THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT).

SESSION 1946—1948

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 3rd June, 1947.

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

Present :

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

After prayers, Mr. S. A. WALCOTT enters the House and takes his seat.

MINUTES.

The Minutes of the meeting which was held on the 20th May, 1947, having been circulated are taken as read and confirmed.

DOCUMENTS

Mr. SPEAKER: I have the honour to inform the House that I have received the following:—

Statement of Revenue and Expenditure for the half year ended on the 31st March, 1947, from the Commissioners of Highways of the parish of Christ Church.

Statement of Revenue and Expenditure for the half year ended on the 31st. March, 1947, from the Commissioners of Highways of the parish of St. Peter.

Message from the Legislative Council returning the Resolution approving the Workmen's Compensation Regulations, 1941, with amendments.

Message from the Legislative Council returning the Resolution approving the Workmen's Compensation Regulations 1947, with an amendment.

Message from the Legislative Council informing the House that they have appointed the Honourable J. D. Chandler, the Honourable G. D. L. Pile, and the Honourable R. Challenor, members of their Body, a Select Committee to consider and report on the Bill to impose a levy on sugar and fancy molasses manufactured in this Island, to create funds for the benefit of the Sugar Industry of this Island and to provide for the administration of such funds and inviting the House to appoint a Committee of its House to co-operate with the above Committee.

Mr. CRAWFORD enters the House and takes his seat.

PAPERS LAID

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

Statement showing Gross Customs and Excise receipts for twelve months ended 31st March, 1947.

Statement of advances to the Colonial Postmaster for the payment of Money Orders to the 30th of April, 1947.

Mr. GARNER enters the House and takes his seat.

NOTICES.

Government Notices are given as follows:—

Mr. CRAWFORD: Resolution to place the sum of £958 at the disposal of the Governor-in-Executive Committee for payment to the suppliers of stone to the Department of Highways and Transport to enable them to pay increased wages to labour employed by them during the period 1st April, 1946, to 31st December, 1946, on the basis of wages payable to Unestablished and Casual staffs of Government Departments.

Mr. MOTTLEY enters the House and takes his seat.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Resolution to place the sum of £755 at the disposal of the Governor-in-Executive Committee to meet the cost of purchasing a motor lorry, equipping it with a water tank for the conveyance of water, and to provide for labour, materials and unforseen expenditure, in connection with the running of the lorry.

Mr. ADAMS: Resolution to place the sum of £3,142 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. ADAMS: Resolution to place the sum of £14,000 at the disposal of the Governor-in Executive Committee to provide for the purchase of building equipment and material, the property of the United States Government and now at Seawell Airport, the over-haul and repair of certain items of this equipment and other expenses incidental to the purchase.

Mr. CRAWFORD: I beg to give notice of my intention to move the suspension of Rules 88 and 89 in order to deal in all its stages to-day with the Resolution for £755 of which I have just given no

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to give notice of my intention to move the suspension of Rules 88 and 89 in order to deal to-day with the Resolution for £14,000 of which I have just given notice.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to give notice of my intention to move the House into Committee of Supply at its next meeting to consider certain money Resolutions of which notice has been given to-day.

QUESTIONS

Mr. BRANCKER: To enquire of the senior member of the Executive Committee present in the House at its next meeting:—

1. Whether it is a fact that a new sea-levelling project on the Panama Canal, Central America, is shortly to be put into execution?

2. If the answer is "Yes," will the Government make strenuous efforts to secure a quota for Barbadian workers to assist in the construction of this project?

EXCUSE FOR ABSENT MEMBER.

Mr. CRAWFORD offers an excuse for the absence, through illness, of the senior member for St. John (Dr. WILSON).

Mr. WILKINSON enters the House and takes his seat.

APPOINTMENT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker,—Before the Orders of the Day are called, I beg to move that a Select Committee be appointed to co-operate with the Select Committee appointed by the Other Place to consider and report on the Bill to impose a levy on sugar and fancy molasses manufactured in this Island, to create funds for the benefit of the sugar industry of this island and to provide for the administration of such funds.

Mr. SPRINGER: I beg to second that.

The question that a Select Committee be appointed for the purpose mentioned by the senior member for St. Joseph is put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Mr. SPEAKER: Subject to the approval of the House I appoint the following a Select Committee for the purpose:— The senior member for St. Peter (Mr. F. L. Walcott), the junior member for St. Michael (Mr. Gale), the junior member for the City (Mr. LEWIS), and the senior member for St. George (Mr. Springer).

Dr. CUMMINS enters the House and takes his seat.

STATEMENT *RE* EMIGRATION OF WORKERS TO THE U.S.A.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker,—I ask the leave of the House to make a statement of importance which will be public property soon but which the Government considers that the House should be made aware of before the general public.

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

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker,—Members of the House will recollect that in a Message No. 17 of 1947, His Excellency the Governor informed this House that the Labour Branch of the United States Department of Agriculture expected to recruit between 800 to 1,000 workers in Barbados and to transport them free of cost; and to recruit an additional 500 workers if this Government would bear the cost of their transportation to the United States of America.

I very much regret to have to inform you, Sir, that notification has been received within the last few days from the British authorities in Washington that the Labour Branch of the Department of Agriculture can now recruit only 300 workers from Barbados and that there is little or no hope of any additional number being recruited this year. The cost of the transport of these 300 workers will be borne by the United States authorities and recruitment is likely to take place in about a week's time.

