

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SESSION 1951—54

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 18th December, 1951.

The 1951—54 Legislative Session was inaugurated at 10 o'clock a.m. to-day in the Council Chamber, Public Buildings by His Excellency Sir Alfred William Lungley Savage, K.C.M.G., Governor and Commander-in-Chief in this Island.

Pursuant to Writs issued by His Excellency the Governor-in-Executive Committee, the hon. members elected by the several constituencies to represent them in the House of Assembly were present in the Assembly Chamber as follows:—

Messrs. G. H. ADAMS, B.A., (Senior Member for St. Joseph), J. E. T. BRANCKER (Senior Member for St. Lucy), Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS, M.D., C.M., (Junior Member for St. Thomas), Messrs. W. A. CRAWFORD, (Senior Member for St. Philip) A. E. S. LEWIS (Junior Member for the City), M. E. COX (Senior Member for St. Michael), L. E. SMITH (Junior Member for St. Joseph), F. L. WALCOTT (Junior Member for St. Peter), E. D. MOTTLEY, (Senior Member for the City), R. G. MAPP (Senior Member for St. Thomas), K. N. R. HUSBANDS, (Senior Member for St. Peter), E. K. WALCOTT, K.C., (Junior Member for St. James), T. O. BRYAN (Junior Member for St. Michael), F. C. GODDARD, (Junior Member for Christ Church), O. T. ALLDER (Senior Member for St. John), F. E. MILLER (Junior Member for St. George), J. A. HAYNES B.A., Junior Member for St. Andrew, J. C. MOTTLEY, (Junior Member for St. Philip), E. St. A. HOLDER, (Senior Member for St. James), V. B. VAUGHAN (Junior Member for St. John), C. E. TALMA, (Senior Member for Christ Church), Mrs. E. E. BOURNE (Senior Member for St. Andrew), Messrs E. W. BARROW, B.Sc., (Senior Member for St. George) and L. A. WILLIAMS, LL.B. (Junior Member for St. Lucy).

On receipt of a Message from the Sergeant-at-Arms that His Excellency the Governor was awaiting their presence, hon. members proceeded to the Council Chamber where they answered their names, took the Oath of Allegiance and signed the declaration as to their qualification to be elected members of the General Assembly. At the request of His Excellency, hon members repaired to their Chamber to make choice of their Speaker to be presented for His Excellency's approval.

ELECTION OF THE SPEAKER

Hon. members being in their places,

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Clerk,—I have much pleasure in proposing Mr. Kenmore Nathaniel Rhystone Husbands, the senior member for the parish of St. Peter, as Speaker of the General Assembly for this coming Parliament. Mr. Husbands needs no recommendation from me or from any of us as Speaker, inasmuch as he has already presided over our destinies with that dignity which one expects from the Speaker of a Legislative Assembly, and I may add, that extra dignity, if such a thing is possible, that one would expect of a Legislative Assembly which is the second oldest in the colonial world. I go further and say, Mr. Clerk; that if one were to read the old debates of Assemblies that have taken place in the past 300 years of the life of Barbados, one could not find today any diminution in the care with which the proposed Speaker has conducted as our guardian, the affairs of this Assembly. Mr. Husbands has shown that attention to detail, to procedure and to the observance of the Rules of the House that one expects, as I say, from the holder of an office which is as old as ours. In fact, perhaps I should not say this, but there were times when I, personally, thought that Mr. Husbands was, if anything, too dignified, too careful and too much of a Speaker; but that is a good fault. One does not want to draw invidious comparisons, but it is far better for an old Assembly like ours, to say that the Speaker is a rigid Speaker rather than a lax Speaker. If Mr. Husbands continues in the way in which he has begun, I have no doubt that for the next 40 or 50 years his successors will have the pleasure of continuing in his dignified and correct administration. Again I have much pleasure in proposing the senior member for St. Peter, Mr. K. N. R. Husbands, as Speaker of this Assembly for the ensuing Session.

Mr. BRANCKER: Not only because it happens that I am the second senior member of this Chamber, but because of my personal feelings in this matter and my regard for Mr. Husbands who has just been proposed for the office of Speaker of this Assembly, I take pleasure in formally seconding the motion of the honourable senior member for St. Joseph. I think that Mr. Husbands' re-election as Speaker will provide the utmost satisfaction to the vast majority of the inhabitants of this colony. Mr. Husbands' own electorate have shown how much they have appreciated that he was Speaker during the last Session by re-

turning him as the senior member of the constituency. He has had an opportunity, and he has availed himself of it, on two occasions during the last Session of studying Parliamentary procedure in the Imperial Home of parliamentary democracy, and of course he has profited, as we expect he would profit, from those two trips, those two, shall I say, courses of study and observation in the Mother of Parliaments. The fact that Mr. Husbands has taken his duties so seriously in his first Session is an indication that he will take them even more seriously in this Session, and I am happy again to second the motion of the honourable senior member for St. Joseph that Mr. Husbands be Speaker of this General Assembly for the current Session.

No other honourable member having been proposed.

Mr. HUSBANDS: Mr. Clerk,—I must say how much I thank the proposer and seconder of the motion for my re-election as Speaker of the General Assembly. I am fully aware of the great responsibility and the signal honour it is for me again to assume the Speakership of this old and historic Parliament. I am happy to accept this office and I hope that I will receive more than the necessary assistance from you gentlemen throughout the Session which is before us. I promise you that as I have tried in the past to serve you with all the dignity of which I find myself possessed, I shall continue as your humble servant in the Session now before us, Mr. Clerk and gentlemen, I thank you. (Cheers).

