

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT).

SESSION 1946—1948

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 6th May, 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*), Mr. J. T. C. RAMSAY, (*Chairman of Committees*), Dr. J. A. LEV. WILSON, Messrs. L. E. SMITH, F. L. WALCOTT, M. E. COX, D. A. FOSTER, R. G. MAPP, H. W. SPRINGER, M.A., H. D. BLACKMAN, C. E. TALMA, J. A. HAYNES, B.A., and V. C. GALE.

After prayers, Messrs. S. A. Walcott and Adams enter the House and take their seats.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting which was held on the 29th April, 1947, having been circulated are taken as read and confirmed.

DOCUMENT

Mr. SPEAKER: I have the honour to inform the House that I have received a Statement of Revenue and Expenditure from the Highway Commissioners of the parish of St George for the half year ended on the 31st March, 1947.

PAPERS LAID.

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

Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer for the year 1945—46.

Report of the Auditor General on the Audit of the Accounts of the Colony for the year 1945—46.

Report on the Excise Branch of the Customs Department for the year 1946.

Statement of the sums of money paid over to the Colonial Treasurer by the Commissioner of Police during the quarter ended on the 31st of March, 1947.

Financial Statement re operation of crop, 1946, at the Government Factory, Lancaster.

Statement regarding the present position of the soap industry.

Mr. WILKINSON enters the House and takes his seat.

NOTICES

Government Notices are given as follows:—

Mr. BLACKMAN (On behalf of Mr. CRAWFORD): Resolution to place the sum of £9,040 at the disposal of the Department of Highways and Transport to complete the works set out in Column I of the Schedule to the resolution to the extent of the amount set out in Column II of the said Schedule.

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

Mr. SPRINGER: 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. BRANCKER gives notice of a Bill to amend the Supervision of the weighing of Sugar Canes Act, 1939—1.

QUESTIONS.

Mr. BRANCKER: To enquire of the Senior Member of the Executive Committee present at the next meeting of this House:—

(1) Whether Government is aware that photographs of certain convicted persons who have served their terms of imprisonment are framed and are on display conspicuously at various Police Stations in this Island?

(2) Will Government cause the immediate discontinuance of this practice so that such persons as above may not thereby be handicapped in their quest for employment in their efforts to become useful members of society again?

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

(1) Whether there are instances wherein certain persons who are ordered to stand their trial at the Court of Grand Sessions by a Police Magistrate, have been required by the Police to have their fingerprints taken?

(2) If the answer is "yes", will Government cause this practice immediately to cease, except in the case of persons who are actually convicted?

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

1. On how many occasions during the previous crop season has the scale beam at Spring Hall Factory, St. Lucy, been inspected by

- (a) A Member of the Police Force.
- (b) A Justice of the Peace.
- (c) Officers of the Department of Science and Agriculture.
- (d) Itinerant Canes Inspectors?

2. Has any complaint been made or error found in the weighing of canes at this Factory on 17.4.47. or any other date?

3. If the answer to (2) is Yes, will the Government give particulars, and also state what steps have been taken or are contemplated to make good any loss to those persons, if any, who may have suffered as a result of errors?

4. Whether there was any delay in the arrival of the Police called to inspect the Springhall scale beam on 17. 4. 47?

Dr. CUMMINS, Mr. CRAWFORD and Mr. GARNER enter the House and take their seats.

Mr. TALMA: To enquire from the Senior Member of the Executive Committee present at the next meeting of the House:

Will the Government say:

(1) Whether the cancellation of the former order restricting the supply of water for Gardens and Clubs was made after consultation with the Engineer and Manager of the Waterworks Department and with his approval?

(2) Whether the present short supply of water in the parish of Christ Church and other parts of the Island for essential services is due directly or indirectly to the cancellation of the order?

(3) If not, will the Government say what is the reason of the present short supply and what action they propose to take?

SELECT COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Mr. WILKINSON hands in the Report of the Select Committee appointed to draft a Reply to His Excellency's Message No. 1/1947 relating to Barbados contributing to the Caribbean Tourist Association.

BILLS READ A FIRST TIME

On the motion of Mr. SPRINGER, seconded by Mr. ADAMS, a 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 is read a first time.

On the motion of Mr. BRANCKER, seconded by Dr. WILSON, a Bill to amend the Supervision of the weighing of Sugar Canes Act, 1939—1, is read a first time.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. SPEAKER: The first Order of the Day is to resume Committee of Supply to consider the grant of sums of money for the service of the Government.

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

On the motion of Mr. SPRINGER, seconded by Mr. ADAMS, the CHAIRMAN reports progress and asks leave to sit again.

The House resumes.

RESOLUTION Re EX GRATIA GRANT TO ELTON HAYNES WITHDRAWN

Mr. SPRINGER: Mr. Speaker,—The point I want to raise is this. Your Honour will recollect that at the last meeting I indicated that it was proposed

to alter the terms of Resolution No. 1 to be dealt with in Committee of Supply. We have now decided to alter those terms, both as to the Resolution and the addendum, and I would like permission to substitute another Resolution for the one on the Order Paper. It varies in two respects—the sum of £120 for £70—

Mr. SPEAKER: You want to withdraw this Resolution for the purpose of substituting a new one?

Mr. SPRINGER: That is what it is in substance, Mr. Speaker. I ask leave to withdraw Resolution No. 1 for the purpose of introducing a substituted Resolution in its place.

There being no objection the honourable member is allowed to proceed.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think you have to give notice of the new Resolution.

Mr. SPRINGER: I beg to give notice of a Resolution for £120 to be granted from the Public Treasury to Mr. Elton E. Jones as an *ex gratia* grant in consideration of his years of service as an elementary school teacher.

SUSPENSION OF RULES 88 AND 89

Mr. SPEAKER: If the honourable senior member for St. George wants to deal with that Resolution to-day he must move the suspension of Rules 88 and 89.

Mr. SPRINGER: I now ask leave to move the suspension of Rules 88 and 89 in order to deal, in all its stages to-day, with the Resolution of which I just gave notice.

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

Mr. SPRINGER: I beg to move that Rules 88 and 89 be suspended.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to second that.

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

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

EX GRATIA GRANT TO ELTON JONES

Mr. SPRINGER: Mr. Chairman,—The new Resolution is for £120 instead of £70. The addendum states that Mr. Elton Jones was employed as an elementary school teacher for a period of seven years and retired from the Service on medical grounds. Apart from his appointment to an elementary school, he was employed as an honorary pupil teacher and it is proposed to grant him a gratuity of £120, the equivalent of one year's salary in respect of his two periods of service. I do not think there is going to be any controversy over this matter. It is a very unfortunate case. The gentleman went to the War in the R. A. F., returned last year, resumed duties, then unfortunately fell ill and had to be invalided out of the Teaching Service. He has a family and the Authorities regret very much to lose his services. I beg to move that the Resolution do now pass.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

Mr. TALMA: Mr. Chairman,—Before you put the question I would like to know whether the time is not ripe for some amendment to be made relative to the manner in which such pensions or gratuities

are granted. I would like to know from the senior member of the Executive Committee present in the House if one month's salary for each completed year of service is regarded as a fit and proper reward for such services. I know that I will be told that one month's salary for each completed year of service is laid down as the basis, so I do not care to hear any reply along those lines. I want to know if in the minds of the members of the Executive Committee they consider that one month's salary for each year of service is a fair and adequate sum for work of this nature. My point of view is that it is not enough. If anyone renders the Government 10 years' service I feel that one month's remuneration for each completed year of service is not a fair and adequate sum for ten years' service. For ten years' service one gets ten months' salary as a gratuity (Mr. SPRINGER: No, he gets a pension). I would like to know if the Government has in mind an improvement of that state of affairs or whether it feels that this is ample compensation for service of this sort.

Mr. SPRINGER: It is difficult to answer the honourable member; he has not offered any suggestion that can be considered as a better basis. This is the system that is adopted throughout the Service. People who have not given ten years' service to the Government have no claim but the Government has, for a long time now, been making these *ex gratia* payments and I have never heard any complaints. I regard it as adequate in the circumstances. It is an *ex gratia* payment to compensate the gentleman who became ill and was forced to retire. It is an act of generosity on the part of the Government.

Mr. TALMA: I should like to point out that the retiring age has been reduced.

Mr. SPRINGER: It has certainly not.

Mr. TALMA: The retiring age is being reduced from 65 years to 60 years.