The Government has not yet received a full report from the British authorities in Washington but information has been received that the United States Congress has just reduced the Labour Branch appropriations by over 50 per cent. The Labour Branch applied to Congress for $10,074,000 and this has been reduced to $5,000,000. Of this amount $2,000,000 is earmarked for state extension services so that the Labour Branch has only $3,000,000 at its disposal. There can be little doubt that this is the reason for the drastic reduction in the number of workers to be recruited.

As I have said, I am just giving the House all the information the Government has at its disposal. The Government is expecting at any moment a fuller report. The first bit of information was received four or five days ago and the last bit was received only yesterday, I believe. We are expecting to hear very soon more fully about the matter but it is only right to let the public know that very much to our regret there does not seem to be any possibility of getting a quota for more than 300 workers from Barbados this year. The Recruiting Officer, if not on his way, is about to leave for Barbados, so that the chance of a change in their decision is very remote.

SUSPENSION OF RULES 88 and 89.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker,—I now beg to move the suspension of Rules 88 and 89 in order to deal with the Resolution for £14,000 as well as the Resolution for £755 of which notice has been given earlier to-day.

Mr. SPRINGER: I beg to second that.

Mr. LEWIS: Mr. Speaker,—So far as the Resolution for £14,000 to purchase certain buildings and equipment at Seawell is concerned, I am agreeing to the suspension of the Rules because I am anxious to know something about this matter. It is common knowledge that the American military and naval units in the Caribbean have been leaving these islands and that leaving has been in process for a long time now. I think it is unfortunate that a Resolution for such a vast sum of money should come before this House with so few details as to the sizes of the buildings and the other things at Seawell that the Government is going to buy and that members should have to consider it in such a hurry. As I say, I am anxious to hear more about the matter and for that reason I am willing to agree to the suspension of the Rules.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Before you put the question, Sir, I just want to say that I have not been informed as to the procedure to-day and what is taking place. When I gave notice earlier of my intention to move the suspension of Rules 88 and 89 in order to deal with the Resolution for £755 to purchaase a motor lorry and equip it with a water tank I intended to deal with that Resolution after I had completed the one for £112,000 to meet the cost of making certain improvements in the water supply of the island. My intention was that those two Resolutions should be dealt with one after the other as they both relate to the water supply. I have not been instructed as

to why this change has taken place and I do not know what has happened.

The question that Rules 88 and 89 be suspended is put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to move that it be an instruction to the Committee of Supply, when the House is in Committee of Supply, to deal with the Resolutions for £14,000 and £755 respectively.

Mr. RAMSAY: I beg to second that.

The question that it be an instruction to the Committee of Supply, when the House is in Committee of Supply, to deal with the two abovementioned Resolutions is put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

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

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.

Mr. ADAMS: I would just like to say this. That is a very unfortunate statement which the senior member for St. Philip has just made. Had I been able to get hold of the honourable member before he came into the House, he would have known what was about to take place. But when the honourable member came in, he was informed that the two measures which the House proposes to deal with are the Resolution relating to the purchase of buildings and equipment at Seawell and the Hospital Bill I considered that the Resolution for £755 should also be dealt with to-day and, therefore, I included that as well. I beg to move that Your Honour do now leave the Chair and the House go into Committee of Supply.

Mr. SPRINGER: I beg to second that.

The question that Mr. SPEAKER do now leave the Chair and the House go into Committee of Supply is put and resolved in the affirmative without division

Mr. SPEAKER leaves the Chair and the House goes into Committee of Supply, Mr. RAMSAY being in the Chair.

PURCHASE OE BUILDINGS, EQUIPMENT AND MATERIAL AT SEAWELL FROM THE U.S. GOVERNMENT

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman,— The first Resolution with which I shall deal is for the sum of £14,000 to be placed at the disposal of the Governor-in Executive Committee to provide for the purchase of buildings, equipment and material, the property of the United States Government, and now at Seawell Airport, the overhaul and repairs of certain items of this equipment and other expenses incidental to the purchase. Perhaps I should preface what I am going to say by a brief remark in reply to the junior member for the City. As I go along, he will see that the Government is not to be blamed. For some time the United States Government has been pressing us for an answer as to whether we want this equipment and this Government, knowing—any Government would know—that it would be our duty to get all the information possible before coming to the House, got all the expert opinions it could get beforehand. It has taken us some time because we have had, in one case, to wait on Wing Commander Egglesfield and, in another, on Mr. Hodgson, whose official title, I believe, is Director of Telec Communications in the Bahamas, who were the only two experts in the West Indies. The Americans have constantly asked us to give them an answer and we had to wait on the opinions of the experts. Now we have the information to give the House, we have come as quickly as possible after; it would be impossible for us to do more. The addendum to this Resolution is pretty full but any specific detailed information honourable members may desire to have I shall give. I draw most especially to the notice of the Committee paragraphs 4 and 5 of the addendum and I will briefly say this. The Government did its utmost to get the Secretary of State for the Colonies to pay for this equipment, rather than that the money should come out of local funds. That was found to be impossible, either directly from the British Government or from Colonial Development and Welfare funds. As regards paragraph 5 the Government has been assured by the experts—and we are prepared to give the House that assurance—that the cost of the radio equipment alone, if it had to be bought now—and sooner or later it will have to be bought—would be much more than what the Americans are asking. The Resolution seeks to provide for the purchase of the buildings, the equipment and material at the airport, for overhauling and repairing certain items of this equipment and for other expenses incidental to the purchase. The amount comes to 67,000 odd American dollars and the equivalent in B.W.I. currency is roughly £14,000. As far back as February 4, Wing Commander Egglesfield, the Colonial Engineer, the Government Electrical Inspector, and other interested parties met Lt. Col. Murrell, of the U.S. Army, who has to see after the disposal of things of this nature in the Caribbean area and that was the beginning of the official discussions. The U.S. Authorities have been constantly asked to sell us the radio equipment alone but they have refused over and over again to sell piecemeal. They say "All or nothing;" they have pointed out to us that the cost of the whole turn-out is $134,000, exclusive of transport and handling charges and the cost of material brought from the U.S.A., so to start with, honourable members will see that, according to the expert opinion, we have not been done in the eye by the U.S. Government. We have also got the consent of the U.S. Government to re-sell any material that we may buy from them, either locally or abroad, in spite of the fact that they are fixing the price lower than they otherwise would have fixed it if we bought the whole lot; they have no objection, they say, to our taking advantage of that and selling things which we do not want. As I have pointed out, the negotiations started with the greatest expert, we are told, at present in the West Indies—Wing Commander Egglesfield—in conjunction with the Government Electrical Inspector and the Colonial Engineer. After they had an inspection of the buildings, the equipment and installations, Mr. Hodgson, Director of Telecommunications in the Bahamas, was got hold of and he visited Barbados and also inspected them. We were then informed by the British Government that they would give us the assurance which appears in paragraph 4 of the addendum, namely, that on the completion of the scheme which is still under consideration for aeronautical wireless services throughout the British West Indies, any of this surplus U.S. equipment which might be of value in connection with the scheme, would be purchased from our Government at the price we paid the U.S. Government for it. After that assurance was given, there was a further communication with the Secretary of State for the Colonies and another attempt was made to get him