Mr. SPEAKER-ELECT was then robed by the honourable senior member for St. Joseph and the honourable senior member for St. Lucy, his proposer and seconder and conducted by them to the dais.

Mr. SPEAKER-ELECT: Gentlemen,—I thank you very much for re-electing me as your Speaker. I am too full of emotion to thank you in very many words. Again I pledge myself to do my best in your interest and in the interest of the community. I thank you. (Cheers).

The Mace was then placed on the Table.

APPROVAL OF THE SPEAKER

Sitting in the Chair,

Mr. SPEAKER-ELECT: I request my proposer and seconder to repair to the Council Chamber and report to His Excellency that the House has elected

its Speaker and is desirous of presenting him for His Excellency's approval.

Mr. ADAMS and Mr. BRANCKER proceeded to the Council Chamber.

On their return.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker-elect,—The honourable senior member for St. Lucy and I waited on His Excellency in the Council Chamber and reported to him that the House has made choice of its Speaker and is desirous of presenting him to His Excellency for his approval. His Excellency has expressed his willingness to accept Your Honour's selection by the House as Speaker and awaits the coming of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER-ELECT: Gentlemen,—His Excellency awaits us in the Council Chamber.

Mr. SPEAKER-ELECT and the House, preceded by the Marshal bearing the Mace proceeded to the Council Chamber.

On their arrival,

Mr. SPEAKER-ELECT: Your Excellency,—The House of Assembly has elected me as its Speaker and I now present myself for Your Excellency's approval.

HIS EXCELLENCY: I have much pleasure in approving of the choice made by the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Your Excellency,—In the name and on behalf of the General Assembly I lay claim to their ancient and undoubted rights and privileges, and especially to freedom from arrest and molestation of their persons and servants, to freedom of speech in debate, to free access to Your Excellency whenever occasion may require it, and that the most favourable construction may be placed upon all their proceedings.

HIS EXCELLENCY: Mr. Speaker,—I give and grant to the House of Assembly so far as it is consistent with the Royal Prerogative and with the laws and constitution of this island, every privilege and liberty which have been enjoyed by any former Assembly as fully and freely as ever.

HIS EXCELLENCY'S SPEECH

HIS EXCELLENCY then delivered a Speech to the Houses of the Legislature, at the conclusion of which he presented a copy to Mr. Speaker.

The Speech is as follows:—

Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council:

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

It is with a deep consciousness of the solemnity of this occasion that I address you. The Legislature and the people of this Island are facing a new period of development—political, social and economic—and against the background of the last war with its crippling effects on the economy of the Commonwealth and with a foreground of threats of war, if we are to succeed in our endeavours it will need the maximum effort of each one of us, a very much closer co-operation of all people, less cleverness and more wisdom, and a more practical application of the Christian principles which we profess.

It is with this appeal that I greet you and welcome you on your return to duty and service for the people of this Island. Those of you who previously have had the honour and privilege of being members of the Legislature will, I am sure, continue to give the benefit of your counsel and your more mature experience of affairs. Those who are new to the political life of the Island will rapidly appreciate, as a statesman once said, that successful Government is essentially synthetic. In the crucible of the Legislature we hope to fuse together the aims and the aspirations of our community into one composite whole. But "the heat needed for this process is the heat of anxiety to serve and not that of controversy or of sectional hostility or of personal interests."

APPOINTMENTS

I regret to inform you that Sir Dudley Leacock has resigned his appointment as a member of the Executive Council on general health grounds. His services to this Island in many capacities have received well deserved praise from all sections of the community and were fittingly recognised by His Majesty the King in the last Birthday Honours by the award of a Knighthood. I wish him a very happy and tranquil retirement.

I have (a) provisionally appointed the Honourable John Chandler, M.L.C., President of the Legislative Council, as a member of the Executive Council;

(b) appointed the Honourable H. A. Cuke, C.B.E., M.L.C., to be a member of the Executive Committee; and

(c) on the nomination of the leader of the majority party in the House of Assembly, I have appointed the following four House members to be members of the Executive Committee:—

Mr. G. H. Adams
Dr. H. G. Cummins
Mr. M. E. Cox, and
Mr. F. L. Walcott.

Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council:

I have appointed Mr. Campbell Wylie to be a provisional member of the Legislative Council in place of Mr. F. E. Field.

Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council:

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

GENERAL

There is before us a tremendous volume of work and a host of difficult problems. Those that come to mind are, in alphabetical order, certain constitutional questions the Civil Service, the Cost of Living, a Deep Water Harbour, Financial Policy, Hospital Development, Housing, Irrigation, Local Government and Public Health, Office accommodation for Government Departments, Population, the Port of Bridgetown, Production and Subsidization of foodstuffs, Secondary Industries, School building programme and Technical Education.

