

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT).

SESSION 1946—1948

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 15th April, 1947.

Pursuant to adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 12 o'clock noon to-day.

Present:

His Honour Mr. G. B. EVELYN (*Speaker*), Mr. J. T. C. RAMSAY (*Chairman of Committees*), Dr. J. A. LE V. WILSON, Messrs. M. E. COX, D. A. FOSTER, R. G. MAPP, H. W. SPRINGER, M.A., G. H. ADAMS, B.A., H. D. BLACKMAN, J. A. HAYNES, B.A., H. A. DOWDING, V. C. GALE, and S. A. WALCOTT.

PRAYERS AND MINUTES.

Prayers are read and the Minutes of the meeting which was held on the 1st April, 1947, having been circulated are taken as read and confirmed.

Messrs. WILKINSON and LEWIS enter the House and take their seats.

DOCUMENT

Mr. SPEAKER: I have the honour to inform the House that I have received the Financial Report of the Colonial Treasurer for the month ended 31st March, 1947.

PAPERS LAID.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker,—I have the honour to lay on the table of the House the following Papers:—

Message No. 12 of 1947 from His Excellency the Governor informing the House, with reference to the Address from the House, that the Commissioners of Highways have been invited to consider which tenantry roads in their respective parishes are in urgent need of repair and to submit applications for grants to enable them to undertake the work.

Message No. 13 of 1947 from His Excellency the Governor informing the House that he has assented in the name and on behalf of His Majesty to certain Acts.

NOTICES

Government Notices are given as follows:—

Mr. SPRINGER: Resolution to place the sum of £150 at the disposal of the Governor-in-Executive Committee to assist in the cost of the medical scholar-

ship awarded to Mr. F. C. Ramsay under Colonial Development and Welfare Scheme D. 693.

Mr. SPRINGER: Resolution to grant the sum of £70 to Mr. Elton E. Jones as an *ex gratia* grant in consideration of his 7 years' service as an Elementary School Teacher.

Mr. CRAWFORD enters the House and takes his seat.

Mr. SPRINGER: Resolution to place the sum of £2,731 at the disposal of the Governor-in-Executive Committee;—

- (A) (1) to make a grant to the Governing Body of Christ Church Boys' Foundation School of £1,310. 8. 4;
- (2) to make a grant to the Governing Body of the Christ Church Girls' Foundation School of £920. 17. 6;

to enable the Governing Body of each school to pay salaries and war bonus to the staff from the 1st of April, 1944, to the 31st of March, 1947, and a special allowance to certain members of the staff from the 1st of October, 1945, to the 31st of March, 1947, in accordance with the rates fixed under the Schemes of Government of Second Grade Schools; and

(B) to refund to the Governing Body of the Christ Church Girls' Foundation School the sum of £500 expended on the reconstruction of that school.

Resolution to ratify the Agreement made between the Executive Committee and Ernest Gunn Macintyre, one of the constituted attorneys in this Island of the British Union Oil Co., Ltd., for the supply of natural gas to the Belle Pumping Station.

Mr. ADAMS: Resolution to authorise His Excellency the Governor in accordance with the provisions of section 3 (2) of the Clerical Service Act, 1944, to appoint two additional clerks to the Clerical Staff of the Clerical Service.

Mr. ADAMS: Resolution to place the sum of £10,135 at the disposal of the Governor-in-Executive Committee for the service of the Colony as set out in the Schedule to the Resolution.

Mr. SMITH enters the House and takes his seat.

Mr. BLACKMAN: Draft Bill to provide for the importation into this Island free of duty for a period of three years of goods made from sea Island cotton.

Mr. ADAMS: Draft Bill to grant additional sums of money out of the Public Treasury and to appropri-

ate the same for the service of the years ended the 31st of March, 1941, the 31st of March, 1942, the 31st of March, 1943, the 31st of March, 1944, the 31st of March, 1945, and the 31st of March, 1946.

Mr. ADAMS: To move the House into Committee of Supply at its next meeting to consider the money Resolutions of which notice has just been given

Mr. F. L. WALCOTT enters the House and takes his seat.

SELECT COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Mr. ADAMS hands in the Report of the Select Committee appointed to consider and report on the Bill to make provision for the registration and supervision of factories and for the safety and well-being of workers employed therein.

BILLS READ A FIRST TIME

On the motion of Mr. BLACKMAN, seconded by Mr. CRAWFORD, a draft Bill to provide for the importation into this island free of duty for a period of three years of goods made from Sea Island cotton, is read a first time.

On the motion of Mr. ADAMS, seconded by Mr. CRAWFORD, a Draft Bill to grant additional sums of money out of the Public Treasury and to appropriate the same for the service of the years ended the 31st of March, 1941, the 31st of March, 1942, the 31st of March, 1943, the 31st of March, 1944, the 31st of March, 1945, and the 31st of March, 1946, is read a first time.

APPOINTMENT OF A SELECT COMMITTEE

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker,— Before you proceed to call the Orders the Day I ask leave to move that a Select Committee be appointed to draft a Reply to His Excellency the Acting Governor's Message No. 1 of 1947 relating to the contribution of Barbados to the proposed Caribbean Tourist Development Association.

There being no objection, the honourable member is granted leave to proceed.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to move that a Select Committee be appointed to draft a Reply to Message No. 1/1947 of the Acting Governor.

Mr. SPRINGER: I beg to second that.

The question that a Select Committee be appointed to draft a Reply to the Acting Governor's Message No. 1/1947 is put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Mr. SPEAKER: Subject to the approval of the House I appoint as members of that Committee the following:— The junior member for St. James (Mr. Wilkinson), the junior member for St. Michael (Mr. Gale), the senior member for St. Philip (Mr. Crawford), the junior member for the City (Mr. Lewis), the senior member for St. Michael (Mr. Cox), and the junior member for St. Peter (Mr. F. L. Walcott).

Mr. LEWIS: I ask to be excused from serving on that Committee.

Mr. ADAMS: I suggest, in the place of the junior member for the City, the senior member for St. John.

Mr. SPEAKER: Subject to the approval of the House I add the name of the senior member for St. John (Dr. Wilson) to the Committee.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. SPEAKER: The first Order stands in the name of the honourable senior member for St. Joseph,

—To move the House into Committee of Supply to consider the grant of sums of money for the service of the Government.

On the motion of Mr. ADAMS, seconded by Mr. SPRINGER, Mr. SPEAKER leaves the Chair and the house goes into Committee of Supply, Mr. RAMSAY being in the Chair.

PURCHASE OF LAND OFF FISH ALLEY

Mr. SPRINGER: The first Resolution is for the sum of £170. 2. 7. to be placed at the disposal of the Governor-in-Executive Committee to purchase an area of land containing 4,362 square feet situated on the sea frontage off Fish Alley, Fontabelle, and to pay legal and other expenses in connection with the sale of the land.

Most honourable members know the piece of land concerned. It is at present being used by fishermen for the beaching and repairing of their boats and the Fisheries Committee point out that in the event of heavy weather, there is no other place for the beaching of the twenty-four fishing boats which ply their trade in that area. I may add that the purchase of this land is one of the projects, among other fishery matters, in the ten year sketch plan which was presented to the Government by the Committee appointed recently—I think I see copies of it on the table of the House now. The owners of this land, however, are desirous of disposing of it immediately but before setting it up for sale, they have agreed to extend the option to the Government and it is for this Committee to say and the House approve whether we should purchase the land now, so as to make sure that it is retained by the public for the use of these fishermen. The matter is non-controversial and the price is reasonable. I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to second that.

Mr. BRANCKER enters the House and takes his seat.

Mr. LEWIS: Mr. Chairman,— Before you put the question I would like to say that I know something about this matter. This piece of land was bought many years ago by someone who wanted it to be used by the fishermen and the Government has been given the option of purchasing it so that it can be retained for the use of the fishermen. I do not know how much notice is taken of the debates on these Resolutions in this House but I am led to believe that not much notice is taken of them and I would like it to be stated definitely in the body of this Resolution that that is the reason for which this land is being purchased. Perhaps it may be wrong at this point to tie the hands of the Government if it finds that this land can be used for some other purpose and that some better piece of land be obtained for the fishermen but I am not satisfied with the actual wording of the Resolution that this land is going to be retained for the use of the fishermen. I would not like it to be disposed of by the Government or the Government to alter the purpose for which it was given the option of buying the land. I would like the senior member for St. George to tell me definitely if it is impossible or wrong to state in the Resolution the purpose for which this piece of land is to be used.

Dr. CUMMINS enters the House during the course of Mr. LEWIS's speech and takes his seat.

Mr. SPRINGER: I am very relieved to hear that the honourable member does not want me to answer any other question. I do not think it is neces-

sary to state in the Resolution the purpose for which the land will be used but the honourable member need have any doubt that in the future it will be used for any other purpose. We all know where the land is and the only reason we are getting it for this amount of money is because it cannot be used for any other purpose. I cannot see any possibility of the land being used by the Government except for this purpose and if the Government intended to do otherwise it would not do it without the knowledge of this House because this House as the representatives of the people would get up in arms and ask why. It is not customary to tie the hands of the Government when it is buying a piece of land like this. If the honourable member has no confidence in future Governments, then it may be necessary for him to press for the insertion of a binding clause I do not think it necessary myself. I do not think that many honourable members, even the junior member for the City himself, will insist that it be put in.

Mr. WILKINSON: I think it is a very excellent idea to buy this piece of land to enable the fishermen to beach and repair their boats but I do hope that some proper supervision will be exercised to see that it is kept clean. I would like the senior member for St. George to tell us who is going to be responsible for seeing that this land is kept clean and, as the junior member for the City has said, that it is used for the intended purpose. There will have to be some control over it because everybody seems to think that as long as property belongs to the Government it can be used for any purpose.

Mr. SPRINGER: The general administration will be in the hands of the Fisheries Committee but the actual supervision, no doubt, will be undertaken by some Department like the Public Works which has a staff equal to the task. I cannot really answer the question directly but I feel quite certain that that phase of the matter will be attended to satisfactorily.