to provide the money but he again made it clear that that was out of the question. There was then no alternative but to ask the Legislature for the money but he repeated his guarantee that any of the material which we do not want and which other islands need for their wireless services would be purchased from us. There is a certain amount of history attached to the aeronautical wireless services scheme in the West Indies dating back nearly two or three years. The Secretary of State for the Colonies, for instance, as far back as 1944 approved of a Colonial Development and Welfare grant of £5,000 to enable Mr. Hodgson to establish a nucleus organisation and to make detailed plans for the provision of aeronautical wireless services in the British West Indian Colonies. I dare suppose that honourable members will remember that much; that that has been in train since October, 1944. At this stage I will give honourable members information supplied us by the U.S. Authorities as to the cost of these installations and their present appraised values, showing how the sums are arrived at. Under the head, Fixed Improvements, as they call the buildings and so on, $61,868, present value $14,044. All installed property not removable $41,774, priced at $25,465 and Non-installed, movable property, radio equipment $29,883, present value $21,130. Those are the prices which total 61,000 odd dollars, which, as I say, is equivalent to roughly £14.000. The Government Electric Inspector inspected this wireless equipment and made a report strongly recommending the purchase of it. Wing Commander Egglesfield did likewise and so too did Mr. Hodgson who stated that all of the radio and electrical equipment is required in connection with the West Indian schemes. A good deal of it will be needed for Barbados and the remainder will be required for the other islands. I do not think there is more I can say, except to repeat that the Government has been most careful in dealing with this matter. If I am not disclosing a secret I may say that the Government rather dreaded the re-action of the Legislature to the sum of 61,000 American dollars and for that reason has been most careful in obtaining all the best possible advice that it could get in the West Indies, and Wing Commander Egglesfield would be an expert, I am told, anywhere. He was doing similar work in India; he must have been highly thought of to be selected by the Colonial Office for his present job as Director of Civil Aviation in the West Indies and they have assured us that this is cheap at the price; that the radio equipment alone is worth more than the money and that the Government is not going to lose by it but will lose if it let the opportunity go now and will have, I repeat, sooner rather than later to buy this stuff. As appears in the addendum we are at present using aeronautical wireless facilities which are inadequate while the radio equipment we are using up there is borrowed; in short, the Americans have lent it to us. Honourable members will see, set out in paragraph 2 of the addendum, the other articles,—motor vehicles including a heavy tractor, an ambulance, and a 2½ ton six-wheel truck. The ambulance will be needed at Seawell. We have been told that we have been extremely fortunate among airports of the world to have got by so far without accidents; even minor fires we have been spared. Other articles are: crash and fire equipment, office equipment and furniture including a safe, an adding machine, a duplicating machine, filing cabinets, three aircraft refuelling units, and sundries, including quantities of caustic soda—I am sure the soap factory experts will be glad to hear that—and fuel and lubricating oil. There is nothing that I can add but if honourable members ask for specific details as to what these buildings are I assure them— I hope an honourable member from whom I hear a remark is not really serious and I am serious when I make that statement. If the Government gives the absolute assurance that on the best possible advice this is cheap at the price, is the honourable member seriously going to ask me to tell him the size of a particular building at Seawell? Suppose I tell him 24 ft. by 18 ft. or 32 ft. by 16 ft. does it make any difference? The Government has, as clearly as possible, given this House the assurance that on the advice it has, this is a bargain and I can do no more than that, Mr. Chairman. The Government is prepared to stand or fall by that assurance. I beg to move, Sir, that this Resolution do now pass.

Mr. SPRINGER: I beg to second that.

