

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SESSION 1948—50

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 23rd March, 1950.

Pursuant to adjournment, the House of Assembly met at three o'clock p.m. to-day.

Present.

His Honour Mr. K. N. R. HUSBANDS (*Speaker*), Mr. L. E. SMITH (*Chairman of Committees*), Dr. H. G. CUMMINS, Messrs. D. A. FOSTER, O. T. ALLDER, F. E. MILLER, R. G. MAPP, T. O. BRYAN, M. E. COX, F. L. WALCOTT, F. E. C. BETHELL, E. K. WALCOTT, K. C. J. H. WILKINSON, O. B. E., and F. C. GODDARD.

Prayers are read.

Mr. CRAWFORD enters the House and takes his seat.

PAPERS LAID

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

Report of the Department of Highways and Transport for the year 1948—49.

The Civil Establishment (General) (Amendment) No. 4 Order, 1950.

NOTICES

Government Notices are given as follows:—

Dr. CUMMINS: Resolution to approve the Order entitled "The Civil Establishment (General) (Amendment) No. 4 Order, 1950, made by the Governor-in-Executive Committee on the 2nd day of March, 1950, under the provisions of the Civil Establishment Act, 1949.

Dr. CUMMINS: Resolution to grant the sum of \$628,309 from the Public Treasury (to be subsequently refunded from Loan Funds) to be placed at the disposal of the Governor-in-Executive Committee to meet expenditure incurred to the 31st March, 1951, on the Capital Works included in the Estimates 1950—51, Part II—Capital, Head I, Items 1—11, Head II, Head IV, Items No 4, in excess of the sum of \$100,000 made available under Head XLIV of the Estimates 1950—51, Part I.

Dr. CUMMINS: Bill to grant a sum of money out of the Public Treasury and to appropriate the

same for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1951.

QUESTIONS

Mr. CRAWFORD: To enquire of the senior member of the Executive Committee present at the next meeting of the House of Assembly:—

Is it a fact that the majority of the artisans employed on the construction of the new Seawell runway are paid at the minimum wage rate of the lower scale which has been fixed as remuneration for this type of worker, namely 25 cents per hour,—the two scales being 25—29 cents, and 30—38 cents per hour?

2. Is it a fact that employees who, incidentally, are paid fortnightly are called upon to work ten hours a day, sixty hours a week, with no extra pay for overtime?

3. In view of the fact that the total number of local workers employed on this million-dollar project, including artisans, watchmen, unskilled labour, electricians and chauffeurs, is, up to now, only 88, will the Government take immediate steps to ensure that wages and conditions of work be completely satisfactory?

4. Will the Government cause to be laid on the table of the House, a copy of the contract under which this work is being executed?

Mr. CRAWFORD: To enquire of the senior member of the Executive Committee present at the next meeting of the House of Assembly:—

1. Is Government unaware of the fact that considerable dissatisfaction exists on the part of peasant proprietors and small cultivators generally with regard to the prices paid for the 1948 and 1949 cane crops?

2. Is Government unaware that estimated from available figures as to the total value of a ton of sugar, the average costs of manufacturing raw, muscovado sugar and fancy molasses, other production costs and the average recovery of sugar factories, the prices paid for canes during these two (2) years are less than the value of sugar would have afforded?

3. Will the Government propose to take any steps to guarantee that an equitable price be paid for canes reaped during the present crop?

4. If the answer to Question No. 3 be in the negative, will the Government state the reasons why?

5. In consequence of the circumstances that
- (a) Dr. C. Y. Shephard in his Report on the sugar industry of Barbados has recommended since 1947 that the standard cost of manufacturing sugar should be revised annually;
 - (b) that a Committee of both Houses of the Legislature which was appointed to consider his Report has recommended "that the Government should itself collect and analyse the data from which the economic condition of the largest if not the only industry in the colony can be continuously exhibited";
 - (c) the Government's allegation that there is at present no suitable officer available to undertake the detailed statistical work which would be necessary in order to calculate standard costs on the lines proposed by Dr. Shephard,

Will the Government take steps immediately to implement the recommendation of the Committee of the Legislature under reference, with regard to the appointment of an Agricultural Economist on the staff of the Department of Agriculture?