The question that this Resolution do now pass is put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

SUBSIDISATION OF COMMODITIES

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman,—The next Resolution is for the sum of £50,160 to be placed at the disposal of the Governor-in-Executive Committee to meet the cost of subsidizing the commodities mentioned in the Schedule hereto to the 30th June, 1947 in order that the prices of these commodities may be stabilized at such prices as may be fixed by the Competent Authority. Whatever our views may be Mr. Chairman, on the question of subsidisation, whatever arguments may be repeated as to the necessity for putting this or that item in the list of subsidized commodities, honourable members will agree with me, when I am finished, that this whole question of subsidization should be examined with very cold, dispassionate logic and that we should hesitate before we rashly attempt to alter the present list of items that appear in the schedule. As honourable members will see from the addendum, by Resolution No. 1 of the 8th January, 1947, the sum of £55,000 was provided to subsidize to the 31st March, 1947, the commodities mentioned in the schedule—flour, condensed milk, salt fish, salt pork, firewood and charcoal; that was the occasion when some honourable members suggested that we should include rice and workmen's clothes. The addendum goes on to state that the position in regard to the funds provided by that Resolution is as follows:—At the 28th February, 1947, the sum of £45,174. 13. 7 has been spent

and that it is estimated that by the 31st March, 1947, the sum of £11,640. 0. 0. will be spent, making a total of £56,814. 13. 7 and thereby having a deficit of £1,814. 13. 7. It is estimated that during the next three months we shall need £48,345 and that will bring the total amount to roughly £50,160. As the addendum further states, owing to the uncertainty regarding the price of flour it is proposed to continue subsidization on the present basis for a period of three months ending on the 30th June, not six months as usual, and to review the general question of subsidization at the end of that time. Honourable members will recall the Government's attitude which was supported by the majority of the House at the beginning of January this year when the present Agreement with the British Guiana Government was discussed. Because of the price which we had to pay for rice and because of the price which we had to pay for flour, at that time, it was considered advisable that the price of rice and the price of flour should be close to each other; the price of rice was, therefore, fixed at 6 cents per pint and the price of flour at 7 cents per lb. Since then, the position, as far as flour is concerned, has given cause for, shall I say, anxiety. The first cost of flour has recently been subjected to varying fluctuations and it is impossible to tell, with anything like certainty or even moderate assurance, the future trend of flour. The Competent Authority has estimated that on the basis of the latest quotation which has been received, the amount of subsidization required will be 18/8 per bag of 98 lbs. as against an average of 12/3 per bag during the past six months—an increase of 50 per cent. On this basis the cost of subsidizing flour for the next six months will be £67,200, more than we have been paying to subsidize any other commodity in the past two or three years—at any rate since 1944, 1945 and the first half of 1946. As honourable members will recall, the cost of subsidizing the articles other than flour, which prevailed in 1944 and 1945 was roughly £112,000 and the Government then considered that that was about as much as it should spend in this direction. However, owing to the arrangements which were made with British Guiana in respect of a supply of rice, it was thought advisable that flour should be added to the schedule. If it is proposed to add rice or any other article to the schedule, honourable members can well understand what the amount for subsidization is likely to become. It is with the object of keeping present prices at the reasonable level at which they have been kept for the past six months that the Government is asking the House to-day to pass this Resolution for a period of only three months until we know where we are as regards flour and until we have gone more thoroughly into the whole question of what should or should not be subsidized. As honourable members are aware, Trinidad—I am not mentioning any other colony for the purpose of copying what it has done—has considered it advisable to subsidize flour alone. Such a step by us at the present moment would almost certainly cause hardship as regards the purchasing of certain commodities. For instance, if the cheapest kind of salt pork were not subsidized, the price would go from 12 cents to 18 cents per lb. and if salt fish were not subsidized the price would go from 18c. to 23½c. per lb. Honourable members will, therefore, see the difficulties of rashly changing the present principle on which subsidization is being worked. I will quote the subsidized and unsubsidized prices of the other commodities: charcoal 3c. per lb. subsidized, 3½c. per lb. unsubsidized; the increase of ½ cent is very little

but if it is taken off you will be saving only £750; condensed milk 21c. per tin subsidized, 21½c. per tin unsubsidized,—only a half cent difference but you will be saving only £750 and will be creating a hardship, especially when you consider that a number of people who cannot afford to buy cows' milk occasionally give their children a couple of teaspoonfuls of condensed milk; firewood 85c. per 100 lbs. subsidized, 89c. per 100 lbs. unsubsidized,—here again 4 cents per 100 lbs. is very little but we would be saving only £400 if we put this item on the list of unsubsidized goods. I have already mentioned salt fish. The cheapest salt pork would go from 12c. to 18c. per lb.; the second grade from 14c. to 22c. per lb., the third grade from 18c. to 23c. per lb., the fourth grade from 22c. to 24c. per lb. and the best grade from 24c. to 31c. per lb. Flour unsubsidized would go from 7c. to 12c. per lb. Those are the figures for the items which are at present subsidized and I need only mention those figures to let honourable members see—they will pardon me for repeating it but it is worth while repeating—that you cannot rashly alter the present principle of subsidization. It takes much consideration as to what we have to do in the future and practically everything we may have to do in the future will depend on what is going to happen to the flour market during the next three months. I know there is a school of thought that the Government should do like Trinidad, that is, subsidize only flour; that school points out that the cost of fresh fish, bloaters, mackerel, salmon, and other things is much above the cost of salt fish and that the cost of fresh meat is much above the cost of salt pork and that if the subsidy was removed, in nearly every case if not in everyone the cost of all the articles I have just mentioned—fresh meat, bloaters, salmon &c.—would still be higher than the unsubsidized cost. On the other hand, to stop the subsidy now and let the price of flour jump up 5c. per lb., salt fish 5½c. per lb. would be a pretty rash action on the part of the Government. I now formally move that this Resolution do now pass.

Mr. BLACKMAN: I beg to second that.

Mr. LEWIS: I do not think that this Resolution should go through without a certain amount of debate. I sympathize wholeheartedly with the purpose of this Resolution, namely, to subsidize certain commodities so that they will be sold to people at lower prices than otherwise; also I am in agreement that the things used more generally, especially for food, by the poorer classes of the community should be the items in this schedule. But I am asking that the question of subsidization be gone into very thoroughly by the Government. I think the first Resolution that came down to this House in respect of subsidization was for £25,000 for a period of six months; it is now £50,160 for a period of three months. By that average we are going to have to subsidize to the tune of £200,000 in the course of a year. I am wondering, Sir, whether a Resolution of this magnitude should be brought to this House and no explanation, so far as the source or sources from which the the Government intends to raise the money is concerned, is given. We have passed over Annual Estimates; we are budgeting very closely and I think it is incumbent upon the Government to let us know how it intends to continue with this subsidization. If we did not have a surplus in the Treasury, we could not contemplate this expenditure. What is worrying my mind is this. Flour was not added to the list until recently and I understand that the moment we added flour to the list, the flour that was scarce before came down here so plentifully that we have it in abundance and that our stocks are likely to spoil. I am not saying that there is anything

wrong with that. I am glad that that flour is in the island but I find it a strange coincidence that the moment we subsidized flour, we began to get supplies in such large quantities that our stocks are likely to spoil. I mention that for serious consideration and contemplation by the Government. I know that the Government will have the explanation to give that it is a mere coincidence; probably the ships would not be coming for the next three or four months and we had better get it now even if we have to run the risk of its spoiling. On the last occasion I drew to the attention of the Government that colonies like Jamaica, Trinidad, and British Guiana had been taking steps to send a deputation to Canada to tell the people up there that the prices of the stuff they were sending down here are too high for the wages of the people in these parts. Well, Sir, I think that Barbados should be included. As a matter of fact across the table of this House I was told that we were included and that we are going to be represented by Professor Beaseley. I do not know what has come out of it. I find, Sir, that in Trinidad, a rich colony which will be able to subsidize foodstuffs with revenue obtained from the sugar industry or the oil industry—we can subsidize with revenue from only one source—was anxious about being included in the Wheat Agreement with the United Kingdom. I understand that the British West Indies not being represented at all or being represented by somebody in the United Kingdom has put us at a disadvantage. I am warning the Government that it seems to me that the method of subsidization in this country can become a racket. The moment that the people in Canada know you are subsidizing these things, the prices are going up. I understand that in Canada they are controlling the export quantity but the price is not controlled and I think that is something of which we should also take a serious view. Those people should be told that we are not going to subsidize a high standard of living in Canada, and automatically, lower the standard of living of the people in Barbados. It does not matter how you subsidize these articles, this money is coming out of the people of this country; if they do not pay for it in flour, they have to pay for it in something else. You compel a man to wear clothes but you cannot compel him to eat food; he can die of starvation and probably some of us do. However, I mention that in passing. My contention is that I see countries who are more able to bear expenditure of this sort taking steps to see that the people who ship these goods to them are told that the people for whom the goods are shipped are not getting wages to pay for them. Those people are willing to send us flour and yet they refuse to employ West Indians on the ships that bring the flour here; they are allowed to put the price of flour up and up and they look forward to our subsidizing it. The day the Treasury balance is gone, the price of flour may be 15c. per lb. but this subsidization will have to be stopped. I do not think the Government would attempt to raise Customs Duties for the purpose; it is going to have to raise the money from Income Tax and it will mean a doubling of the income tax rates to get £200,000 a year more. I ask whether you think we can stand that. This country is one that likes to say that Trinidad can do this thing but Trinidad, I believe, took lots of money from its merchants by way of an Excess Profits tax and its Government can afford to spend it in this way. We cannot afford to spend it in this way. The people from whom the money should have been taken for this purpose have been left with it and they are not going to suffer, whatever the prices are; they are going to be able to feed themselves and their

families and still show good profits at the end of the year. You can take it from me that this money is going to come out of the people who are eating the flour. The normal price of flour is 8c. or 10c. and you cannot maintain the principle of subsidization when the price of the article is a normal one. It means that you are subsidizing the wages of the people here; that is all that you are doing. You are allowing people to work for others for small wages and are subsidizing those wages in this way; that is what it amounts to. I am saying that it is necessary to bring the cost of living down. I should like to hear how this scheme is going to be financed. I should like to hear if any representation has been made to the people in Canada to reduce the price of flour. How are you going to keep up this subsidization? I say that the surplus in the Barbados Treasury has been taken from people least able to pay taxes. I am asking some subsequent speaker for the Government to tell me why Barbados was left out of the scheme to send somebody to Canada to discuss prices generally. There is another point I should like to mention for the information of the Government and it is this. I find, in looking through some statistics—I have them here—printed by the Canadian Government themselves that over a period of five years—1935 to 1939 inclusive—Barbados had a favourable trade balance with Canada amounting to 10,213,083 Canadian dollars. Those are things in which it will be good for the members of the Government to take an interest because the high prices of goods shipped here from Canada might be a means of squaring this up; all those things count in the legitimate manipulation of trade. I am anxious, Sir, that the cost of living should come down. There is no member of this House who is more anxious about that than myself and I feel that it is time we help the people in ways in which we can really help them. It is true that in a certain way this does not apply to the poorest class, but free secondary education is a permanent help to the people. I am glad for the assurance of the senior member for St. Joseph that this question of subsidization is going to be gone into by the Government and that we can look forward to hear at the end of the next three months what it is going to do. I am going to counsel the senior member for St. Joseph that it is time the people representing labour in these colonies convene a Conference on matters of this sort. Let us leave Federation alone for the time being and let us see that the people who are shipping us goods understand that they are putting lower and lower the standard of living in this place when they send those goods at prices we cannot pay; we are automatically maintaining a high standard of living for them—Well, Sir, I have seen it stated in print that the Barbados Government is to be blamed for the high cost of living in this place. The charge has only been laid but I have not seen the evidence, so I am warning the Government that that is what it is going to be told. There are such things as bulk purchasing that puts up the price of the commodity to people; there is no getting away from that; that has been proved beyond the shadow of a doubt. I am hoping that the Government will endeavour to see free purchasing, in the interest of the people, is the best control. Import control, after an emergency has passed, is a dangerous principle; it is open to manipulation by people and it is not easy for people who are not acquainted with it from actual experience to see the danger and it is time that we get back to a little free trade, so far as the importation of goods is concerned. Let those people who do

the importing compete with one another. Let us control the prices at which they bring the goods in and at which they sell them and if they are controlled in that way, they are going to see to it that they get cheap goods because that is the way they will make money. But if you continue to subsidize the goods of people who have allocations but no price control, you are doing absolutely nothing. As a matter of fact, the very method of subsidization will cause you to pay more for the goods than you should pay. I like to mention these things because this matter is giving me a great deal of thought. I am going to vote for this Resolution but I repeat that I see action being taken by other colonies on behalf of their inhabitants to bring to the notice of the exporters in Canada that the prices of the goods which they send them are too high but I do not see similar action being taken here.

