

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SESSION 1950—51

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 21st November, 1950.

Pursuant to adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 3 o'clock p.m. on the abovementioned date.

Present.

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

Prayers are read.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER informs the House that the Minutes of the previous meeting are not yet ready for confirmation.

Mr. CRAWFORD enters the House and takes his seat.

PAPERS LAID.

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

Statement showing the Gross Customs and Excise Receipts for six months ended 30th September, 1950.

Statement of the expenditure of the Housing Board to the 30th June, 1950.

Annual Report of the Public Works Department for the year ended 31st December, 1949.

Report on Development and Welfare in the West Indies, 1947—49, by Major General Sir Hubert Rance, G.C.M.G., G.B.E., C.B.

NOTICE

Mr. Cox gives a Government Notice as follows:—
Resolution to approve of the Book of Reference and Plan of the proposed extension of the Water-works in the parish of St. Michael.

Mr. GILL enters the House and takes his seat.

QUESTIONS

Mr. CRAWFORD gives notice of certain questions relating to the establishment of a Milk Processing and Pasteurising Plant in Barbados.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable member submitted these questions which, I find, contain more than one statement and I told him that I would not allow them to leave my hands with those long statements. Questions should not contain statements. In other words, I have directed the Clerk to hold those questions.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Is one entitled to believe that after questions have been in the hands of the Speaker for three weeks sufficient attention should have been given to them to ensure their acceptance?

Mr. SPEAKER: I must contradict that statement. Those questions have not been in my hands for three weeks.

Mr. CRAWFORD: It is not my fault if they have not been. They were submitted three weeks ago.

The questions are not allowed.

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

1. Is it a fact that the Cotton Spinning Plant situate on lands of the Barbados Co-operative Cotton Factory Limited in Whitepark Road, St. Michael, has been sold?

2. If the answer to (1) above is in the affirmative, then

- (a) Who is the purchaser thereof?
- (b) What is the amount of the selling price?
- (c) Has the whole amount of the purchase money been paid in cash? If not, what is the unpaid balance and how is it secured and what are the terms of payment?
- (d) What is the reason for the sale?
- (e) Why was it not auctioned or Tenders advertised for?

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

1. Will the Government cause to be laid on the table of the House figures showing the total number and acreage of sugar plantations and/or sugar factories owned by absentee proprietors in Barbados?

2. In view of acute land hunger in the colony, and the general unavailability of land, will the Government take action with a view to the expropriation of land owned by absentee proprietors and make such land available for outright purchase by competent agriculturists and others or make arrangements for its cultivation under such conditions as will ensure that the profits obtainable therefrom accrue to the workers engaged in its cultivation?

3. Will the Government introduce legislation to prohibit future acquisition by companies or individuals of agricultural or other lands with an area in excess of 500 acres?

Mr. REECE enters the House and takes his seat.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. SPEAKER: The first Order stands in the name of the honourable senior member for St. Joseph,—To move the House into Committee of Supply to consider the grant of sums of money for the service of the Government.

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

RESOLUTION TO PURCHASE INSTRUMENTS FOR CONTROL TOWER AT THE AIRPORT

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman,—The first Resolution is for the sum of \$600 to provide instruments for the Control Tower at Seawell Airport. As honourable members will see from the addendum, the Airport Manager has reported the absolute necessity of supplying information relative to wind velocity and direction and barometric pressure, to pilots of aircraft operating into Seawell Airport. It is essential, especially at night, that this information be passed during approach. There are not sufficiently good instruments at the Airport to-day to obtain the information which should be supplied to pilots and about which they have complained. The Air Ministry Meteorological Station is 75 yards away from the Control Tower and when it is raining or during the night the wind direction vane cannot be seen at all. The sum is small, comparatively speaking, and I may warn honourable members that there is a lot more to be asked for in order to make Seawell Airport up-to-date and that it will be necessary for the Government to come later on with a Resolution for a further sum of money. I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

Mr. WILKINSON: Of course, Sir, it is very necessary that there should be an instrument of this sort at any up-to-date airport and I am only taking this opportunity to again enquire from the honourable member—the last time I made the enquiry he was not in the House and I could not get the reply—when it is likely that the extension of the runway at the airport will be completed. I would be very glad if he could give us some information on that point.