I do not intend to attempt a complete survey, and, therefore, I have selected a number of these items for brief consideration, but their selection does not imply that the others are not of similar importance. I would only add that the opinions I express are entirely my own responsibility and, again, I seek your indulgence if unwittingly I offend in word any of your traditions or unwritten

CIVIL SERVICE

I propose first to make some reference to the Civil Service. Following the reorganisation of departmental staffs carried out during the last session, some progress has been made in sending officers overseas for further training and in obtaining the services of overseas officers to train local staff. I am aware that more needs to be done on a broader and on a long term basis, but the pressure of work over the last twelve months unfortunately has precluded this. I am responsible for the delays, but I have endeavoured to deal personally with each department individually rather than delay the completion of an overall plan. I can only say that I hope to complete the proposals by the end of January.

I do not believe the increasing volume and complexity of public business is appreciated by members of the general public. In the past, to a great extent, each Colony was interested almost solely in its own affairs, but in the last decade, the development of international relations, conventions, conferences and the specialization in almost every branch of the public service, has thrown a tremendous burden on administrations, and in Barbados with its limited number of specialist officers, the load has slowed down the speed of achievement. This is no reflection on serving officers or, in particular, on officers who have acted in the more senior posts. Far too often I have had to demand that they should endeavour to carry out many of the duties of two posts and, therefore, have placed on them an unreasonable volume of work. But it is essential to refer again to the basic reasons for this apparent neglect of the administration in filling vacancies.

When I spoke on this matter eighteen months ago, I referred to the necessity to review the terms and conditions of service of professional and other senior officers and to bring them as far as our finances would allow to the market level.

In my first two years of service in Barbados, I have been, for periods of a year or upwards, without the services of six substantive Heads of Departments and other senior officers. At the end of this month, I shall lose the services of another Head of Department whose post I have endeavoured, without success, to fill during the last twelve months. Three serving Heads of Departments have

applied for transfers to other administrations. *The most important department* and compare the crops of the same period, you will find that we are getting much bigger crops than ever before. There can hardly be one planter who would not admit that this is due in the main to the work (theoretical, practical and instructional) of the officers of the Department of Agriculture. Let me tell you the staff position. There has been a vacancy for a Deputy Director of Agriculture for just over two years and there are two other vacancies awaiting recruitment, i.e., Veterinary Officer and Senior Peasant Agricultural Instructor. The posts of Government Analyst, the former holder of which went on leave prior to retirement in May, 1950, and of Co-operative Officer, which was created in August, 1950, have only recently been filled. In addition, one senior officer has applied for a transfer to a Colony where leave passages are provided, and another has for the time being withdrawn the application for transfer which he had submitted.

This is all very insidious, for the progressive reduction in the efficiency of the Agricultural Department would not be quickly seen. Nearly two years ago, difficulties were being experienced in recruiting senior qualified teaching staff. The considerable number of changes in staff in the last twelve months and the renewed difficulty in recruitment, demands re-consideration of the problem. These difficulties occur in many departments which are just as important in their own sphere of administration. I must emphasise it is not only the question of recruitment, for there is also the problem of retaining serving officers. We have endeavoured as a temporary expedient to fill some vacancies by short term agreements on non-pensionable terms and at very much higher salaries. We have had to do it, but it has caused much bitterness—and in my opinion legitimately so—among the serving officers, many of whom have given a lifetime of service to this Government.

What are the objections to the review I have proposed? I have been told we cannot afford to pay more, or that if the emoluments of professional officers are raised there will be pressure for all Government employees of all grades to have their salaries raised, or that the Governor is endeavouring to get better salaries for officers from overseas and so keep Barbadians out of the best jobs.

Let me deal briefly with each objection. While I shall deal with the future budgetary position in a moment, I can say I have no doubt that this island can afford to bring its civil service salaries and terms and conditions of service up to, say, British Guiana standards. But I must emphasise that the real approach should be rather—can Barbados afford to allow its standards in administration, in the scientific field and in the many professional fields, to deteriorate to the lowest in the Caribbean? The procession of senior staff (Barbadians and others) from this Island to better paid jobs elsewhere must be arrested. As Head of the Administration, I have a responsibility to the Legislature and to the people of this Island to maintain an efficient public service, but I cannot carry out my task with a discontented civil service or a service with qualified staff who, on financial grounds, are compelled to seek other fields of employment.

The next objection has been that it would be unfair to the junior staff to improve the terms and conditions of service of the senior staff. That argument in general, unfortunately, won the day at the last revision of salaries and that is, of course, why we are in such a parlous condition now. Salaries and wages and terms and conditions of service in the junior branch of the civil service compare favourably with those in private employment, and rightly so, but those of the senior branch of the service are poor in comparison with almost any other field of employment. Furthermore, the salary scales and superscale posts in the civil service are quite unbalanced and need coordination. The average salary of a Head of Department is not much more than \$5,000 a year, whereas a clerical officer can hope to earn roughly 60% of that amount. Surely, it is obvious that that percentage is completely out of line with the comparative responsibilities of the posts?

The third objection is that the Governor wishes to raise the emoluments of overseas officers and so retain their services in this Island, to the detriment of Barbadians. I would have hoped that in two years I would have earned the confidence of this Civil Service. I do not practice discrimination of that kind. But the problem is not that of attracting and retaining overseas officers. The same arguments apply to Barbadians and other West Indians. Too often, and for too long, the argument has been advanced that if you keep the salaries low in Barbados, jobs will be kept for Barbadians. What is the result? There are many qualified Barbadians who have found the local terms of service unattractive and now are enjoying more attractive posts in nearly every part of the world.

