THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SESSION 1950—51

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 15th March, 1951.

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

Present:

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

Prayers were read.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting which was held on the 27th February, 1951, having been circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker,—I have the honour to present a Message from His Excellency the Governor as follows:—

MESSAGE NO. 12/1951

His Excellency The Governor
To
The Honourable The House of Assembly

His Excellency the Governor has the honour to refer to the Address dated 26th November, 1940, from the Honourable the House of Assembly in which the Honourable House of Assembly expressed agreement with the necessity for the urgent replacement of the Water Boat "Ida".

2. It was not possible to proceed with the replacement during the war, but conditions have now improved and it is proposed to replace the "Ida" with a Tug and Barge which are obtainable from the United Kingdom.

3. The total cost of replacement is estimated at $171,240 made up as follows:—

Cost of 60′ 6″ steel water barge ..	$ 43,920.00
Charge F.O.B. Southampton ..	619.20
Handling Gear, etc.	1,008.00
Cost of 56′ 0″ Diesel Motor Tug F.O.B. Southampton	110,116.80
Freight	15,576.40
	$171,240.40

It is proposed to utilize the amount of $144,713 standing to the credit of the Watercraft Renewal Fund and provision for the remaining $26,527 has been included under Capital Head VI, Item 5 of the 1951-52 Draft Estimates.

L. SAVAGE,
Governor.

Government House,
Bridgetown.
13th March, 1951.

NOTICES

Government Notices were given as follows:—

Mr. ADAMS: Resolution to grant the sum of $491,384 from the Public Treasury (to be subsequently refunded from Loan Funds) to be placed at the disposal of the Governor-in-Executive Committee to meet expenditure incurred to the 31st of March, 1952, on the Capital Works included in the Estimates, 1951-52, Part II—Capital, Head I, Items 1 to 9, Head II and Head IV, in excess of the sum of $250,000 made available under Head XLIII of the Estimates 1951-52, Part I.

Dr. CUMMINS: Resolution to authorise the Governor to enter into an Agreement with a person to serve in the Medical Department in the office of Biochemist.

Mr. ADAMS: Of my intention to move the House into Committee of Supply at the next meeting in order to consider the money Resolution of which I have just given notice.

QUESTIONS

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

Whether Government is aware of allegations of serious maltreatment (including wounding) at Police Stations "B", "F", and Belmont, St. Michael, and elsewhere, since the present Commissioner of Police assumed duties, alleged to have been inflicted by members of the local constabulary upon persons de-

tained at such stations and from whom Police were seeking to obtain statements or admissions?

2. If the answer to the above query is in the affirmative will Government state:—

(a) How many such allegations have been received?

(b) On what dates were the incidents alleged to have occurred?

(c) When were the incidents first reported to Government.

3. If the answer to the first question (above) is in the negative, will Government cause rigid inquiries to be instituted to ascertain the existence and authenticity of such allegations?

4. Whether it is the custom for Police in this Island to obtain statements from minors in the absence of a parent or guardian of such minors or the Probation Officer.

5. Whether any barrier exists precluding the appointment in the first instance, as Superintendents of Police in this Colony, of coloured men who are not and have not previously been members of the local constabulary?

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

Is it true that, already during the current sugar cane reaping season, an instance has been brought to light wherein, at a sugar factory in this Island a substantial discrepancy was discovered by an itinerant Cane Inspector between the actual weight of a lorry load of canes and the weight of same as recorded by the cane weigher who weighed them?

2. If the answer to the foregoing question is in the affirmative, is it also true that (as was the case of Spring Hall Factory, St. Lucy, a few reaping seasons ago) the difference between the recorded weight and the actual weight was in favour of the factory and to the detriment of the seller of the canes?

3. If the answer to either of the above questions is "yes", Will Government see to it that no stone is left unturned to secure for the cane grower justice at the scale beam, and for the Factory Management speedy trial at proceedings instituted against such in respect of incorrect weighing of canes?

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY—ESTIMATES 1951—52.

Mr. SPEAKER: On the last adjournment the House was in Committee of Supply on the Estimates for 1951-52.

Mr. SMITH: Mr. Speaker,—Before you leave the Chair, I should like to take the opportunity to say a few words in connection with rural housing, as I will not be able to do so when I am in the Chair.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable member is completely out of order.

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair, and the House resumed Committee of Supply, Mr. SMITH being in the Chair.

Mr. DOWDING came into Committee and took his seat.

HEAD XVI—PRISONS

The items and the respective amounts to be voted under this Head were read.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to move that the sum of $38,370 be voted under this Head.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