Mr. SPRINGER: I have no information to that effect. The honourable member has been a member of this House for over three years and should know that the reduction of the retiring age cannot be effected without the sanction of the Legislature.

Mr. TALMA: I am saying that it is being reduced. I am wondering whether the Government has in mind the reduction of the qualifying period for a pension; instead of ten years it should be five years.

THE CHAIRMAN: Before I put the question I should like to say that I think the honourable senior member for Christ Church has stated a case which is worthy of consideration.

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

On the motion of Mr. SPRINGER, seconded by Mr. Cox, the Chairman reports the passing of the Resolution in Committee of Supply.

The House resumes and on the motions of Mr. SPRINGER, seconded by Dr. CUMMINS in each case, the Resolution is read a first and a second time and is agreed to.

THE FACTORIES BILL.

Mr. SPEAKER: The next Order is to resume Committee on the Bill to make provision for the registration and supervision of factories and for the safety of workers employed therein.

Mr. SPEAKER leaves the Chair and the House resumes Committee on the Bill, Mr. RAMSAY being in the Chair.

Clauses 25 to 28 inclusive are read and agreed to.

Clause 29. (1) The period of employment and the intervals for meals and rest, for every woman or young person shall conform to such conditions as may be prescribed.

(2) For the purposes of this part of this Act—
“Woman” means a woman of the age of sixteen years and upwards.

“Young person” means a person who has attained the age of fourteen years and who is under the age of sixteen years.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to move that that be Clause 29 of the Bill.

Mr. BLACKMAN: I beg to second that.

Mr. TALMA: I would like to ask the member of the Executive Committee who is handling this particular Bill a question. I see that the term “young person” is defined as a person who has attained the age of fourteen years and who is under the age of sixteen years. What provision is being made for a person under 14 years? (Voices: He should not be employed). I am not suggesting that he should be employed but he is employed and I would like to know what provision is being made for him.

The CHAIRMAN: It is against the law to employ persons under 14 years.

Mr. TALMA: What is the penalty?

The CHAIRMAN: I refer the honourable member to the Act which deals with the question.

The question that Clause 29 stand part of the Bill is put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Clause 30. (1) The Governor-in-Executive Committee may make regulations for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Act and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing provisions any such regulations may provide for—

- (a) securing safety in connection with all operations carried on in a factory;
 - (b) securing safety in connection with the use of cranes, winches, pulley blocks and of all engines, machinery, mechanical gear and contrivances whatsoever;
 - (c) first aid appliances;
 - (d) the test to be applied to boilers;
 - (e) the space to be allowed for workers;
 - (f) the plan and system of fire escape;
 - (g) the fee to be paid to a Police Medical Officer performing duties under this Act;
 - (h) the fees to be paid for the registration and renewal of registration of any factory or of any class of factory, and for the inspection or examination of any factory or class of factory, and any machinery therein, and for the issue of boiler certificates;
- Provided that in no case shall the fee for registration or re-registration exceed fifty pounds;
- (i) the forms to be used under the provisions of this Act;
 - (j) prescribing anything which is required by this Act to be prescribed.

(2) All regulations made under the provisions of this section shall be published in the Official Gazette.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to move that that be Clause 30 of the Bill.

Mr. BLACKMAN: I beg to second that.

Mr. WILKINSON: Mr. Chairman,—I see that a section which is usually inserted in an Act when regulations are to be made by the Governor-in-Executive Committee has been omitted from this Clause. It is customary to provide in the particular Act that the regulations shall have the force of law until they are approved by both Houses of the Legislature and that Clause should be included in this Bill. I do not think the honourable member can have any objection to that being done.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, I accept the suggestion of the honourable member. Anticipating that point I have before me the Workmen's Compensation Act and I ask leave to delete sub-clause 2 of Clause 30 in order to substitute therefor the following:—

(2) All regulations made under this section shall be submitted as soon as possible for the approval of both Houses of the Legislature and if not approved shall cease to be regulations from the date of their disapproval but the non-approval shall not affect anything done or suffered under the regulations between their coming into force and their rejection by the Legislature.

(3) All regulations made under this section shall be published in the *Official Gazette*, and shall be judicially noticed.

There being no objection, the honourable member is granted the leave asked for and the above-mentioned sub-clauses are substituted for the original sub-clause 2.

The question that Clause 30, as amended, stand part of the Bill is put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Clauses 31 to 35 inclusive are read and agreed to.

Mr. ADAMS: Reverting, Mr. Chairman, to Clause 20 I should like to say that the matter has been put to the Colonial Engineer and I shall read his Minute generally and not merely on this boiler question. He writes:—

"Inspection of boilers would be carried out by outside engineers licensed in accordance with Clause 22. It is essential that the engineers should be qualified for the work, not necessarily holding a certificate but definitely having had plenty of experience. When making their inspection they would enquire into the age and history of the boiler and would make a careful internal inspection, looking out particularly for any sign of corrosion and paying special attention to the boiler tubes. If there was any sign of corrosion they would require a hole to be drilled in the plate to determine the thickness. In addition they would probably require the boiler to be filled with water which would then be pumped up to pressure of one and one-half times the working pressure of the boiler." That portion of the minute about the test of one to one and one-half times the normal working pressure has been the intention of the Executive for years and is almost certainly to be one of the tests to be laid down by the Governor-in-Executive Committee. Having regard to Jamaica and Trinidad regulations and some of the English regulations, it appears that the Colonial Engineer's Minute points to the need for no more than what I have just read. I, therefore, beg to move that Clause 20 stand part of the Bill.

Mr. BLACKMAN: I beg to second that.

Mr. S. A. WALCOTT: I think the explanation is fairly satisfactory (Hear, hear) because the conditions have changed since the last meeting. We have now provided for the regulations to come before the

House whereas up to the last meeting no provision was made for them to come before the House at all. It was always within our knowledge that boilers are always tested at one and one-half times the normal working pressure.

Mr. WILKINSON: The senior member for St. Joseph has referred to the regulations in England for the examination of boilers. No doubt that practice is to inspect boilers all the year round—day and night—but I do not think it will be necessary in Barbados to inspect these boilers all through the year. The average working period for a boiler in a sugar factory in Barbados is one-third of a year; therefore, it may not be necessary to inspect boilers all through the year. I throw that out for consideration when the regulations are being drafted. It may not be necessary for a boiler that works, on the outside, four months in a year to be inspected all through the year but where a factory works day in and day out I agree that that should be done.

Mr. ADAMS: I will bear that point in mind.

The question that Clause 20 stand part of the Bill is put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Mr. WILKINSON: Mr. Chairman,—Before we leave this Bill I would like to have the definition of "owner" reconsidered and I will give my reason. It seems to me that the Government is exempt from any control at all under this Bill. You cannot prosecute the Government unless it is particularly mentioned in the Act and it is my intention to move that the definition of "owner" should include His Majesty in his Government of the Colony as was done in the case of the Workmen's Compensation Act. I ask leave to have Clause 2, the definition Clause, re-committed.

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

Mr. WILKINSON: I beg to move that Clause 2 be re-committed.

Mr. S. A. WALCOTT: I beg to second that.

The question that Clause 2 be re-committed is put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Mr. WILKINSON: I beg to move the deletion of the definition of "owner" in order to substitute therefor the following:—"Owner" includes His Majesty in his Government of the Colony and any person who is the immediate proprietor or lessee or occupier of any factory.

Mr. S. A. WALCOTT: I beg to second that.

Mr. ADAMS: I am in more than sympathy with the honourable member but I cannot see how we can accept that. Let me say at the outset that for years I have been one of the school of thought that believes that the Crown should be sued like a private individual. It was for years like that in Australia and I am glad to see that a Bill has just been passed or is being considered by the House of Commons making the Crown liable to be sued like an ordinary person. In days gone by, when a police van or horse knocked you down you could not sue the Crown—it is an anachronistic anomaly—but in latter days when the Crown in many respects is also a trading Company it is held that the Crown should be suable. But that is a vastly different thing from prosecuting the Crown. On whom are you going to have the penalty imposed? On the Executive Committee or on the Colonial Secretary? It cannot be done so easily. The Crown should not be put in any better position than an ordinary individual but I cannot see the Crown prosecuting the Crown; so I suggest to the junior member for St. James not to press his point. If between the passage of this Bill by the House and its being sent to the

Other Place, the learned Attorney General can devise some means of getting the wish of the honourable member carried out I feel that the amendment can be put in by the Other Place. When it comes back, we might accept it. But whom, for instance, are you going to prosecute in the case of the government factory at Lancaster? If the machinery is not fenced, whom are you going to prosecute? The Colonial Engineer, the Executive Committee including the Head of the Administration? It is not a point which can be dealt with off-hand. Again I repeat—and I believe I speak for all four members of the House of Assembly who are on the Executive Committee—we have no desire to put the Crown in any better position than a private individual and I hope soon to have before this House a Bill like the one I mentioned in the case of Great Britain, so that the Government of this country can be placed in the same position as a private individual or firm or company. I ask the honourable member not to press the point and I suggest to him to withdraw the amendment.