MR. GARNER enters the House during the course of Mr. Lewis's speech and takes his seat.

MR. BRANCKER enters the House and takes his seat.

MR. F. L. WALCOTT: Mr. Chairman,—On the last occasion — this is a coincidence — I spoke in this House, it was on the question of subsidization and after listening to the junior member for the City I must say that there are many points in his speech to which attention can be paid but, in the main, his argument was not logical. He started by saying that you must do something to keep the cost of living down; then he went on to suggest that subsidization such as it is now is wrong, owing to the high prices of certain commodities which we are receiving from outside. I would like to say, Mr. Chairman, that we should be realistic; no amount of sentimental gush will enable us to solve our economic problem. Barbados is not a world in itself; it is predominantly a colony that depends upon the importation of goods; it is not the only colony that imports goods from Canada or any other part of the world. I agree that if an economic delegation is going from these colonies to Canada or Great Britain or the United States to speak about prices, Barbados should be represented but that in itself cannot solve the problem or should not cause us to say that Canada or the United States is going to lower the prices of its commodities. You must first assess how much you are importing from the colonies to be able to boycott them. The honourable member referred to the ten million dollars (Canadian Currency) of trade which Barbados did with Canada in five years but \$10,000,000 is infinitesimal, as far as Canada is concerned. We have to do things to lower the cost of living and I feel that subsidization is a means of lowering the cost of living for the people. The honourable member talks about free trade and I want to issue a warning to him as a man in business. There is a small minority in this island who have ruled things for a number of years and they are now partners owning most of the businesses in this place; each belongs to the other and when he speaks of free trade, there is no free trade in its proper sense in Barbados. You have the Commission merchants with whom the other merchants are all friendly; they meet at the same dinner tables and discuss matters. You go to Da Costa & Co., then to Harrison's next door and when you go through the names of the principals what do you find? One is a Director here; his brother is a Secretary there and his friend or uncle is filling another key position in one of their other businesses. Where then do you find yourself when you talk about free trade in Barbados?

I feel that a measure of control must be placed upon merchants in this colony by those who represent the workingclass people,—people whom the present minority failed to represent before and is now making sporadic attempts to come here and use all their subtleties to make the people believe that they are interested in them. This is 1947 and those of us who have the opportunity to help others who have never been helped before must resist as strongly as we can, in order to prevent this minority from using its subtleties effectively. We do not subsidize clothing and what is the result? The prices of clothing have gone up and are going up and I must say to the junior member for the City that he knows as well as I do that prices in the world are not geared by whether Barbados is going to give subsidies or not; that is elementary. The Canadian people will not wait to see if Barbados is really going to give a subsidy to decide what price they are going to ask for their flour. When the honourable member speaks about income tax—and I do not know whom he means when he says that you cannot tax them more—I am wondering if the junior member for the City is convinced that we have reached the limit of taxing all those in this colony who can be taxed because it would be a very happy omen if we reached the stage at which we can say to those who have sweated labour for many many years “you were bad fellows in the past but we cannot go on to tax you any more.” The honourable member’s remark that you cannot tax them more is vague. In any event we know that the money with which subsidization is paid for is the people’s money but we also know that if you allow prices to go up, poor men and women will find it very difficult to buy salt fish at 23½ cts. per lb. No man can go into the Treasury and get a cent saying that it is his money but when the price of a commodity is lowered, the merchant must sell that commodity cheaper. We must have a system of control. Some of us are anxious to get rid of controls because they seem to worry certain people but as long as we are dealing with other human beings we definitely need a system of control. In Barbados everybody knows one another and everybody has pet friends but the poor must always suffer because they cannot pay for the things they need. To a large extent, the honourable member and myself are agreed on certain fundamentals; we may differ in the matter of details and my point of view may not strike him in the same manner as it strikes me. If we agree that a better system of subsidization should be instituted, let us go into that but do not let us say what other people in a subtle way would like us to say; that is, controls must go. They do not resist certain controls but resist others because they find that they cannot be free and untrammelled. If we do not subsidize, what is the other alternative? The other alternative is that we will have to start processing factories and see if we cannot get from that source some of the things which we now import, but to think of telling people in Canada that you are not buying their goods at their prices because you will be keeping their standard of living higher than it is here, is not realistic. As I said, whatever we feel or do we must be realistic. We must look at ourselves as we are and not higher than we are and that is the only way we can legislate for the good of the people.

Mr. LEWIS: I would like to take this opportunity to reply to a few of the points of the honourable member who has just sat down. The honourable member does not know that the object of control is to keep the business in the hands of a few people. The

honourable member does not know that quotas for the importation of flour are decided on between certain friends and that there are cheap brands of flour that can be imported by small importers who are kept out altogether. The honourable member asks us to be realistic. I claim that there is no man on earth who is more realistic than I am; there is no sentiment with me. When I talked about the income tax I particularly said that I cannot pay any more and I know a good many people who will not be able to pay double what they are paying now and to get £200,000 extra you have to double the rates of income tax. I am being realistic there. You should not drive small importers out of business and that must of necessity happen when there is control of importations. Not only that; no new ones can start business. There are many small importers who would be surprised to hear the honourable member, who is supposed to be representing the small man, say that he would continue with this form of control. If you leave a certain amount of competition between people who import these goods, I tell you that you are obliged to get them into this country cheaper. Does the honourable member not think that if Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad, British Guiana, the Windward and Leeward Islands join together and go and tell the Canadian exporters that the West Indies are not going to import their flour they will not sit up and take notice? They will sit up and take notice quickly enough because you can import flour from other places. I am telling you to act on my suggestion first and find out if you cannot get the flour at a cheaper price; then you can explore other channels, linking yourselves up with the other colonies for this particular purpose. Don’t have your Labour Conference and discuss Federation while the people have to pay more for the food they have to eat. Try and be realistic. The present necessity is to get cheap food for the people and not allow other people to dump goods on you at any price. People in Canada know that it will not be a futile effort to send persons on a mission to them to discuss the question of prices; only the people of Barbados know that. Mr. Chairman, other colonies have made the effort to get things cheaper. Barbados feels that it sufficiently rich and thinks that it has sufficient money that it can subsidize indefinitely whatever is sent to it at whatever price. I say that that is dangerous. It is the ordinary man in the street who has to provide this money for subsidization, whether he does so directly or indirectly in the profits that businesses make through his buying from them. I know that to be a fact.

Mr. WILKINSON: Mr. Chairman,—I agree to some extent with the last speaker but I cannot follow him right through. First of all, I would like to appeal to the senior member for St. Joseph—it is too late to-day—to do in future what he did on the last occasion when the question of the subsidization of these commodities was discussed by this House. You will remember, Sir, that on the last occasion—some time in November—when we had this same subsidization question before us, the honourable member kindly circulated, a week before, papers showing the cost of each item with and without subsidy. It is true that he has to-day read the comparative figures but you, Sir, as much as anybody else realize that you cannot always hear well in this Chamber and further, you cannot make calculations at the same time other people are talking. Now, Sir, as regards the general question of subsidization I am very glad that the Government is going into it thoroughly to see what is to be the policy in future. It seems to me that at the moment we have no policy. On the last occasion

in November we were told that if flour was not subsidized, the price per lb. would be 10c; the locally controlled price is now 7c. per lb. and I understand the senior member for St. Joseph to say that if flour was not subsidized the price to-day would be 12 cents per lb. Well now, Sir, I agree with the subsidization of certain articles that are essential to the life of the people but I tell you, Sir,—I know you are going to smile—that we do not have in this schedule all the items which should be there. Rice should be included in the list. The price of rice per pint was increased 50% and I repeat, at the risk of being considered tiresome, that from the information I have received the people of this country look upon rice as a more important article of food than flour. Well, Sir, it is now proposed under this scheme to subsidize flour—if I am correct from what I have heard—by another 2 cents per lb. I am suggesting to the members of the Government that it will be a wiser act on their part and will satisfy our people more, if they let the price of flour go up 2 cents per lb. and use the money resulting therefrom to subsidize rice. As I said before, those figures were read to us and I have not had time to calculate from them the amount of money it will take to subsidize rice; but from the figures given to us last November it was estimated that the sum of £96,000 would be required to keep the subsidized price of rice at 4 cents per pint for a year and if the price was fixed at 5c. per pint, the cost would be £48,000 for a year. We are budgeting now for only three months and as the junior member for the City has said, we are really subsidizing at the rate of £200,000 per annum; that is what it looks like. Unfortunately, as regards flour, we appear to be in the hands of the speculators. If honourable members have been reading, they will have discovered that it is expected that there will be a very fine wheat crop in Canada and Europe, provided Nature does not intervene and there is some calamity; but there is a certain amount of flour available until that crop is reaped and the decontrol of prices will mean that certain speculators will buy the stuff and, as the junior member for the City has said, if Barbados wants it we must buy it at the price which they ask. That is wrong and I do not think we should be a party to speculation in what is necessary to keep people alive. I now formally beg to move that the word "rice" be inserted after the words "condensed milk" in the schedule. If we had more time or we given the figures beforehand I would be able, I think, to give some exact figures as to what it will cost to subsidize rice by increasing the price of flour by 2 cents per lb.

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Chairman,—The junior member for St. James says "Put two cents on flour; take it off rice and you will still effect a saving." Well, Sir, I am not a mathematician but I cannot see what the honourable member has suggested taking place. Anyhow, my little intelligence tells me that if we want to keep down the cost of living for the poor man, we have to continue to subsidize these commodities. I do not think that Barbados is big enough to make its economic position felt in Canada by telling Canada "if you continue to sell us flour at a high price we will have to cease subsidizing it." I do not think that will have any effect on the Canadian exporters. Barbados is only a drop in the ocean, so far as the importation of flour from Canada is concerned and our telling them that would not make them alter their price of flour. But the main thing I wish to speak about is this and it was hinted at by the junior member for St. Peter. I want to advise the government to institute a form of

rationing for condensed milk, so that the poor people who are not able to buy fresh cows' milk will be able to get condensed milk for their children. Day after day I hear people complain that they are unable to buy fresh cows' milk and even if they are able to buy it they cannot get it and I have it from a reliable source that when a shipment of condensed milk comes here, a case is sent to this big man or that big man and the poor people for whom it is intended get very little of it. I am sure that we would like to have strong babies in this country but mothers, owing to a lack of proper nourishment, are not able to nurse their babies and when they try to get a little milk they cannot get it. I think that is a matter which the Government should look into and see that a portion of the condensed milk which comes to this island is earmarked for the people who cannot afford to buy fresh cows' milk.