Mr. ALLDER: In connection with item 17, "Provisions", the amount to be voted is $23,000. There is a decrease of $1,000 on last year's estimates, but that is not the result of what is produced by the prisoners at this Institution. We have been voting money in respect of the stock farm and we have been voting money for the replenishment of the stock. I enquired about allowing the provisions grown at the Prison to be consumed by the prisoners, instead of allowing them to be sold outside, and honourable members have expressed the feeling that that would be too good a thing for the prisoners. Cabbage, carrots, and so on are grown at the Prison and some of them are sold to the warders, and the remainder to housewives and some of the business houses in town. We have had discussions on prison reform, recommendations have been made but no changes have been effected. Prisoners leaving the Institution are dissatisfied with the treatment which is meted out to them, and those undergoing terms still have to eat cold food—a system which was set up since the 17th century. Many prisoners leave the Institution after serving long terms up there and the fact that the treatment is bad is seen in the fact that a few weeks after they leave the Institution they show improvement. I am told that the food for the prisoners is cooked early in the morning, the prisoners take it out with them and it is given to them in a degenerated state. Besides that, the menu leaves much to be desired; two ounces of salt fish which is unwashed is given with the food. Fruit is given once a month—on Sundays—and at Christmas Day or at any other Festival. Provisions which are produced by prison labour should not be sent on the market to be in competition with local traders who have spent much money to produce those provisions; if provisions are grown at the Prison it would not be wrong if you allow what is produced there to be issued to the prisoners so as to improve the protein and other nutritive value of the diet. I do not believe that nothing should be done for the prisoners because they have no right at the Prison. I should like to say that not only are the inmates up there dissatisfied, but also the employees; many years ago the warders asked the Government to supply them with mechanical transport and they were refused that. We all know that this is an age of progress and that nearly every Government Department which has to do transport is given the means of transport. One does not have to go into the Prison to see the difficulty of the warders who have to walk from the Prison to Codrington several times a day with the prisoners who have to cart stones, and that is also hard for the prisoners. Prisoners have been carried as far as the Garrison and Gravesend and they are carried to Government House. It is somewhat embarrassing when a prisoner has to be taken to the General Hospital for treatment; he is compelled to walk along the street to the stare of the public. Replies given by the Government to the questions which I asked some time ago were to the effect that supplying motor transport at this Department would be uneconomic. The smallest business has to supply itself with several units of transport, and if a large number of prisoners accompanied by warders have to travel to various parts of the parish to do work, you must get more work out of the prisoners with the use of mechanical transport. I cannot see how the provision of mechanical transport for the prisoners can be considered as uneconomic; we should improve the lot of the prisoners because they do work in return for the ever so little which we might be giving them. As regards item 18 "Clothing and Uniform", the warders complain that the heavy uniform which they have to wear takes a lot out of them, and they would not mind if they were given a lighter material; such a change would not only bring ease and comfort to the warders, but it would entail a saving of the revenue of the colony. As regards the amount allocated for "After Care of Discharged Prisoners," I feel that it should be something more than $480. The prison population is on an average

of 300 and some of them leave the Institution weekly; some of them spend 18 months and so on, and I am told that they are given $2.00 or $3.00. The amount spent in the aftercare of these prisoners is inadequate and that is why we have so many recidivists. A discharged prisoner needs an adequate amount for food and medicine which an individual who is broken morally and physically would need to rebuild him, otherwise he is left open to temptation and within a short time be returns to the Prison. Although people are prisoners they still have to be treated as human beings. Complaints come not only from disgruntled individuals, and when several of them come to me over a period of months, I begin to look at the picture more seriously. If one statement is false you cannot say that several statements do not have any foundation in fact, and should the Administration not carry out an investigation? The Barbadian is very docile and with all this bad treatment taking place, we do not hear about any revolutionary activities being carried out at this Institution. I think that an ear should be given to the statements and complaints which these individuals make. I have found on making an investigation that the officers who have to see that discipline is carried out at the Prison are also dissatisfied; one can only come to the conclusion that there is nothing less than a volcano existing at this Institution and it only needs something to ignite it. I think that we should always try to remove the cause of trouble rather than try to relieve the result. I hope that something will be done in the not distant future. It is felt that when a complaint is made as regards a particular Department, the people who are actually suffering are not approached to get their expression on the matter about which the complaint is made. Every Head of a Department likes the public to know that everything is going well, and and his expression alone should not be taken as the basis of replies which the Administration is expected to give to questions asked by honourable members. In connection with the questions which I have asked relative to affairs at the Prison, I was told th no investigation was carried out in a general way, but that somebody spoke with the Superintendent. It would have been better if a few prisoners were sought out and questioned as well as some of the junior officers of the Department; because you would have been able to get an all-round picture as to the conditions which might be existing at the Institution. I have not had the opportunity to discuss the replies which have been given to my questions, but I am hoping that some consideration will be given to the points which I have just made with a view to an improvement of the general condition not only in respect of the prisoners but also in respect of the staff.

Mr. GILL came into the Committee and took his seat while Mr. ALLDER was speaking.

Mr. BRANCKER: I must congratulate the honourable senior member for St. John on the observations which he has made and I hope that the appropriate member of the Government has taken note of what the honourable member has said and will pass it on to the proper quarter. The warders are unanimous in expressing the view that their present uniform is completely unsuitable to the tropics; it might be all right for a cold climate, but in Barbados when uniform is provided for people in the humble walks of life, it is usually made as unpleasant as possible for them. We remember what the uniform for postmen was like, what that of the Police is like, and the warders seem to be the worse off having to wear their uniform up to their necks. I hope that before tenders are again called for in respect of making this uniform, something more suitable for the tropics will be provided. As regards item 19 "Cleaning, Water and Light," I would like to know if electric light has been installed in any of the prison cells so that prisoners can have the opportunity to read while they are in the cells. Until recently there was no electric light in these cells. The Government would be well advised to consider the provision of lighting facilities in the cells up to a certain hour of the night so that the prisoners would not have to go to sleep like fowls; they could improve their minds by reading suitable literature. I am glad to see that there are one or two honourable members around this table who feel that the methods adopted at the prison are merely punitive and nothing to do with reform; we follow other countries in other matters, but, strangely enough, we do not follow them in this matter of prison reform. The amount of the item "After Care of Discharged Prisoners" is rather small and I trust that it is not the result of any cutting down; one of the most important things to society is that when prisoners are released suitable provision is made for their after care so that they will not offend against society. I again commend to the Government the modern views of prison reform as expressed by the honourable senior member for St. John.