A few weeks ago, the House of Assembly passed an Address expressing general agreement with the terms of the Holmes Report and in view of that measure of agreement, I have again appointed a Committee to examine the matter. I trust that its report will receive the early and the sympathetic consideration of the Legislature.

POSITION OF CIVIL SERVANTS.

It is inevitable that in a small island problems of personalities should arise, but I have been distressed at the practice of abusing Civil Servants in privileged circumstances which do not permit them to reply or to defend themselves. Let it not be thought for one moment that I am trying to interfere with the rights of free speech and fair criticism. But it is axiomatic that rights imply obligations and there is a world of difference between fair criticism of the operations of a Government department and invective against individual Civil Servants. I hope the practice will cease.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION.

The Public Service Commission Act has been placed on the Statute Book. It is the intention to set up the Commission not later than the 1st of April next.

DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS.

I intend to propose the establishment of a new department of Government. Every modern and progressive state has a department responsible for the collection, interpretation and distribution of the statistics of the country. It would not require a large staff and would not be unduly expensive. It may be preferable to select Barbadians for training and, therefore, it may not be possible to establish the Department for two years, but I hope meantime to arrange for a quarterly bulletin of statistics to be published by the administration.

GOVERNMENT OFFICES

There is an urgent need for final decisions to be taken regarding new Government offices. It appears to me that we shall not reach finality until a firm decision is taken as to whether it is intended to erect new buildings to accommodate the Honourable Legislative Council, the House of Assembly and the departments of the Colonial Secretary and the Attorney General. A Joint Select Committee considered the proposal just after the outbreak of the last war and reached the conclusion that "the consideration of this question should be postponed".

The difficulty of obtaining a suitable site has always been a problem, but with some diffidence I throw out the suggestion that an excellent site is available at the east end of Government House grounds. There are several acres of mainly rocky ground which cannot economically be developed agriculturally and adequate maintenance is difficult. In my opinion, the use of that site for the purpose I have suggested will not interfere in any way with the beauty of the grounds and the site is so far distant from the house that there would not be any inconvenience to anyone.

DEEP WATER HARBOUR

The question of a Deep Water Harbour for Barbados has been under discussion for decades, each scheme proving — mainly because of the progressive depreciation of the value of money — to be much more expensive than the last. It appears that there is now a fairly general public demand for a scheme to be implemented. I hope that the proposal in principle will be examined by all branches of the Legislature early in the New Year so that a definite decision can be taken one way or the other without further delay. The recent domestic sugar agreement has indicated the support of the sugar industry in a practical manner by the acceptance until 1953 of the imposition of a levy in "above average crop" years as a contribution towards the annual costs of the necessary loan, but I hope that the contribution will be continued during the period of the loan.

THE PORT OF BRIDGETOWN

This brings me to the question of the present conditions in the Port of Bridgetown. The position has become very serious and over recent weeks I have had informal discussions with representatives of employers and employees. From my personal contact with ships' masters and shipping representatives, I am informed that the Port of Bridgetown is considered to be the least efficient and consequently the most expensive in the Caribbean. The result has been that one European company has imposed a surcharge of 10% on all cargo for Barbados, while three North American companies have given notice of a surcharge of 15%. There is also a real danger that the larger class of ships will restrict their calls here as there is a shortage of ships and handling time is particularly vital at present. The effect of such action would be that our imports would cost us more because of additional freight and treble handling charges, while our receipts from our exports would be reduced for similar reasons, with the result that food and other prices would rise. We are not faced with a dispute, but with a crisis which, if not averted, will affect adversely everyone in this Island.

I believe that employers and employees can yet save the situation. At present — it seems to me — that representatives of both sides rarely meet except when there is a dispute. There is an urgent necessity for them to meet more often and to move closer in a "partnership of goodwill" in the port. I have suggested that a "good offices" committee at the highest level should meet at the earliest possible moment to consider the reasons for the present crisis and to make recommendations towards a solution. I do not wish to intervene unnecessarily, but I am prepared, if I am approached by both parties, viz., the Barbados Workers' Union and the Shipping and Mercantile Association, to act as chairman to such a Committee and to use my best endeavours to assist in solving the problem.

The North American companies have announced their intention of imposing a surcharge of 15% as from the 1st of January next, but I appeal to them, through their local agents, to defer the implementation of that decision for three months to give us an opportunity to remove the stigma and regain the reputation for efficiency which the port undeniably has lost.

HOMES

I next refer to Housing which I prefer to designate "Homes". The Census Report of 1946 with its summary of dwellings and rooms provides much useful information in relation to the needs of the situation, and it should now be possible to prepare a long term plan. I say "long term" for it is not possible financially for any country to carry out a major housing programme in a short term of years.

Much has been done — by way of loans for repairing and improving houses — from the Labour Welfare Fund; by housing schemes from public funds — both by providing prepared sites for building and by building homes at low rentals. A Civil Service Housing Scheme is to be submitted to the Legislature in the immediate future.

For the present, the Labour Welfare Fund provides only for loans for the "alterations, additions or repairs to a house." The maximum rate of a loan is inadequate for any other purpose.

I would hope that some priority could now be given to the purchase of homes. I believe that Government "should favour ownership and its policy should be to induce as many people as possible to become owners." Good homes are the foundations of a happy community and there can be no doubt that when people own property themselves, they gain in self respect and become more useful citizens.