Mr. LEWIS: Mr. Chairman,—I think that I will have to assure the senior member for St. Joseph that this is a matter about which, naturally, I would know nothing but that does not mean that the taxpayers of this colony are not entitled to the fullest possible information from the floor of the House. I may be unable to say what a building 24 ft. by 18 ft. is worth but a statement made on the floor of the House may be heard, say, by the junior member for St. James and if he does not know what a building 24 ft. by 18 ft. or 32 ft. by 16 ft. is worth if you tell him what it is made of, well, Sir, I had better not say the rest. A statement like that, made in the House, may fall on the ears of someone who knows something about the subject which is under discussion—I leave out for the moment, my colleague who knows all about things. That is the way I have to estimate the diligence with which the Government looks into these matters. The Government should be able to tell us the sizes of those buildings at Seawell; if it is not a military secret, the name of the equipment should be given so that somebody who knows something about it will be able to say whether it is a good brand or not. The next thing I would like to know is this. Can the honourable member say whether the Government Broadcasting System is likely to come out of this equipment? That is a matter on which I would like some information before I vote this money. Another thing I would like to know is whether the Government has considered setting up a broadcasting system with American equipment which it may have to replace with British equipment later on; or whether it has considered that this type of equipment might contain military secrets and would last for only a certain time in wartime but in peacetime, replacements may not be obtained for it. It is a very good thing to say that this is worth ten times the price but you can buy gold at too high a price. Those are things that I would like to know. I am merely asking the Government if it has considered these things. £14,000 is a lot of money for me to vote at this time when there may be other things which need more serious consideration. The sum of £1,320 was voted in the Estimates for the Government Electrical Department and I understood, not from the senior member for St. Joseph, that that money was to purchase equipment locally. I had heard from an unofficial source that that £1,320 was to buy equipment that was being sold by the American authorities at Seawell and I mentioned it, perhaps vaguely, in this House at the time. I would like to know if the Government Electric Inspector has purchased the equipment already with the £1,320 or if he is going to get it out of this block vote and use that £1,320 for the purchase of other equipment. If we buy this equipment which he had in mind, he could also use that money to import other equipment:

if he gets the necessary equipment out of this block vote, he could use that £1,320 to import other equipment from abroad. I am absolutely sure of that and no Auditor General could stop him. As far as the Government Electric Inspector giving an opinion about this equipment is concerned, honourable members will be well advised to reject this vote, if the Government Electric Inspector of Barbados has recommended it. If the Americans had fixed the price at three times what it is, he would have recommended it. This is an officer who likes the most modern equipment—ultra modern equipment; he has spent $720 in purchasing electrical books to teach morse code to a few people for this Government. That is the type of Government Electric Inspctor we have and it is unfortunate that his name has been brought into this matter at all. I think the taxpayers of this country have to be very careful in dealing with anything that has been recommended by the Government Electric Inspector. I do not think it is reasonable to ask me to leave alone such things as roads, water, light—things of that kind—and spend this money in buying this equipment that is being sold or being scrapped at Seawell—American equipment, to begin with, that may have to be replaced by British equipment for broadcasting purposes. All those things have to be looked into. When a man is buying a motor car, he usually discovers whether the agents are willing to stock spare parts; he may be getting a bargain in the initial stages but it may turn out to be a burden.

Mr. WILKINSON: I heartily agree with the remarks of the junior member for the City; it is rather a big pill to ask us to swallow at such short notice. I got my copy of the Resolution about ten o'clock this morning and certainly honourable members have not had time to make the enquiries which they would wish to make in this matter. As far as I know, I believe that this would be a good buy but I do think that we should have a little more time to consider it. I think it might be feasible to appoint a Committee to go into the matter, rather than vote £14,000 of the taxpayers' money to-day for something that we really know nothing about. Paragraph 2 of the addendum states that approximately 60% of the purchase price is represented by radio and electrical equipment but they do not tell us—and I do not think that the senior member for St. Joseph has told us—what it is going to be used for. I rather gather from his remarks that we are going to buy all this; that possibly a good deal of this radio and electrical equipment will not be required and that we have hopes of selling it to the other islands. Well, Sir, I do not think that we are to-day in a position to finance experiments in the other islands. The honourable member who has just spoken does not have a very high opinion of the Government Electric Inspector but I suppose he would be put in charge of this equipment and what is he going to do? I do not believe that this has anything to do with broadcasting. As far as I know, this is mostly a location plant to locate and get in touch with aeroplanes. I think it is very necessary in modern airlines but at the same time I think this proposal deserves more consideration and that we should be given more information. I, therefore, beg to move that the further consideration of this Resolution be postponed.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman.—I am asking honourable members not to agree to that for the reasons I have given. Who would not cheerfully agree to send this Resolution to a Select Committee or postpone it if anything is to be gained by so doing? We send it to a Select Committee and whom are they going to ask about the matter?—Wing Commander Egglesfield, the Government Electric Inspector and they are going to tell the Committee what they told the Government. The Americans have been constantly telling us that they want an answer; they wanted an answer since the 26th April. The Government has thoroughly investigated the matter and has come to the House at the earliest possible opportunity after. Nothing can be gained by postponing the Resolution, except the chance of the equipment going to South America. I have an inventory here and can read it all if honourable members want me to do so but what sense is it going to make to us laymen? Are we going to question Wing Commander Egglesfield when he says that it is a good bargain? Members of the Executive Committee went to Seawell and got the re-assurance from him that it is a first-class bargain and he himself has his eye on certain items; things that are going to be white elephants, we can sell, through the Secretray of State for the Colonies, to the other islands. That is the position. We are benefiting ourselves but instead of allowing any of the equipment, which we do not want, to rust we will sell it, perhaps, for twice as much as we pay for it. Make it a matter of confidence in the Government, if you like. The Government can only go by its technical advisers and the Government has given an assurance on the advice of the experts in the West Indies. What more can it do? I ask honourable members either to vote for or against the Resolution.