Mr. MAPP: I would like to know how item 17 "Provisions" and item 28 "Fodder", have any bearing on each other. The amount in respect of provisions is $1,000 less than what it was last year, while the amount in respect of fodder has increased. The note to item 17 reads: "Cost of rations for prisoners, and of material used in making bread supplied to the Mental Hospital, the value of which is paid for in accordance with fluctuation in market prices." I would like to know why the cost of provisions has gone down when market prices have gone up. Is there expected to be a decrease in the number of prisoners?

Mr. MILLER: Sometimes I wonder if the very word "prison" does not tend to frighten people and it would be a good thing if the Government could bring about the necessary reform. The idea of a prison is not to bring premature death to a person; the prime idea should be to reform people. I feel that sending a man to prison is casting him out of society; people who have been sent to prison are despised, and the stigma attached to them is enough for them. There is no reason why a person should be put in prison for 10 or 15 years, and if you give him food which is lacking in nutritive value, you must shorten his life. The Government must realise that if you ask a man to live on a few biscuits and unwashed salt fish and a few ounces of potatoes that tends to shorten his life, and if you isolate him for more than 16 hours in a cell, that is depriving him of the right which God has given him. I do not think that any Government would want to deny a man his right to live; but you have people who, on account of circumstances, find themselves behind prison bars and they are forced to death as a result of the poor food and cruel treatment meted out to them. I am asking the Government to view this matter from a humane point of view; there are many recommendations made in the Report of the Conference in respect of Prisons, which was held in 1948, but none of them has come into existence. Very strong recommendations have been made in this Report; the present Superintendent of the Prison attended this Conference and there is a recommendation to the effect that nothing produced at the Prison should be offered for competition in the outside market. It is criminal to put a man in prison and ask him to produce articles of food which he sees going through the door of the Prison and he is denied the reward of getting any any of those articles. It is cruel enough to supply prisoners with unwashed rice, but sometimes the food is there for hours. One can understand how

uncomfortable the present state of affairs is; one could not conceive of such things existing in an age like this. I ask the Government to consider the question of prisoners going to Government House to work. We have strangers coming here from all parts of the world and going to Government House; they have an impression of sunny Barbados and so on, but as soon as they enter Government House they see prisoners working. I feel that we should not have prisoners working at a place such as Government House; I feel that working old-fashioned carts which have been rejected by animals, is more than a human being should be expected to bear. I do not know what the Government feels about this matter; I happen to be a Socialist and I think of the individual; I feel that out of the scum and mire found in the gutter we can produce a gem. Because of certain circumstances you find a man in prison, there is no reason why he should be in that state for ever. It must be remembered that many people were born in humble surroundings, and some people were without food or shelter, and as regards prisoners very often a man who is in prison is not guilty of any offence. Sometime ago I met a man who was coming out of a field with some potatoes and yams; he told me that he had just come out of prison on that particular day and his children were hungry. I am not saying that that sort of thing should be encouraged, but we need to consider carefully the position of people who are unfortunate enough to have to serve terms in prison. The question of installing lights in the prison cells was one of the recommendations of the Conference in respect of Prisons; prisoners are placed in their cells early and I agree that they should be allowed to read up to a certain time. I feel that some amendments should be brought down with regard to affairs at the Prison; if a man is denied the company of his wife or associate I think that that is sufficient punishment for him, and we should try to bring him back to a respectable way of living. I feel that the recommendations of the Conference should be put into effect.

Messrs. WARD, GARNER and MOTTLEY came into the Committee and took their seats while Mr. MILLER was speaking.

Mr. ALLDER: The honourable senior member for St. Thomas should at least make some comments one way or the other, having heard the points made by honourable members.

