members of the Danish Parliament. If the members in question are to be elected by direct election it is to be expected that it will not be possible in every case to hold elections caused by dissolution of the Danish Parliament at a time which coincides more or less with the elections in Denmark; if e.g. the Danish Parliament is dissolved in winter, insurmountable difficulties may, in practice, prevent the sending of members from Greenland to Denmark immediately after new elections. With this question in view the Constitution Commission has called attention to the expediency of inserting in the Constitution Act a provision according to which detailed rules on the manner of electing Greenland representatives shall be established by statute; such rules should include provisions as to whether the representatives in question are to be elected by direct or indirect election and whether they should be elected for a certain term of years independent of the life of the Danish Parliament.

Referring to Sect. 7 of the Greenland Council Act I should like to ask the Greenland Council to submit an opinion concerning this question; but I call attention to the fact that, as it is desired to accelerate the work of the Constitution Commission as much as possible, the Prime Minister has informed me on behalf of the Danish Government that he would appreciate an indication of the attitude of the Greenland Council to the proposal submitted by the Danish Government at the Council's early convenience.

The Constitution Commission's Proposal to amend the
Constitution Act with the Purpose, among other Things,
of securing Representation of Greenland in the Danish

"The provisions of this Constitution Act shall apply to all parts of the Kingdom of Denmark. In consequence thereof Greenland shall in future be represented in the Danish Parliament.

"If on account of local conditions such procedure should be regarded as a necessity, departures may be made by statute from the provisions of Sects. 71, 72, and 78 as far as Greenland is concerned."

Mr. Augo Lynge:

One of the principal wishes of the present Greenland Council is to associate Greenland with Denmark as an integrated part of the mother country with representation in the Parliament of Denmark. We stated this last year when introducing the manifesto. This was the first action of the new Greenland Council elected by the people of Greenland.

The matter was not, however, discussed as a special item because we wanted first to find our bearings on this fundamentally important question, up here in Greenland as well as in political quarters in Denmark. Reference was, therefore, made to the matter in the Greenland Committee when the delegates of the Greenland Council were present in Denmark last winter, and we should now like to take action and bring this problem up for discussion here in the supreme Council of this country.

For 231 years Greenland and Denmark have been linked with each other as colony and mother country, and during this long space of time things have developed in Greenland. Many ties were formed which gradually grew so strong that the rapprochement should now be completed by integrating Greenland firmly into Denmark.

Casting a glance over the world, we see in many places colonial struggles where the indigenous population fights to secede from the mother country and become independent; they do so because they think that is the best for them. But here in Greenland we should like to do the opposite. We should like to use our own right of determination, so recently acquired, for an initiative to integrate Greenland firmly into the mother country.

Through many years we have worked to achieve for the Greenlanders full equality of status with other nationals of Denmark. We are willing to undertake the obligations, the burdens and the responsibility this new state of affairs must involve. And this we do because we are convinced that it will be to our advantage and - if the political, cultural, economic and linguistic advancement is to be continued - a prerequisite for making Greenland a normally developed, civilized country.

Up here in Greenland we now think that the time has come for such an association and that it ought not be postponed any longer. The wishes in that respect are strong in Greenland. Out in the world the United Nations work persistently to obtain even for under-developed countries representation in the national assemblies of their mother countries. In Denmark a Commission works at a revision of the Constitution, a task that is now approaching its completion. Under the present Constitution Greenland is still a colony in its relation to the mother country even if the whole social machinery greatly approaches Danish conditions. It is very important that Greenland's constitutional status should be expressly defined in the new Constitution and that we should not be satisfied with a provision of a promissory nature which may later require years of action to achieve a state of stability. So we must not miss the opportunity of this favourable moment to complete the work.

But such an initiative presupposes complete agreement in this Council, and I now ask the High Council to give its consent to the motion, namely that a Section be inserted in the new Constitution of Denmark according to which Greenland is admitted as an "amt" (that is county or province) of Denmark and that Greenland gets representatives in the Parliament of Denmark.

The Chairman observed that he found it practical to postpone the more technical question concerning the manner of election until the main issue had been settled.

Mr. Fr. Nielsen stated that the point under consideration had been brought up in the Greenland Council of recent years and that great interest is taken in it by leading political quarters in Denmark. Without using many words, he wanted to recommend the offer which had now been made by Denmark, namely Greenland's

promotion to an integral part of Denmark with representation in the Danish Parliament.