Mr. S. A. WALCOTT: Mr. Chairman,—I beg to second the motion of the junior member for St. James. The senior member for St. Joseph has told us that the Government has been negotiating in this matter for a long time but, Sir, some of us got our copies of this Resolution last night and I do not think it is fair to us to ask us to come here and vote £14,000 of the taxpayers' money at such short notice. While the Government was negotiating in this matter, its members could easily have come to this House and told us what is taking place. They could not expect us to come here and vote £14,000 of the taxpayers' money at such short notice. £14,000 might sound a little bit of money but to me it is a lot of money. This Resolution has not been on the Order Paper even for a week and I do not think this House should vote the people's money in this manner.

Mr. GALE: I think that certain honourable members are looking at this matter in the wrong direction. The question is whether this equipment is necessary or not. If our airport is to be an up-to-date airport, then it is imperative that we should should have this equipment at Seawell. We hear the talk all over the country that we would like more planes to come to Barbados bringing and carrying passengers and if we have not got proper radio equipment at Seawell, it is very unlikely that more planes will come to Barbados. We have no ambulance, no fire fighting apparatus at our airport and all those things are necessary. These things which are owned by the American Government are on the spot and if we lose the chance of buying them to-day we might have to spend £28,000 instead of £14,000 later on. The Resolution has certainly come down at a rather late hour and certain honourable members have not had time to go into the matter but I do not feel that that is a sufficient reason for turning down this Resolution. We have read the addendum; we have heard what the Government has done and it is for us to make up our minds one way or the other to-day. I do not see that the putting off of the Resolution until next week is going to make any difference. If the equipment will be necessary next week it is necessary to-day; therefore, what is the good of postponing the Resolution?

Mr. F. L. WALCOTT: I agree with the last honourable member who has spoken. There are occasions on which matters may be postponed for further information but when you postpone this Resolution, you are postponing it only to hear what you have already heard to-day. It means that you either have no confidence in the Leader of the House when he makes a statement or that you believe people like the junior member for the City who tells us that the Government Electric Inspector is incompetent. I say that if any honourable member feels that a Government servant is incompetent, he should draw it to the attention of the House with the view of bringing it to the notice of the Governor and eventually to the notice of the Secretary of State for the Colonies—

Mr. LEWIS: On a point of explanation. I would like to ask the honourable member at what stage of my remarks did I say that the Government Electric Inspector is incompetent. I particularly said that the Government Electric Inspector would recommend the purchase of this equipment because he was ultra modern. I even said that he bought $720 in books to teach a few people morse code.

Mr. F. L. WALCOTT: I do not want to challenge the honourable member's statement that he said the Government Electric Inspector was competent but a child, anybody with a nodding acquaintance of the English language, would understand from the remarks of the honourable member that this officer is incompetent; that is the only inference to be drawn from his remarks and I say that he has his proper course to take in a matter of that sort. As regards this Resolution, certain honourable members stand on the same sentimental ground as they usually stand in their electioneering campaigns. They talk about voting away the people's money. This is the only place in which the people's money can be voted. When you are voting money here, you are voting the people's money and that is the whole crux of the situation. If this is for something that is worthwhile, it does not matter whether you vote the money to-day or next week. If something happened to any of the families of the honourable members for St. James while coming here by a plane which landed at Seawell and they discovered that it was due to the fault of the Government, they would bring down the wrath of God, stating that the Government had the advantage of obtaining these facilities but would not spend the money to purchase them. As the junior member for St. Michael has said this is for something that is required at airports in all parts of the world if they are to be up-to-date. If any honourable member can assure me that by postponing this Resolution he will be able to get more information than what the senior member for St. Joseph has given us I will agree to the postponement. But the senior member for St. Joseph has told us that the Government Electric Inspector and the Director of Civil Aviation in the West Indes have given their opinions in the matter and they are the people to give us the information and on whose advice we have to work. I am saying that honourable members are fast losing respect for their own House; they are saying that the Government is doing something but that they are nothing to do with the Government when at the same time they vote money to keep these Government officials in office.

Mr. LEWIS: Mr. Chairman,—I would like to reply to certain remarks———

THE CHAIRMAN: I will put the question for the postponement of the Resolution first.

Mr MOTTLEY: Before that is done, Mr. Chairman, I would like to find out one or two things. Personally I am satisfied that the best qualified brains, up to now, have been asked to give some valuation of this equipment. I am also satisfied that this equipment is partly being loaned to this Government for use at Seawell Airport. Now, Sir, there is only one thing I should like answered, if it is possible to answer it. Paragraph 2 of the addendum states that approximately 60% of the purchase price is represented by radio and electrical equipment. I do not think it would be asking too much if we enquired, in view of such a large proportion of the purchase price, whether this equipment is of standard make. That is not asking too much and I think the honourable Leader of the House will agree with me that there is something in that. If this is only wartime equipment, the House should be entitled to know whether or not it will be purchasing something that cannot be replaced and for which parts cannot be obtained. I entirely agree with my colleague when he says that that information is essential.