Mr. S. A. WALCOTT: If the honourable member's amendment is carried and it is wrong, it must be rejected by the Other Place. I cannot see how this House can pass a regulation making a private individual examine his boiler and the Government's boilers should not be examined too. The big nationalization scheme is on, so that there will be all government factories soon and I think that it is highly necessary that the Government should observe the same procedure that a private individual will be called upon to observe.

Mr. GARNER: I am going to join that chorus whether it be a case of nodding or non-nodding. I feel that the Government should set the example by putting its own house in order. If we sit here and pass legislation affecting private individuals, when it comes to the Government it should set the example. If the Government wants private individuals to fence their machinery, the Government should set the example by first fencing its machinery. Let the Government put its house in order and then come and tell private individuals what they must do.

Mr. TALMA: Despite what I have been listening to I would like to say that the law is such that the Government can be proceeded against in civil actions. I want to bring to the attention of my colleagues on my right the fact that action can be taken against the Government in certain cases; with nationalization in the air, it stands to reason that the Government must be on all fours with private individuals who own factories; it is only fair that it should be. That is my conviction and I shall follow where my conviction leads me, as I always do.

Mr. WILKINSON: I am glad that the senior member for St. Joseph sympathizes with the idea. He said—and I am sure that he is sincere—that the Government has every desire to carry out all these regulations but we want to make sure that they are carried out. If I understood him correctly, the difficulty is in respect of the penalty and he suggested that the amendment could be made in the Other Place. Well, I think the amendment had better go through in this House and if it is not in order, let the Other Place throw it out or further amend it. If we agree to the amendment it will show that we feel that the Government should carry out all these regulations in respect of all its factories.

Mr. ADAMS: Out of deference to the Chair I should like to say that the smallest child knows that you cannot prosecute the King; the smallest child knows that you cannot prosecute the King's representative. The Lancaster Factory is owned by the Governor-in-Executive Committee and all I am en-

deavouring to point out is that the honourable member cannot by this means do what he wants to be done.

The question that the words proposed to be deleted from Clause 2 stand part of the Clause is put and resolved in the affirmative, the division being as follows:—

Ayes: DR. WILSON, Messrs. F. L. WALCOTT, COX, FOSTER, MAPP, DR. CUMMINS, Messrs. SPRINGER, ADAMS, BLACKMAN, and Mr. SPEAKER—10.

Noes: Messrs. SMITH, GARNER, TALMA, HAYNES, GALE, S. A. WALCOTT, and WILKINSON—7.

On the motion of Mr. ADAMS, seconded by Mr. COX, the CHAIRMAN reports the passing of this Bill in Committee with amendments.

The House resumes and on the motions of Mr. ADAMS, seconded by Mr. BLACKMAN in each case, the Bill is read a third time and is passed.

HOTELS AID BILL

Mr. SPEAKER: The next Order stands in the name of the honourable senior member for St. Philip, —Second reading of a Bill to encourage the Hotel Industry in this Island. The honourable member is not in his place.

BILLS POSTPONED

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker,—I am afraid that the next two Bills—Bill to amend the Colonial Treasurer's Act, 1941 (1941—9) and Bill to amend the Clerical Service Act—are being reconsidered in Executive Committee. I ask leave to take Order No. 6 as the next Order of the Day.

RESOLUTION APPROVING WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION REGULATIONS

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to move that Order No. 6 be the next Order of the Day.

Mr. SPRINGER: I beg to second that.

The question that Order No. 6 be taken as the next Order of the Day is put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Mr. SPEAKER: The next Order stands in the name of the honourable senior member for St. Joseph, —To move the passing of a Resolution to approve the Regulations made by the Governor-in-Executive Committee under sub-section (1) of Section 37 of the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1943 (1943-2).

Mr. ADAMS: As honourable members will see, this Resolution is really to provide fees for medical assessors and others who may be called in by the Judge to help him under Section 21 of the Act. It is suggested they should be entitled to a fee of 2 guineas each and fee of 1 guinea each per day respectively for each sitting. It is a simple matter and I beg to move that the Resolution do now pass.

Mr. BLACKMAN: I beg to second that.

Mr. GALE: I would like to ask the senior member for St. Joseph one question. Are these fees the same or more than the fees allowed under the Coroner's Act?

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

EDUCATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr. SPRINGER: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that Order No. 16 be taken as the next Order of the Day.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to second that.

The question that Order No. 16 be the next Order of the Day is put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Mr. SPEAKER: The next Order stands in the name of the honourable senior member for St. George, —Second reading of a Bill to amend the Education (Amendment) Act, 1943 (1943-3).

Mr. SPRINGER: This Bill, as the Objects and Reasons explain, is primarily introduced to provide for the appointment of a staff to run the Teachers' Training College at Erdiston. This staff will consist of a Principal, a Vice-Principal and a Woman Tutor who will form part of the staff of the Department of Education. Now, opportunity is being taken in this to depart from the practice of putting forward Bills with the names of every officer—from the highest to the lowest—of the particular Departments and it is, therefore, proposed, as honourable members will see, to delete sub-section 3 of Section 2 of the Education (Amendment) Act of 1943, as contained in Section 8 of the Civil Establishment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1944, in order to substitute something simple, that is to say, in addition to the Director of Education the Governor may appoint to the Department such officers and servants as may from time to time be necessary at such salaries as shall be provided by the Legislature. I want honourable members to understand very clearly that this is not to take away any power from us because every officer's salary has to come before this House for approval. It is nothing new because when we were dealing with the taking over of the Central Road Board's business and creating the Department of Highways and Transport we adopted this procedure and all the funds have to be voted by this House. It only means that the Principal Act will not have to be amended each time an officer is to be appointed to a particular Department. We have a concrete example of this on the Order Paper. Each time you have to amend the Clerical Service Act when an additional officer or officers are to be appointed, whereas all that should be necessary is to send down a Resolution to provide so much more money for additional clerks and the House would have the opportunity to say whether the Resolution is necessary. It is intolerable continually to amend a Principal Act, because you have to turn over several pages to find what the particular section or sub-section which you want to amend contains. Take this Bill, for instance. It says in Clause 2:—"Sub-section (3) of section two of the Education (Amendment) Act, 1943, as contained in section eight of the Civil Establishment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1944 and as amended by the Education (Amendment) Act, 1946, . . ." Now, if you want to find what are the contents of sub-section 3 of Section 2 it is no good looking at the Education (Amendment) Act of 1943; you have to go all through the different Acts and finally end up with the Act of 1946. Well, if the House passes this Bill to-day, the result will be that the Act itself will remain the same. We must have a Director of Education and such other officers as the Governor may from time to time appoint, subject to the approval of the Legislature. As soon as it becomes necessary to appoint a Principal at Erdiston, we just come to the House and say "Do you agree that there should be a Principal at Erdiston? If so, pass this Resolution." That is at the beginning and after that, the salary is put in the Estimates and the matter is finished. This proposal has everything to commend it and no drawbacks. The reason why Clause 4 is included in the Bill is because it will be necessary for these officers to be appointed and their salaries fixed before the Act is brought into force, so that the two things should be done at the same time. I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to second that.

Mr. GALE: Mr. Speaker,—There is only one question I want to ask in order to get a little information. I see the necessity for this amendment but what I am thinking about is this. Suppose by means of a Resolution somebody is appointed Principal of this Teacher's Training College and his name is not stated in the Clerical Service Act. Then suppose any given year this officer is included in the Estimates—he is not mentioned in the Act—and the House for some reason or other did not vote his salary, where would he be? I am only asking that question for information.

Mr. SPRINGER: Really, that does not arise. In the Estimates there are two columns—(1) Fixed by Law and (2) To be voted—and this officer's salary would be in the column, Fixed by Law, which is not subject to interference.