I realize that larger loans will condition the rate of progress, but I trust that in the long term plan which is necessary, some funds will be made available to increase the number of owners of homes in this Island.

PRODUCTION OF FOOD

A common world problem is the increasing cost of living. In Barbados there has been a substantial increase in price levels of our imports and of our domestic production and already we are aware of further potential increases. Our chief food imports come from Canada, the United States, Australia and British Guiana, and the rise in the cost of living in those countries is reflected in the prices we have to pay. Our own exports have increased substantially in price which affects the cost of living in other countries.

There are many reasons for this economic roundabout, probably the strongest being the threat of war with its rearmament programme and consequent inflation. In Barbados, as in many other countries, we have endeavoured to cushion the rise in prices of certain essential foodstuffs by subsidization, but, as elsewhere, the substantial increases in price levels have reduced the effectiveness of such policy. It is my considered opinion that we cannot afford to increase the recurrent cost of subsidization which already represents a charge of over 10% of our normal budget.

There are, of course, certain foodstuffs which we cannot grow ourselves and the general view appears to be that it is unlikely that we could grow other foodstuffs any cheaper than we can import them. I may have the confidence of ignorance, but I am not satisfied to accept that view.

PIG INDUSTRY

I refer in particular to the 2,000 tons of salted pork which we are importing every year from North America and which we are also subsidizing by over \$300,000 a year. There are two private schemes of pig production and marketing of which I am aware and I hope that Government will be prepared to assist the ventures and to encourage producers to develop the industry, not only for domestic consumption but for the export of hams and bacon in the Caribbean.

CENTRAL MILK DEPOT

I deeply regret that the proposed scheme for a Central Milk Depot and Creamery has met with so many difficulties. From a food production point of

view this is of the highest priority. Quite apart from the potential increased production of milk, the scheme would also result in the production of more meat. Another factor is that the by-product of pen manure is of vital importance to the sugar industry.

The original scheme proposed Government participation on a fifty/fifty basis within a co-operative undertaking. I understand there were technical objections, but a later proposal for a scheme on a company basis was unacceptable to the producers.

In my opinion this scheme cannot be allowed to die and I hope that milk producers will reconsider the matter and come forward with alternative proposals which they would be prepared to support.

FISHING INDUSTRY

The recent disaster whereby the greater part of the fishing fleet on the Leeward coast has been destroyed, affects the fishermen very seriously and food production substantially. For some time previously there had been discussions regarding mechanization of some vessels which would result in a substantial increase in the quantity of fish caught. The disaster has expedited consideration of this matter and the Fisheries Advisory Committee is now considering a scheme to include mechanization of some of the new vessels to be built. The question of the refrigeration and marketing of the supply of fish above immediate market requirements has also to be considered.

VEGETABLES

As regards green vegetable crops, I am advised that any decrease in the present high costs can be sought in two ways:—

- (a) by encouraging the growers to produce more;
- (b) by decreasing the present high costs of distribution.

This would necessitate the establishment of a central marketing depot with cold storage facilities and these matters are now being investigated.

SUGAR INDUSTRY

There are a few points I wish to make in relation to the sugar industry. First, the recent domestic sugar agreement. Once again Barbados has led the Caribbean in industrial relations. But in my opinion, too much emphasis has been placed on the bonus provisions of the agreement and not enough on the other clauses, which are just as important. They provide for specific consultations between employers and employees in relation to the external sugar agreement, for a solution, I hope, of the problem of the price of peasants' cane, for increased contributions to the Labour Welfare Fund, for a contribution to a Harbour Fund and for an annual statement to be published explaining publicly the figures relating to the price paid for cane, to manufacturing expenses and to factory profits.

But the most important part of this agreement is not written. It will be found in the hearts and minds of both of the parties concerned, viz., the Barbados Workers' Union and the Sugar Producers' Association. Barbados, and indeed the world, depends in the future on what Mr. Winston Churchill has recently described as a partnership of capital and labour to ensure common prosperity, and I trust that in the years ahead, the domestic sugar agreement will be looked upon as the first step made in that direction.

SUGAR BOARD

It is my hope that in the coming year, which is the second year of the agreement, representatives of employers and employees in the sugar industry will come closer together to form a Barbados Sugar Board on which there will be representatives of employers, including peasant representation, and employees, and of the Government. Their primary task would be to consider all major matters affecting the industry and in particular to examine the present domestic agreement and to make recommendations in relation to its extension.

LABOUR WELFARE FUND

I have made some reference to the Labour Welfare Fund, but I would like to read to you the summary of conclusions of the Manager after nine months operation of the Housing Loans Scheme:—

- (a) The increased cost of materials has had an unfortunate effect upon the rate and period of repayment of loans;
- (b) The worst aspect of housing conditions as revealed by inspection is overcrowding;
- (c) Most houses in respect of which applications for loans were made, were in a bad state of disrepair;

- (d) There is encouraging evidence of willingness on the part of workers to repay their loans;
- (e) Owners and managers of estates and factories have been active and helpful in their co-operation. Without their assistance the scheme would not have worked.