6. If the answer to Question 5 be in the negative, will the Government please state the reasons why?

BILL READ A FIRST TIME

On the motion of Dr. CUMMINS, seconded by Mr. Cox, a Bill to grant a sum of money out of the Public Treasury and to appropriate the same for the service of the year ending on the 31st March, 1951, is read a first time.

Dr. CUMMINS asks for and is granted leave to move the suspension of Rules 88 and 89 in order to deal with the abovementioned Bill in all its stages to-day.

SUSPENSION OF RULES 88 AND 89

On the motion of Dr. CUMMINS, seconded by Mr. F. L. WALCOTT, Rules 88 and 89 are suspended.

SUSPENSION OF RULE 60

Dr. CUMMINS: I ask leave, Mr. Speaker, to move the suspension of Rule 60 in order that the consideration of the Appropriation Bill may be made the first Order of the Day.

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

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to move that Rule 60 be now suspended.

Mr. F. L. WALCOTT: I beg to second that.

The question that Rule 60 be suspended is put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

THE APPROPRIATION BILL

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker.—I beg to move that the consideration of the Appropriation Bill be made the first Order.

Mr. F. L. WALCOTT: I beg to second that.

The question that the consideration of the Appropriation Bill be the first Order of the Day is put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Mr. SPEAKER: The first Order of the Day is the name of the honourable senior member, Mr. St. Thomas.—Second reading of a Bill to grant a sum of money out of the Public Treasury and to appropriate the same for the service of the year ending 31st March, 1951.

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker.—I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. F. L. WALCOTT: I beg to second that.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Just before you put the question, Sir, I have some information which I want to pass on, which may be of some value to the Government and which I think it would not be inappropriate to mention at this time. I notice, Sir, in the Abstract of the appropriation of grants under Schedule A, that the amount to be appropriated in the fiscal year 1950-51 for Controls, Subsidies, etc., is \$1,184,000. From figures I have acquired to-day I learn that the amount which we are spending on the subsidization of flour and balanced animal feed is \$673,733—the number of half-bags of flour being 224,000 and the number of bags of animal feed being 234,000. The sum of \$673,733 is, as you will see, more than half of the total amount to be spent on subsidization and is quite an appreciable figure. I feel, Sir, that the time has come when the Government should seriously reconsider the question of subsidization with a view to finding out whether it would be possible or not to attain the desired end of keeping the cost of the commodities which are subsidized at a reasonable level. I say that with particular reference to flour and balanced animal feed. Both of these items are imported; both of them—flour especially but I am not quite sure about animal feed—come from hard currency areas and I am particularly keen on the Government taking whatever steps possible to manufacture locally wheaten flour from imported wheat. I have already referred in this House to the fact that in July last year I posed certain questions on the subject and the Government, in reply, stated that it was not possible to manufacture locally wheaten flour from imported wheat. Since I made mention of this matter I have been able to get some information which, I think, should be of some use to the Government on the question. It will be recalled that I said a week ago that at the recent Livestock Conference held under the auspices of the Caribbean Commission, Mr. Heesterman, Consultant for Industrial Development to the Commission read a paper on the production of wheaten flour in the Caribbean from imported wheat.

Mr. MAPP: Mr. Speaker.—I rise on a point of order. Does this mean that I can pick out any item on which I did not speak during the consideration of the Estimates and bring it up for consideration at this time?

Mr. SPEAKER: The junior member for St. Philip has stated that he has some information which, he thinks, may be of value to the Government.

Mr. MAPP: The information, Sir, concerns subsidization, so I take it that if the honourable member can give that information I can raise a point under any Head at this time if I care to do so.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have ruled that the junior member for St. Philip is in order. The honourable member may proceed.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Just to clarify the situation, Sir, I will read the questions which I asked in July last year:—

In view of the appreciably high cost of imported wheaten flour, will the Government take steps to investigate the practicability of manufacturing flour locally from imported wheat, giving due consideration to the following factors:—

- (a) the advantage concomitant upon the establishment of a new industry,
- (b) the desirability of being able to make available locally different grades of super-quality, including whole wheaten flour,

"(c) the opportunity provided of obtaining a highly-nutritious ingredient for the preparation of the product known as Balanced Animal Feed?"