Mr. TALMA: I would like to enquire from the honourable senior member for St. George if the Governor in the future will appoint all the teachers at elementary schools and all the people who work in connection therewith. Clause 2 of this Bill states:—"In addition to the Director of Education the Governor may appoint to the Department of Education such officers and servants as may from time to time be necessary at such salaries as shall be provided by the Legislature." If that is being done at present, as I am told, why then insert it in the Bill? I would like to have that clarified.

Mr. SPRINGER: I will try my best to satisfy the point raised by the honourable senior member if I have the right to speak again on the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: I was just thinking whether the point raised by the honourable senior member for Christ Church has anything to do with the principle of the Bill and I am going to suggest to him to raise his point when the House is in Committee on the Bill.

The question that this Bill be now read a second time is put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

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

Clause 1 is read and agreed to.

Clause 2 Subsection (3) of section two of the Education (Amendment) Act, 1943, as contained in section eight of the Civil Establishment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1944, and as amended by the Education (Amendment) Act, 1946, is hereby repealed and the following new subsection substituted therefor:—

"(3) In addition to the Director of Education the Governor may appoint to the Department of Education such other officers and servants as may from time to time be necessary at such salaries as shall be provided by the Legislature."

Mr. SPRINGER: I will take the opportunity to answer the senior member for Christ Church while I move that that be Clause 2 of the Bill. This does not affect the position of the elementary school teachers directly. If the honourable member will refer to the Civil Establishment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1944, he will see there the section which says that in addition to the Director of Education, the Governor may appoint to the Department certain other officers. Instead of adding to that list the Principal, the Vice-Principal and the Woman Tutor of the Teachers' Training College, we just insert in this Bill the

words "in addition to the Director of Education the Governor may appoint to the Department of Education such other officers and servants as may from time to time be necessary at such salaries as shall be provided by the Legislature." Then an abstract Resolution will come down to appoint these officers at the stated salaries. As far as the teachers are concerned, they have been appointed by the Governor since 1944.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to second the motion of the senior member for St. George.

The question that Clause 2 stand part of the Bill is put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Clauses 3 and 4 are read and agreed to.

On the motion of Mr. Springer, seconded by Mr. Adams, the Chairman reports the passing of the Bill in Committee.

The House resumes and on the motions of Mr. SPRINGER, seconded by Mr. BLACKMAN in each case, the Bill is read a third time and is passed.

DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAL SERVICES BILL

Mr. BLACKMAN: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that Order No. 17 be taken as the next Order of the Day.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to second that.

Mr. WILKINSON: Mr. Speaker,—Order No. 17 relates to a most important Bill, a Bill which affects the whole Island, and I do think some of the members who to-day are unable to attend would like to be present when it is being discussed. They could have hardly expected that it would be discussed to-day and I ask honourable members not to proceed with it to-day.

Mr. SPRINGER: I doubt whether the honourable member is not under a misapprehension. There is nothing controversial in this Bill at all. A Select Committee of the House as well as other public bodies have given consideration and approval to some of the proposals contained in this Bill and this merely seeks to put into legal fashion what has already been approved by the Select Committee.

Mr. TALMA: Mr. Speaker,—I would like to say this; if this Bill were so pressing and if it were so desirous that it should be dealt with it to-day, it would hardly be No. 17 on the Order Paper. I would like to know the other measures which were considered previously to be more pressing but are not yet prepared and whether we should agree to this jumping around from No. 1 and No. 2 to Nos. 16 and 17 on the Order Paper. I want to know if this is a proper Order Paper. Does it mean what it sets out? Because one can hardly imagine that we start with Orders Nos. 1 and 2 and then jump to Nos. 16 and 17. No. 17 is the one before the last and I am in total agreement with the junior member for St. James when he says that this Bill affects the island as a whole as it seeks to change completely our medical services. I feel that we should have a more representative gathering of the elected representatives of the people present to discuss this Bill. We are being met by surprise. Not one of the members present has given this Bill the consideration and thought which it merits and in fairness to the electors and ourselves I feel that Order No. 17 should not be taken at this stage but that some other measure which in their wisdom is entitled to priority be dealt with.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable member has already spoken. The honourable member seconded the motion that Order No. 17 be taken as the next Order.

Mr. F. L. WALCOTT: Mr. Speaker,—I do not take the same view. I agree in part and I disagree in part with what the previous speakers have said. When I hear honourable members say that other honourable members are not present in the House I would like to point out that this House has been summoned to meet at 12 o'clock noon to-day and there can be no excuse for those honourable members who are not present. There is no time limit as to the speed with which you can normally get through a Bill. There are some Bills which can be got through in a couple of minutes and there are other Bills which take some time to be considered; it all depends on whether the particular Bill is of a controversial nature or not. I may say this at this particular juncture. We have just had a new set-up as an experiment and if members are going to assume a certain amount of responsibility in the Government they must find themselves in this House to do their work. I notice four Orders under Government Business in the name of the senior member for St. Philip on the Order Paper and he is not in his place to deal with them. We should lay blame where blame should be laid. If the senior member for St. Philip were here, we should be able to go through the Orders in his name—Nos. 3 and 8—and then go on to No. 17. With regard to No. 17 I would say this: If this House passed the memorandum dealing with the Medical Services, the assumption is that they have agreed, in principle, to the establishment of a Department of Medical Services and it is now only a matter of setting out the details in a Bill; so there can be no reason for saying that you are not dealing with this Bill to-day because it happens to be No. 17 on the Order Paper. No. 3 is supposed to be an important Bill and if the senior member for St. Philip was present it might have been discussed to-day with the members we have here.

Mr. RAMSAY: Before the question is put I should like to say that I have a peculiar policy. There is no quibbling about it but I feel that honourable members have not had the opportunity to go through this particular Bill. I am not saying that it should be postponed on account of that; because when a matter of importance such as this,—which, as the junior member for St. James said, affects the island,—is before the House, honourable members ought to be here,—but the fact is that they are not here and I would suggest that we put it off until next Tuesday when honourable members will know that they should be present and if they are interested, they will come and discuss it. I am going to ask the junior member for St. John not to press for the consideration of Order No. 17 to-day.

Mr. BLACKMAN: I ask leave, Sir, to withdraw my motion.

There being no objection, leave is granted and the motion is withdrawn.

RESOLUTION RE APPOINTMENT OF TWO ADDITIONAL CLERKS

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker,—In moving that Order No. 12 be taken as the next Order, let me say that it is no desire on the part of members of the Government to ask honourable members at a moment's notice to do this or that. The most sensible thing to have done in the circumstances, was to have asked that Order No. 17 be taken as the next

Order. Order No. 3 is in the name of the senior member for St. Philip but the honourable member is not in his place and I have already pointed out that Nos. 4 and 5 have gone back to the Executive Committee. As regards No. 11, only this morning a Minute has been sent to the Head of the Department which will have to be considered by the Governor-in-Executive Committee. Nos. 8 and 9 are also in the name of the senior member for St. Philip. With regard to No. 10, it would mean reading the regulations all over again. No. 11 is in the name of the senior member for St. Philip and of the remaining lot, it was thought that No. 17 is more important than the others. No. 16 was taken next and that has just been passed by the House. Nos. 12 and 13 are two small matters and possibly we could get through them in the ten minutes at our disposal. I beg to move that No. 12 be taken as the next Order of the day.

Mr. SPRINGER: I beg to second that.

The question that Order No. 12 be taken as the next Order of the day is put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Mr. SPEAKER: The next Order stands in the name of the honourable senior member for St. Joseph.—To move the passing of a Resolution to authorize 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: I think most of us, if not all of us, know that there are some Departments which are understaffed. The Colonial Treasurer's is one and the Electric Inspector's is another. This Resolution is to authorize the Governor in accordance with the provisions of section 3 (2) of the Clerical Service Act, 1944, to appoint these two additional clerks. I beg to move that the Resolution do now pass.

Mr. BLACKMAN: I beg to second that.

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

WEST INDIAN SEA ISLAND COTTON (EXEMPTION FROM DUTY) BILL.

Mr. BLACKMAN: I beg, Sir, to move that Order No. 13 be taken as the next Order of the Day.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to second that.

The question that Order No. 13 be the next Order is put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Mr. SPEAKER: The next Order stands in the name of the honourable junior member for St. John,—Second reading of a 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. BLACKMAN: Mr. Speaker,—This Bill is to provide for the importation into this island free of duty for a period of three years of goods made from sea island cotton. As will be seen from the Objects and Reasons, it is intended that this Bill is to foster the development of the Sea Island Cotton Industry by encouraging an increased demand for articles made of that commodity. There is very little to be said about it. I feel that it is a non-controversial Bill and it is only to enable us to get these goods free into the island so as to be able to reduce the cost of living in this country. I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to second that.

