

STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR THE COLONIES
FRIDAY, 11TH MAY, 1956.

With permission I wish to make a statement about certain developments in the Gold Coast.

As the House knows, the present Gold Coast Constitution marked the last stage before the assumption by the Gold Coast of full responsibility for its own affairs. The grant of such responsibility is a matter for the United Kingdom Government and Parliament and it has always been the wish of Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom that the Gold Coast should achieve its independence within the Commonwealth.

Since the present Constitution was introduced there has arisen a dispute within the Gold Coast about the form of Constitution which that country should have when it achieves independence within the Commonwealth.

Efforts have been made to bring about a reconciliation between the major parties but they have so far met with no success.

I have been in close touch with the Prime Minister of the Gold Coast on these matters. It is the considered view of his Government that the time has now come for the Gold Coast to assume full responsibility within the Commonwealth for its own affairs. I have made my view clear to him that because of the failure to resolve the constitutional dispute we can only achieve our common aim of the early independence of that country within the Commonwealth in one way and in one way alone; that is to demonstrate to the world that the peoples of the Gold Coast have had a full and free opportunity to consider their Constitution and to express their views on it in a general election. I have told Dr. Nkrumah that if a general election is held Her Majesty's Government will be ready to accept a motion calling for independence within the Commonwealth passed by a reasonable majority in a newly elected Legislature and then to declare a firm date for this purpose.

Full membership of the Commonwealth is of course a different question and is a matter for consultation between all existing members of the Commonwealth.

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NEWSREEL DESK, C.O.I.
 July, 1956.

GOLD COAST'S SECOND FREE ELECTIONS.

The Gold Coast is holding its second general elections under universal adult suffrage on July 17 (apart from certain Northern Territories wards which voted on July 12).

Seven parties or movements, as well as many independents, together put up a total of 225 candidates to contest the 104 seats.

The number of voters registered for the present elections is 1,460,000, out of a population of about 4½ million, including Togoland.

At the time of the elections the party in power is the C.P.P. (Convention People's Party), the N.L.M. (National Liberation Movement) forming the main opposition.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd said recently that general elections in the Gold Coast were the necessary next step towards the country's goal of independence within the Commonwealth.

U.K. MP'S. IN GOLD COAST. OBSERVERS OF GENERAL ELECTION.

The U.K. Parliamentary Delegation visiting the Gold Coast as observers of the General Election flew to Accra on July 9 and at once visited the Northern Territories, where the Election started on July 12. Subsequently they divided into three parties of two and observed the conduct of the Elections in the Colony and in Ashanti. After their return on July 22, they will report first to the Secretary of State for the Colonies and then to the United Kingdom Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

The Delegation consists of: Sir Roland Robinson, M.P. (Leader), Mr. E.L. Mallalieu, Q.C., M.P., Mr. Roy Mason, M.P., Mr. N.A. Pannell, M.P., Mr. Peter Smithers, M.P., and Mr. F.T. Willey, M.P.