PRICE STABILIZATION RESERVE FUND

No call has had to be made on the Price Stabilization Reserve Fund since its inception, but some small reduction is being made in the annual rate of contribution in certain years for the benefit of the Labour Welfare Fund. There appears to be a body of opinion that considers that in view of the external "rolling agreement" with the United Kingdom, there is not the same need for such a Reserve Fund as before. I do not share that view. We may well have a period of droughts, in which case this Fund may be essential to help cushion the industry over difficult days.

CAPITAL REHABILITATION RESERVE FUND.

As is well known, the purpose of the Capital Rehabilitation Reserve Fund is primarily to bring factory efficiency to the highest level possible. A survey of factory requirements was undertaken when the scheme was initiated, and in the last five years much has been done to achieve the purpose of the Fund. But it is clear that an up to date survey of present and future requirements is necessary because if any actual or potential free funds are available, consideration might be given to the requirements of producers who presently can only earn 2s. 6d. a ton in respect of improvements to their equipment, etc. I have in mind particularly the possibility of providing funds for irrigation.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly :

GOVERNMENT FINANCES.

I turn now to consideration of the future budgets of Barbados. I do not intend to go into a lot of detail, but to indicate what I believe, with the experience I have gained in the last two years, to be a sound financial policy. We are of course a part of the sterling area and naturally the strength or weakness of sterling is reflected in our economy. The last world war and a current re-armament programme have weakened the Commonwealth, but if war can be averted I am not unhopeful of some strengthening of sterling and, therefore, of our own economy.

RAINFALL AND REVENUE.

Rainfall and Government Revenue in Barbados are directly related. This can be ascertained from a comparative table of annual rainfall, crops and revenue. Last season we had the highest rainfall since 1897 and the biggest crop ever recorded—187,000 tons. This is reflected in our current receipts from customs and excise which will exceed \$6,000,000 and in direct taxation—income tax—which we will collect next year which will reach a new peak. The previous two seasons also reflected above average rainfalls, above average crops and good revenues. We have had good rains so far this year and again a good crop—presently estimated at 165,000 tons—is anticipated. But these four crops are above average and are giving, I feel, a false sense of security to the general public and too many people are forgetting the bad years of small crops and limited finances. The weakness of a one crop economy must be obvious and although the development of secondary industries must be encouraged, our financial policy must be primarily related to agriculture.

I have, therefore, sat at the feet of the Director of Agriculture, of Sir John Saint and other agriculturists and endeavoured to determine future prospects assuming minimum and maximum rainfalls, further development of new cane varieties and the best use of the land. I have summarised their advice as follows:—

- (a) It is unlikely that we shall ever fall below a crop of 80,000 tons in the future;
- (b) It would be reasonable to assume an average crop of the order of 150,000 tons in the next five years;
- (c) With optimum conditions, a maximum crop of the order of 200,000 tons could be achieved at the end of ten years.

FINANCIAL POLICY

I have endeavoured to translate those opinions into financial and economic policy for the next five years and these are my conclusions :

- (a) Higher priority must be given to directly productive schemes;
- (b) More must be done to improve the productivity of the 17,000 peasants who presently grow about 15% of the sugar crop;
- (c) Further assistance should be given to smallholders to grow more food and to keep livestock;

- (d) Irrigation schemes must be made a live issue;
- (e) Secondary industries, however small, must be encouraged, if necessary by loans;
- (f) More assistance should be given by Government, and other interested parties, to develop the tourist trade;
- (g) Recurrent expenditure should as far as possible be limited to the moving average revenue of the previous five years;
- (h) More recurrent revenue will be needed if we are to go ahead with major development schemes such as a Deep Water Harbour, improved and extended educational facilities, improved hospitalization and extension of social services;
- (i) The Revenue Equalization Fund, which has been approved with a token contribution of \$150,000 this year, should be built up in "above average" crop years by fixed annual contributions and by the transfer of, say, 50% of any budget surpluses, so that in bad years we can maintain the current level of public services;
- (j) The General Revenue Balance should not be allowed to fall below a third of the annual revenue during the next five years;
- (k) Expenditure against loans should, as far as possible, be limited to schemes which are directly remunerative;

RECURRENT REVENUES

I do not propose to detain you by explaining in detail each of these conclusions, but I want to refer to the item relating to the necessity to obtain additional recurrent revenue if we are to embark on a major development programme.

Recently my attention has been drawn to articles in the Press regarding the incidence of taxation in Barbados. I agree at once that there is a number of potential taxpayers who are evading the income tax net and that is why the Department has been reorganised, additional staff provided and emphasis placed on the preparation of statistics.

But the implication in the original article that public services are provided, or could be provided, primarily from direct taxation is misleading. I anticipate the total revenue this year will reach nearly \$12,250,000 of which only roughly one third will be derived from income tax. The remaining \$8,000,000 will be received from indirect taxation, Customs and Excise duties paid by all sections of the community, and from fees, licences, etc., collected from the general public.

To return to my main point regarding the raising of additional revenue. In the last twelve months a review of all revenue items of the Estimates has been undertaken excluding Head I (Customs and Excise) and Head II (Taxation). They include licences, fees for services and other items which have not been revised for many years. There is a legitimate case for some increases. But from a brief survey of the items, I do not consider we could anticipate collecting more than an additional \$150,000 annually. As regards Customs and Excise duties, it would be possible to raise more revenue on many items, but although there are very few items which are not related in some way to the cost of living, we may have to review this source of revenue. An increase in company tax would not be substantially effective for most of the capital employed in Barbados is local and the shareholders are assessed individually. As regards rates of income tax on individuals, my view is that no change should be considered until the Income Tax Department has repaired most of those meshes in its net which are broken and we are satisfied that those who should be paying are, in fact, assessed.