Mr. CRAWFORD: There are one or two aspects of this matter which have arisen during the course of this debate on which I should like to make my position as clear as possible. I am not quite sure whether or not it is being suggested by certain honourable members that we should discontinue subsidization. Apparently, for instance, the junior member for the City is not quite sure in his mind whether or not the colony can afford to continue it. Well now, speaking personally, subsidization is, in my opinion, the most effective means devised by the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth of Nations for keeping the cost of living as low as possible, considering the conditions which arose out of the War. Subsidization and its allied system of price control are easily the two most efficient measures for keeping the price of the essential commodities within the reach of the average working classes in colonies such as this; they are the only sure means of protecting the national economy. The alternative would be to increase wages every time there is an increase in the cost of essential commodities and that, as you know, is almost practically impossible and would also lead to inflation with all its disastrous consequences. So that if we are viewing the matter as carefully as we should we shall have to continue subsidization so long as these abnormal conditions obtain. Perhaps it is true to say that as a local policy we have never gone far enough. We have, throughout the war years, subsidized only imported essential commodities, although the suggestion has been made, I think by the senior member for Christ Church, that we go further and extend some sort of aid to locally produced foodstuffs; that was done in British Guiana. During the last four years, British Guiana spent about \$6,000,000, if my figures are correct, on subsidization; they got assistance, I think, with about \$2,000,000 from the Imperial Treasury but they embarked on a scheme for keeping the prices of imported essential commodities down at the same time as they assisted foodstuffs produced in the colony and I believe that we would have been better advised in this country if we had also endeavoured to assist the production of local foodstuffs at the expense of subsidized imported commodities. I know that the planters claim that during the war years they lost money on ground provisions—potatoes, yams and produce like those—and, Sir, it is not surprising that, considering the merchants of this colony dominated the entire Control Board throughout the war years, all the money voted for this purpose was expended in the direction which would be most beneficial to the mercantile community at the expense of the planting community. Whatever makes me think of this more forcibly is the allegation by the junior member for the City that this question may easily degenerate into a racket and I have

been thinking for the last half-hour that with our present system of subsidization we are really playing the game of the merchants in the country who dominate the Control Board. What we are doing here to-day, if we are to face the reality of the situation, is their proposal and I think, Sir, I need a little more time to consider it carefully. I do think that when we expend the money proposed on the subsidization of flour at the complete expense of rice, we are also playing the game of the merchants to a greater extent. Let us view the matter carefully, Sir. If we refuse to peg the price of flour at its present level, what is going to happen? Less flour will be sold because if flour is sold at 7 cents per lb. now and the price goes up to 12 cents per lb. people are going to buy less flour. Flour is not a complete essential commodity. If rice is sold at 4 cts. or 8 cts. per pint, the consumption would be always the same because the workingman must have his rice and I defy any member of this community who knows anything about his country to tell me differently. If you increase the selling price of flour you are going to have immediately a decrease in the consumption of flour; therefore, there is going to be less flour sold and these fellows who dominate the Control Board are going to make less money by way of commission. If the price of flour was fixed at 10 cents per lb. the merchants will sell less flour but if rice was subsidized at 4 cents per pint and the price went up to 6 cents per pint, not a bag less will be sold. Therefore, it has been running through my mind during the last half hour that when we increase the price of rice by 50 per cent for which they know they have a short market, and at the same time subsidize flour, all we are doing is playing their game. I believe we should be well advised even to-day, to go into this matter a little more thoroughly because people, I am sure, Sir, can get all the flour they want but not all the rice and I believe that we may be adopting a policy of more advantage to the workingclass in this country if we were to take steps immediately to spend some of the money which we are spending on flour on rice. I am not opposing the Resolution—naturally, I agreed to it in Executive Committee and I intend to support it—but these are thoughts that occur to me during the debate and I state them for what they are worth. I certainly do feel that we would not be going far wrong if we do not push this matter to its conclusion to-day and appoint a Select Committee to go into it more carefully or go through the figures and discover if, as suggested, we can subsidize rice at the expense of a slight increase in the price of flour within the ambit of the amount mentioned in this Resolution. I am not prepared, Sir, to go any further and suggest that we should increase the amount we are spending on subsidization. I am not doing that because bearing in mind other commitments, especially in the field of social and economic reform, I do not think we can afford to spend any more in this particular direction. But when you hear it suggested that it is possible to do both of these things within the amount we are allocating for subsidization I think we would be pursuing the right track if we adopted the principle suggested to the fullest possible extent. What I should also like to emphasize to the members of this Committee is this. The increase in the cost of subsidization while in a way due to the increase in the price of these essential commodities, is also due to the resolve of the Canadian dollar in parity with the U.S.A. dollar and as that is a matter of fairly recent occurrence, it must be borne in mind that the result will be an

appreciable increase in the amount we are going to spend on subsidization. The figures given by the senior member for St. Joseph disclose a very slight increase in the cost price of several of these commodities if they were not subsidized but, fortunately, the consumption of those commodities is so small that if we were to fail to subsidize them, the amount so saved would not be of any appreciable quantity; so we may as well continue with the subsidization of them. I do feel that there is a great deal in the insinuation by the junior member for the City that we have not investigated as fully as we should whether or not in this whole policy of subsidization we are not being made the pawns of a handful of merchants who dominate the Control Board.

Mr. SPRINGER: Mr. Chairman,—The essence of the matter before us (and may I remind the Committee that the debate is on a Resolution to provide additional funds for the purpose of subsidizing certain items of food), has been pretty well expressed in the early part of the speech of the honourable member who has just sat down. The suggestion made by the junior member for the City that times are normal in the world of trade I do not find acceptable at all. I think it will be agreed that it will be difficult to be satisfied that a system of subsidization of particular items in the way we do it is a part of normal conditions, although I will not say that subsidization in any form must necessarily arise only in abnormal times. For example, one of the basic principles of balanced community economy, as distinct from a laissez faire capitalist one, is that if there are certain commodities whose production is always going to be sought and whose profits are high but are not necessities all the same, and other commodities which are necessities but the profits from them not so large, the Government will be advised to lift some of the excessive profits from the profitable luxury commodities and maintain, through difficult times, the less profitable but necessary commodities. We know ourselves how in England and in other countries at certain periods production—of coal, for instance—has waned because the profits from that production and the wages paid have not been sufficiently attractive either to induce the capitalist or the worker and concurrently with that, the same workers leaving that necessary but no so profitable industry and going to make other articles which the community can very well do without. But as far as the present Resolution is concerned, none of those questions arise. The times are still abnormal and we are faced with that position to-day. The honourable member has given the Government credit for not asking for six months' supply and for promising to review the whole situation and the position to-day is that we have to decide whether, from the 1st April, 1947, which is already past, we are going to maintain the price of flour at 7 cents per lb., along with the price of other items, rather than to allow them to make a leap in the majority of cases. During the course of his remarks, the junior member for the City suggested that there is some connection between the increased importation to-day of flour and its being put on the subsidized list. I was in charge of the Resolution that was sent down by the last Government, not this one, in connection with the subsidization of certain commodities and the position then was that there was no cornmeal in the island but there was flour. Rice was in short supply; we had not yet had a contract with Demerara for a supply of rice and money that was voted for subsidizing cornmeal was not being used for that purpose. Flour was coming in but it was not yet put in the schedule

and on the suggestion of the senior member for St. Michael the House made that proposal. It actually had been considered by the Government before, as is usually the case; but, nevertheless, before the Government took the decision, the honourable member made the mention in the House and as a result of that, the House agreed to put flour in the schedule. We were very fortunate that it was done because immediately after that, the price of flour skyrocketed and when the Government came back for the money we found that we had to increase the vote in order to keep the price of flour within bounds. The only basis of the argument for spending more money on other items and less money on flour is an assumption made by the senior member for St. Philip. He admits that it is an assumption at present—an assumption that it is a diabolical plot on the part of merchants who exercise a nefarious influence over the Control Board to keep flour subsidized in order that more flour can be imported, based upon the further assumption that if you raise the price of flour people would stop buying flour to make biscuits and dumplings and so on and there is very little evidence to support that suggestion. I am not going into that now. I would have to debate it with the honourable member on some subsequent occasion. But there is no need to suggest that there is any oblique motive on the part of anybody in this matter. Obviously it could not affect the Executive Committee because the honourable member himself was present at the discussion in Executive Committee and agreed to the Resolution before us. The simple fact is that we have no control over the price charged by the people who sell flour in Canada. Now that brings me to another point made by the junior member for the City. Britain made a Wheat Agreement with Canada not long ago which provides for the importation of flour from Canada to England at a fixed price but the Canadian Government did not agree to include the West Indies in that Agreement. Now the question as to whether the West Indies made any effort is a matter of opinion. The junior member for the City says that they made no attempt; he has no means of supporting that statement. I suggest that they did not succeed. It is easy for anyone to say that somebody did or did not do something that we cannot say is true or not. The British Government did not compel the Canadian Government to sell flour to the West Indies; that is the position. The fact is that a certain quantity of flour was earmarked by the Canadian Government to be sold to the British Government at a certain price and the Canadian Government kept that flour for that purpose. While we are speaking about flour we should not forget to express our appreciation of the goodwill flour which was given to this island free of cost during the war years by the Canadian Government. The people of this island did get that flour in those years for nothing because the money that would have been used for that purpose was used in helping to keep the price of other items down. The junior member for the City also spoke about the delegation that went to Canada from other West Indian Colonies in connection with this Wheat Agreement but if the honourable member had been able to prove that as a result of that delegation, the price of flour to Jamaica, Trinidad, and British Guiana has been reduced in relation to the price charged to Barbados, he would have been quite justified in remonstrating with this Government for not having sent a representative from Barbados on that delegation. The fact is that we have no worse

conditions than any other colony in the Caribbean area. As far as flour is concerned, the price fluctuates every week, sometimes twice a week. The people who bought the stocks of flour that were not allocated by the Canadian Government to the British Government had to buy in the open market, no agreement having been entered into on our behalf, and that is why the price fluctuates so frequently. I think, however, that the House should be cheered to know that the present information is that this high price of flour will not last as the result of the trade talks now going on. There is a likelihood that an agreement will be reached which will result in keeping the price of flour substantially lower than it is now. Anyhow, that is by the way but it will help the honourable member to understand that we will be able to see a little more daylight as far as financing this expensive scheme is concerned. I, of course, agree with him entirely that we do not wish to carry on import control any longer than is necessary. There is no desire on the part of the Government, or even the Government Department concerned, to keep it on. Nobody likes the job to control imports or prices. It is very difficult to retain the services of people who do this work and the Government does not like to be saddled with the responsibility of keeping on these controls. He may be right in saying that it suits businessmen but I do not think it is desirable to carry on the control of imports or exports except in cases of necessity. As far as bulk purchase is concerned, we have to carry on that because the British Government tells us we have to bulk purchase; the moment they say we should not bulk purchase, it automatically ceases. We work on instructions we receive from the British Government. It may be said that it is unsatisfactory but in no Department is everything satisfactory. When it comes to price control I am at one with him. Price Control Boards should remain as long as it is of advantage to the people of Barbados. When we bear in mind what the junior member for St. Peter has said about the monopoly of control of business in this island through family relationships and other reasons, we have to be very careful before we abandon the question of price control. Now the junior member for St. James spoke in the opposite sense to the junior member for the City. The junior member for the City was a little hesitant about continuing this subsidization on financial grounds. The junior member for St. James says "On the contrary continue it. I do not care what it costs" and that is very cheering coming from him. We know the reason. He wants to extend it by adding rice to the schedule. The only point about that is this. I do not think that there can be any case made out for the suggestion of taking a penny off rice and putting it on flour. I do not think that it would be reasonable to sell rice at 4 cents per pint and flour at 9 cents per lb. It has been said that people do not eat a considerable quantity of flour but normally they do eat as much flour as rice. The figures which were given on the last occasion show that about 9,500 tons of each of the two commodities are consumed in the course of a year, and we would certainly be wrong to put the price of one at 4 cents per pint and the price of the other at more than twice that amount per lb.; the disparity will be too great.