The Government replied as follows:—

The Government has considered the question of the establishment of a flour mill and is advised that it would not be a practicable economic proposition.

Now, this information which I got this morning from Trinidad from the Caribbean Commission is entirely different from the advice given to the Government. I do not know from what source the Government got its advice but Mr. Heesterman claims that it would be quite economic in any British Caribbean colony to establish a flour mill to produce anything up to 50,000 kilograms a day; that would be approximately a little over 100,000 lbs of flour per day. As a matter of fact he goes farther and says that a mill to produce 10,000 kilograms would be quite economical—a little over 20,000 lbs., per day. Now, if the average quantity of flour consumed in the colony is 224,000 half-bags annually, assuming that a half-bag weighs 98 lbs. to 100 lbs., the average quantity of flour consumed in the colony annually would be roughly 22,400,000 lbs; so that the larger quantity of 50,000 kilograms would be adequate to supply the colony's needs in this respect. Mr. Heesterman claims that one of the advantages of importing wheat for this purpose in the Caribbean area is that the freight on wheat grain, shipped in bulk, will be less than the freight on wheat flour, shipped in bags, and that local manufacture will possibly make use of the bags several times. And, Sir, he states that one of the reasons why he brought the problem to the attention of the Conference is that the development of the industry would lead to a considerable local production of bran, a product valuable for feeding dairy cattle and pigs. Considering that we are importing animal balanced feed to the extent of 234,000 half-bags annually and that the subsidy on this item alone is \$87,873, we would be, as it were killing two birds with one stone. Mr. Heesterman claims that 200 lbs. of wheat would yield about 144 lbs. of white flour and 56 lbs. of bran. I would like, just for another additional moment, to quote a small paragraph which he includes in his memorandum in regard to the actual operation of the plant. He states:—"A milling plant for a production of 50,000 kilograms of white flour per day of 24 hours, working 250 to 300 days a year, could work quite economically, even if bigger plants on the Continent are slightly more economical. These benefits, especially the differences in freight between grain and wheat, the availability locally of bran for sale, and the fact that milling profits remain in the territory, may even lead to the conclusion that, especially for the territories with lower total consumption, a mill for production of 10,000 kilograms per day of 24 hours will be quite economical." 10,000 kilograms per day is roughly one-fifth of the present consumption of the colony. I do not propose, Sir, to detain the House any longer on this point but I do feel that too much emphasis cannot be laid on this question. Every cent of this subsidy of six hundred thousand and odd dollars for flour per year is going abroad and even if we had to give some sort of protection either by a direct subsidy or indirect protection to the locally manufactured article, obviously it would be more to our advantage to subsidize the locally produced product than the one which is manufactured abroad, bearing in mind the additional advantage of providing employment for our unemployed and the general all-round economic advantage which would accrue to

the colony if an industry of this sort was established in this island. I sincerely hope that the Government will pursue the matter a little further with the view of establishing such an industry in the colony at the earliest possible date.

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

On the motion of Dr. CUMMINS, seconded by Mr. F. L. WALCOTT, Mr. SPEAKER leaves the Chair and the House goes into Committee on the Bill, Mr. SMITH being in the Chair.

Mr. MORTLEY enters the House and takes his seat.

Clauses 1 to 6 inclusive and Schedules A and B are read and are agreed to.

On the motion of Dr. CUMMINS, seconded by Mr. F. L. WALCOTT, the CHAIRMAN reports the passing of the Bill in Committee.

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker,—I ask leave to take Order No. 7 as the next Order.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: The next Order is to move the House into Committee of Supply to consider the grant of sums of money for the service of the Government.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to move that Your Honour do now leave the Chair and the House go into Committee of Supply and that it be an instruction to the Committee of Supply when the House is in Committee of Supply to deal also with the Resolution for \$628,309 of which I gave notice earlier to-day.

Mr. COX: I beg to second that.