^{Subj}
Mr. P. Lynge moved the appointment of a committee to draw up a joint pronouncement for, even if the idea was not new in Greenland, the Greenland Council must make a decision that would not be contradicted by the people of the country.

The Chairman recommended that the Council go into committee and discuss the framing of the reply. The right thing would supposedly be to give a comprehensive reply.

This was agreed.

.....

The meeting was continued on Monday, 9 September 1952, at 2.30 p.m.

Item 5 on the agenda:

The Future Constitutional Status of Greenland (continued)

The Chairman stated: As previously agreed, the Greenland Council has discussed the question of the Future Constitutional Status of Greenland and we have agreed on the following pronouncement to the Government.

At a meeting on 9 September 1952, the Greenland Council agreed unanimously to accept the draft submitted of a new constitutional provision, according to which the Constitution of the Kingdom of Denmark will be drafted so as to comprise Greenland, and according to which Greenland is to be represented in the Parliament of Denmark.

The Greenland Council accepts the reservations proposed in the draft in respect of Sects. 71, 72, and 78.

The Greenland Council is aware that the changing Governments and the Parliament have up to this time always paid attention to the special conditions of Greenland, and the Council expects that this practice will be followed continuously also when acts and orders are drawn up in future.

The Greenland Council continues the discussion on the question of the procedure that can most expediently be followed with regard to the election of representatives to Parliament and will submit an opinion thereon as a contribution to the continued discussion of this question in the Constitutional Commission.

As the decision was taken in closed session, I ask, for the sake of good order, the Council to signify that this motion has been adopted.

(All the members stood up.)

The Chairman: This resolution will now be sent to the Prime Minister. Thereupon we can presumably at once go on with the technical question, including the discussion of the manner of election. It will no doubt be practical to deal with this question in committee when the main lines have been drawn up by the Council in plenary session.

The point is to elect the person, or persons, to be returned to Parliament in such a way that you can be certain that the person, or persons, concerned really represents the population. It is, therefore, desirable that the person, or persons, concerned be elected directly by all voters.

I also hope that it can be done. If, however, it should prove difficult to accomplish other methods, as for instance indirect elections performed by the Greenland Council, could be adopted instead of elections direct by the voters. One of the difficulties of a direct election is that it may be comparatively difficult to find the candidates. It is important that too many candidates are not nominated as, in such a case, the persons who are elected cannot act with sufficient authority based on a majority. This is one of the difficulties due to the fact that there are no political parties up here. The expedient may perhaps be adopted that, for instance, the Greenland Council finds a number of candidates among which the population can choose. It is not my intention to go in for any of these points of view, which I only emphasize in order to show some of the difficulties. Another aspect of the election question is the time of the election. From time to time, as it is known, a dissolution of the Danish Parliament occurs with subsequent elections. It will be difficult, may be impossible, to hold such elections here in Greenland sufficiently quickly and at a chance time of the year. No doubt an effort must be made to find a way out of this problem. There is the possibility of electing the representative, or representatives, of Greenland for a certain period to remain in office irrespective of any dissolution of Parliament. One may perhaps go further on and say that it is expedient to let the election of parliamentary representatives take place at the same time as the ordinary elections up here.

Some of these questions ought to be discussed already now before we possibly proceed to making a recommendation or proposal to the Constitution Commission.

Mr. Augo Lynge proposed that on account of the large geographical extent of Western Greenland one member should be elected from the northern part of Western Greenland and another from the southern.

Mr. Jens Olsen stated that some years have passed now since the two colonial councils and the two district officer posts in Northern and Southern Greenland were merged into one. Since then the difference of interests prevailing in Northern and Southern Greenland respectively had often been ascertained. He had found it desirable that jurists should travel in Northern Greenland and Southern Greenland independently and make investigations. He therefore recommended one representative for Northern Greenland and one for Southern Greenland, which arrangement he found to be the most righteous one.

Mr. Fr. Nielsen observed that the old colonial councils were not elected by direct elections and this fact was criticized by the population, for which reason it was changed by the new Greenland Council Act. If the coming members of parliament were not elected by direct elections, the criticism would arise again, and he therefore recommended direct elections.