The question that this Bill be now read a second time is put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

On the motion of Mr. BLACKMAN, seconded by Mr. ADAMS, Mr. SPEAKER leaves the Chair and the House goes into Committee on the Bill, Mr. RAMSAY being in the Chair.

Clause 1. This Act may be cited as the West Indian Sea Island Cotton (Exemption from Duty) Act, 1947.

Mr. BLACKMAN: I beg to move that that be Clause 1 of the Bill.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

Mr. TALMA: I would like to enquire from the member who is taking care of this Bill which colony he has in mind this Barbados Sea Island Cotton is coming from.

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest to the honourable member that this is only the title Clause. Let us go on to Clause 2 and the honourable member can raise his point then.

The question that Clause 1 stand part of the Bill is put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

2. Notwithstanding anything contained in the Customs Tariff (Amendment) Act, 1921 or any Act amending the same, all articles manufactured from Sea Island Cotton which are accompanied by a declaration in the form contained in the First Schedule hereto, endorsed as provided in section three of this Act, shall for the period of three years from the date of the coming into operation of this Act be admitted into this Island free of customs duty.

Mr. BLACKMAN: I beg to move that that be Clause 2 of the Bill.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

Mr. S. A. WALCOTT: I would like to know what island this sea island cotton is coming from.

The CHAIRMAN: The lint is shipped from Barbados, is manufactured into sea island cotton goods which are then shipped to this island.

Mr. TALMA: As far as I know sea island cotton is manufactured in St. Vincent. I want to know if there is any means of getting any further information about the matter.

Mr. SPRINGER: The honourable member is mixing up manufacture with cotton production. I hope he will not be offended by my saying that. St. Vincent grows cotton as well as we do. The sea island cotton which we grow is exported and manufactured into goods which are then imported into this island. This Bill is to facilitate the importation of the sea island cotton goods.

Mr. S. A. WALCOTT: I think this Bill has the wrong title. If it were a matter of subsidizing clothing, then the title would be correct. If as a result we were going to get sea island cotton goods at a cheaper price I could agree to it but as the senior member for Christ Church has said, we are trying to improve cotton growing in St. Vincent not in Barbados. We export about ten bales of sea island cotton a year; that is all.

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. 30 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) for the purpose of resuming Government Business. I propose merely to finish the Bill with which we were dealing before the adjournment, and then we can proceed with the consideration of questions in the ordinary way.

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

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to move that Rule 61 (a) be now suspended for the purpose of resuming Government Business.

Dr. CUMMINS seconded the motion which was agreed to.

Mr. SPEAKER: On the adjournment for lunch the House was in Committee on the 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.

WEST INDIAN SEA ISLAND COTTON
(EXEMPTION FROM DUTY) BILL.

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House resumed Committee on the Bill, Mr. RAMSAY being in the Chair.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: When the House was in Committee on this Bill, Clause 2 was under consideration.

The question that Clause 2 stand part of the Bill was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Clause 2 was passed.

Clause 3 of the Bill and the three Schedules were read and passed.

On the motion of Mr. BLACKMAN, seconded by Dr. CUMMINS, the CHAIRMAN reported the passing of the Bill in Committee.

The House resumed.

On motions of Mr. BLACKMAN, seconded by Mr. ADAMS in each case, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

DISSATISFACTION AMONGST COUNTRY
SHOPKEEPERS OVER MARGIN OF
PROFITS ALLOWED.

Mr. SPEAKER: At Question Time on the last occasion, the House was discussing the Replies to Questions No. 19 put by the honourable junior member for St. Joseph relative to country shopkeepers, and the honourable junior member for St. Philip was speaking.

Mr. GARNER: Mr. Speaker,—There is not much more that I can say on this matter because I believe that everybody is convinced that an advantage is being taken of shopkeepers by the Control Board, etc., and now the Government sees fit to O.K. that policy inasmuch as the replies which have been given to the honourable member's questions state that the entry of new shopkeepers into the field makes it appear as if shopkeepers are receiving lucrative wages or salaries. However, Mr. Speaker, it is a known fact that certain items which shopkeepers sell are what are called "leaders" and no money is made on them. For instance, let us take rice; we never make any money on rice; we use that as a "leader". Onions and potatoes are other items on which we make no money. There is a total loss when it comes to these items on account of the high percentage of spoilage and on account of many other conditions. This is the point with which I want this Government to be impressed; the shopkeepers have had to raise the wages of the agricultural labourers from 1/- per

day to 5/- and 5/6 per day, they have had to employ people so as to be able to carry on their work and they have had to raise the salaries of their employees. On account of the Shop Closing Act, in many cases they have to employ more assistants, thus adding to the cost of running the business. I hear a lot of talk about profit per unit and not on the percentage basis and that is where the snag is. We have to raise the salaries or wages of the people who cater to the business and we are not given the percentage which will enable us to carry out the reforms. It is difficult to get people to enter the shop business as assistants; they are gradually getting away from it because shopkeepers are not able to compete with other branches of labour. It may be said that I am exaggerating the point, but I am stating hard facts. When you have the whole standard of living raised everybody is asking for more money. The sugar industry has been given a little more money and the profit which the Control Board allows the shopkeeper is very little more than what was allowed before the War whether it is on the unit or percentage basis. The shopkeeper has to pay increased wages and salary increases continue; he has to contribute his share to everything that is increased, but the people who form the Control Board have not taken that into account at all.

I said on the last occasion that onions should never have been put on the list of items the prices of which are controlled because you lose money on them. I know that shopkeepers all over this island would be glad to hear that the control of the prices of onions and potatoes is discontinued. These items are very perishable items and on any item which is perishable you stand to lose a lot of money. This should be according to supply and demand. I agree with regimentation, but are you going to regiment shopkeepers all the time and let off the other people free? Shopkeepers have had to bear a greater brunt than any other branch of business in the community and their profits are circumvented. I hear people talking about putting aside something for the rainy day and about making hay while the sun is shining; but in the case of the shopkeeper he cannot put aside anything for the rainy day. How long, O Lord, how long is this going to continue? It cannot go on for ever; the cost of living is mounting up and the shopkeepers are getting in a worse condition than before the War. The standard of living has been raised and they have to contribute to the general fund by way of taxation, salaries and what not, and they have to do without every other thing that goes on in the world. Everything is costing more and yet the shopkeeper is relegated to the lowest rung of the ladder! Something is wrong somewhere. I think that it would be incumbent upon the Government, although they seem to be a little preoccupied now, to pay attention to this matter of quotas and control, because if the shopkeepers are to continue to give service to the community they must also enjoy some of the profit which is going to all other industries. Someone may say that I am not a Socialist, but when it comes to this shopkeeping business I want profit. You cannot do any business under this scheme unless you are making a profit whether you are a Socialist or not. There are those who make an exorbitant profit and there are those who just have to eke out a livelihood and shopkeepers are in the latter class. They have to give credit when they are unable to do so; some shopkeepers give credit to people merely because they do not want to lose business but they really cannot do any crediting because of the system under which they have to compete. Speaking as a shopkeeper, I say that I am sure that the amount of profit allowed whether per unit or on the percentage