At this stage, 2 p.m., Mr. Speaker resumes the Chair and adjourns the House until 2.45 p.m. in accordance with Rule 40 (a).

REPLIES LAID.

On re-assembling,

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to lay on the table of the House the Replies to Questions No. 21 standing in the name of the honourable junior member for St. Lucy.

Mr. SPRINGER: I beg to lay the Replies to Questions No. 10 (a) and the Replies to Questions No. 35, both standing in the name of the honourable junior member for St. Lucy.

SUSPENSION OF RULE 61 (A).

Mr. ADAMS: I ask leave to move for the suspension of Rule 61 (a) in order to resume Government Business, namely, the consideration of the Resolution with which we were dealing to-day.

Mr. WILKINSON: I object.

Mr. SPEAKER: An objection having been taken, I will put the question. The question is that leave be granted the honourable member to move for the suspension of Rule 61 (a) in order to resume Government Business. Honourable members in favour of that will please say "Aye" those against will please say "No". I think the "Ayes" have it.

A division was taken as follows:—

Ayes: Dr. CUMMINS, Messrs RAMSAY, FOSTER, MAPP, SPRINGER, ADAMS, BLACKMAN, CRAWFORD and GARNER—(9).

Noes: Messrs BRANCKER, TALMA, HAYNES, DOWDING, GALE, S. A. WALCOTT and WILKINSON—(7).

Mr. SPEAKER: The question has been resolved in the affirmative, nine honourable members voting "Aye" and seven honourable members voting "No". The honourable member may therefore make the motion.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to move that Rule 61 (a) be now suspended in order to resume Government Business.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

The question that Rule 61 (a) be now suspended in order to resume Government Business was put and resolved in the affirmative.

The following division was taken:—

Ayes: Messrs RAMSAY, SMITH, F. L. WALCOTT, COX, FOSTER, MAPP, SPRINGER, ADAMS, BLACKMAN, CRAWFORD and Dr. CUMMINS—11.

Noes: Messrs BRANCKER, GARNER, TALMA, HAYNES, DOWDING, GALE, S. A. WALCOTT and WILKINSON—8.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question has been resolved in the affirmative, eleven honourable members voting "Aye", and eight honourable members voting "No". However, the Rule cannot be suspended, twelve honourable members not having voted for its suspension.

DISSATISFACTION AMONG COUNTRY SHOP-KEEPERS OVER MARGIN OF PROFIT ALLOWED

Mr. SMITH: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move the adjournment of the House for five minutes for the purpose of discussing the Replies given to my Questions No. 19 relative to the margin of profit allowed the country shopkeepers. Honourable members will remember that the Questions were:

Is the Government aware that the country shopkeepers are dissatisfied with the margin of profit allowed them by the Competent Authority, especially in view of the high cost of freight and the increase in

their staffs made necessary by the 42-hour week imposed by the Shops Order?

Will the Government investigate the position and make such adjustments as may be necessary to produce an equitable arrangement?

The Government replied as follows:—

The Government is aware that some country shopkeepers are dissatisfied with the margin of profits allowed. It is not, however, feasible to differentiate between the profits permitted in and outside the City; and the number of applications for quotas on record from shopkeepers who have started new shops within the past two years indicates that the total number of shops is increasing, and suggests that the existing arrangements provide little discouragement to the retail trade. The Controller of Food Supplies and Prices has the matter constantly under review and from time to time when attention has been drawn to items on which profits allowed were maladjusted, the matter has been corrected by the Controller of Food Supplies and Prices in consultation with his Advisory Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot understand this Reply: up to now, it baffles me. I am wondering if the members of the Government have seen it at all. (Laughter). They say in the first instance, that it is not feasible to differentiate between the profits permitted in and outside the City; and the number of applications for quotas on record from shopkeepers who have started new shops within the past two years indicates that the total number of shops is increasing, and suggests that the existing arrangements provide little discouragement to the retail trade. How on earth could that be true when not long ago we passed a Land Bill which dealt with the price of land within, I think, two miles of the City? And here they say that it is not feasible to differentiate between the profits permitted the City and the country shopkeepers. The country shopkeeper has to pay the same price for his goods as the City shopkeeper. The merchant sends the goods to the City shopkeeper free of the cost of the freight, but the country shopkeeper has to pay the cost of the freight of his goods. Of course, some of the merchants own motor lorries and they send the goods to the country shopkeeper at a cost of 1% for freight. That is very cheap. But there are other merchants who do not have any transport for the goods, and the country shopkeeper has to pay for the transport of his goods. The price for the transport of goods ranges between twelve and eighteen cents per hundred. When you have to pay for a bag of sugar, it costs you 36 cents, whereas if the merchant sends it, it will cost you only 10 cents. I had occasion to speak with Dr. Saint in connection with the matter and he told me that there is a certain amount of profit allocated to the merchant for the transport of these goods and that helps him to charge only 1% for it. The country shopkeeper has to pay the cost of transport to the merchant and the merchant who does not pay any transport gets a margin of profit on the price of the goods! That is not fair to the country shopkeeper; he loses because he is allowed only about 65 cents profit and a bag of sugar, and when he pay 36 cents for the transport he is left with only about 1/-. The country shopkeeper has to pay his attendants, and then there is the question of shortage; if you do not have any scale at home to test the weight, your profit will be taken out on the road. Dr Saint has told me that the shopkeeper is allowed a profit on

the empty bags of as high as 30 cents, but since that price was fixed, no shopkeeper has received more than 12 cents for one of these bags! Dr. Saint has said that the shopkeeper can get 30 cents for a bag, but he does not say where he can get that price for it. The shopkeeper can get 20 cents for a bag if it is clean and whole, but there are rats about the place. The Competent Authority has allowed a profit of 30 cents on an empty bag when you can only get 20 cents for it! I have already said that I do not know if the members of the Government have seen this Reply. I know that one of them has admitted that the country shopkeepers only get the barrel the box and the bag as profit, but now we cannot get the barrel, the box or the bag. (Laughter) That is why I am wondering whether this Reply has caught the eyes of that honourable member. The Government have said in their Reply that the total number of shops is increasing. The number of shops is increasing because some of the poor people who went to America came back with a few dollars, they did not know in what to invest the money and they decided that they would throw it away in opening a shop. (Laughter) I supply some of these same people with bread, and I can assure honourable members that I have levied on one of them for the non-payment of my money, and he will have to be sold out. He cannot pay his debt: he does not have three bottles in the shop, but the license is still up on the shop. The Government keep their eyes on the increase of shopkeepers but not on the decrease of them. I am in a position to let the Government know that the shopkeepers are dropping out one by one. When you look at the "mark-up", the garages are allowed as high as 25% on a motor car which they will sell for \$2,600, but the poor country shopkeeper gets shortages of meat, sugar etc., he goes up and down many times. He is supposed to lose about four or six pounds of sugar on a bag and the Competent Authority allows him a small profit. You get the "mark-up" as high as 30% on dry goods, but you are not allowed any margin on onions because what you are allowed goes in the shortages, and so on. I do not know how some of the poor shopkeepers exist. Some of them will borrow about \$20 from whoever will lend them; next week they will kill a pig or sell something and make up an amount for the merchant and if he feels that they should pay off, he comes in and they have to borrow money on their houses. It is unfair for the Government to encourage such things: the Government are encouraging the poor shopkeepers to steal and to use counterfeit measures. The Government should not encourage a man to steal in order to live. That is a big disgrace in a community like this. You will notice that the Defence Regulations allow 5 or 6 cents in the dollar, while the big garage man is allowed 25% as a margin of profit. I would have had a new motor car if they did not tell me that everything was for cash. (Laughter). The garage man is allowed a margin of 25%, but the poor shopkeeper, who is the saviour of the people, is allowed very little. During the hard months of September and October when the people can get only two or three days' work, they go to the poor shopkeeper and credit day in and day out, and when the crop comes in, they owe the shopkeeper as much as they will get from working. The shopkeeper finds that one person owes him about \$10 or \$15, and when that person becomes ill and goes to the Almshouse, the debt is dead. The shopkeeper is catering to the poorest class in the community and his property is at stake. When he has these bad debts, he has something with which to pay them. I do not know if the members of the Government have seen this Reply,

but if those who are responsible for it are not ignorant, they are spiteful or wicked. Imagine the price of an empty bag being put at 30 cents and not a bag can be sold for that price! You cannot get 15 cents for a bag if it has been torn. When the shopkeeper owes the merchant too much money he cannot go back to him. I think that the shopkeeper should be helped out of his distress by trying to allow him a reasonable margin of profit. Imagine that in 1933 you allowed a shopkeeper 30 cents on 100 pounds of sugar and to-day you allow him the same thing! He has to pay his attendants more money, he has to pay the increased price to the carpenters and masons, but he does not get anything out of the business! It is hard unfair and ridiculous for this Labour Government to allow a Reply like this to pass unnoticed—a Reply which tells this House that owing to the increase in the number of shops, the shopkeepers stand a rosy chance. The members of the Government are aware of the facts, the Leader of the House knows them, and I will have to say that the honourable senior member for St. Philip knows them. If they have seen this Reply at all, they are just as spiteful and wicked as the Competent Authority. (Laughter and Cheers). I am surprised to see how they look at things in such a one-sided way; I sincerely hope that this Labour Government will look into this matter. The only thing that this House cannot do is to turn a man into a woman, and I sincerely hope that some sort of consideration will be given to this matter which I have brought to the attention of the House.