Mr. ADAMS: It is impossible for a Government spokesman to reply to all the drivel which one hears in this House. Hon. members on both sides of the House are entitled to bring matters to the notice of the Government, to make accurate statements and offer constructive criticism of the policy of the Government, but when hon. members base their criticisms on their perverted mentality and do not care whether they speak the truth or not, sometimes in their own interest, it is best not to answer them. I did not hear all, and I did not care to hear all that was being said. I do not say that prisoners should be treated as brutes, and as regards what hon. members have said by way of criticism, we are not asked to supply reasonable diet for prisoners; we are asked to feed them probably better than they would be fed outside. I remember the cold, but useful argument which Lord Chief Justice Hewart used to put up to Counsel at the Bar; he used to say that before a man left home to commit a crime he should remember his wife and family. Every report which a prisoner makes is investigated, brought to the notice of the Superintendent and ultimately to the notice of the Government. There is not one word of truth about the lack of this and the lack of that in respect of the diet of prisoners; some of them get more oranges than I get during some weeks. The Superintendent reports—and he has been there for 11 years—that the diet has been improved by the inclusion of split peas and soup, fresh beef, fresh pork, and four oranges and grape fruit weekly. Comparisons have been made between people joining the Police Force and the Barbados Regiment; the balanced diet accounts for marked improvement in the physical condition of those people, and in consequence they put on weight. If those hon. members who have spoken about this diet had the slightest responsibility, they would make sure of their facts; but instead of doing that, they say things which are absolutely untrue so as to make a splash on the floor of the House. But that sort of thing will have to be stopped; the people of this island will know the truth about those who pretend to support the Government. The Superintendent has reported that as a result of the debate in the House last year, people asked to be supplied with vegetables; it is not a question of any competition. Members of the Government sometimes hear things for the first time in the House. I heard the question put today by the hon. junior member for St. Lucy about a defective scale beam, but the information must be right; the hon. member has a habit of melodramatically adding to the truth, but I cannot say the same thing of hon. members on my extreme right. They make a point and they do not care whether it is based on fact or not; they do not ask anything, but they either make accusations either absolutely on imagination or on wild rumour. To do that and then attack the Government is just sheer dishonesty. As regards the work done by prisoners, the kind of work which you give a prisoner to do in a place like Barbados is limited; and it is far better to give him hard labour than penal servitude. You must give him something to do; you send some prisoners to cut blocks, but you send others to Government House to do gardening. In respect of the cases at the Assizes, I sometimes wonder why people did not break into some Broad Street merchant's store instead of breaking into their poor neighbour's house. I should like to say that some people want to use the prestige, the name and even the funds of the Labour Party and then stab it in the back. There was a complaint made by prisoners about their eyesight, and it was suggested that the diet lacked this, that and the other. The matter has been gone into; it was found that such a complaint generally comes from people who are told that they have to go to Codrington and cut stones. They make that complaint because they do not want to cut stones. As regards the warders, I did not know that they have made the same representation as the Police in respect of a change of uniform; but, obviously, just as there was a change made with regard to the uniform worn by the Police, there will be a change in the uniform worn by the warders. I will pass on the comments which have been made in the proper quarter. I notice that the critics in this matter do not wear tropicals, but they will say "Look how the Government makes the warders and the policemen dress." As regards the item "Provisions", hon. members will find that we have been asking for more than has been spent from year to year; we voted $28,000 in 1949—50 and only $20,456 of that amount was spent. The Head of the Department asked for the same $24,000 as was voted last year, but as we voted more than what was spent, we cut down the amount by $1,000. Last year we made the point that the decrease from $28,000 to $24,000 was due to a reduction in the prison population; but after the Castries fire, we had to keep some prisoners from that neighbouring colony. When no more than $21,880 has been spent, it is reasonable to put down $23,000 instead of $24,000 in respect of this item.