basis does not admit of credit being given to anybody; but it has to be done. I shall not be long because I do think that enough has been said to convince one and all and especially those who are responsible persons that shopkeepers are in a critical plight. It is becoming more and more serious, and while we as a group wish to do business legitimately and we have no idea to fleece or rob anybody, we say that we have contributed our share to the War effort and the time has come when we want to live as free citizens again. If you tell me that I must buy in a particular market and I am subject to certain restrictions and in spite of that I cannot get the quota that I can dispose of, you will agree with me, Mr. Speaker, that I am in a bad way. The shopkeeper is fenced in on all sides; he cannot get quotas or make a legitimate profit. He is hunted down week after week by the Inspectors. I have nothing against them but the shopkeeper has a hard time. The shopkeepers did not bring about the War but indirectly they contributed a lot to it because they gave of their services almost freely. I say that the time has come to say to those who are responsible that the profit allowed the shopkeepers is too slight and whatever can be done to help them must be done and done quickly. On the last occasion I raised the question as to the profit made on sugar and to-day I would like to make it more emphatic that the shopkeepers are losing money on sugar. There is no need for that; I would like to make this point quite clear. When the sugar dealers sometimes you get an empty bag weighing 10 or 14 pounds and the shopkeeper loses. You also have to take into consideration the cost of paper and the labour for dishing out 100 pounds of sugar, and when you are allowed a profit of 30 or 35 cents on that, that cannot pay you. The sugar is weighed in bulk but you cannot get out the amount: therefore you either have to have the notches divided or weigh very lightly in order to try to get it to work out. (Laughter). There is no use in our beating about the bush and fooling ourselves. I have been born a shopkeeper and I have followed that business in all my life; I do not know how soon I will get out of it. Unless the Government comes to my rescue—(A MEMBER: We are going to nationalise the shops). Somebody says that they are going to nationalise the shops. If they nationalise the shops it will be better for me; I am sure that I will not have any grouse. This is a serious business where the shopkeepers are concerned; they have to live in the same way as any other person. They want to rear up their children and educate them. They want to make a legitimate profit rather than having to be looked after by some shop Inspector; they do not want to be brought up for black market business. They are a decent part of the community; they constitute a charitable element of the community and they are demanding a fair "break" from the Control Board or this Government. We are not begging for anything; we cannot have the same restrictions in peacetime as in wartime; there must be an adjustment somewhere. Every now and then we lose because the same circumstances do not prevail; the same circumstances which prevailed in the War years do not prevail now and the shopkeepers have to be set free. I know what I am talking about; I am going to be very emphatic about this. Certain people have found out that they can make money by not letting goods come in. A person who can get a quota for certain things is not allowed by another to bring in those things and that corruption is going on. I challenge anybody either inside or outside this House to rebut that statement. There is nothing but a clique and this should go. The more I think of it, the more emphatic I want to make my statements because it is all keeping down the shopkeeper. If more goods came into this island our quotas

would be increased and we would be able to make a little more in the volume we turn over. If you have a dozen eggs and you can sell them and make one shilling profit on them, if you have three dozen eggs and you can sell them you can make a profit of three shillings on them and the staff which you employ would be the same. We cannot sit down as mere pigmies and allow these people to do whatever they wish to do. We are not now in wartime; what we countenanced in the War years we cannot countenance in times of peace. What can we do about it? The shopkeeper goes to the merchant and the merchant says "I only have sugar, very little rice but a lot of flour". You can get a lot of flour. Something is wrong in Denmark or somewhere. There are many items which you cannot get and still I have been told that many people have been offered goods to import and they are told "You have no quota." While they have no quotas, the shopkeeper is waiting for something to sell. It is against those things that we want to impress upon the Government to-day that something needs to be done and that they should not send down to us answers such as those which they have sent down when we ask for help. Because people jumped into a well yesterday it does not mean that it is legal for people to commit suicide. Because you have in this island people who went to America, saved some money and have returned here knowing nothing about this business but have opened shops and are broke ere long, that does not mean that something is not wrong with the Regulations. Everybody knows that nowadays every branch of endeavour will be tried. When you come down to the normal process of business you will find that those who have ventured into the shopkeeping line will be absolutely broke by the time that another five years have passed. The reason for that is that the profits obtained today are not commensurate with the standard of living. The profit on sugar is a farce there is really no profit on it. I would say that it is a losing proposition and so with the profit on some other items. When you get men who are working for large salaries, men who bother us from time to time for cost of living bonuses and things of that kind and they take it upon themselves to offer the shopkeeper an empty bag or package for his profit, those men should be hanged in Golden Square; because they know what it takes for them to live and maintain a decent home but they tell the shopkeeper "It is all well; you can have the empty package as your profit." Mr. Speaker, this is a vicious circle; something is wrong and it should not obtain. If you are giving a margin of profit, let it be on the percentage basis. You take a bag of sugar; it aches me when I think that sugar is produced here and those who have to cater to the needs of the people of this island have to render such services for nothing. I have no grouse about socialism, but you are socialising one section and the other section goes free. That is where I object. If you are circumventing the profits of the shopkeeper, who is making very little profit, so as to make it almost impossible for him to live, I say that it is better to call a halt there. Where socialism is concerned you cannot expect the shopkeepers to carry out their part and the other people do nothing about it.

I think that I have said enough on this matter and I hope that I have not spoken to deaf ears. I hope that such answers as those which have been sent down will not be sent down again. I hope that a more sympathetic ear will be given to such requests

which are made because, as I said before, this is a burning question. There are about 800 or 900 shops in this island and pretty soon you will have more than that number. I am sure that the shopkeepers are eager to do what is right; they want to give service but they are asking for adequate profit so that they can live. They do not want to run up against the Inspectors. We are very glad that the public is being protected because if it were not for that protection a lot of wrong things would go on. I must say that in fairness to the public, to the Inspectors and to myself. If at the head of affairs the people who make these schemes leave nothing for you, if you want to live it boils down to the survival of the fittest. (A MEMBER: The slickest). Everybody takes care of himself when it comes to that. We are asking to be given a chance to live as decent citizens of Barbados without being hunted down by the Inspectors or having to fear anything. I am afraid that because there is corruption in high places the small fellow must also compete. (A MEMBER: That is true). There are a lot of things that I could reveal here but I do not care to reveal them. I know some facts; I know what I am talking about. I wish to say that I am not speaking for the country shopkeepers only; I am speaking for all the shopkeepers in this island and I am hoping that an amendment will be introduced to this question whereby all the shopkeepers will be represented. I am sure that all the shopkeepers are in the same plight. While as I stressed on the last occasion, the shopkeepers in town are not faced with freight charges, yet the margin of profit allowed them is too low. I am appealing not only on behalf of country shopkeepers but on behalf of the shopkeepers as a whole. I have nothing more to say at present but I am hoping and waiting for very quick action on the part of this Labour Government so that this state of affairs may be remedied. I repeat that the shopkeepers are a respectable part of this community and they have rendered yeoman service towards the War effort. They have given service equally day and night for very little profit; they feed the people over and over again even at the risk of losing their property and they have given credit to people who were underpaid at a certain time. If this is not a deserving case, if a case has not been made out for the shopkeepers, then I submit that every shopkeeper should go on strike.

Mr. RAMSAY. I think that the case as has been made out by the honourable junior member for St. Joseph and by the honourable junior member for St. Philip is worthy of some note. It is not just, shall I say, a question of meandering and talking for the sake of talking. There is quite a lot in what the honourable junior member for St. Philip has said about shopkeepers feeding almost the entire population. The people who have not had any work during the hard times come to the shopkeepers before they get the Poor Law Authorities to give them aid. The ordinary man, as one may say, starts off a shop with about \$700 or \$800 and perhaps a property which is worth about \$1,000. At the end of two or three years he has neither the cash nor the property. I think that the entire set-up of this price administration should be gone into. As was said by the two honourable members who preceded me, shopkeepers fill a big role in this community and when it comes to those in the country especially there ought to be some law whereby the Vestries can come to their aid because they are really Poor Law administrators. I know that to be true. Those of us who do not know anything about doing business and do not

intend to learn, well these remarks must not be taken by them. (Laughter). They must close their ears. (Laughter) It does appear on the surface as if the shopkeepers are given a reasonable profit but in practice, that is not true. The honourable junior member for St. Philip has told us about a profit of 30 cents being allowed on 100 pounds of sugar; a bag of sugar weighs 228 pounds first weight and when everything is taken into consideration the mathematics of Mr. Haskell pales into insignificance as compared with this. The honourable member has made out a case where the entire matter should be gone into. I understood him to say that the price control should go, but I think that that should never happen. I say that price control must not go; if price control were to go the honourable member would be in a worse position. Mr. Speaker, if I may digress a little—

Mr. GARNER: On a point of explanation. I did not mean that price control should go; I meant the import branch of the Control Board, the one which has to do with the quotas.