Mr. GARNER: I beg to second the honourable member's motion; I have, in duty bound, to associate myself with the honourable member's remarks, because as a member of the shopkeepers' fraternity, I know at first hand the hardships which we are now suffering. It is true that I have not admired certain people in the office of the Competent Authority as I have heard other people boosting them up; there is no surprise to me because I know it would happen. It is true to say that at one time the shopkeepers of this island were not far removed from the agricultural labourer. The shopkeeper was looked upon as such, and treated as such, notwithstanding the fact that he had borne the brunt of the burden and made up the deficiency where the plantocracy robbed the labourers. Many a shopkeeper has gone to his grave bankrupt because he helped the poor people who were in need of it. To-day I join the chorus with my colleague or comrade in saying that things have gone so much that the shopkeepers are asking for a more adequate financial status. They are asking for proper remuneration for their services: while it is true that all service should be adequately paid for, in the shopkeepers' case it is not so. I started to say that there are a few people in the Office of the Competent Authority whom I do not admire because they are too dictatorial; they never let up on their dictatorial policy and the shopkeepers suffered. I have suffered mainly because of that policy. In taking this Reply into consideration, I think that this Labour Government who have sent it down ought to be censured. Those who know nothing should try and find out something before they seek to give any solution. If this Reply is a solution to this vexed problem, I say that this Labour Government is good for nothing. Shopkeepers are an intelligent part of this community; they bear the brunt of the burden of many people in this community, and they never say a word about it. If a shopkeeper manages to live and die and leave something, he has been a very, very clever fellow, because the economic set-up does not permit it. The shopkeeper is between the devil and the deep blue sea. In their Reply the Government say this: "The Gov-

ernment is aware that some country shopkeepers are dissatisfied with the margin of profits allowed." It is not true to say that only the country shopkeepers are dissatisfied with the margin of profits allowed; this dissatisfaction is island wide, there is dissatisfaction among the city shopkeepers too. I would say that there is one thing which the city shopkeeper has on the country shopkeeper; it is that while the country shopkeeper has to pay for the freight of his goods, the man in the city does not have to pay that. When the country shopkeeper buys something for, say 60 cents, he has to pay 1/- to send it home; whereas the merchant will send it to the city man free of charge. The honourable junior member for St. Joseph spoke about the freight charges which made him leave out the city shopkeepers; but they have a grouse too, because the whole margin of profit is too small. The Government's Reply goes on: "It is not, however, feasible to differentiate between the profits permitted in and outside the City; and the number of applications for quotas on record from shopkeepers who have started new shops within the past two years indicates that the total number of shops is increasing, and suggests that the existing arrangements provide little discouragement to the retail trade." May I digress to deal with that for a moment? Any person who finds himself with \$100 or \$200 wants to open a shop; that is the first thing he thinks of doing, because he thinks that he can make a livelihood. Unemployment is rife and he thinks that he can carry on and employ himself with the aid of his family, perhaps. When you get too many people doing one sort of business, the result is that the majority must suffer. The system of crediting the shopkeeper is so loose that all you have to do is to acquire half an acre of land, put a house on it, come to Bridgetown and turn over your papers to the merchant and he will give you the equivalent. In one or two years' time, the shopkeeper is gone! He was living in a fool's paradise, because when he thought he was making money, he was not making any and he has to close down. He was feeding the people and eating what he was not making, when the true accounts are presented. Because there are an abnormal number of people trying to do business, that does not mean that they are doing anything. The influx of shopkeepers now makes it impossible for anybody to "get by". There is no regularity, so that when you get people looking for employment and they think that the best thing for them to do is to keep a shop, that does not mean that the retail business is so lucrative. I know, in this island, that there was a time when I dreaded going into my business on Saturday mornings; we had what is called cut-throat competition. Some shopkeepers wanted to turn over very largely; because they wanted the merchants to compete, they would give away the meat on which they could put their hands; and if you wanted to follow suit, you had to do the same thing because the people were too poor and underpaid, and they would walk for six or ten miles in order to get cheap goods. Many shopkeepers went under, but the merchants still made their profits. That state of affairs existed. Fortunately, or unfortunately, the War came along and conditions changed a bit; but due to the quotas and the rationing system, the shopkeepers to-day are in the same plight as in pre-war times, because they cannot get the required amount of goods to sell and that plays a very important part in the business. Again, you have the price control, and some of the things the prices of which are controlled should have been let alone. I mention one of those things—onions. Onions should never have been on

the list of these things, because if you buy five crates of onions, you will lose one of them, or at least three-quarters of it. However the shopkeeper turns, unless he buys only one or two crates, in fact, if he tries to keep one of them, he will lose something. When you come to sugar, there is a farce. The shopkeeper receives the sugar underweight the sugar deliquesces and he has to pay for the bag delivered! The Competent Authority says that you must sell this bag for 20 cents, and there is no wholesale merchant in Roebuck Street who will pay you 20 cents for a bag to-day. He will pay you 8 or 10 cents for it and does not feel that he is breaking any Defence Regulation. He is buying as cheaply as he can, but the poor shopkeeper is rated at 20 cents for a bag. That is a part of the shopkeeper's profit, and he cannot get 20 cents for the bag. The shopkeeper's trade has deteriorated and if something is not done to help him, I am sure that those of us who are responsible individuals and who have any substance at all, will lose what we have. It is coming to that. I am not saying that the public should pay more for their goods; I am saying that the margin of profit allowed on the goods proper should be more evenly distributed between the wholesaler and the shopkeepers. I do not say that the price of goods should be raised so as to give the shopkeeper more profit; but take away something from the wholesaler who gets his goods in bulk. How many times goods come to this island underweight and the shopkeeper does not know what he is getting? The wholesaler is all right, he has already got his money because he has not taken off for the shortage of the goods. The shopkeeper must feel things because he cannot sell the number of pounds which he thought he had to sell. When you come to the control business, I agree that we want the retail prices controlled. I say, Mr. Speaker, until the shopkeeper gets his full quota so that he can get an adequate week's pay or month's salary, he will have to abide by the present quotas. If we are going to sit here and let the Government continually finance the control of quotas, I do not see that the shopkeepers will get much further in the near future. I am reliably told that there are some small agents around here who have new goods to put on the market—that is some good news—but because a few prominent magnates control the Board, they cannot get a proper show. Meanwhile, the public and the shopkeepers are suffering, because you cannot get away from the fact that competition is the spice of life, and while it is good to have it to a certain extent, we are asking that some of these agents be given a chance. The members of the Control Board control all the business in the island; they control everything. They should control those who are sending out to their retail shops. During the War, I can tell the House that a certain merchant opened shops all over the island *ad lib*, and sent out 20 or 30 bags of rice per week in order to sell his goods. (A MEMBER: What year?) Two years ago. I can call names if you wish me to do so. It is a shame how the Control Board is run; I think it is time to break it up. Not so long ago, a sum of money was voted for the Control Board and I did not say anything because it was late in the afternoon and I knew that I could not get any support. While other people want to wax fat, the shopkeepers are suffering: they cannot get their quotas and they are rationed. It is a terrible state of affairs, nobody thinks about the shopkeeper. What I see is being done in Trinidad is this; I am not saying that it

should be done here because I have said that I am not asking for an increase in the retail price. However, in Trinidad, they have zones and the margin of profit, half cent more or something like that, is determined by the distance from the City. I am not saying that that should be done here, but it does seem to be very fair. When you buy say, a barrel of biscuits in the City, you do not have to pay any freight costs, but when you have to send it 14 miles in the country and you pay 20 cents for the freight, if the profit is 40 cents, then you only get 20 cents. The shopkeeper has to pay trade tax, and in some cases occupancy tax, and that does not sound reasonable. If you begin from the Chain in Roebuck Street until you get to Broad Street, there is not a small shopkeeper who can pay his bill. That sounds funny, but it is a fact. The fellow who manages to get out of it is a happy fellow; I will take off my hat to him. Year by year when the shopkeepers get money out of the crop season and carry that money—

At this point, it being now 3.30 p.m. of the clock, Mr. SPEAKER stated that it was now time for the consideration of Private Members' Business.

SUSPENSION OF RULE 61 (B)

Mr. ADAMS: I ask leave to move for the suspension of Rule 61 (b) in order to resume Government Business.

There being no objection, the honourable member was granted leave to make the motion.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to move that Rule 61 (b) be now suspended in order to resume Government Business.

Mr. RAMSAY: I beg to second that.

The question that Rule 61 (b) be now suspended in order to resume Government Business was put and resolved in the affirmative.

A division was taken as follows:—

Ayes: Messrs. SPRINGER, LEWIS, SMITH, F. L. WALCOTT, COX, FOSTER, MAPP, RAMSAY, ADAMS, BLACKMAN, GARNER, TALMA, Dr. WILSON and Dr. CUMMINS—14.

Noes: Messrs. HAYNES, DOWDING, GALE, S. A. WALCOTT and WILKINSON—5.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question has been resolved in the affirmative, fourteen honourable members voting "Aye", and five honourable members voting "No." When the adjournment took place, the House was in Committee of Supply.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair, and the House resumed Committee of Supply, Mr. RAMSAY being in the Chair.

SUBSIDISATION OF FOODSTUFFS

Mr. CHAIRMAN: When the House was last in Committee of Supply, we were considering a Resolution to place the sum of £50,162 at the disposal of the Governor-in-Executive Committee to meet the cost of subsidising the commodities mentioned in the Schedule thereto to the 30th June, 1947, in order that the prices of these commodities may be stabilised at such prices as may be fixed by the Competent Authority.

Mr. LEWIS: I would like to know if the honourable junior member for St. James is willing to give some better figures for the proposition which he has made to-day. I have been discussing the matter with some honourable members, and while it is a good thing to subsidise flour, yet when less flour was being

imported, everybody got bread, and bread in the form in which flour reaches the poor people in the way of food. I think that the Committee would be in favour of hearing more of the proposition made by the honourable junior member for St. James because it is worthy of consideration. I said that so as to show that there is something in what the honourable member has said. I am convinced that we were getting on all right where flour is concerned, when there was less flour. There may be a tendency to flood this place with more flour than is necessary because of the subsidy. I am not prepared to continue to sanction the subsidy if that is the way in which it is going to be used. If it is absolutely necessary, I am prepared to subsidise all the needs of the people as far as food is concerned; but if there is going to be extravagant use, I am not at all opening the people's taxes to a racket. I do not know where it is beginning, but I know that it will end with a burden. The people of this colony have to pay this subsidy. You have money in the Treasury now because there are certain things which could not be done during the War. The moment that you can get supplies of material, not only the sugar factories but the merchants are going to spend their money in improving their business. They are going to write off more in depreciation and show less profit to be taxed. There will be legitimate returns with less profits, and you will not get the money which you expect to get. The Government has money in the Treasury because of the War, and I think that this money should be earmarked to be spent in improving the water supply, the roads and the lighting for the people of this colony. Whatever the amount in the Treasury is, I think that two or three times the amount should be there. I am saying that I know that the people will eventually have to pay this subsidy. The moment you tax these people in order to provide this money, the price of everything will go up and the people will not be any better off. I foresee what is going to happen when the surplus in the Treasury is gone. I foresee that these schemes will eat it up quicker than we may realise, and I say that it is in the interest of the people that we should take a long view of things. I am convinced that if a concerted effort is made in these parts to convince people in places like the Dominion of Canada and elsewhere that we cannot import their high-priced goods especially their food, something will result from it. Intelligent, strong and concerted action will bring results, because as I hinted to-day, the sale of stuff from Canada can be so manipulated that when it reaches you it has passed through several hands, the price has gone up and as long as you are willing to pay the price for it, it will come to you as a scarce item. We are fooling ourselves, with schemes of this sort, that we are protecting the interest of the poor man and his food. We are not doing that; the poor man has already provided this money.