There is an alternative to increasing customs duties and other taxes. It is to reduce expenditure and I press for reconsideration of my previous suggestion for the progressive reduction of present subsidization over a term of years. The funds which are saved could be used for financing a development loan. I admit that less subsidization means an increase in the cost of living, but I see no other alternatives than those I have mentioned.

CONCLUSION

Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council:

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

I do not take a gloomy view of the future. It is certainly going to be slow and uphill work to move forward. Progress all over the world has been retarded, but if we have faith in ourselves and in each other and do not flinch before the challenge of the future, there is no reason why we should not succeed in our endeavours.

I now declare the Legislative Session open and pray for the guidance of Almighty God in your deliberations.

ALFRED SAVAGE,
Governor.

Government House,
18th December, 1951.

SWEARING IN OF THE MARSHAL

Mr. SPEAKER and the House preceded by the Marshal bearing the Mace returned to the Assembly Chamber and entered upon the business of the day. After Prayers,

Mr. SPEAKER: I request the honourable senior member for St. George and the honourable junior member for St. Lucy to repair to the Council Chamber and request the President of the Legislative Council to send one of their members to swear in the Marshal.

The Legislative Council having sent honourable Dr. Gato, the Marshal was duly sworn in.

RULES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to move that the Rules of the House that were in existence during the last Session, be the Rules of the House, until amended, for this Session.

Mr. F. L. WALCOTT seconded the motion which was agreed to.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to move that the honourable junior member for St. Joseph be appointed Chairman of Committees for this Session.

Dr. CUMMINS seconded the motion which was agreed to.

APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY SPEAKER

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to move that the honourable junior member for the City be appointed Deputy Speaker of the House for this Session.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

The question that the honourable junior member for the City be appointed Deputy Speaker was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

SELECT COMMITTEE TO DRAFT A REPLY TO THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Mr. SPEAKER: I have the honour to inform the House that when the House attended His Excellency the Governor in the Council Chamber on the occasion of the opening of the Legislature, His Excellency was pleased to deliver a Speech, a copy of which he has handed to me.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to move that His Excellency's Speech be taken as read.

Mr. COX: I beg to second that.

The question that His Excellency's Speech be taken as read was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to move that a Select Committee be appointed to reply to His Excellency's Speech.

Dr. CUMMINS seconded the motion which was agreed to.

Mr. SPEAKER: Subject to the approval of the House, I appoint the following members to serve as such Committee:—The honourable junior member for St. James (Mr. E. K. Walcott), the honourable senior member for St. Joseph (Mr. Adams), the honourable senior member for St. George (Mr. Barrow), the honourable junior member for the City (Mr. Lewis) and the honourable junior member for St. Thomas (Dr. Cummins).

SELECT COMMITTEE TO RECOMMEND APPOINTMENTS TO STANDING COMMITTEES

Mr. ADAMS: It has been the practice for some time now that the Standing Committees are appointed every Session and that a Select Committee comprised of the senior members of the various constituencies makes recommendations as to the persons to be appointed to serve on such Standing Committees. I therefore beg to move that the senior member of each constituency be appointed as a Select Committee to make recommendations to the House as to the members of the several Committees which are to be appointed.

Mr. Cox seconded the motion which was agreed to.

DOCUMENTS

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

Financial Report of the Accountant General for the month ended 31st October, 1951.

Annual Report of Barbados Police Force for the year 1950.

Highway and Tenantry Accounts of Parish of St. Peter for half year ended 30th September, 1951.

Tenantry Road Account of Parish of St. John for half year ended 30th September, 1951.

Tenantry Roads Account of Parish of St. Thomas for half year ended 30th September, 1951.

Letter from the Clerk of the Jamaica House of Representatives enclosing a copy of a resolution of the Jamaica House of Representatives dealing with the banning of South African goods.

NOTICES

Government Notices were given as follows:—

Mr. ADAMS: A Bill intituled an Act to make better provision for Local Government in this Island.

Mr. ADAMS: A Bill intituled an Act to make provision for the protection of Third Parties against risks arising out of the use of motor vehicles and for purposes incidental thereto.

Mr. ADAMS: A Bill intituled an Act to confer powers, and impose duties and restrictions, in relation to gold currency, payments, securities, debts, and the import, export, transfer and settlement of property, and for purposes connected with the matters aforesaid.

Other Notices were given as follows:

Mr. ALLDER: Of the following Address:—

*The House Of Assembly
To*

His Excellency The Governor

The House respectfully request Your Excellency to send down legislation to provide for the setting up of an Emergency Hospital in the parish of St. John and other parishes.

Mr. ALLDER: Of the following Address:—

*The House Of Assembly
To*

His Excellency The Governor

The House of Assembly desire to set up a system for the redistribution of the landed areas in this colony among the local population. And as a step towards this end, respectfully request Your Excellency to send down legislation immediately mak-

ing provision for the purchasing and taking over of all Estates in this Island owned by absentee proprietors.