Mr. ADAMS: I am afraid that I cannot help the honourable member officially, that is to say, I have not recently asked that question officially but I shall, during the next half hour, get the information. Unofficially I was told that it would be the second week in December. Whether that has been modified or not, I will discover and let the Committee know later.

Mr. REECE: I agree with the senior member for St. Joseph that now we are expending a considerable sum of money on the runway we should

spend all the money necessary to make the airport a first-class airport. We not only want a good runway but we want all the necessary accessories and particularly do we want a proper terminal building in which in-coming and out-going passengers can be housed and in which members of the Customs Staff will be able to work with a degree of comfort. At the present moment, we have a building which is not big enough to cope with the activities which take place at the Airport. With the extended runway we hope to do greater trade at the airport and it is well to do all that is necessary and let us know what the total cost is going to be. Rather than to have in years to come to spend large sums of money to make alterations to buildings which are put up I think it is wiser to construct buildings that will accommodate not only the passengers but all the officials who have to work there. I do hope that when the Government considers this particular project, it will decide to give us an airport which will be capable of handling all the trade which we are hoping will pass through it.

Mr. LEWIS: Mr. Chairman,—I would like to know if the honourable senior member for St. Joseph can tell me whether this instrument that is being obtained is one that somebody else has been using for some time and if that is so, whether it would not be cheaper to spend more money and get a new one. I do not like the idea of spending \$600 to buy a second hand instrument when we could spend, say \$6,000, and get a brand new instrument.

Mr. ADAMS: I am not aware that this instrument is second hand but if I get information which I hope to get soon I will let the honourable member know. As regards the observations of the junior member for Christ Church, the Government feels that we should make a good job of this project straightway and it is more than likely that the present building will not be used but that a more elaborate building, differently sited, will be used for in-coming and out-going passengers. When I used the word "elaborate", the Airport would still be in the "C" class category from a world point of view.

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

Mr. ALLDER enters the House and takes his seat.

SUPPLEMENTARY GRANT FOR UPKEEP OF HIGHWAYS

Mr. ADAMS: The next Resolution, Mr. Chairman, is for the sum of \$21,600 as a supplementary grant for the upkeep of highways principally in the parish of St. Joseph. As honourable members will see from the addendum, the recent heavy rainfall has caused serious damage to several of the roads in the parish of St. Joseph and some of the roads are now impassable owing to landslides. It is not often that I pay tribute to the Highway Commissioners of the parish which I have the honour to represent but on this occasion honourable members should not feel hurt if the Commissioners of St. Joseph have been a little more energetic to see that the damage to these roads is repaired as urgently as possible. I will anticipate any criticism or expert advice by saying that although the Government has found it necessary to send down this Resolution immediately, the Director of Highways and Transport does not propose to start repairs to be washed away next week but as soon as one can reasonably expect the heavy rains to be finished, he will begin this work. I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

Mr. REECE: Mr. Chairman,— I am very

pleased indeed to see that the Government is paying attention to highways which have been washed away in the parishes. The parish of St. Joseph is not the only parish that has suffered as a result of the recent heavy rainfall. I can speak with authority for the parish of Christ Church. The roads in that parish, particularly the tenantry roads, are in a deplorable condition. I take it that the Government is dealing with these roads in St. Joseph first because representation has been made as regards them; but I would like to state that there are roads in the parish of Christ Church which are damaged as the result of these rains and are in need of urgent repairs. I know certain tenantry roads in the parish of Christ Church which it is almost impossible to get out of without the use of a boat and the people find it very difficult to pursue their daily avocations. I do hope that when these grants are being considered by the Executive Committee, the parish of Christ Church will not be forgotten and that an additional allocation will be made to it, so that some of those tenantry roads which have given trouble for years to the inhabitants can be put in a proper state of repair.

