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The Making Of Modern Belize: Politics, Society And British Colonialism In Central America (Cambridge Commonwealth Series)



Synopsis

Belize (formerly British Honduras) is a residue of the British Empire and the last colony in the Americas. Like most colonies in this age of decolonisation Belize was willing to break the colonial ties and in fact achieved internal self-government in 1964. It is, however, deterred from taking its full independence by Guatemala's century-old claim to its territory, a claim famous in international law. Belize is more than a British enclave in Central America, it is a meeting place, the borderland of two quite different cultural worlds. These are the White - Creole - Carib and the Spanish - Mestizo - Indian complexes which together produce among Belize's 120,000 inhabitants a racial, linguistic and cultural heterogeneity that is unusual either in the Commonwealth Caribbean or in Central America. There Belize's distinctiveness ends. Structurally, it is as economically dependent as its neighbours. Endowed with luxuriant forest resources, it was from the start a classical example of colonial exploitation, of taking away and not giving back in terms of permanent improvement and capital development. It was only when the forest resources were depleted after the Second World War that its other natural resource, agriculture, received attention.

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