Mr. RAMSAY: I know that the honourable member did not mean price control; that is why I emphasized it so as to give him the opportunity to clear it up. (Laughter). If that price control went the honourable member would not be able to sell anything at all. In the last War they sold people a pound of anything for less than what they sold the shopkeeper and the shopkeepers lost their entire properties. Last Saturday morning a poor butcher bought a pig weighing 120 pounds and gave \$26 for it and when he was finished with the carcass he showed me that he was getting back \$25. The Government are unwittingly assisting the black market business; they are ignorant and ignorance is a curse, it is worse than a crime. They are misguided. Of course, I do not like Government, but this particular Government has my heart. (A MEMBER: Suppose they did not have it). If they did not have it, they would be worthy of the same criticism which I am making. I am not making any destructive criticism; I am asking the Government to go into this question. I have promised to go to the Price Control office but I am always busy. The case as has been made out by the honourable junior member for St. Joseph and by the honourable junior member for St. Philip can bear inspection: you do not have to put on any microscopic glasses in order to see that. They are businessmen and they can get the Board changed and bring in ordinary men like myself. (Laughter). I do not mean myself personally, but people in my walk of life. I think that only then will things appear to be more adequate. As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, a clear case has been made out. I think you have some knowledge of it. You see shopkeepers driving their horse and buggy and appearing to be doing well and then the whole thing goes up in smoke. I think that the Government, if they deserve to be called a Government, have to see after the strays and waifs: they have to see that no one section of their children suffer at the expense of the other. I am sorry that the Government have sent down these answers and I am glad to be able to add my quota to the debate on them. When the taxpayers ask to have something done and it is feasible, do not let us say merely "I will give attention to the matter." I remember when the late Sir Herbert Greaves had to defend a colleague in this place, the honourable member for the Government twisted his moustache and said "The Government says so and so." Even in those days such answers were not satisfactory. I ask the honourable junior member for St. Philip not to be hard on the present Government; they are taking

advice from the people who are supposed to know. There is no collusion on the part of the Government with the big merchants. It is impossible for them to be associated with the big merchants. It is impossible for them to be associated with any such collusion. I am exonerating them from anything like that. They do not know any better, and therefore you must forgive them.

Mr. BRANCKER: In a matter of this kind it is good for the House to be assisted by such well-informed hon. members as the mover and seconder of this motion that the House adjourn for five minutes in order to consider the Government's replies. As a matter of fact, I think that many of us have been greatly enlightened as a result of the exposition of the hon. junior member for St. Joseph and that of the hon. junior member for St. Philip as to the position of the country shopkeepers. Those hon. members spoke from first-hand knowledge and the last hon. member who spoke has done so with much feeling and great sympathy towards these people.

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

ADDRESS RE RENT RESTRICTIONS.

Mr. SPEAKER: The first Order of the Day under Private Members' Business stands in the name of the hon. senior member for St. Michael:—To move the passing of an Address to His Excellency the Governor relating to rent restrictions.

Mr. COX: Mr. Speaker,—The address reads as follows:

The House of Assembly To His Excellency the Governor.

In view of the unreasonably high increases of rent of Houses as well as land charged by Landlords, the House respectfully request Your Excellency to send down with as little delay as possible legislation necessary to provide for a rent restriction including powers to compel owners of rented houses to keep such houses in good repair and with proper sanitary accommodation.

In moving the passing of this Address I feel that I can say with some amount of confidence that it will meet with the approval of all hon. members, more especially those who move regularly among the people of this colony. There is no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that "landlordism" is the most serious question disturbing the economic and social life of the people of this colony; and what is more it is being aggravated from day to day by a few sharks whose only desire is to get rich overnight irrespective of the avenue through which the riches are acquired or the methods adopted in the acquisition of these riches. I think that the first question which concerns us is that of land rent: I feel that owing to these "puffed prices" at which land has been sold within the last two or three years the owners of houses have increased the rent of their houses, I would not say justifiably, but some of these increases in house rent have been due to the high prices which have been paid for land recently. While I am dealing with the question of land I would like to say it is a fact that the people must live on land even although they may not own houses. It is impossible for them to live elsewhere. I feel that the Government ought to go into this question of land prices very carefully. I am going to say something now which I know will not be appreciated by many people but it is my conviction that land should be owned by the State.

The reason for that is to make sure that one individual or group of individuals are not given the privilege of putting so many others to great inconvenience whenever it suits them. I think that I can say with a certain amount of certainty on reading the history of this colony that in 1627 a small ship anchored somewhere in Hometown with 48 people. They did nothing to make the island anything; they just settled on it, they did not buy it from anybody. The fact remains that the land belongs to the people as a whole. For that reason I do not see why any individual or group of individuals should have the privilege of putting so many people to such great inconvenience. Now, Mr. Speaker, I have taken the trouble to get a few figures in connection with the recent increase in land rent. I find that in Hindsbury Road there is some land which was recently bought by Ex-sergeant Jones; I have been informed that whereas the people who occupy the back spots used to pay 2/6 per week, that has been increased to 7/6 per week. I find also that whereas the people who occupy the front spots used to pay 5/- per week that has been increased to 10/- per week. In Deane's Land I find that the people were paying \$3 per quarter and they are now asked to pay \$6 per quarter. Similarly in the case of Deane's Village Tenantry. Now we come to Carrington's Village. There are some people there who used to pay 6/- per quarter and now they are paying \$12 per quarter. Whether the figures are incorrect or not I do not know, but they have been given to me. At Kensington there are spots which used to be rented at \$2 a quarter and now the rent has been increased to \$5.50 a quarter. There are spots there which used to be rented at \$6 per quarter and now they are rented at \$6 per month. In Hall's Road I notice that there are some spots which are no more than 600 square feet in size situated near the Chain and when it rains the storm water washes away all the people's property. These people are asked pay \$3 a quarter. The land belongs to one Harewood. The people on the right hand side are asked to pay \$4.68 per quarter. That is the position with these unscrupulous landlords. One can easily realise that it is high time that the Government should do something so as to protect these people, because it can be clearly seen that while on one side the Government is doing its best to increase the wages and salaries of its employees—and through Trade Unionism the wages or salaries of many people are being increased—you will see that there is a sort of night gang hiding in the dark, as it were, and extorting from these people—blackmailing them so to speak, after they have been given these increases. I repeat, I feel that it is time that the Government should do something in this matter. When you come to value land, irrespective of how the commercial magnates may look at it, I personally cannot see it from any other angle than that land is a fixed quantity. I will never see it from any other angle. The people must live on land and land, as I know many will agree with me, is a fixed quantity. It does not visibly diminish or deteriorate; it does not suffer the fate of being burnt and you cannot remove it so as to increase its value. Land remains wherever it is; even if you use it regularly or work it hard it still remains the same, and it is difficult to understand how land can be sold at 10 cents a square foot to-day and tomorrow, without one iota being done to improve the land, it is sold at 50 cents a square foot. I feel therefore that when it comes to the question of land, it is even different from that of houses. Land will always remain where it is; as I have said it is a fixed quantity. You will agree with me, Mr. Speaker, that in the case of

houses, you have to work on them, you have to put much labour on them so that people can live in them. Land being a fixed quantity makes it all the more necessary for the Government to do something to see that people do not continue to charge these exorbitant prices which are being charged not only in regard to the purchase of various lots of land but also with regard to the rent of the land. I have taken the trouble to get a Rent Restriction Ordinance from a gentleman in St. Lucia in order to help this Government, if it so desires, to expedite the drafting and passing of similar legislation. I have been informed that in Trinidad, St. Vincent, British Guiana and in many other colonies there is a Rent Restriction Act on the Statute Book. Moreover, I have been informed that people who applied to the Board after it came into being, people who were overcharged by their landlords, were given back by the landlords what they had paid them as excessive increases from as far back as 1939. It is necessary for us to have something of a similar nature done in this colony.

I would like to deal now with the question of houses. I have been informed that there are some houses which used to be rented at \$14 a month in 1943 and they are now being rented at \$28 a month. Some which were rented at \$14 a month are now being rented at \$25 a month. I know of one which used to be rented at \$12 per month—I do not want to call any names because the tenants might be so unprotected that if the landlords were to surmise that they have given these figures to politicians, I am sure that they would be asking the tenants to go out of the houses to-morrow. However, the house which was being rented at \$12 per month in 1943 is now being rented at \$24 per month. Now there is a christian gentleman—**Mr. H. O. Entage**—

Mr. SPEAKER: If you are calling names, you should call all the names.