Mr. CRAWFORD: This, of course, may be regarded as an emergency Resolution occasioned by special circumstances, and no doubt, the people in St. Joseph will probably regard this expenditure as a God-send if the work is put in hand some time next month. In that respect it may be considered as somewhat fortunate because, as you doubtless know, Mr. Chairman, at this time of the year people in the rural parishes who depend, for the last half of the year, more or less on work that the Parochial Highways Departments are doing get very little—in many cases none at all—work to do. I know that there are other windward parishes in which, for weeks and months now, work has been reduced to the minimum. The senior member for St. John will bear me out that in his parish—and I know in the neighbouring parish of St. Philip — there has been dissatisfaction over the fact that there is very little work being done by the Highway Commissioners. I do not know whether the total funds at their disposal have been completely exhausted but if that is the case and there is no more money at their disposal I think the Central Government may well consider the possibility of assisting some of these rural parishes with a little more money at this time of the year for the repair and the maintenance or the reconstruction of highways in order, Sir, to have a little more money in circulation in the parishes at the time of the year when everybody is faced with double or treble their ordinary amount of expenditure. It will be at least 2½ or 3 months before the next crop season starts and with the exception of work on roads an appreciable portion of the population would earn little or next to nothing during that period. I believe, Sir, that if the Government were so minded and would act as expeditiously in the matter a quick survey could be made by the Director of Highways and Transport with the view of ascertaining the position as accurately as possible and making what contribution towards improving it the Government finds it within its means to do. The question of heavy rains or abnormal rains causing landslides and extensive damage to newly constructed roads will not arise to the same extent in some of these parishes as it will in the parishes of St. Joseph and St. Andrew; therefore, Sir, it may be possible, even although these showers continue to undertake some sort of roadwork programme in some parishes without any waste of public funds or

the materials involved in the work. I merely mention that, because I know a number of people who would appreciate it and if it is at all possible—if the funds are there—it would be a very fine gesture at this time of the year to assist these people with some work in this manner.

Mr. WARD entered the House while Mr. CRAWFORD was speaking and took his seat.

Mr. ALLDER: Mr. Chairman.—I know that there are roads in other parishes which have been damaged by these heavy rains and I am wondering if the Highways Commissioners of those parishes have intimated to the Government that those roads are also damaged as a result of the weather, so that they can get grants to effect the necessary repairs at the same time that repairs are being effected in the parish of St. Joseph. Last week I drove over a road which was constructed last year, that road is now broken and I feel that this matter should have been gone into thoroughly so that a definite amount could be voted to effect road repairs in the various parishes simultaneously. There is another point and it is this: We sit down here from time to time and vote money to the Highways Commissioners to spend on the roads. I have noticed that the engineering skill which is found in those parishes is not up to mark and that is because the posts of Inspectors of Roads are given to persons who do not have a real technical knowledge of road construction. The result in many cases is that householders have had water turned on to their lands. In the parish of St. John there are a couple of avenues which have been repaired and the parochial authorities have definitely refused to remedy the condition which has been brought about by the flooding of lands as a result of those repairs. I feel that it should be the duty of the Government to see that before money is voted to the Highway Commissioners they prove to the satisfaction of the Government that the men who are going to undertake the road work know what they are about. Because of that, much money is wasted and the roads do not last. The Inspector of Roads of the parish of St. John seems not to know anything whatsoever about road engineering because there are areas which are flooded whenever the rain falls and the situation is never remedied. The Inspectors of Roads should be made to prove that they have some qualification to build roads before we say "vote the money for the purpose." I am hoping that some consideration will be given to the matter and so avoid the disadvantages to which many householders are put after roads in certain parishes have been repaired.

Mr. ADAMS: I think it is only right to say that the Government is well aware that these things may happen from time to time. Already this year money was voted for the repair of Cocónut Grove road in St. Joseph for which £1,000 is being asked for and it has been washed away. The parish of St. Joseph and the parish of St. Andrew are the two worst, as far as damage to the roads is concerned, because of the danger of landslides even apart from flood damage. The Government has borne in mind the position as regards other parishes, not as far as the suitability of their parochial engineers are concerned. In this case, at any rate, the Director of Highways and Transport himself went over these roads. The Director, at the beginning of the year, advised the Government that it was necessary to increase the grants to the parish of St. Joseph and, I think, the parish of St. Andrew because of the danger of bridges being washed away and of landslides taking away whole portions of roads. I will bear in mind what the senior member for St. John

has said but I wish to assure him that the Government sees to it that the Director himself is satisfied that any sum of money asked for is not too much for the intended purpose. I will also bear in mind his suggestion and see to it that it be a directive that during the course of work that is being done the Department of Highways and Transport should supervise it so as to satisfy the Government that the work is actually being done well.