Mr. GARNER: I rise to second the motion for the inclusion of rice in this Schedule, and furthermore, I would suggest that "firewood" and "charcoal" be deleted and "cornmeal" included. This thing is being bungled, because we have a few things here on the Schedule which matter very little. They are infinitesimal and they should be removed. Cornmeal is the people's diet: cou-cou is a favourite dish in many homes. We have meal here in a sufficient quantity, but the people cannot buy it because the price is too high. I think that the Committee should listen to what I am saying because I am in touch with this business and I should know about it. I want rice to be included in this Schedule. On the last occasion I said that

I was not in favour of the inclusion of rice in the Schedule, but since then I have been interviewed by the people who have censured me for having agreed to increase the price of rice by one penny a pint more. (A MEMBER: Are you afraid of your constituents?) I think that the people should get their food as cheaply as possible so that they can buy some clothing. They come to my place for goods and when they go out again their amount of money is great. The ordinary man cannot get much meat to eat now; when he buys Prem or Corned Beef he has to spend nearly a dollar. I am going to speak the truth here now. (Laughter and Cheers). It does not matter so much at what price you put flour, because the poor man buys it in the way of bread or biscuits. If the ordinary man buys two pints of rice, he does not buy the same quantity of flour. A lot of this flour goes to the bakeries. When I say that I am voting for the inclusion of rice in the Schedule, I feel that I am doing what is equitable and right, because rice is the poor man's food. There are a few people who eat a large amount of rice, but they do not depend upon it like the poor man. I beg to move that the words "firewood" and "charcoal" be deleted from the Schedule and that the word "cornmeal" be inserted.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I was wondering whether the honourable member would ask the honourable junior member for St. James to accept that proposal and let one motion be made.

Mr. GARNER: I would like to counsel honourable members of the Government to defer the matter until to-day week and come back with it in some other form. I feel that it is of no use continuing this business to-day and that is why I voted in the way I did in the first instance. Are we going to subsidize the poor man's food or are we playing a game? What is our policy? Who gets the firewood? The Soap Factory gets a lot of it and what is the use of keeping firewood on the Schedule? The Soap Factory and some of the big bakeries get the firewood; the poor man cannot get it. If you are subsidising rice and cornmeal, do not go the whole way with flour, but have a policy. I have often said in this House that when the Government wants to know something about carpentry, they should get a carpenter, and when they want to know about masonry, they should get a mason. There would not be so much bungling. But you get people who have misinformation and you get these things all wrong. I beg to move, Mr. Chairman, that you do now report progress with leave for the Committee to sit again, because it is not reasonable, after hearing the wishes of this Committee, to ask that this matter be put to the vote to-day. If it is the wish of this Committee that the Resolution be carried back to the Executive Committee and see what adjustments can be made to include these primary things, I think that that should be done. We have a lot of cornmeal in the colony now and if the price of it is not made reasonable, it will deteriorate. As regards flour, as soon as that commodity is subsidised, you will get an over-abundance of it, because there is money to be made. If you tell the people concerned that you are only giving a percentage and not a subsidy, you will see how much flour you would have. Therefore, while we may think that we are really subsidising the people's food we are playing into the hands of people who have been trained in business and have the art of telling you the opposite story. It is true that some of the members of the Government would compete with the businessmen because they have learned the art, but that does not come under the same category. I appeal to the members of the

Government not to flout the wishes of this Committee.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I think that the honourable member should make a motion and let somebody second it.

Mr. GARNER: There is still free speech, and I hope that this Government will not flout the wishes of this Committee and insist that this matter be put to the vote.

Mr. DOWDING: I beg to second the honourable member's motion. I would like to say that I agree wholeheartedly with all that he has said. I think that we are losing sight of the people whom we are trying to represent. (Hear, hear). Rice is definitely the food of the poor man of this colony and it should be included in this subsidisation scheme. Flour, on the other hand, apart from being used in making bread and biscuits, is mostly used for making cakes and pastries. I say that from experience. (A MEMBER: From experience in the Army?) The experience which I have had was, as an honourable member has said, when I had the honour of being in the Army with my fellow-countrymen. In America we could get flour *ad lib*, but we could not get any rice. I happened to be the Officer responsible for the food. (A MEMBER: Shame!) and I have never been able to satisfy the men. They were always underfed, and I gave them as much flour as possible. When we got to Egypt, we got rice and the situation was changed. I feel that rice should be included in this Schedule.

Mr. F. L. WALCOTT: Before the question is put, I would like to say that, from what I have read, the Labour Prime Minister of England has made a statement about rice, and Great Britain has to import rice so that the rice-consuming countries can get it. Therefore when it comes to the question of subsidisation, I view it seriously. It is strange to find bed-fellows like the honourable junior member for St. James and the honourable junior member for St. Philip who seem to be trying to agree on something and now we have the honourable junior member for St. George joining them. Let us know what the labourers were being paid before the War. What were the labourers at Lower Estate paid?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Lower Estate has nothing to do with this matter; the honourable member should not refer to Lower Estate. I cannot stand for it.

Mr. F. L. WALCOTT: I will bow to your ruling, Mr. Chairman, but we are at a stage in this colony where we have to be more than careful as to whom we are having as our leader. At the last General Election we heard a lot about representing the people. We must allow the public to know that this is a question which affects the interest of the community. The honourable junior member for St. James was a member of the Executive for the last eight years, and he was most inaudible when it came to matters affecting the people. Now when people like the honourable junior member for St. James lose power, they must do something to justify that loss of power. The honourable senior member for St. Joseph was the pioneer of subsidisation in this colony; the honourable member fought for subsidisation so that the poor people could get their food cheaply, but some of us try to be forgetful of the people. We must see that the interest of the people comes first; we are only the reflection of a race which has been down trodden for years, and I feel that anything that we can do to assist that class of people, it is our duty to do it. If this question of subsidisation means that you are doing something wrong at the Control Board, let us fix that; we cannot say that something is wrong at the Control Board so therefore do not let us continue

with subsidisation. The alternative will be that the price of these commodities will be increased. It has been suggested that if we do not subsidise rice, we will spite the poor man more. We cannot put in the Schedule all the items that we would like to put there. I say, finally, that it is grievous to think that any of us could be so lacking in our responsibility as to follow people who have never yet fought for the interest of the poor people of this colony. This is a serious debate: I have seen and read that we in Barbados cannot allow any minority at all to do anything which would cause the people of this colony to lose the opportunity which they were long waiting for. This debate is a serious debate, I repeat. It must be remembered that posterity will have to pay for anything that we do.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Before any other honourable member speaks, I should like to say that every honourable member is entitled to speak in the way he speaks. I do not want honourable members to vie with each other, because we will not get any further.

Mr. COX: I cannot vote silently on this matter: I have heard so many rhapsodical speeches that it is difficult for me to decide whether I should vote one way or the other. The honourable junior member for St. Philip has introduced his amendment and has spoken of including rice in this Schedule. I remember that sometime during the session when a similar Resolution was before us, the honourable member was the first person to suggest that rice should not be subsidised and that the price should be six cents per pint. All the honourable member has given us as the reason for changing his attitude to-day is that a few of his constituents have told him that he should not have agreed to increase the price of rice.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Every honourable member is at liberty to change his attitude. I am not now referring to the honourable member, but as soon as the Committee decide to have another Chairman I would be glad. I will be quite willing to have that.

Mr. COX: The honourable junior member for St. Philip must realise that this is not a parochial matter; he is a representative of Barbados and not merely of the parish of St. Philip, and, at any rate, there are more people in St. Michael and other parts of the island than there are in St. Philip. It would not be fair, therefore, to accept the honourable member's statement as justifiable argument as to why we should subsidise rice. We have to consider everything which is for the use of the people of this colony. On the last occasion the honourable member showed his willingness to subsidise flour; but to-day he says that it is not necessary to do that because the people do not use as much flour as they used to use. We have been given figures as to the consumption of rice and flour in this colony. Whether a man makes pastries, cakes or anything else, the most of the flour is consumed by the majority of people in the colony. The majority of people in this colony use flour as a diet; the mason, the carpenter, everybody uses it and the children use it in their bread and biscuits, and so on. That is why we are subsidising flour. I notice that the Conservative element in this colony is working in a surreptitious manner to thwart the efforts of the Labour Government but I am doing what I know is just and right in the people's interest. If they fail to realise that, the ballot-box is always open and the day of reckoning will come. I see that the Conservative element is trying to upset the people and trying to put them back in slavery and I am going to open my eyes, ears and mouth and speak against it. It is a matter for the people

if they fail to realise it or not. It will mean very little for the individual if this movement fails, but it will mean quite a lot to the inhabitants of this colony. I see that certain Labour members are getting in close association with others and doing a lot of tricks in order to upset the people. If this were a mass meeting, you would hear a lot more from me. I am not saying now what I know happens, but I am saying that this Resolution should be passed. I remember that on a former occasion when a similar Resolution was before this House, it was filibustered and pushed aside and the people suffered as a result. The food was in the warehouse; it could not be priced and the people could not get it. I think that if honourable members have the interest of the people at heart, they should vote for this Resolution and not allow the Conservative element to sway them. We have selected this Labour Government which is working in the interest of the people—

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I have allowed quite a lot of latitude, but the motion before the House is that I do now report progress with leave for the Committee to sit again. Therefore any further debate will have to be confined to that motion.

Mr. COX: I would like to say that I see no sense or justification in supporting that motion. I hope that the Committee will pass the Resolution in order that the people will be able to get their food at a cheap price.

Mr. TALMA: I am surprised to hear the remarks which have fallen from the lips of the honourable member who has just sat down. It would appear as if the Conservative element or the Labour group have based—

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The motion before the Committee is that I do now report progress with leave for the Committee to sit again, and I say that the honourable member must speak on that motion or he cannot speak at all.

Mr. TALMA: I am giving my reason for voting in the way in which I am voting. I am saying that the Conservative group and the Labour Party were closely aligned during the last session but they are not so closely aligned to-day. When the Congress Party attempted to break the relation, one would have thought that a suggestion had been made whereby the people would suffer some detriment. This is a question of including rice in this Schedule so that the people will benefit. I do not think that anybody could suggest that we are doing anything wrong if we include rice in this Schedule so as to help the poor people.