Mr. Fr. Nielsen endorsed what the Chairman had stated in respect of allowing the Greenland Council to act as nominator of candidates for Parliament, but he was doubtful at Mr. Augo Lynge's proposal about a division of the country as the importance of the unity for which they worked in Greenland might hereby be disparaged. If Western Greenland was to be divided, the question might arise of dividing the country into more than two parts.

Mr. Jens Olsen called attention to the fact that all reforms in Greenland aim at creating uniformity. Most important of all is, however, that the members who are to represent the country know what they talk about.

Mr. Augo Lynge observed that his proposal had been submitted for practical reasons exclusively. He recommended a nomination system as at the Greenland Council election.

The Chairman called attention to the fact that it was not yet known whether Western Greenland would have one or two representatives. The Chairman regarded as a strong point that the members of the Greenland Council from north and south associated with each other so that just thereby they learned to know the other part of the country. He had no doubt that a member from the south and a member from the north would succeed in finding a common denominator for the points of view that were to be asserted on the part of Greenland, but the question was how an election could be organized in the most practical way. Presumably greater agreement on a person, or two, is obtained if the person concerned is attached to a distinct part of the country.

Mr. Peter Egede mentioned an example of how an unintentional result could be obtained by dividing the country into two parts.

Mr. Fr. Lynge reminded of the fact that a great part of the population had not found it proper to elect the Greenland Commission in 1948 in the way it had been done. He declared that in the places which were situated furthest away from Godthaab the personal contact between the people and the authorities had been lacking of late years.

He recommended the election of two representatives for the safeguarding of common interest.

Mr. Gerh. Egede would recommend two representatives in Greenland on account of the large extent of the inhabited Greenland. He did not think that one needed to fear a division as to the two members of parliament, who must continually co-operate, could not be compared with the two old colonial councils which worked independently of each other. The members of parliament ought to have a constituency each, but without any domicile qualification.

Mr. Fr. Nielsen called attention to the fact that he also wanted two representatives; his statement was only to be understood as a warning against the danger of a separation of Northern and Southern Greenland. He was opposed to the establishment of constituencies.

Mr. Mor. Sivertsen stated that even if at the election of the Greenland Council it had been possible to nominate candidates from other parts of the country, this has in no case been done. It would surely cause great difficulties if the populace was to nominate its own candidates for Parliament. He endorsed the proposed nomination of candidates by the Greenland Council as the Council must be presumed to know the men who might be suitable for election.

The Chairman moved that the Council now pass on to committee discussion.

The Chairman was of opinion that a small committee could more easily formulate proposals.

The appointment of a committee of 5 members was adopted by 9 votes; the following members were elected to the committee:

The Chairman,
Mr. Fr. Nielsen,
Mr. Gerh. Egede,
Mr. Augo Lynge,
Mr. Fr. Lynge.

.....

.....

The Meeting was continued on Thursday, 25 September 1952, at 2.30 p.m.

Item 5 of the agenda:

The Constitutional Status of Greenland (continued)

The Chairman referred to the recommendation of the Committee, reading:

".....The Committee met on Saturday, 20 September 1952, and the Committee agreed to subdivide the questions under consideration into the following 4 items:

- A. Number of constituencies,
- B. Manner of election,
- C. Term of office,
- D. Thule and Eastern Greenland

re A. Number of Constituencies

The Committee agreed to submit the following 2 possibilities to the Greenland Council:

1. Western Greenland is divided into 2 constituencies, each returning its own representative to Parliament. Such an arrangement can, however, only be represented by at least 2 members of Parliament.

2. Western Greenland forms 1 constituency but a guarantee must be provided that among the candidates there will be an equal number of representatives from the northern and the southern part of Western Greenland, respectively.

re B. Manner of Election

The Committee agreed to submit the following 3 recommendations to the Greenland Council:

1. Each parish council designates 2 candidates (who may, however, be joint candidates for several parishes, and preferably should be so). If this should result in more than 6 candidates, the candidates elect among themselves (this election can be effected telegraphically) 6 candidates, 3 from the northern districts and 3 from the southern districts; these 6 candidates will then stand for popular election so that the two candidates who obtain the greatest number of votes are returned to Parliament, the next 2 will be 1st substitutes, and the last two 2nd substitutes.
2. Each parish council designates 2 candidates in the same way as mentioned under Item 1. If this results in more than 6 candidates, the Greenland Council selects 6 candidates, 3 from the northern districts, among whom the members of Parliament and the substitutes are elected by general popular vote as stated above. Such a scheme may be supplemented by a provision to the effect that the candidates selected by the Greenland Council may only include 2 members of the Council.
3. In order to stand for election a candidate must have 200 nominators. Among the candidates thus nominated a general election by all voters is held. If more than 6 candidates have been nominated, a new direct election by all voters is held among the 6 candidates who have obtained the greatest number of votes. The two who thereby obtain most votes are returned as members of Parliament, the next 2 are elected 1st substitutes, and the last 2 2nd substitutes.