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

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS CONCLUDED.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker,—I regret to say that none of the other matters under Government Business have reached the stage at which they can be proceeded with to-day. The Select Committees have not yet reported on either Order No. 2 or Order No. 3 and as regards Order No. 4 a doubt arose as to whether the matter is completely covered by the proposed Bill, and the Secretary of State for the Colonies is advising the Government on it. Until word is had from him it is unnecessary to proceed with the consideration of the Bill. In that case, subject to a statement I would like to make, Government Business has come to an end to-day. With Your Honour's permission I would like to state, in reply to the question of the junior member for St. James about the completion of the runway at the Airport, that my information is that if the weather is not too bad, that is to say, if the rains do not keep up as they have been keeping up during the last three days, the runway will be ready by the middle of January. As regards the enquiry of the junior member for the City, this windial is a very modern instrument available locally. The Airport Manager, after careful inspection of the instrument, recommends most strongly its purchase. It is an American type of instrument and its British counterpart would be worth \$980 approximately. Acting on that information the Government thought that we should buy it.

Before I conclude Government Business I would like to make a statement in relation to the Government of this colony. There has recently appeared in the Press a very strong and serious and quite libellous statement to the effect that the Government had reached a decision to come to the Legislature with a proposal for extending the life of the House. The scurrilous suggestion is made that members of the Government are doing that, so that they may continue to draw money from the Treasury as members of the House and the Executive Committee.

There is not the slightest foundation whatever for such an accusation. No decision of that sort has ever been made. The question has never been discussed, and as far as I know, it has never entered the mind of any member of this Government. The Government feels that it should make this statement, not only in fairness to itself, but also in fairness to the learned Attorney General. It has been suggested that this Government is going to do nothing about the registration of voters, on the basis of Adult Suffrage in time for the next General Election, and use that as an excuse for the extension of the life of the House. Far from that being the case, the learned Attorney General has been most busily engaged, in

drafting legislation to send to this House for the purpose of having the newly franchised voters registered; and it is possible that if he was not engaged at the Court of Grand Sessions that legislation would be ready. I am told that a writer of some of these scurrilous articles is a gentleman of the long robe. A member of an honourable profession ought at least to have the common decency to be sure of his facts before libelling anybody, let alone the Government of the country in which he lives. It would have been the easiest possible for him to have telephoned the Attorney General, and discovered whether any steps were being taken to have the necessary legislation drafted. I repeat that the learned Attorney General has been very active in the matter. He has been delving deeply into legislation dealing with a similar set-up both in Jamaica and Trinidad; and the matter has engaged the attention of the Executive Committee. One well expects that the policy of a Party will be attacked by the writers of another Party. But I appeal to the senior member for St. James who is the head of the Electors' Association and who must have some method of advising, if not controlling, his journalist, to let us fight as hard as possible, but let us fight cleanly and honestly. You could not put money into the pockets of the members of the Government without putting money into the pockets of the other members of the House. I am reminded that it may be expedient; but the Government sees no expediency in prolonging the life of the House. The matter, as far as I know, has never crossed the mind of any of us; and for anyone to state in emphatic terms that a decision has been reached to extend the life of the House, is carrying controversy beyond the limits of ordinary civilised standards.

Mr. WILKINSON: Mr. Speaker,—I want first of all to thank the honourable member for the information he has given as regards Seawell. I think I understood him to say that if the weather does not keep up, the runway will be finished in January next year. Formerly, we understood that it would have been finished by the end of September this year, but now it will be in January next year when a lot of the tourist trade will be over. I quite appreciate that the recent weather conditions have not made it practical to get on with the job. As regards the honourable member's last remarks, I wish to inform him, Mr. Speaker, that the Electors' Association has no official organ, and no official writer. I think the honourable member would admit that he has never seen my name in print as the writer of any article on any subject. I do not believe in the useless, futile correspondence, that sometimes goes on in the Press. As far as the Electors' Association is concerned, I am a member of its council; but we have no official organ, and we have no official writer.

POOR RELIEF (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr. SPEAKER: The first Order under Private Members' Business stands in the name of the honourable senior member of the City,—Second reading of a Bill to amend the Poor Relief Act 1892 (1892-2).

Mr. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker,—This Bill seeks really to consolidate the salary of the Clerk of the Board of Guardians of the parish of St. Michael. The salary of this officer is fixed by law; and where the salary of a parochial officer is fixed by law, no parochial board can give him a cost of living bonus without the approval of the Legislature, and that is what this Bill seeks to do. I beg to move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. GODDARD: I beg to second that.