The question that Mr. Speaker leave the Chair and the House go into Committee of Supply and that it be an instruction to the Committee of Supply when the House is in Committee of Supply to consider also the Resolution for \$628,309, of which notice was given earlier to-day is put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY VOTES FOR VARIOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Chairman.—The first Resolution is for the sum of \$88,684 to supplement the Estimates 1949—50, Part I, Current Estimates, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1949—50, No. 32, which form the Schedule to the Resolution. This amount includes certain monies due to the Crown Agents whose accounts have recently been sent to us. The amounts are set out in the Schedule to the Resolution and the notes explain why they are necessary. I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Mr. COX: I beg to second that.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Head XXIX, Miscellaneous, Item 22, Entertainment of Petty Officers and Ratings of ships visiting Barbados, Grenada, to that, I just want to mention that so far, the Legislature has not been asked to vote any reasonable sum of money in connection with the entertainment of Her Royal Highness Princess Alice

and the Earl of Athlone. My attitude towards matters of this sort is well known but in this particular instance it would be quite unfair to place the burden of the entertainment on the shoulders of the Officer administering the Government. Entertainment, in the ordinary course of events, is adequately provided for by the grant which we vote annually to the Governor. This, I think, we will all more or less concede is extraordinary entertainment and on whatever scale it was done would cost an appreciable amount of money. The various parties held at Government House and what not must have entailed some extra expenditure and I feel that it would not be inappropriate if we give an indication to the Officer administering the Government that we would be quite willing to vote a moderate sum of money — I say "moderate" — in order to assist him in any expenses incurred in entertaining Her Royal Highness and her husband on their recent visit to Barbados.

Mr. MOTTLEY: I support very strongly the remarks of the junior member for St. Philip. I think that I can safely say that honourable members on this side of the table would like to see some reasonable — I lay emphasis on the word "reasonable" — sum of money voted for this purpose and we regret that it was not voted before now. I make the latter statement for this reason: The start which the Head of the Administration has had, in the matter of entertainments, seems to be very heavy on his Entertainment Allowance, — not that I am prepared to vote any fancy sum at the whims and fancies of anybody, but our loyalty to the British Crown is still real and unquestionable. We shall always, on the floor of this House or outside, offer criticism which we think would bring pressure to bear on our way of thinking and we realize that the start which the present Head of the administration has made, in matters of this nature, is different from the start which a former Head of the Administration made, who when he had to let people of Barbados meet not Royalty but a few officers of ships, did not find it necessary to include more than three men of colour among the invitees. In his list of invitees the present Head of the Administration sees fit to include Heads of Departments and other respectable Barbadian people. If he continues that way he would find that he would get the co-operation of the House. I appreciate the remarks of the junior member for St. Philip and I suggest strongly to the Government to send down a Resolution for this purpose. I am sure that there will not be a dissenting voice in respect of what we consider a reasonable sum to assist the Head of the Administration to defray these expenses.

Mr. WILKINSON: I just want to confirm what the senior member for the City said, that is, we on this side of the table would like to see a Resolution come down to this House for a sum of money to defray the expenses incurred in connection with the entertainment of Her Royal Highness Princess Alice and the Earl of Athlone. It is a thing that happens once in a way. Princess Alice's last visit to this Island was 16 years ago, so that it is the sort of thing which does not happen very often. I do not want to detain the House but I should like to draw attention to Head XXI, item 56, Provision and Distribution of Plant Material and Insecticides. An additional \$3,200 is being asked for and the note says: "The supply of vegetable seeds is procured from the U.S.A. as experience has proved that the best results are obtained from this source and due to the increase in the rate of exchange, this year's provision has proved insufficient. This amount is recoverable." Now, Sir, we said last week that we should be given

more dollars and be allowed to import goods from Countries which can sell to us at cheaper prices and here you have the Government finding itself in a similar position. The Government itself admits that this source of supply is much superior and I suggest to the Government to carry it a little farther and insist that we be given a free hand and that more dollars be placed at our disposal to import the essential goods which we need.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY RESOLUTION *Re* DEEP WATER HARBOUR INVESTIGATION

Dr. CUMMINS: The next Resolution is for the sum of \$456 to Supplement the amount voted in the 1949-50 Estimates for the investigation into the economics of the proposed Deep Water Harbour. This amount is due to the Trinidad Government in respect of the passage and the salary of the gentleman who came to do the investigations. I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Mr. COX: I beg to second that.