Mr. ALLDER: I want to reply to the hon. member's statement that hon. members want to use the prestige of the Labour Party. I would like the the hon. member to explain whether that statement applies to me and I would like to ask him how many pounds or dollars of the Labour Party I have used and then stabbed the Party in its back. If the hon. member thinks that being a member of the Labour Party is the only ambition which an honest young man wants to achieve, he is mistaken as far as I am concerned. I can only be proud of my membership of any organisation if it meets with what is my political conviction; I have no fear of doing anything at all, and if the hon. member thinks that I am as weak and stupid as he thinks, he is wrong. I want to say here and now that I have not had one cent from this Party to spend on my election to a seat in this House, and as regards using the name of the Party, I have always felt that when a Party thinks it does everything for the individuals, and the individuals do nothing for it, that Party must die, because each individual has to contribute its quota to the Party. I want to say that unfortunate people can be killed because they think about their wives and children before they commit a burglary; many people think so much about their families that they are forced to relieve the conditions under which their families might be suffering. I was trying to be mild about what has been reported to me as having taken place at the Prison; the hon. member tries to make out that a person is a liar and he is always telling the truth. I am representing the people and I consider it my right to listen to them. The conditions existing at the Prison were explained to me by someone who came to my house, and it was my duty to bring the case here in the place where I feel all things should be brought to be remedied. I promise the hon. member that I can bring about a dozen or eighteen persons who have left the Prison recently, to the bar of the House to testify to what I have said. The hon. member claims that my statements as to the prison diet are not true, and he read out that the prisoners are given four oranges and so on. I have been able to see the diet; I visited the Prison on a private transaction and a prisoner showed me a portion of rice which was like a bit of ice. When complaints are made about Heads of Departments, no proper methods are adopted to investigate the conditions; and in this particular case I am told that the Superintendent was interviewed and questioned, but no enquiry was made of members of the staff or of the inmates. I know that the hon. member will be surprised to hear this. A nurse who used to be employed at the St. Thomas' Almshouse and who was involved in a case which took place there some years ago, was put to superintend the kitchen at the Prison; being a nurse, the doctor leaves her to administer to prisoners the injections which are to be administered to them, and she cannot leave the kitchen to administer these injections, nor can she do it beyond a particular time when the prisoners are sent to have these injections; therefore, the prisoners line up in the kitchen over the food which is open on the table, and they get their injections. I hope that the hon. member will investigate that matter. If he says that applications have only been made to the Prison for the purchase of provisions since I raised the question in this House, I would like him to ask the Officer up there if provisions were not sold to an individual in St. James before I raised the question in the House. I have also been able to talk to an individual who lives in the vicinity of the Prison and who has been accustomed to purchasing provisions from there. Even if the hon. member felt that the facts were not given, he should not have been so indiscreet as to say that the person who raised the question did so indiscreetly. It is a known fact that no hon. member would know what happens inside the Prison unless he was asked to visit there; it is only left to an hon. member to ask questions here because people who have lived in prison would have had to go to him and put matters before him. I could not tell people that they were lying. The position is this: the hon. member's attitude shows an absence of any charitable feeling towards the under-privileged people after he has convinced them that everything should be left to him, and whenever anything is suggested here, he has always been unwilling to give it the hearing and consideration which a true leader should give. That has left the way open for one to think that the hon. member does not truly hear about the plight of the masses. I believe more in actions than in words; I have read of leaders who have made sacrifices in order to help the underprivileged, and they have been treated in a manner in which the hon. member would not want to be treated. If the hon. member thinks that things will continue to be as they are now, he is mistaken; if he thinks that the people are not thoughtful, he is mistaken. What sympathy can Government have for people who, through circumstances of life, have to serve terms in prison and who have to haul heavy stones, and when a question is asked about supplying motor transport for doing this work, the reply is given that supplying this transport is considered unjustified and uneconomic? Is it unjustified for you to relieve suffering? Have hon. members not passed along Station Hill and seen the prisoners carting stones from Codrington to the Prison and a little fellow at the helm jumping up and trying to balance the cart? You brand yourself as a Socialist and as an emancipator of the people so as to make them rulers of their own colony and you get vexed when questions are raised? If you are not a Socialist, do not call yourself a Socialist; if you are a Conservative, say so and people will support you for what you say you are. I hope that the people will decide the matter; I have all confidence that they will decide it. I have heard certain hon. members ask if the Prison must be turned into the Marine Hotel; but I am asking the Government to stop giving prisoners rice which is boiled without the two ounces of salt fish which is provided along with it. The prisoners get stewed potatoes and two ounces of fish as an alternative meal. How often do they get split peas, soup and fresh meat? A prisoner who has just been released is writing a calypso on the conditions obtaining at the Prison: some of the prisoners have said that they do not even get the cabbage leaves because they are given to the pigs. Must I believe the Head of the Department rather than the numbers of prisoners who are suffering? As a matter of fact, after getting these reports, I wanted to see conditions for myself. I drove up there and was received by a warder who asked me to come in. I asked to be allowed to see the stock farm and I was told that the Superintendent was out. If disrespect was not uppermost in the mind of the Officer who told me that the Superintendent was out, even if he did not give me the opportunity of seeing things for myself, he would have told me in a different manner that the Superintendent was out and he was unable to accommodate anybody except by the Superintendent's orders: then a proper Head of the Department would have telephoned me when he came in and asked me to come up at his convenience or at mine. But nothing like that was done. All those Heads of Departments know that their case will be defended in this House; however,

I am hoping that something will be done about the points which I have mentioned.

Mr. MILLER: I would like to make a few remarks in reply to the statement made by the Leader of the Party of which I am a member. I cannot understand how the hon. member could point to me and state that I am serving in this House under the prestige and funds of the Labour Party; nothing could be more untrue. In connection with every strike which the Union has had, I have contributed money. I have always supported the cause of Labour; my father, who is now dead, was against me because I supported the cause of Labour in Queen's Park. I remember utterances which the Leader of this Party has made in public; that man has had a strong influence on my life. My wife was ill with a baby———

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is going a little too far. I should like him to preserve the dignity of the Committee; I should like him to stick to the point.

Mr. MILLER: I respect your position, Mr. Chairman, but I think I should say what I feel. I have come here to serve with the hon. senior member for St. Joseph, not under him, and I feel that I should have the right to criticise things and say what I feel about them. There is no record that I have voted against the Government, and what justifies the feeling that I have stabbed the Government Party in the back? There is not one act on record by which I can be regarded as being other than a Socialist. I should like to say that everything which the Party has had to do meant money out of my pocket.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must stick to the items under this Head.

Mr. MILLER: I have an opinion of my own and it must be respected. The Government has been preparing these Estimates for five months but we have not had any discussion on them; and if I have a contribution to make, I think I should make it. I am 40 years old and I have never served as a stooge; I have never been like that. The hon. member has influenced my life and he comes here today and says that I have stabbed the Labour Party in the back. I should like to know what justifies that statement.

The question that the sum of $38,370 be voted under this Head was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to move, Mr. Chairman, that you do now report progress and ask for leave for the Committee to sit again.

Mr. Cox seconded the motion which was agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN reported and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the motion of Mr. ADAMS, seconded by Dr. CUMMINS, the House was adjourned for half an hour.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

On re-assembling,

Mr. SPEAKER: On the adjournment, the House was in Committee of Supply on the Estimates for the year 1951—52.

Mr. Speaker leaves the Chair and the House resumes Committee of Supply Mr. SMITH being in the Chair.