Mr. F. L. WALCOTT: Mr. Speaker,—On the last occasion when this Bill was brought before the House, I was one of the stoutest opponents to it —

not against the officer by any means, but against the principle of dealing with the matter. There was at the time before the Vestry of St. Michael the question of the payment of retrospective wages to members of the unestablished staff. As I mentioned to the introducer of this Bill, it was not that I have any grouse against this officer getting his increased salary; but it was a matter of making the Vestry of St. Michael realise that the House is protesting against their action in not doing justice to other employees under their administration. But I am going to agree, Sir, today, to the passing of this Bill because the Vestry has gone on record as agreeing to pay retrospective wages to those in the lower categories in their employ. I am still issuing a warning in my capacity as Secretary of the Barbados Workers' Union because I want to make the position clear especially to the introducer of this Bill who is the leader of the municipality in St. Michael. The Vestry of St. Michael should bear in mind that all their employees should have the same rights and conditions of employment as employees in private walks of life. The ratepayers of this parish are paying the wages of the employees of the Vestry; and I want the Vestry to realise that their workers can join any association, political or otherwise, they like. One of the things that we are fighting for in this world is that people should have freedom; they should not be victimised or threats should not be held over their heads because they join other people to obtain their rights and protection. I am issuing this warning because I do not want the Vestry to be unaware of things to come. Do not let them think that the payment of retrospective wages is good enough and that bad conditions of employment should still obtain. I feel that the honourable senior member for the City is, an introducer of this Bill, in a grand position to report to his Vestry that the workers have the right of association and that if the elementary rights of justice are not meted out to them, I will stand on this floor and oppose any measure that comes from the Vestry of St. Michael until such rights are granted. I hope the Vestry of St. Michael will heed that warning. I feel that many of its members are not human enough and that their views are not modern enough to understand that this is the middle of the twentieth century and not the slave period of the past. The honourable member is the Chairman of some of the subsidiary Boards of the Vestry of St. Michael; and I know that he has to work by the votes of those Boards. That Vestry has been carrying on a ruthless practice of getting rid of people who have worked with them for many years. It is very significant that they are asking the Government to give them more authority to increase salaries and at the same time they are giving the Government a headache by throwing people out of work and increasing the unemployment problem. I think that the unemployment situation should be uppermost in the mind of the honourable member and his colleagues at the Vestry; and that they should think a thousand times before they dismiss their workers for faults let alone for the purpose of retrenchment. Many of their workers have been dismissed at the beginning of this financial year; and I hope that the senior member for the City in his enthusiasm for helping the unemployed will use his influence on that Vestry to make them see that it is no use putting more unemployed people on an already heavy list of unemployed persons. I just wanted to throw out the hint that all is not well with the Vestry of St. Michael.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to endorse all that the senior member for St. Peter has just said. The Barbados Workers Union has the extremely enviable reputation of having fewer strikes than prob-

ably any other union in the West Indies; and it is because that most employers have learnt, in some cases over long periods, in other cases quickly, that trade unionism is inevitable, and not merely inevitable but useful to themselves and the workers; and we are glad to be able to say that, especially in the sugar industry, methods of conciliation have taken the place of methods of harshness but the feeling is still dormant in the minds of some employers that it is my money, I can fire when I like, I can hire when I like, I can pay a tribute to the sugar industry. I can say that the agriculturists in this island have always pulled their weight and shown more regard for their workers than the mercantile community. I do not think that the senior member for St. Peter spoke too strongly when he used the words "issue a warning." Members of this Government especially the senior member for St. Peter and myself, who are more closely associated with the work of the Barbados Workers' Union, feel that if it is right, in the interest of workers, that something should be done and we cannot by Trade Union methods get it done, then it is our duty to make use of the numerical strength we have in the House of Assembly to get it on the Statute Book. Apparently, the employers in the St. Michael's Vestry still think that a man has to keep his mouth shut politically, that if he should utter political sentiments different from those of his employers, he should be fired. I am going further than the senior member for St. Peter. He said that he would register his indignation against that sort of action as he did when this Bill was first before the House; but I am going further than that. I am sounding the warning that this Government is prepared to see that even a casual employee of the Sanitary Commissioners in any parish is safeguarded in his job, and is fired only after proper reasons have been given for his dismissal. That is a warning which this Government is issuing, and I am sure that the honourable members on my left will agree to it. I am glad that the senior member for Christ Church has at last seen the light. I hope he will correct me if I am wrong; but I was made to understand that he is one of those who do not feel that the Vestry of St. Michael is morally bound to pay back pay. The honourable member is young and probably will learn. The senior member for the City is not quite as young as the senior member for Christ Church, but he makes up in ingenuity for the elasticity that he has lost. I am appealing now to him to see that the same harmony that has been built up in this island, between employers and the Barbados Workers' Union could possibly exist between the Barbados Workers' Union and the parochial authorities of St. Michael. I regret to say that that is not so. The parochial authorities of St. Michael are the only body of employers that the Executive of the Barbados Workers' Union feel should be watched and fought. That is a sad thing. We do not want to go back to the days when strikes and hard words had to be the means of settling disputes. I do not know, if the senior member for the City was ever employed by somebody; but imagine a person leaving his home to go to work, and because he may have discussed something about the Barbados Labour Party with a fellow worker he finds that he has no job? We are not going to preach retaliation; we have no cause to preach retaliation with members of a different political faith; the voters do that. But we do say this; situated as we are, with members of the Labour Party prepared to help the Barbados Workers' Union attain a better standard of living for workers in this colony, we feel it our duty to help by legislation in fair and reasonable cases where negotiations by Trade Union methods have failed because some employers have been unduly