Mr. GARNER: I myself am in favour of these questions which have been asked because only yesterday afternoon I received this Resolution and I come here to-day to find the Leader of the House with the portfolio of another member of the Executive Committee. I want to know if the arrangement, as far as this Government is concerned, has been changed because I think this portfolio belongs to the senior member for St. Philip; it seems strange to me. Anyhow, I make that statement in passing. I think that some of the questions which have been asked should be answered before we pass this Resolution and I counsel honourable members to vote for the postponement of it. You cannot always take things and throw them down people's throats. This is a matter of which somebody said we are ignorant and rightly so; therefore, we should refer it to a Select Committee. If a man pleads ignorance of certain things, he is honest. I am pleading ignorance of this and I think that we should be able to make enquiry from citizens who know something about it. How can you expect me to come here and vote £14,000 for something about which I know nothing? The Housing Board cannot come into being yet and we are asked to vote £14,000 to purchase this equipment while the people are homeless. It is a fallacy to come here and and vote away the people's money for a purpose like this. This House is committed to the mass of people in Barbados first and then to things after. Our duty, Sir, is to see that the mass of people get pieces of land on which they can put their houses. The Government should first see to it that the mass of people get houses in which to live, proper roads on which to travel and then such things as this equipment will come afterwards. But we are becoming a hybrid. This Government is capable of doing nothing but throwing away the people's money. If this equipment was not here, would we buy it? If this was not on the spot, would we buy it? We hear so much about peace and we are buying all sorts of equipment for war. Why should we invest our money in the interest of the other West Indian Islands? Why should we become the agents of certain other West Indian Islands? If the British Government with all its capital cannot do that, why should little Barbados be drawn into it? I do not see why we should be asked to do a thing like that. If the Secretary of State wants to invest money for that purpose, let him do so. We do not want any assurance that he may give in this matter. We cannot go to London and tell them what to do up there. As an elected representative of the people I am saying that he should not tell us what to do. I have no voice in London and I do not see why he should have so much prerogative over this House. That is my opinion and any other honourable member can express his opinion. What we should be interested in, Mr. Chairman, is getting houses for the mass of the people, getting land for them, giving them more cheap food and doing things of that nature: then this Government would be operating rightly. But to do all these fantastic things about which we know nothing is preposterous.

Mr. TALMA enters the House while Mr. GARNER is speaking and takes his seat.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman,—As far as the question asked by the senior member for the City is concerned, the answer is that the equipment is absolutely brand new; it is of standard make and according to the reports before me it most appears to be in excellent condition.

The question that the further consideration of the Resolution be postponed is put and resolved in the negative, the division being as follows:—

Ayes: Messrs. LEWIS, GARNER, TALMA, S. A. WALCOTT, and WILKINSON.—5.

Noes: Messrs. MOTTLEY, F. L. WALCOTT, COX, FOSTER, MAPP, Dr. CUMMINS, Messrs. SPRINGER, ADAMS, BLACKMAN, CRAWFORD, HAYNES, GALE, and Mr. SPEAKER.—13.

Mr. LEWIS: Mr. Chairman,—I would like to say that I do not feel that if this Resolution was postponed you might get other technical advice so far as the equipment is concerned, but what you have to understand is that very often you come here to the House and either vote money or pass some Bill and while you are going down the stairs, somebody tells you that if you had only known what he could tell you, at least you might have postponed the Resolution or the Bill as the case may be. I am not saying that that advice is always right. I am not saying that such an advice may not be biased but the fact remains that honourable members have to consult and get more information wherever they can. I am saying that equipment which has been made for war purposes have got to be of a nature that if the enemy were to steal a part of the whole of it they cannot easily make adjustments. That is the point I endeavoured to make and I wanted to know whether it is purely wartime equipment or whether replacements can be made if it is used in peacetime. Those are things we should know and if the senior member for St. Joseph cannot supply the information off-hand, he may be able to supply it later on before I am called upon to vote this sum of money. I have to-day heard from the floor of this House one of the greatest disappointments to the people of this country, that is, instead of 1,500 workers going to the U.S.A. this year, only 300 will be going and I have to satisfy my constituents. Again, this House is made up of members of three Parties, one of which is not represented in the Government and if they ask that this matter be postponed for further consideration I feel that I should support their request.

The CHAIRMAN: The honourable member has already voted on the question for the postponement.

Mr. LEWIS: I am explaining that in addition to one fact there is another that is worthy of consideration. That is the way I feel about this matter. I am willing to vote for this Resolution on the understanding that my question is answered satisfactorily. I have not had a reply to the question I asked about the equipment that is to be bought by the Government Electric Inspector. I wish to have a definite answer because it was stated on the floor of the House that whatever equipment that could not be got locally would be imported.

Mr. WILKINSON: Perhaps the senior member for St. Joseph could give us some information about this. Sub-paragraph (a) of paragraph 2 of the addendum states:—"Motor vehicles including a heavy tractor, an ambulance and a 2½ ton six-wheel truck." Can the honourable member tell us how many motor vehicles are there and whether they include any jeeps?

Mr. ADAMS: There are one heavy tractor, one ambulance, one 2½ ton truck. The ambulance will be kept as an ambulance and there are no jeeps.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the honourable member answer the question of the junior member for the City?

Mr. ADAMS: Every penny of that £1,320 was set out in the explanatory notes on the page of the Estimates dealing with the Government Electric Inspector. It states:—"Increase of £1,220 for the purchase of new equipment including wireless frequency measuring, monitoring and D/F equipment £1,050; interference tracing equipment £150; one recording voltmeter £50, one power factor meter £40, one precision ammeter £50; one high-voltage 'Megger' £100." He cannot purchase them twice. If he buys them from Seawell, it comes out of these funds and the £1,320 lapses. If he does not buy them from Seawell, he will import them. How, therefore, can he buy them twice? He cannot take any of this vote and spend it for anything else because it is specifically stated how the £1,320 is to be spent.