HEAD XVII—GOVERNMENT INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS

The items and the respective amounts to be voted under this Head are read.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the sum of $30,732 be voted under this Head.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

Mr. ALLDER: I notice that the number of inmates at the Girls' Reformatory has been somewhat reduced so that there are now only about a dozen girls in residence, and that the staff of this Department is not commensurate with the number of girls. In accordance with a previous suggestion, I am wondering if the Government has not yet considered making such a change as would reduce the cost of this Department.

I have a very good suggestion to make which I feel the Government should consider; that is: if there are only six or eight girls at the Reformatory the Government could find some other Department to take care of them and in this way the place would be made available for some other purpose like secondary or even elementary school accommodation as such accommodation is much needed in the country districts.

I have been thinking too, of the plight of these girls after they have been discharged from the Reformatory. Many of them find it very difficult to obtain employment and the stigma further adds to their difficulty in reinstating themselves into society. It would be a good thing for society if these girls could be transferred for service for instance, to the Mental Hospital where nurses from the same stratum of society as some of these girls are employed. With the senior matron in charge of them, they could be put on service and continue there until their time expired, after which they could be put on the staff at the present rates of pay. I hope that the Government will consider this suggestion because I notice that the cost of the up-keep of these inmates is considerable and with the number being so few, I do not think it is wise for them to continue.

While I am on this subject, I should like to say that I am hoping that nobody is paid to go up to Dodds to teach the boys how to play chess, as in my opinion, it is a waste of time. Instead of teaching them to play chess and other games, that time could be devoted to instructive and productive employment.

Mr. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Speaking in connection with item 28, Pocket Money. I am wondering if, as time goes on, the Government would reconsider making some little addition to that small figure of six cents a week. It would help to encourage the boys in their efforts at good behaviour just as you would think of a child striving for some pretty thing, as for instance, a tricycle. I think that the service which they give to the institution deserves it. It is fortunate that the Government employs labour so that these children can have the opportunity of gaining some learning; but I hope the Government will consider increasing this small rate of six cents. If, instead of including items like sweets and so on, the Government would increase the allowance by about six cents I do not think that the tax payers would object.

Mr. GARNER: Mr. Chairman, I am not criticising any item. I just want to make the record even. I want to say how well the Institution is being run now that the salaries of the Superintendents have been increased. They deserve it. It is all to the benefit and improvement of the boys and the few girls who are there. I am sure there is a vast difference between the Institution with its old system of conduct and management and the Institution as it is working today.

The question that the sum of $30,732 be voted under this Head is put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD XIX — ECCLESIASTICAL

The items and the respective amounts to be voted under this Head are read.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the sum of $3,960 be voted under this Head.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The question is that the sum of $3,960 be voted under this Head. Hon'ble members in favour of that will please say "Aye", those against will please say "No," I think the "Ayes" have it.

HEAD XX — EDUCATION

The items and the respective amounts to be voted under this Head are read.

The items and amount are read.

that the sum of $801,787 be voted under this Head.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

Mr. ADAMS: First of all, I should like to refer to the information given by the hon. senior member for St. Philip regarding his intention to move a reduction of the sum to be voted under this Head as an indication of the feelings of the House relative to certain aspects of the educational set-up of this Island. It was only a few days ago that I unearthed a file which has been in my possession, I regret to say, for three or four weeks, in which there was a report about an investigation into the capacity and ability of all elementary school children over thirteen and a small group at Combermere, and the report on that inquiry makes me feel that consideration should be given to the overhauling of the educational set-up in elementary schools. (Cheers). I will give the Hon. Member this assurance: that even if I have to postpone certain other matters, reconsideration of the methods of teaching, age-grouping and everything connected with it will be carried out. I repeat, that when a great majority of teachers say that there is nothing wrong with age-grouping and the Government, at the same time knows the difference of teachers, it has to temper the advice given by them with personal investigation. We cannot ignore inspectors and heads of departments and reports of teachers. It may be that Government will go more deeply into the matter later on. But even in the face of such heavy criticism by honourable members that cannot be brushed aside.

A year ago I expressed the hope that I would give a little more of my time to the matter and I must admit that this is a priority, I assure honourable members that if I have to set aside other matters to make the investigation, I shall do so.

Mr. GARNER: Mr. Chairman, I cannot blame myself for having told the Government of what I intended to do. Unless some people are dealt with forcibly, they will not understand what is going on. I heard the Leader of the House in reference to the teachers' report say this: that the thing that makes him think of certain aspects of education is the fact that the teachers tell the Department one thing and then go to their representatives and say another. Two extremes! I think it is this: some of them do not want to get into the black books of the Department, but they want their views expressed on the floor of the House. But how will any citizen, who really thinks about the future of his children know what is going on in connection with the practice of age-grouping and superannuation? When you consider the educational facilities of this colony, there is some disappointment, and we cannot afford to spend so much money on education and get such meagre results. I am willing to make matters easy; but as I said before, some people will respond to nothing but force, and when the Director of Education hears that the House has censured the Department, then he will make a move. I can only hope that the House will agree with me in censuring this Department, because in doing so we shall be censuring the Head of the Department who is bound to pay more attention to what is going on in the Island and take steps to remove the things of which we disapprove.