stubborn or obstinate or spiteful. Now before I sit, I think I should state this. The position of this Government, even though it is completely responsible for legislative policy in this island, is not the same as the position of the Government with responsible Ministers. It is perfectly compatible with our position as members of the Government of this colony to be Trade Union Officials. It is perfectly compatible for us to fight as strongly as possible in our capacity as Trade Union Officials, for any legislation that is brought before this House in the interest of workers. When the time comes that we are in the position of Ministers as is the case in Great Britain, obviously it is incompatible for us to hold office as Trade Union Officials because as a Trade Union Official, you may have to fight even the Government, and your duty to the Government should not conflict with your duty to any body of people in whose interest you are working. So I hope that no honourable member will be misled by any statement that this Government is not entitled to get on the Statute Book anything that it feels is for the benefit of the workers of this colony. It is our duty to do so, and if it should happen that we are Trade Union Officials at the same time as we are members of the Government, then that is merely a fortuitous circumstance, and not a breach of any constitutional, legal or even moral duty.

Mr. COX: Mr. Speaker,—Perhaps I may be sounding a discordant note, but I cannot at this stage vote for the second reading of this Bill, and my reason, Sir, is that I feel that before the Vestry attends to its employees at the top, it should deal with the many unfortunate workers, who for about two years now, were clamouring for their retrospective pay which members of the Vestry agreed in 1948 when Commissioner Adams was out here that they would give. I have been told that the officer whom this Bill affects is drawing the salary which the Bill seeks to give him; and for that reason, I do not consider that he would be inconvenienced if this Bill were not passed today, or perhaps next year. Sir, if we would be reminiscent, we will remember that when Commissioner Adams was brought here to consider the reorganisation of the Civil Service, and the question of increasing the salaries of Civil Servants, the Vestry of St. Michael committed itself to follow the Government in its decision. The Government, as we all know, decided to pay its employees retrospective pay from April 1948, and therefore we all felt not only as representatives, but as tax-payers, that the Vestry would have honoured its decision, and do as it said it would have done. But, Mr. Speaker, we find that the Vestry completely ignored its promise to its employees, and as a result, there was a great fight between the Vestry and the Barbados Workers' Union in order to bring the Vestry to a sense of justice, as far as its employees are concerned. That fight Sir, is not yet ended. The Vestry has had several abortive meetings. Quite a number of threats have been used. There were strikes and things of that sort, before the Vestry did agree to pay retrospective pay to these people, and even recently, they decided to pay some of their employees, and not the rest. As a result there was another upheaval, and only a week or two ago, the Vestry agreed to pay all its employees, what is their rightful due. Personally, Mr. Speaker, I have very little confidence in the Vestry, and for that reason, I cannot support the passing of this Bill before there has been introduced in this House a Bill seeking permission to raise a loan to pay retrospective pay for all the employees of the Vestry,—money for which they have been looking for months, and which I know they are very much in need of. As I said before, Mr. Speaker, the present holder of

this office, I understand, draws the salary which this Bill seeks to give him and therefore if this Bill is postponed this afternoon, that will do him no harm. I hope that honourable members who realise the sad plight of the sanitary workers, employees at the Westbury Cemetery and people of that sort, people who have been suffering for a very long time and trying from every angle to get their retrospective pay, will agree to the postponement of this Bill and wait until the Vestry sees fit to send up a Bill which will benefit everybody. I understand that the Bill is being prepared, but as I have said, I have little confidence, if any, in the Vestry and therefore I am hoping that honourable members will vote for the postponement of this Bill until a Bill is brought forward to pay the workers who I feel are in more need of their retrospective pay than this individual whose salary this Bill seeks to consolidate.