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

RESOLUTION TO MEET CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Dr. CUMMINS: The next Resolution is for the sum of \$628,309 (to be subsequently refunded from Loan Funds) to meet expenditure incurred to the 31st March, 1951, on the Capital Works included in the Estimates 1950-51, Part II, Capital, Head I. Items 1 to 11, Head II, Head IV, Items 1 to 4, in excess of the sum of \$100,000 made available under Head XLIV of the Estimates, 1950-51, Part I.

This amount is already provided in the Estimates and this Resolution is to give formal approval for the issue of advances to meet certain capital expenditure which will in due course be covered by the authority of a Loan Act and the advances will be paid when the loan or loans are raised. I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Mr. COX: I beg to second that.

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

On the motion of Dr. CUMMINS, seconded by Mr. Cox, the CHAIRMAN reports the passing of three Resolutions in Committee of Supply.

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

THE EXPIRING LAWS CONTINUANCE BILL

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker, — I ask leave to take Order No. 13 as the next Order of the day.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: The next Order is to move the second reading of a Bill to continue various expiring laws.

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker, — As honourable members well know, there are certain laws which are in force for only a year and this Bill has to be passed to enable those laws to continue to be effective after the 31st March this year. I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. COX: 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 Dr. CUMMINS, seconded by Mr. Cox, Mr. SPEAKER leaves the Chair and the House goes into Committee on the Bill, Mr. SMITH being in the Chair.

Clauses 1 to 3 inclusive and the Schedule are read and are agreed to.

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

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

CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT (GENERAL (AMENDMENT) No. 2 ORDER, 1950.

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker,—I ask leave to take Order No. 16 as the next Order of the day.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: The next Order is to move the passing of a Resolution to approve the Order entitled "The Civil Establishment (General) (Amendment) No. 2 Order, 1950," made by the Governor-in-Executive Committee on the 13th day of February, 1950, under the provisions of section 3 of the Civil Establishment Act, 1949.

Dr. CUMMINS: This Resolution is to give legislative sanction to the changes in the titles of officers in the ranks of the Police Force. The changed titles are already in the Estimates. I beg to move that this Resolution to approve this Order do now pass.

Mr. COX: I beg to second that.

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

THE BARBADOS REGIMENT (RATES OF PAY) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS, 1950.

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker,—I ask leave to take Order No. 10 as the next Order of the day.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: The next Order is to move the passing of a Resolution to approve the Regulations made by the Governor-in-Executive Committee under the provisions of section 22 of the Volunteer Act, 1909.

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker,—The reason why we are trying to pass these Regulations before the 31st March is that if they are not passed by that time the volunteers who attend the required number of parades will not be able to collect the

money to which they are entitled. I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Mr. COX: I beg to second that.

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

COUNCIL'S AMENDMENT TO VESTRIES (AMENDMENT) BILL

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker,—I ask leave to take Order No. 5 as the next Order of the day.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: The next Order is to move the consideration of the amendment of the Honourable the Legislative Council to the Bill to amend the Vestries Act, 1911 (1911-5).

Dr. CUMMINS: This, Mr. Speaker, is a minor amendment which is just a changing of figures. I beg to move that this amendment be now read a first time.

Mr. COX: I beg to second that.

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

On the motions of Dr. CUMMINS, seconded in each case by Mr. Cox, the amendment is read a second time and is agreed to.

COUNCIL'S AMENDMENT TO VESTRIES (AMENDMENT) BILL

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker, — I ask leave to take Order No. 6 as the next Order.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: The next Order is to move the consideration of the amendment of the Honourable the Legislative Council to a Bill to amend the Vestries Act, 1911 (1911-5).

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker,— This is a similar amendment to the one which we have just agreed to and I beg to move that it be now read a first time.

Mr. COX: I beg to second that.

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

On the motions of Dr. CUMMINS, seconded in each case by Mr. Cox, the amendment is read a second time and is agreed to.

THE ADJOURNMENT

On the motion of Dr. CUMMINS, seconded by Mr. Cox, the House is adjourned to meet on Tuesday, 28th inst. at 3 o'clock p.m.