Mr. TALMA: I would like to know what is the urgency about this matter. Why is it that we have received copies of this Resolution only yesterday and to-day?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The senior member for St. Joseph has already expressed his regret that honourable members did not receive their copies before. If the honourable member was in his place earlier he would have heard the explanation and his question would not have arisen. The senior member for St. Joseph has already explained the reason for the urgency of the matter.

Mr. TALMA: Although I did not happen to be in my seat I can still ask the question. In spite of your position as Chairman—I anticipate how you may feel——

The CHAIRMAN: It would serve no useful purpose if the entire House kept away and members come in one by one and ask for the explanation. That is all I am saying.

Mr. TALMA: Couldn't you have said what the statement was?

The CHAIRMAN: It is too long for me to say.

Mr. TALMA: Mr. Chairman,—I am saying that this procedure is entirely wrong. I cannot see the reason for pushing through a measure with which very few of the members of the House are not acquainted and about which the members of the Executive Committee probably know very little. I do not see the reason for pressing this Resolution to-day. I am speaking on behalf of the people who sent me here (Cheers). If it is because the senior member for St. Joseph, the Leader of the House, is going to the U.S.A. very soon and he wishes to show the American government—

The CHAIRMAN: The honourable member must not make any such imputations. I wish the honourable member will make his remarks in a parliamentary manner.

Mr. TALMA: I have read that the honourable member is leaving for the U.S.A. to day and if this is a gesture—

The CHAIRMAN: That is not before the Committee.

Mr. TALMA: If this is a gesture to ingratiate himself,—a gesture with which none of the members of the House are acquainted,—if that is the suggestion then I feel it is an absolute waste of time to be around here. Mr. Chairman, I humbly beg to apologize for any insulting remarks I have made, especially as far as you are concerned but this is the wrong way to do Government Business.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Before you put the question Mr. Chairman, I should like to say that I think that perhaps all things considered it is very fortun-

ate from several points of view that I have gone into this matter very thoroughly. I have discussed it with several of the appropriate authorities and I am convinced to a certain extent that we shall be well advised to acquire this equipment. However, if I had not agreed to it I am sure that the situation to-day would have been entirely different from what it is and I should have used my influence to see that it remains different. The honourable members who are pressing for more detailed information in this matter are perfectly in order. To come here and ask honourable members to vote £14,000 of the taxpayers' money purely on the say-so of people in whom, manifestly, they have no confidence is asking a lot. But the fact remains that almost every question asked on the floor of the House to-day could have been answered to the satisfaction of every honourable member. Sir, incidentally, I need hardly remind you but I am sure that like myself you realize that the House of Assembly is hardly the place to begin to train people; they should be taught elsewhere. I am saying that all these questions could have been answered and the senior member for St. Joseph could have begun by stating that four years ago the Secretary of State for the Colonies in a special despatch criticized adversely the fact that the aeronautical wireless services at first were being operated by a private company instead of being a government concern. That was the major point in an appeal to the local government to take steps to acquire its own ground services rather than being entirely dependent on the services installed by someone else. And he might have gone further along the line mentioned by the junior member for St. Michael and explained how advantageously it would be to the colony, from the point of view of attracting other lines which do not come here, if we equip the airport with all the most modern, up-to-date facilities and satisfy to the limit honourable members and people outside who may feel that we are so lacking in a sense of responsibility that we come here and fritter away £14,000 of the taxpayers' money. I am in complete agreement with this Resolution and, therefore, I shall support it. But part and parcel of the regrettable situation which has arisen here today is due to the topsy-turvy manner in which public business is being conducted in this colony. You cannot make a silver purse out of a sow's ear and if we do not have the entire machinery of Government operating on a proper basis you must expect in the long run to have nothing but chaos and even worse one of these days. Now, Sir, the appropriate government official went to the trouble, expended the time and energy and what not in preparing a most detailed memorandum which would have satisfied minutely every member who raised questions on the floor of this House to-day, but the poor fellow in his profound ignorance made the mistake of putting that memorandum in the wrong person's hands and he gave it to your humble servant under the impression that in this Assembly matters relating to Communications of the Island were dealt with by your humble servant. Like the senior member for Christ Church, I am forced to wonder, not why there is so much haste but what is the reason, what is the ulterior motive, what is the special cause, what is the real, real factor, what is the motive for the assumption of the responsibility of dealing with this Resolution by the senior member for St. Joseph. The senior member for Christ Church ventured to suggest a motive. Perhaps, Sir, in your superior wisdom you are in a position to inform the House what is the motive—

Mr. TALMA: On a point of explanation. I did not suggest any motive at all, but it does appear to the average, naked eye and to average semi-illiterate people like myself that there is a reason for so doing.

Mr. CRAWFORD: I only mention it in passing because I want both this Chamber and the public to be satisfied that if we were conducting Government Business in a satisfactory and statesmanlike manner, all these questions which have arisen and which may remain unanswered would have been answered to-day before this debate was concluded and the public and honourable members would have felt quite satisfied in their minds, when the report of the debate was made public, that the elected representatives of the people were discharging their obligations and were, as is to be expected, quite mindful of their duty to the taxpayers of this country. I say, Sir, in conclusion, that it is fortunate, very fortunate that in this particular instance I am in agreement with the motion before the Committee, otherwise I know the means by which I could get the material to make it perfectly plain to the Head of the Administration that the people of this country deserve decent standards of administration, and a decent policy in the conduct of Government Business; that they are entitled to it and must have it.