Mr. MOTTLEY: There are just one or two things worthy of a reply. Your Honour seems to have given quite a lot of latitude to honourable members and I am asking for the same latitude. I want to say that even if I am influential in giving information to my colleagues, I have not reached the stage where I can bully people or make them do what would appear to other people or even to myself, to be the right thing. I pointed out the aims and objects of the Bill and I think it is quite a simple matter. If I were in the position of honourable members today with nothing urgent to be done, I suppose I would express views as lengthy on the subject as they have done. I do not propose at this stage to reply to some of the criticisms used by honourable members in respect of the attitude of the Vestry, but I should like to say that the generalities were not in keeping with what actually happened. The honourable senior member for St. Peter used his influence with his supporters in opposition to this Bill because he felt, I suppose justifiably so, that it was a means of forcing the hands of those persons who were responsible for granting retrospective pay. I want to make the position quite clear. This Bill is not seeking to do something for any officer which has not been agreed to be done for other parochial employees; a cost of living bonus has been paid from the scavenger to the Parochial Treasurer, but in order to pay this bonus to the Clerk of the Poor Law Guardians and the Parochial Treasurer you have to get the sanction of the Legislature. This Bill does not deal with retrospective pay, and if I were in the position of the honourable senior member for St. Joseph, I would say just what he said. I apprise this House now that I am hoping on Tuesday next to have the opportunity of presenting a Petition and giving notice of a Bill to give the Vestry of St. Michael permission to borrow a sum of money to carry out what the majority of us feel is a moral obligation. Some stupid people seem to think that there is no such idea of our coming to the Legislature for permission to borrow money to grant retrospective pay to the employees but the position is as I have stated. I read in the leading article in the "Advocate" criticisms which are so stupid that I agreed they were not worthy of consideration; that article showed at least that the writer of it was not taking any interest or notice of what was going on around him. I hope that I will have the honour of introducing the Bill to which I have referred. I want to say that to whatever Party I happen to belong, I will retain the right to speak according to the dictates of my conscience: I have never found anybody who can tell me anything to the contrary.

As to what seems to the honourable senior member for St. Joseph to be an arbitrary dismissal of

people, it might be a popular thing to say, but it is not correct to say that any arbitrary dismissal of any employees has taken place; and I speak as a member of nearly all the subsidiary Boards of the parish of St. Michael. I have always felt that there are two sides to any question and it must be fairly obvious to persons who represent a Union that they should not hear only one side of a question but they should sit around a table and discuss the question. Surely, like any other institution, the St. Michael's Vestry with its subsidiary Boards, must have some sort of policy in running its business; and while I do not agree with every member of that Vestry, I should not hold the Vestry up to ridicule. I should like to ask members of the Government this question: If somebody has done something which is blatantly wrong, are you not going to punish him because the Government is a Labour Government? Are you going to sink your manhood? I will punish my offspring; when I have given anybody a fair trial I will come to a decision. Speaking for myself, I have no fear; when I find myself in a position where I have to speak, I will get up and express myself. The accusation of victimisation because of political views is an absolute falsehood. I respect whatever your political views might be and you must have a certain amount of respect and decency. I will tell a man that he is wrong when he is wrong and if he merits dismissal I will dismiss him, or suspend him if his case merits suspension. I would like to say that it is strange that it has only been recently discovered that the most inhuman people in this island seem to be the employers of labour on the St. Michael's Vestry.

I hope I have made the position quite clear; this Bill has nothing to do with another Bill which I hope to introduce into this House.

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

On the motion of Mr. MOTTLEY, seconded by Mr. GODDARD, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair, and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. SMITH being in the Chair.

The three Clauses of the Bill were read and passed.