Mr. ALLDER: Of the following Address:—

*The House Of Assembly
To
His Excellency The Governor*

The House of Assembly respectfully request Your Excellency to send down legislation, making provision for a Pension Scheme for agricultural workers who have become incapacitated as a result of ill health, other than that covered under the Workmen's Compensation Act.

Mr. ALLDER: Of the following Address:—

*The House Of Assembly
To
His Excellency The Governor*

The House of Assembly view with much concern the difficult land situation taking place in this colony. And with the desire to encourage a larger Peasant Proprietorship, respectfully request your Excellency to send down legislation immediately prohibiting the purchasing of more than one (1) acre of land in this Island by persons other than Barbadians.

Mr. ALLDER: Of the following Address:—

*The House Of Assembly
To
His Excellency The Governor*

WHEREAS the road known as Featherbed Lane in the parish of St. John has become impassable to vehicular traffic, and whereas residents travelling to other districts of the parish have to take a circuitous route of five miles through the parish of St. Philip to get to their destination,

WHEREAS, the House of Assembly view with much concern the inconvenience caused to the residents of this district, and therefore, respectfully request Your Excellency to take the necessary steps to have this road taken over by the Department of Highways and Transport for the purpose of giving a through passage from Halton in the parish of St. Philip to Kendal corner in the parish of St. John.

Mr. HAYNES: Of the following Address:—

*The House Of Assembly
To
His Excellency The Governor*

The House of Assembly respectfully request Your Excellency to take immediate steps to put into effect the "Project" known as the East Coast Road from Belleplaine to the public road to Cattle Wash, St. Joseph particularly, as at present, owing to the destruction of the bridge at Lakes by heavy rains, the Villages at Lakes, Corbins and other lands, are completely cut off from road communication.

Mr. MILLER: Of the following Address:—

*The House Of Assembly
To
His Excellency The Governor*

The House of Assembly respectfully request Your Excellency to take the necessary steps to provide for the immediate erection of a Broadcasting Station which will be available for the use of all the inhabitants of the Island.

Mr. MILLER: Of the following Address:—

*The House Of Assembly
To
His Excellency The Governor*

The House of Assembly respectfully request Your Excellency to take the necessary steps to provide for the immediate erection of a modern Secondary School in the parish of St. George.

Mr. MILLER: Of the following Address:—

*The House Of Assembly
To
His Excellency The Governor*

The House of Assembly beg to inform Your Excellency that in order to assist in promoting adult education, to give the people of this island an opportunity to learn the policy of the Government, and to promote cultural entertainment, especially for the people in the country districts, the Government should take immediate steps to nationalise the business concern known as Barbados Rediffusion Service Ltd.

Mr. TALMA: Of the following Address:—

*The House Of Assembly
To
His Excellency The Governor*

1. The House of Assembly respectfully beg to draw to Your Excellency's attention the urgent necessity of providing another Maternity Hospital in this Island.

2. This House would recommend that owing to the undoubted healthy climatic conditions prevailing at the District known as Silver Sands in the parish of Christ Church, that such steps be taken without undue delay for the implementation of such a scheme, thereby bringing relief and/or assistance to hundreds of expectant Mothers in humble circumstances.

QUESTIONS

Mr. SPEAKER: I have the honour to inform the House that several Questions have been submitted by honourable members but I will not allow any of them to be put today because I have not had the opportunity of scrutinizing any of them.

PHOTOGRAPH OF THE HOUSE

Mr. SPEAKER: I also have the honour to inform the House that I have given permission to the Visual Aids Department to take a photograph of the House.

THE ADJOURNMENT

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker,—In moving the adjournment of the House, I take the opportunity on behalf of the Government and myself to wish Your Honour all the compliments of the Season, a happy—and I hope an easy—time both inside and outside of the House. I hope that Your Honour will come back refreshed in more senses than one to continue the work of the Chair when we re-assemble. I should just like to make the suggestion to the senior members of the various constituencies that they could notify the Clerk of the House today, if possible, as to the earliest date that will suit them for meeting and making recommendations as to the members of the Standing Committees. I am told—and it would be unfortunate—that some of the Statutory Boards may

find it difficult to have meetings until the new members are appointed. Provision is made in some cases for the Boards to continue and inasmuch as the adjournment will be over the holidays, it is hoped that it will be possible for the senior members of the various constituencies to meet earlier and make their recommendations as to the Standing Committees. I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, the 8th day of January, 1952, at 3 p.m.

Mr. GODDARD: I beg to second the motion for the adjournment of the House and in doing so, on behalf of honourable members on this side of the House, I wish Your Honour a very happy holiday.

Mr. LEWIS: If I understand this motion correctly, the honourable senior member for St. Joseph has spoken on behalf of the Government, and the honourable junior member for Christ Church has

spoken on behalf of the Opposition. I should like to speak on behalf of the other members of the House and to wish Your Honour the compliments of the Season.

Mr. SPEAKER: I must tell honourable members that I appreciate their good wishes for the Season and I now reciprocate those good wishes. I hope that when we re-assemble honourable members will find it possible to pin themselves down to all the hard work which lies before us, and that we will be willing to work together for the good of the colony. The question is that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, the 8th day of January, 1952, at 3 o'clock p.m. Honourable members in favour of that will please say "Aye", those against will please say "No", I think the "Ayes" have it. This House now stands adjourned.