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

PURCHASE OF A LORRY TO CONVEY WATER

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chairman,—The next Resolution has, unfortunately, some of the aspects of the first, that is to say, we are asking the leniency of the Committee to deal with it without having put into circulation copies of the Resolution but if honourable members, after hearing what I have to say, want the matter postponed for a week I shall be willing to agree to its postponement. I want to assure the Committee that it is a fairly urgent matter; it is a matter over which there can hardly be any controversy and it is a matter which in the interest of the people concerned, we should deal with as expeditiously as possible. This Resolution is for the sum of £755 to meet the cost of purchasing a motor lorry, equipping it with a water tank for the conveyance of water, and to provide for labour, materials and unforeseen expenditure in connection with the running of the lorry. The addendum states that owing to the lack of a constant supply of water in the Castle-Boscobelle District of St. Peter, and as a result of a further deterioration in the supply as the result of the prolonged drought it is considered that means should be found to provide a regular supply to that district for drinking purposes. It is accordingly proposed to purchase a motor lorry and to equip it with a tank of 700 gallons capacity in order that regular supply of drinking water may be made available to the persons living in the district and the estimated cost of the lorry and tank and the cost of running it as follows:—(Capital Cash) one lorry (nett duty free) £520. 16. 8., tank with necessary valves £83. 6. 8., hose pipe and unforseen expenditure £20. 16. 8. (Recurrent Expenditure) gasolene, oil, grease, etc. £43, driver and attendant £70, unforeseen expenditure say £17, making a total of £775 These estimates are based on a period of three months because it is felt that within that time the water supply will be so improved that there will be no further need to utilize this method of carrying water for people in that district. It is proposed ultimately to utilize the lorry in connection with the re-organization of the water supply recommended in

the Roddam report; in other words, when the necessity no longer arises for the conveyance of water by this lorry, we shall be using it to transport materials, equipment, hose and so on, which will be necessary, Sir, in the large and comprehensive scheme for the improvement and extension of the water supply system. I may add that there are two or three other districts for which this lorry will be needed immediately—a part of the upper Christ Church area, and a part of the Church Village area in St. Philip which is suffering severely from a lack of water and has been so suffering for months. It is proposed, Sir, to use this lorry on different days during the week to supply water to these areas and I am sure that honourable members, like myself, earnestly pray and hope that the conditions which make the procurement of this lorry necessary will soon cease to exist. I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Mr. GARNER: I beg to second that.

Mr. S. A. WALCOTT: Mr. Chairman,—The circumstances surrounding this Resolution are worse than those in connection with the one we just passed. In the former case we had a day's notice but we have not had even a moment's notice in this case. However, this a much more pressing matter. I know it is because I have visited the district where people are suffering from the lack of a supply of Government water. I am not surprised that the Government Waterworks Department is not being run satisfactorily. This is only a makeshift and as there are several lorries with tanks in the island which will supply this need I would suggest to the Government that instead of buying a new lorry, it should rent one for three months and I think that would be cheaper than what it is suggesting here to-day. I am not opposing this Resolution. I think it is necessary but I do not think that one lorry is sufficient. I think that about four will be required for this purpose.

Mr. F. L. WALCOTT: Mr. Chairman,—It is hardly necessary for me to say how much I appreciate this Resolution. You, Sir, happen to be my colleague and you know that the two of us have visited the district mentioned in the addendum to this Resolution and have seen the hardships which the people have to undergo; also that at personal inconvenience to ourselves we took water to the people in this area. But this is what I would like to say, Mr. Chairman. No legislator, no member of the Government has any right to exploit great human problems for dirty or political reasons. A thing like a water shortage is nothing that a Party should make political capital of and it is a great reflection on any man's mentality when he tries to use the shortage of water as if it is something some person is holding back and will not give while the other person is willing to give it. I make that statement because I note with great disapproval that a member of this Government, the introducer of this Resolution, wrote an article in which certain statements were made, not with the idea of helping the situation but of using such a serious situation like this for political purposes. We all, Mr. Chairman, as human beings realize our duties and our responsibilities to the people whom we have the honour to represent. This is a matter that affects the island as a whole and I should like to say in conclusion that the sending down of this Resolution for this purpose is a very thoughtful act on the part of the Government, for which they are to be commended.

Mr. SPRINGER: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that you report the passing of one Resolution in Committee of Supply and ask leave to sit again. I say that for this reason. If it is desirable, we may devote more time to the consideration of this Resolution but for the purpose of getting before the House the Resolution which is already passed and which is very urgent. I beg to move that you report the passing of one Resolution and ask leave to sit again.

Mr. COX: I beg to second that.

Mr. LEWIS: I would like to suggest to the senior member for St. Philip that during the luncheon interval he get a few typewritten copies of this Resolution to be handed around to members of the House.

The question that the Chairman do now report the passing of one Resolution in Committee of Supply and ask leave to sit again is put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

The CHAIRMAN reports and the House resumes.

On the motions of Mr. SPRINGER, seconded by Dr. CUMMINS in each case, the Resolution which is passed in Committee of Supply is read a first and a second time and is agreed to.

Mr. SPEAKER then adjourns the House until 2.45 p.m. in accordance with Rule 40 (a).

NO QUORUM—THE ADJOURNMENT.

On re-assembling.

Mr. SPEAKER: It now being a quarter to three and there being only eleven members present, this House stands adjourned until this day week at twelve o'clock noon.