On the motion of Mr. MOTTLEY, seconded by Mr. GODDARD, the CHAIRMAN reported the passing of the Bill in Committee.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

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

VESTRIES (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr. SPEAKER: The next Order of the Day also stands in the name of the hon. senior member for the City:—Second reading of a Bill to amend the Vestries Act 1911 (1911-5).

Mr. MOTTLEY: This Bill seeks to make a small addition to the salary of the Parochial Treasurer of St. Michael so as to make the salary a round figure. As hon. members know, the Parochial Treasurer's salary is fixed by law and the addition can only be made by an amendment to the Act. I have much pleasure in moving that this Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. GODDARD: I beg to second that.

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

Mr. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker,—In view of the indisposition of the Chairman of Committees, I beg to move that the honourable junior member for St. Mary take the Chair for the passing of this Bill.

Mr. GODDARD seconded the motion which was agreed to.

On the motion of Mr. MOTTLEY, seconded by Mr. GODDARD, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair, and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. BRANCKER being in the Chair.

Clauses 1 to 4 inclusive were read and passed.

On the motion of Mr. MOTTLEY seconded by Mr. GODDARD, the CHAIRMAN reported the passing of the Bill in Committee.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

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

AMENDMENT TO RULES 36 AND 40

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker,—I understand that there is no other item under Private Members' Business to be dealt with now, and I am going to move an amendment to Rule 36 of the Rules of this House. I beg to move that Rule 36 of the Rules, Orders and Forms of Procedure of the House be altered by deleting the words and figures "12 o'clock noon" and substituting therefor the words and figures "3 o'clock p.m."

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

Mr. LEWIS: I appreciate the purpose of the amendment. I know that it is not a matter of any great importance, but I feel that this Rule should not be amended in this haphazard manner. In accordance with democratic practice, it would serve a useful purpose if notice of the amendment of the Rule was given. I feel that that is a most essential thing. Of our own free will we meet at 3 o'clock p.m., and I think it would be a bad precedent to move haphazardly that this Rule be amended. I think that notice of the amendment should have been given beforehand and therefore I cannot support the motion for abandoning the Rule on the spur of the moment like this. I hope the hon. member will appreciate my position; I see no necessity for amending the Rule in this manner.

Mr. ADAMS: There is not a single member, with the possible exception of the hon. member who has just spoken, who does not find it inconvenient to be here at 12 o'clock noon. The majority of us feel that meeting at 3 o'clock p.m. is much better than meeting at 12 o'clock noon. I am aware that what I have proposed will make Rule 40 (a) absurd, and that is the position now. When we meet at 3 o'clock, Rule 40 (a) has no application. I had proposed after consultation with members of both sides of the House next Tuesday, to bring in suggested Rules. I feel that I am voicing the feelings of the large majority of members of the House when I say that if by accident next Tuesday there are not twelve members present and the House is adjourned, hon. members would hate to think that automatically they would have to come back at 12 o'clock noon on the following Tuesday. That is the main reason why I am making this proposal now. Many of these Rules have to be amended; both Your Honour and your predecessor appointed a Committee to revise these Rules, but if we are going to wait to bring them up to date, we might never alter them. I feel that this amendment should be made this afternoon.

The question that Rule 36 of the Rules, Orders and Forms of Procedure of the House be altered by deleting the words and figures "12 o'clock noon" and substituting therefor the words and figures "3 o'clock p.m." was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Mr. ADAMS: Arising out of that amendment, I beg to move that Rule 40 of the Rules, Orders and

Forms of Procedure of House, be altered by deleting the words and figures "12 o'clock noon" wherever they appear in this Rule and substituting therefor the words and figures "3 o'clock p.m."

Dr. CUMMINS seconded the motion which was agreed to.

THE ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. ADAMS: I am going to move the adjournment of the House until 3 o'clock on Tuesday next. I hope to introduce next Tuesday Resolutions in connection with the Coleridge-Parry and St. Leonard's

Schools and the houses at the Pine. I hope with your permission, Mr. Speaker, to be able to circulate copies of these Resolutions beforehand, and that honourable members will be able to deal at least with the Resolution in respect of the Coleridge-Parry School so that the Government might be able to get on with the work at this School. I beg to move that this House do now adjourn to Tuesday next, the 28th day of November, 1950, at 3 o'clock p.m.

Mr. Cox seconded the motion which was agreed to, and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.