

ST CHRISTOPHER (ST KITTS)—NEVIS

Capital: Basseterre
Population: 44,404 (1980)

HISTORY. St Christopher (known to its Carib inhabitants as *Liamuiga*) and Nevis were discovered and named by Columbus in 1493. They were settled by Britain in 1623 and 1628 respectively, but ownership was disputed with France until 1713. Forming part of the Leeward Islands Federation from 1871 to 1956, and part of the Federation of the West Indies from 1958 to 1962, the colony achieved self-government as an Associated State of the UK on 27 Feb. 1967.

AREA AND POPULATION. The islands form part of the Lesser Antilles in Eastern Caribbean. The area is 261 sq. km: St Kitts, 168; Nevis, 93. Population, 1980: St Kitts, 35,104; Nevis, 9,300. Chief town of St Kitts, Basseterre (14,725); of Nevis, Charlestown (1771).

CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNMENT. In Feb. 1967 the colonial status was replaced by an 'association' with Britain, giving the islands full internal self-government, while Britain remains responsible for defence and foreign affairs. There is an elected House of Assembly and a cabinet system of Government. The Premier is the head of the Government and presides at cabinet meetings.

Governor: Clement Athelston Arrindell.

Prime Minister: Dr Kennedy Alphonse Simmonds.

Flag: Three vertical stripes of green (for agriculture), yellow (for sunshine), blue (for the sky), with a black palm tree in the centre of the flag.

ECONOMY

Budget. The 1980 budget balanced at EC\$29·m. Grant for airport improvement from UK in 1974-75, £1·1m. (1973-74, £1·1m.). Grant aid from UK, 1974-75, £400,000.

Banking. There is a branch of Barclays Bank International, of the Royal Bank of Canada and of the Bank of Commerce at Basseterre, a sub-branch of Barclays Bank International at Charlestown. Local banks are the St Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla National Bank and St Kitts-Nevis Development Bank in Basseterre and the Nevis Co-operative Banking Co. Ltd in Nevis.

AGRICULTURE. Most of the farms are small-holdings but there are a number of large coconut estates and a few livestock farms. The main crops are cotton and vegetables.

INDUSTRY AND TRADE

Industry. The main employer of labour is the sugar industry. There are 30 estates.

Commerce. Imports, (1979) EC\$86·65m.; exports, EC\$45·47m. Chief exports were sugar (3,683 tons) and molasses (1·4m. gallons).

Tourism. In 1980, there were 32,585 tourists.

COMMUNICATIONS

Roads. There are about 200 km of roads.

Railways. There are 36 miles of railway operated by the sugar industry.

Aviation. There is an airport at Golden Rock (St Kitts) and Newcastle airfield (Nevis).

Post and Telecommunications. There were 2,939 telephones on 1 Oct. 1980 in St Kitts and Nevis.

EDUCATION (1981). There were 34 government schools and 14 private (6 of which are denominational). A teachers' college prepares approximately 30 teachers annually in a 2-year course.

Library: Public Library, Basseterre. *Librarian:* Miss V. Archibald.