We do not want age-grouping at all. It is an evil. We have neither the staff nor the capacity for it. It is of no use trying to practise it here because it cannot work. To pitchfork a child to a certain standard only because he is a certain age does not make sense. I am going to leave it to the discretion of the Leader of the House. I know he is an extremely busy man, and while he would like to look after these matters, time will not afford him. Nevertheless a change is imperative.

As I look through the Estimates I see Item 29—Relief Teachers, and as a mark of our protest or disapproval of the continuation of age-grouping and superannuation I want formally, to move that Item 29 be reduced by five dollars.

Mr. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I beg to second that.

On this question of age-grouping and on the general question of this new-modelled fancy, what the education authorities would have us believe is the streamline of education, I speak, not only as a legislator but as one of many parents who know the hardship and embarrassment that it has entailed.

I am supporting the reduction of this vote by five dollars purely as the honourable senior member for St. Philip has said, a means of registering our disapproval of the practice of age-grouping and superannuation.

At the end of this session I shall have been a member of this Chamber for five years; and this is the reply to what the honourable Leader of the House has said: when I took my seat in here part of my pledge was that I would oppose, in every possible way the practise of age-grouping, and I have done so on every occasion that the Annual Estimates have come before this House. Now, I could accept in good faith, what the honourable Leader of the House has said; but that is not enough for me. As the honourable senior member for St. Philip has said, the Leader of the House may have given the matter some consideration; but he did not want to have a dictatorship, and he, being an English graduate and a man of learning, may feel that this new-fangled system which has been brought about in England should be given a trial here. From the Opposition back to the Government hon. members have expressed their disapproval of age-grouping. We have been approached by our constituents, by parents and the people generally, and they have all spoken of the hardship that it has created and have said that they do not want it. Surely, the honourable senior member for St. Joseph should believe, especially when members of his own Party—and I make bold to say, some of his own constituents—think the same thing. Just a few days ago I was discussing the question with an eminent educationist in this colony, and he pointed out to me that even in England to-day, age-grouping as a new venture is not working satisfactorily.

There are those of us who still feel that in Mr. Hayden we had a distinguished and able man, (I believe in paying tribute where it is due. But to a greater or less degree his career was overshadowed by the stand which he took in respect of many things some of which I have already pointed out. As I said just now, he was truly an able man; but no man is so able as to place you in such a position that you are unable to tell him when he is wrong.

What the honourable senior member for St. Joseph has said about having to take what the authorities say in connection with any scheme that has been set up is true. He said that he enquired from the teachers and in the memorandum before him it could be noticed that one section was saying "Yes" and another was saying "No". Well, it is just as the honourable senior member for St. Philip has said: Many teachers, wishing to avoid the black-books of the Education Department have said one thing to that Department and another to members of this Chamber.

The motion for the reduction of this vote is in no way a censure of the Government. It is only meant that the Government or the education authorities will at least, make some attempt to expedite matters in so far as the abolition of age-grouping and superannuation are concerned. So much for that item.

Now,——

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, I am appealing to the mover and seconder of this motion not to do anything to embarrass the Government. If this is not a vote of censure of the Government, I don't know what it is.

Mr. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, as I said just now, it is not a vote of censure of the Government in any way. But I agree with the honourable senior member for St. Philip when he says that it is meant to let the Government or the education authorities know that after having talked upon this subject for so many years that we have reached the stage where we should like to have something done. This is the feeling of a lot of people: a few officials come here and they say "Oh, it does not matter that these newly elected fellows who are in power are opposed to it, it does not matter if they make a noise; let them do it. As far as we are concerned, we will carry out our scheme." That is exactly what some of them are saying. But I will say this: there is an attempt behind this scheme to set back the people in these colonies educationally. Many people have not got the courage to say that. From my earliest recollections Barbadians all over the world have been noted for their ability and learning; but you have to agree with me that under the present system the same cannot be said.

I have discussed this new set-up with certain of the teachers and this is what they said: "We are not in a position to teach your children for the simple reason that we are required to be in school at nine o'clock in the morning and we are off at three. During those hours we are supposed to be teaching; but this is not always as thorough as it should be owing to the volume of statistics which we have to prepare."

Now, mentally, it is a great strain to ask a teacher to go home on afternoons and do as much book-keeping as if he were working for Bulkeley's or Carrington's factory. Teachers nowadays have so much statistical work to do that there is not even enough time to do it at home. Consequently, instead of being able to devote all of his time to actual teaching, a teacher has to spend his time alternately in teaching and preparing statistics.

I repeat that the motion for the reduction of this vote is not a vote of censure of the Government. It is intended to record our disapproval of the continued practice of age-grouping and superannuation; to show that we want it removed from the Education Regulations; and if it is not removed, then the consequences may be different from what the honourable Leader of the House may expect.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, I hope that the honourable senior member for the City will give way to press this vote. Whatever they may say, the Director of Education is not responsible for any policy of Education. This is a vote on myself alone. The assurance which I have already given to honourable members was given in view of the report which I read some days ago. Are they still going to press the matter to a division? This is not a vote on Major Reed, this is a vote on the Government.