re C. Term of office

The Committee agreed that it would not be a practicable possibility in all circumstances to accomplish elections subsequent to dissolutions at a time which coincided more or less with the elections in Denmark, and the Committee, therefore, recommends that the Greenland members of Parliament be elected for a term of 4 years independent of the life of the Danish Parliament.

re D. Thule and Eastern Greenland

The Committee agreed to recommend that Thule and Eastern Greenland are held outside the election plan for the time being, just as Thule and Eastern Greenland at present stand outside the Greenland Council scheme."

Mr. Jens Olsen asked who would decide the number of Greenland members of Parliament.

The Chairman answered that it was expected that a special act would be passed which would determine this question.

Mr. Fr. Nielsen moved a new proposal concerning the number of constituencies:

- A. 3: that Western Greenland shall be one constituency, without any provision being made as to the part of the country the candidates are to belong to. He emphasized that the advantage of this proposal is that it leaves it to the people themselves to determine whence the candidates are to come.

Mr. Fr. Lynge observed that he found it most correct, at any rate as a transitional measure, each part of the country had its own candidate.

Mr. Peter Egede was of opinion that the proposals A 1 and 2 preclude the people in Southern Greenland from voting for the candidate they want if the candidate e.g. is transferred to Northern Greenland.

The Chairman observed that according to proposal A 2 the electors could very well vote for a candidate from the other part of the country.

Mr. Fr. Nielsen added that the candidate concerned would not then be Southern Greenland's representative.

At a division regarding constituencies 10 voted for proposal A 1, 3 voted against.

It was thus decided that Western Greenland be divided in 2 constituencies, each returning its own candidate to Parliament.

Mr. Fr. Nielsen recommended with respect to the manner of election proposal B 3.

Mr. Fr. Lyngge was of opinion that this proposal would scatter the interest of the voters.

The Chairman would reckon that proposal B 3 would quickly cause the formation of parties. This method involves a risk of repeated polls.

The Chairman added that after the adoption of the 2 constituencies the number of candidates in proposal B 3 had to be altered from 6 to 3 in each of the constituencies. In the Committee it had been desired to leave out of account the possibility of an unlimited number of candidates.

Mr. Fr. Lyngge would not mind leaving the manner of election to the decision of the Constitution Commission.

Mr. Fr. Nielsen called attention to the fact that the decision of the Greenland Council must only be regarded as a suggestion to the Constitution Commission.

Mr. Augo Lyngge recommended proposal B 3.

Mr. Jens Olsen referred to the experience gained during the last elections in Greenland. He recommended prudence at the fixing of the manner of election and proposed that only the people who really understood the meaning thereof obtained the franchise.

The Chairman refuted Mr. Jens Olsen's last proposal and stated that the people of Greenland vote in the first line for the men in whom they have confidence. This means as far as the Greenland Council members are concerned that they have a freer position with regard to the points of view they adopt, and it would, therefore, often be right that they support a point of view which the electors do not immediately understand. It is then the task of the Greenland Council members to impart the right understanding to the electors. On the whole the people know how to choose the persons who in reality are the best.

Mr. Gerb. Egede declared that to-day the method of direct elections appealed most to the people of Greenland and he proposed that in their recommendation to the Constitution Commission the Council should only propose direct elections.

At the division on the manner of election.

7 voted for proposal B 1,
7 voted against.

The proposal was thus rejected.

At the division on proposal B 2

5 voted for,
8 voted against.

Also this proposal was thus rejected.

At the division on proposal B 3

7 voted for,
6 voted against.

Proposal B 3 was thus adopted.

It was unanimously agreed to accept the recommendation of the Committee concerning Item C (Term of Office) and concerning Item D (Thule and Eastern Greenland).

It was finally unanimously agreed to transmit a recommendation to the Department with the above decisions as a guide, but so that it was implied that the Greenland Council would not feel slighted if the Constitution Commission should go in for other principles.