Mr. GARNER: I did not want to rise again, but some honourable members have made some remarks about me. I am not in collusion with anybody; I have moved an amendment, or rather I have seconded the motion for the inclusion of rice in this Schedule. Is there anything wrong in that? If I am in collusion with someone in order to get cheap food for the people of this colony, I am grateful for that. If there is any other collusion, I do not know about it. If anybody seeks to get the best for the poor people of this colony and I am in collusion with him, I think that I am going right. If anybody knows that he can be associated with a Conservative member who has a programme and it is a feasible one, there is nothing wrong with that. If you align yourself with a man on one occasion and you see that your man has no programme now, what are you going to do? Two can walk together when they agree. You cannot walk with a man if you do not have things in common with him. If it suits

you now, you walk with the people who voted for the inclusion of rice in the Schedule. The honourable senior member for St. Michael should have said that I said on the last occasion that I voted against the inclusion of rice in the Schedule, and when I went back to my constituents, I was censured. They told me that I had no right to agree to increase the cost of rice to the people. I have a chance to redress that to-day, and I am doing so. Some honourable members feel that unless you see through the same eyes as those which they are seeing through, you are doing wrong. I say in conclusion that when the time comes that somebody makes a change of heart or undergoes a metamorphosis, you have a right to associate yourself with him. I am voting for the inclusion of rice in this Schedule to-day; I am hoping that cornmeal will be included also, and whoever walks that road he is in line with me and I with him.

Mr. GALE: A great deal of heat has been generated by all parties in connection with this Resolution and a plenty of accusations have been made. It is unfortunate that honourable members did not attribute to other honourable members the same good motives as they have towards the people. Honourable members have been elected to this House to represent the people with the best of motives. I am not here to question anybody as to why he is voting "Aye" or "No". I think that we should get down to the realities of the matter before us. Many views have been expressed to-day; the suggestion has been made that other items such as rice and cornmeal should be included in this Schedule and that other items like firewood and charcoal on which the subsidy is very small, should be deleted. I think that we would be somewhat rash this afternoon if we voted one way or the other. We are not sure what the amount required would be if we take the subsidy off the flour and put it on the rice; we are not sure what the amount would be in respect of these items when we take off an item which has been subsidised. It may not be found possible to do these things. These are matters which cannot be gone into hurriedly; there are certain statistics which are necessary before we can go into these matters properly. That is why I am prepared to vote for the postponement of this Resolution. I think that everybody in this House is in favour of keeping down the price of foodstuffs so that the poor people can buy them, only that everybody is not in agreement with the different items proposed to be subsidised. Some honourable members think that rice should be included in the Schedule while others do not think so. If I were in the Government, I would postpone consideration of the Resolution and come back next Tuesday with figures showing what it would cost to subsidise rice, and if you take off so much for flour, how it will affect the situation. These things are not clear either to the Government or to those members who are making the propositions. For the reasons which I have given, I think that honourable members should vote for the postponement of this Resolution.

Mr. ADAMS: I am asking honourable members not to postpone the consideration of this Resolution. May I remind honourable members of what I said at the beginning? The price of flour is doing all sorts of tricks, changing twice in a week in quick succession. It is impossible for the Government to do more than follow the expert advice which we have got both locally and from Canada, and wait for three months. According to the experts, the position is likely to be better at that time. The argument of the honourable junior member for St. James is that the wheat

crop is likely to be extraordinarily good, and the price of flour may come down. It is more than abundantly clear to the Government what the position is, although the position may not be clear to the honourable member who has just sat down. I shall have occasion to read the speech made by the honourable junior member for St. Philip on the last occasion. I am not calling a spade anything but a spade. When honourable members are told that the Government is anxious about subsidisation, when they are told in December that the scheme was in respect of flour and not rice and that it is better to continue the present policy for three months and not six months, all we get by way of constructive criticism is the suggestion that rice be put back in the Schedule! Honourable members must remember their own arguments in December about the two grades of rice being so close to each other that you could hardly tell one from the other; that you are not going to benefit the poor people when you subsidise it; that people will mix it and the poor man will get the lower grade rice at the higher grade price, and so forth. At this stage, let me quote from the speech of the honourable junior member for St. Philip and ask the Committee if the honourable member did not hit the nail on the head three months in advance. This is what the honourable member said:—

"I hold in my hand a speech which I made in this House since 1945 claiming that the price of rice should have been six cents per pint ever since and people should get all they want". Some how or other, his constituents did not go to him then and tell him that he was doing wrong. The honourable member did not change his mind, and he did not have the honourable senior member for St. James to nod at him to tell him not to put charcoal and firewood in the Schedule. The honourable member went on:—

"It was a broad statement to make, at the time but I had great foresight and the Executive Committee has now seen what I saw then. The people would not mind paying six cents per pint for rice. I am a shopkeeper and I say that the man in the street does not mind paying six cents per pint for the rice if he can get it regularly."

I congratulate the honourable member on having the courage to say that, because that was my view.

"I am surprised", the honourable member went on, "to see so much political manoeuvring and to hear so much propaganda to-day."

When the honourable member obeys the whip of the honourable senior member for St. James, and is carried over with his bow, is that not political manoeuvring and political propaganda? The honourable member got here last year and amused us when he talked about members changing their views after cocktails. That has brought about that combination of honourable members on the left. The honourable member went on.—

"I speak as a shopkeeper and I say that when the Executive Committee decided to fix the price of rice at six cents per pint, they did something good for the people. I do not want to get hot although there is a lot to get hot about. Rice is twenty-five cents per pint in America, and if we can get it here at six cents per pint, I do not see any reason why we should have any grouse. Rice is a cheap food. As regards flour", and I commend this statement to the honourable junior member for St. James, "everyone knows that flour is a necessary ingredient in our diet, and the cost of this item is getting beyond our means or the means of the man in the street."

Evidently the man in the street has told the honourable member: "You are wrong; the increase in the price of flour is not beyond my means; vote for the increase in the price of flour." If the hon. member cannot see that the moment you subsidise rice you automatically take the subsidy off flour, and the price of flour has to go up, he cannot see anything. I say that when the honourable member was nodding to-day, the junior member for St. James could have forestalled his impetuous but less intelligent colleague when he nodded to the honourable junior member for St. Philip. It is time that honourable members stop this political manoeuvring.

"I feel that it would be somewhat abnormal", continued the honourable member, "if the price of flour rose to ten cents per pound, and I repeat that if we subsidise flour instead of rice we will be doing the average worker a good turn. Not so long ago the price of flour went to eight cents a pound and when you offered a man a penny loaf of bread he refused it. During that time we had more bread in the shops than anything else and the Government is now trying to keep the price of flour as low as possible".

Has the honourable member forgotten that? Have the rats that we heard about not long ago eaten the bread that was in the shops? The honourable member continued:—

"I agree that flour should be subsidised more so than rice and we know that while people are working they eat bread." Apparently they are not working to-day. "I cannot understand," the honourable member concluded, "why those who are in the opposition are labouring the point so much when in truth and in fact they know in their heart of hearts that rice at six cents a pint is cheap, flour at ten cents a pound is ridiculous and the Government is trying to see that the people get their food at the cheapest possible price."

That was the honourable member's contention. He tells us to-day in 1947 that when he said in 1945 that rice at six cents per pint was cheap, he was doing wrong. I ask the Committee not to vote for the postponement of the Resolution. The honourable member says that the Government has no policy; but the Government has the clearest possible policy. Until you know where you are with flour, keep the items as they are and as soon as the position where flour is concerned is clarified as it will be when the crop is due to be reaped in three months' time, then we will reconsider the whole question of subsidisation. I ask again: "What is the good of our talking about putting rice on the Schedule when you consider that there are two grades of rice and that you can hardly tell the difference between them?"

The hon. member says, although he is a shopkeeper, that they will mix the rice and it is limited in quantity. When the Government reconsiders this matter, they will reconsider it in the light of what I am saying now. When we come back next Tuesday the Committee will be told the same thing that they are being told now. If honourable members want to reject the Resolution they should do so. My argument three months ago still holds good; as soon as you include rice in this Schedule—unless you are going to say that you are prepared to raise this £50,000 to £100,000 or at least to £75,000 for the next three months, and eventually go up to £200,000 with flour subsidised at £135,000, we have to pass this Resolution as it is. It has been suggested that rice be included in the Schedule when firewood and charcoal are the items to be taken out! Well, honourable members are at liberty to say that. The Executive Committee say that they are convinced

with the knowledge which they have, that it is better to have subsidisation for a short period and then review the whole question. Unless you are prepared merely to give the impression to the man in the street, of whom the honourable junior member for St. Philip was speaking, that you are doing something to cut down the cost of living, then I suggest that we should call a halt to the endless debate which this Resolution has precipitated, and decide to vote for or against it. I do not see that you can reasonably tell the man in the street, as the honourable junior member for St. James wants to tell him, "If we make your rice four cents per pint and your flour nine cents a pound you will be better off". That is the only concrete proposition put before the Committee to-day and even that leaves out what I have been stressing that it does not intimate which brand of rice or whether both brands are to be subsidised. I appeal to the honourable junior member for St. Philip and to the Committee to give the Executive the same credit for the careful consideration of this question of subsidisation as they gave them in December not so long ago. I appeal to the honourable member to go out of his way and be charitable, if he likes. Even if he feels that he should not go out of his way, he should, out of christian charity, give us credit for doing to the best of our limited ability, what we have done in this matter of subsidisation. The honourable member began his speech in December by telling us that we have to provide better social schemes—

Mr. GARNER: I would like to refer to Rule 120; I gave the honourable member a lot of latitude before doing so.

Mr. ADAMS: You gave me a lot of latitude? You were not in the Chair. When some of us get the licks which we deserve, we are like children who run to their parents and claim their protection.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I do not think that there is any necessity to refer to that Rule. I am quite prepared to give to the honourable member all latitude for making a personal explanation, but the motion before the Committee is that I do now report progress with leave for the Committee to sit again. Any personal explanation is admissible but nothing else.

Mr. GARNER: It is strange how some of us can quote each other and come to certain conclusions. I would like this Committee to know that any remarks made by the honourable senior member for St. Joseph do not reflect on me; they only give substantial reasons for what I said and for every act I did. Away back in 1944-45 I said that if the people could get rice at six cents per pint they would not mind paying that price for it, and I repeated that in December or January this year. I went to St. Peter sometime ago and this same honourable member got people to come around me—

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable member must not bring in any extraneous matter. I told the honourable member that any personal explanation was all right but any extraneous matter was not permissible. This Committee will not stand for anything which took place in St. Peter.

Mr. GARNER: That has something to do with it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am in sympathy with the honourable member. I entirely agree that the honourable member has a right to explain his position, but I cannot allow anything which took place in any parish to take place in this Committee.

Mr. GARNER: The honourable member has been given all the latitude to make all these remarks

and I am giving the Committee the reasons why I have changed my mind. I think you should ask the Committee to decide the matter.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Committee will consider that the motion before them is that I do now report progress with leave for the Committee to sit again. This Committee cannot deal with things which happen all over the world. I am not permitting it.

Mr. GARNER: I nearly lost my life in St. Peter because a gang—

Mr. ADAMS: I take exception to those words. I ask that they be taken down and that the honourable member withdraw them.

The CHAIRMAN refused to hear the honourable member and asked Mr. SPEAKER to resume the Chair.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and, in accordance with Rule 142 (b), adjourned the House until this day week, the 22nd day of April, 1947, at twelve o'clock noon.