Mr. COX: I called that name purposely because the gentleman is a christian. He was renting out a house at \$10 a month and now the rent is \$20 a month and I have been told that nothing has been done to this house. As a matter of fact, I understand that when the house is locked at night anybody can pull the door and open it. I know that there is another house which used to be rented at \$8 per month and it is now being rented at \$20 per month. I understand that there are a few 16x9 houses divided into two parts in which poor people live for 4/- a week, 3/- a week, and so on. Worst of all, these houses have not been repaired for the last 20 or 30 years, and I have been authoritatively informed that when it rains the occupants of these houses have to shift about their furniture. I have been shown some of these places and I am convinced that they are in a very bad state of repair. As soon as the Government starts its Housing Scheme, these structures will not be considered as houses; they are just stalls or trash boxes. I think that it is high time that the Government take immediate steps to do something so as to protect these poor people. I would like to say that as far as the Landlord and Tenant Act is concerned, all protection is given to the landlords; they need not repair their houses, the rain can fall on the tenants during the morning or during the night, but you must pay the landlords their rent. If you fail to do that, the bailiff can come in through the window and the next thing you know is that your furniture has been sold out at the Police Station. When the house is to be repaired, the tenant has to be on his "P's" and "Q's" so as to get the landlord to do something, and if he spends \$50, and the rent is \$5 a month it is increased to \$6 or \$8 per month. That is a greater percentage than you can get if you lend out money, because I do not think that you can get more than 6% on a loan. I

am really grieved over these conditions; added to these conditions, the landlords do not care anything about the tenants; they tell them "If you do not like it then you must leave." As regards the question of the removal of houses, you can imagine a house being on one spot for many years and suddenly has to be removed. You have to go to the lumber yard and purchase materials at a very high increased price. Just imagine the position of a poor individual owning a house and the landlord tells him "If you cannot pay \$6 a quarter instead of \$2 a quarter you will have to remove it." That individual cannot carry the house on his head and it cannot be carried into the sea. I repeat, I think it is high time that the Government give serious consideration to this question. It applies not only to the poor hard-working man but to the oppressed clerks as well. It applies to the majority of the people of this country because it is understood that the majority of people in this country rent houses. I feel that in the interest of these inarticulate people the Government should be told how serious the situation is, and every effort should be made on the part of Government to see that it is relieved as expeditiously as is possible. I will not say anything more at this moment: I will just wait to reply to anything that may be said. I beg to move that this Address do now pass.

Mr. MAPP: I beg to second the motion for the passing of this Address. In doing so I would like to say that one of the main reasons for the high cost of living to-day is, in my opinion, the absence of a ceiling price on rent whether it be of land or of houses. If this Government does not act quickly in the matter and institute such a ceiling price, I think it will be highly guilty of contributory negligence. One of the main features of Government policy in the past when it comes to presenting figures, has been the lack of preciseness in presenting those figures. In nearly every other country in the world when figures showing the cost of living index are published, everything is covered. You see the increase in the rent of houses and in the cost of clothing, light, food etc. With this Government or with past Governments there has been an exception: you see figures as to food and then what is referred to as "other items". That is not giving the precise figures as to what the increase in these items is. I maintain that that is one of the most necessary things which should be given. I understand that one of the excuses as to why a Rent Restriction Bill was not sent down to this House is that there had not been any great increase in rent to the poor people. I say that that is not true. If you restrict the rents on land that will automatically stop this bare-faced robbery. It is more than speculation which is going on in the matter of rent and the sale of property. If you put a ceiling price on rent, properties would not be bought at such high prices and the prices of land and houses would drop automatically. It is a serious state of affairs and it is time that a stop be put to it. I know that there has been a general increase in rent to all classes of the community. Before I resigned from the Government Service I used to go around on a certain survey and I know of instances where, during the first stage of the War, people used to pay 1/6 a week they are called upon to pay 3/- per week and the houses were unfit for human habitation. Is it fair or right that a poor person should be unable to sleep well at night in a house for which he has to pay increased rent? On what basis has this increased price been brought about. Is it not pure robbery? The owner has not spent one cent so as to justify this increase in the rent. I say that a stop should be to this state of

affairs as a means of keeping down the cost of living. The cost of living has risen very high already and it should not be allowed to rise any higher. One of the main features of the English Rent Restriction law is the means whereby a tribunal can be set up by the Government, and on that tribunal appraisers are appointed. Of course Government appraisers are appointed here to value land but under the English Act appraisers are appointed and they value what is a fair rent on the basis of the unfurnished value of the house. After the Act had come into force it was found that the owner of a house would put in a few pieces of furniture, old or new, and charge a very excessive rent for the house; but the Act was amended so as to put an end to that. The system adopted in other West Indian colonies is still to appoint Government valuers to value what is a fair rent on the basis of the unfurnished value of the house and the pre-war value. The only condition under which a man was allowed to advance the rent of his house was when he spent money to repair the house and the price of material had gone up. It is only fair that he should then be allowed to pass on some cost to the renter. If the owner has not improved his house on what fair basis would he advance the rent? None at all. It is high time that the Government put an end to this matter of increased rents by bringing about a Rent Restriction Act. I will not go into the question as to the form that our Act should take. I feel sure that every honourable member who really has the interest of the poor classes at heart, who knows that there is a continual racket going on with regard to the prices charged for land and for houses in the immediate past and who deprecates that state of affairs, cannot but support the passing of this Address.

Mr. F. L. WALCOTT: Although this Address is a bit belated, we are still in time to discuss the principle of a Rent Restriction Bill in this island. Speaking for myself, I would like to say at the beginning that insufficient attention has been given, sometimes in this House, sometimes in the Press and sometimes by the public, to a matter as serious as this is. Earlier in the afternoon we were discussing the question of food with regard to the shopkeepers and now we are discussing the question of houses and the prices charged for the rent of them. These are two important items in the social structure of a community. We cannot live without food and owing to our conventional way of living, it is impossible to live without proper housing. When we are dealing with the question of housing we are going to offend somebody, and we must not think too much of our friends whom we will offend. There are some landlords in this country who are extortioners, to put it mildly; you cannot unearth an adjective that is too black with which to describe them. I feel that this practice of increasing rents has been going on for a long time because there has been a policy of acquiescence by the public. Too many people are afraid of being turned out if they say anything about the matter and therefore they are content to bear the punishment and wait for the Government to do something about it. We have to press the Government to do something in the matter, but in a democracy the Government can only work when the people themselves force it to do something. As the reflection of the people's will, I feel that we should stress the necessity for implementing a Rent Restriction Bill. Although it should have been here about five or six years ago, it is not too late to implement such a Bill because we would be fooling ourselves if we expect an economic metamorphosis to take place in the world the War having ended in 1945. You can see quite plainly that many industrial countries are not up to

the standard at which they were before the War, and it will take a long time before they can come back to that standard. With the island's population increasing from year to year and with this problem now the situation is an acute one and we must try to solve the problem. I have heard people say that the Government has bought land and therefore that relieves the problem; but this land cannot be made into living areas within a year or two and what in the meantime will happen to people whose wages are still slender? We do not know sufficient about these things because there is no statistical department of the Government to state precisely what are the conditions existing in the various categories and people are left to make wild estimates sometimes. It is clear from what has been going on in Barbados from 1931 up to now, that rents have soared terrifically. There is a case in point of which I have had personal experience. Two years ago a certain place in the City was rented at \$10 per month and after the tenant's appearance seemed to the landlord to be prosperous—I digress here to say that some landlords try to peep into your salary and like some members of the Civil Service or public institutions, as they get back pay the rent goes up. The landlords say: "You have now received something" and the rent goes up. Coming back to this case in point, the rent for this house went from \$10 to \$15 per month and to-day the rent for it is \$30 per month; and the fact is that the owner can get that rent for the house! It is not a question of what people can get as rent for their houses; it is a question of what the house is worth. What is the true rental? Speaking for myself, I would like to say quite plainly that no place in Barbados which is 50 years old is worth more than what was paid for it formerly because the money has been made 50 times over. There is peculiar economic basis for rent even in the case of land; there are, for instance, two spots of land here. Mr. "A" believes that his land is worth a lot of money and because somebody puts a house next to it, he says that it is worth more money. I do not see the logic of that. I feel that if we as legislators have that idea in mind, we are heading for very serious repercussions. When you say that you are trying to relieve any economic pressure, I say that housing is all-important. I feel that this is the opportunity which we should seize to deal with a matter of this sort. Mr. Speaker, I hear some honourable members say that we should now adjourn and I beg to move that the further consideration of this Address be postponed.

Dr. CUMMINS seconded the motion which was agreed to.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable senior member for St. Peter will have the first opportunity of speaking on the resumption of the debate on this Address and after him the honourable senior member for St. Thomas.

THE ADJOURNMENT

The Order Paper having been fixed,

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to move that this House do now adjourn to this day week, the 13th day of May, 1947, at twelve o'clock noon.

Mr. RAMSAY: I beg to second that.

The question that this House do now adjourn to this day week, the 13th day of May, 1947, at twelve o'clock noon was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Mr. SPEAKER accordingly adjourned the House to meet on Tuesday next, the 13th day of May, 1947, at twelve o'clock noon.