

19 Jan 1976

## Argentinian claim to the Falklands

*From Dr Colin Phipps, Labour MP  
for Dudley West*

Sir, During November last Sir John Gilmour, MP, and I, comprising a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association delegation, visited the Falkland Islands for two weeks. During that time we estimate that we met and spoke with at least 50 per cent of the adult population, as well as large numbers of younger people. As a result of these conversations I believe that we are in an excellent position to judge the current feeling in the Islands with regard to their status as a British colony and their future relationship with Argentina.

The problems resulting on the Argentinian claim and the associated economic realities are considerable and will have to be faced. However, irrespective of the validity or otherwise of the claim, it is a fact that, with one exception, I found everybody that we spoke to opposed to the acceptance of any form of Argentinian sovereignty.

I do not wish in a short letter to discuss the rights and wrongs of this attitude, nor the very obvious difficulties that it creates both for the British Government and the Falklanders themselves, but I believe it is essential that public opinion in Britain should be fully informed of the views held in the Falklands. We were left in no doubt of any kind that it is the wish of the Islanders to remain a British colony or, whenever the opportunity appears suitable, an independent country within the Commonwealth.

Yours faithfully,

COLIN PHIPPS,  
House of Commons,  
January 15.