The answer in the teachers' report is to the effect that the majority of teachers are satisfied with the system. When the honourable junior member for St. Thomas asked the question the answer which I gave to him was to the same effect: that is, the majority of teachers were in favour of age-grouping and superannuation. Honourable members are now telling me that the teachers have told the Government one thing and are now saying something else. The memorandum was prepared specifically after I had asked that the inspectors and teachers be circulated on the question for the purpose of seeing their point of view, and especially because an answer was received from them. If honourable members do not believe the teachers what must the Government do? A vote against this item to-night is a vote against the Executive and more particularly against myself who is responsible for advising on matters of education. It is not a vote against Major Reed, nor can it serve to speed up Major Reed's mind. He is not even in the Island.

Only this week I had a talk with someone on the question of education in this Island and, notwithstanding my private opinion of age-grouping, I maintained that the curriculum—the very methods of teaching English and Arithmetic especially—are unsatisfactory, and the figures in the Report (I have not got mine with me now) as to the ability of boys to write reasonably good English and work elementary arithmetical problems are very bad.

I will say this at the risk of repeating myself: I wish that honourable members would get out of the idea that Heads of Departments are responsible for the making of any policy. So far as the Director of Education and his Department are concerned, we (the Executive) make the policy and he has to carry it out. He may attempt to sabotage, and when this is done I invite honourable members to come here and tell us and we will attend to it. If, for example, we pass a Bill which provides that school children should get a hot meal, then they get a hot meal. When things go wrong (I am putting the four of us up to be fired at) the Executive should be blamed. If we have been deceived by teachers and we can prove that this is so, obviously we are not going to listen to teachers nor place any confidence in them. If I have to lay aside my profession I am going to see that every change necessary is effected. If, in spite of that assurance, honourable members will still press the motion for a vote of censure, well, that is a matter for them.

Mr. MILLER: Mr. Chairman,—In connection with this vote of censure I want to ask the two Honourable Members on the other side of the table (the honourable mover and seconder) to reconsider their motion, for this reason: when I was seeking the suffrage of the people I made a statement to the effect that we were at the cross roads of destiny. I feel that the noblest and most useful gift that we can give to the masses is education. Last year when we were considering the Estimates (1949-50) the honourable Leader of the House made a promise that he was going to investigate the question of age-grouping in schools. I came to the House promising the people of St. George to do what I could to relieve the embarrassment, but the machinery of Government is rather slow and—

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I think the honourable member is out of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: I must begin by saying that it is only because I have heard the Leader of the Government give the assurance that very serious investigation will be made relative to the question of age-grouping that I will not vote against the Government. As a former teacher, I think I should be profoundly dishonest if I did not take a stand in letting this Chamber know my views on the matter. I have taught under the age-grouping system. As far as I can remember, the system was instituted as an experiment, and the teachers were even informed of the part they were expected to play in distributing the propaganda in connection with it. Well, the experiment has had a reasonably long trial and very genuine reports have come from teachers whom, I believe have served us well. I have been told recently that even the teachers feel that they are not giving the Government their due. In other words, they openly state that under the age-grouping system they are not justifying the salaries which they are at present receiving.

Now, when members of a Government Department tell the general public and other interested parties that they feel that they are unable to give of their best because of a system under which they are working, I think it is time that the Government should make an investigation. I would be the last person to place the Government in an embarrassing position; but I think I would be the first to deal with people who withheld honest information from them.

Someone has made a reference to the unreliability of teachers when he said that teachers give one kind of information to their representatives and another to people whom they think may embarrass their position. Well, I think that in order to get real, honest, factual information from teachers you would have to go to them at night. I speak as a former teacher of Government schools who has been closely associated with fellow teachers.

I hope that when the investigation which the honourable Leader of the Government has promised is being conducted it will be conducted in such a way that no teacher will be embarrassed in so far as giving information is concerned. The Government has got to work very hurriedly in this matter.

One thing more I should like to say. The standard of certain scholarship examinations has been lowered; and when examiners begin to find it necessary to lower the standard of certain examinations it means that boys of a certain age who used to pass those examinations before, cannot do the same thing now; and if age-grouping is continued in this colony I am sure that the standard of education is bound to further fall, no matter what kind of Government is in power, and no Government would be able to restore it in a hurry. Therefore, I am persuaded to vote against the motion of the honourable senior member for St. Philip only on the grounds of the assurance which has been given to this House by the honourable Leader of the Government.

Mr. WARD: Mr. Chairman, I am not in favour of the reduction of the Education Vote because I cannot see how this reduction will speed up the necessary change. When the experiment known as age-grouping and superannuation was first discussed, I was one of those who voted in favour of giving it a trial. Since then I have come to the conclusion that this House made a mistake in its decision. It is some seven years that the experiment has been on trial and from my talks with parents and general observation of the progress of the children I have found that the children of elementary schools to-day know comparatively less than those of about ten years ago. Children sometimes come to me requesting letters of recommendation. They claim that they have reached the seventh standard, but it is usually appalling to see that they cannot even spell their own names. I consider that it is fooling children when you tell or impress upon them that they have acquired a seventh standard education, when in truth they are no further than the second. I am convinced that age-grouping is doing more harm than good. If we had three times as much teaching staff as we now have it is probable that we might have made some progress under this system. But in the light of past experience I feel now that it is the duty of Government to take quick action to bring about a change—a drastic change in our educational set up.

Many of the teachers disagree with the practice of age-grouping. They feel that they cannot teach as well as they should since they find themselves having to grapple with three or four different standards in the same class. For instance: a teacher of the third standard might find in that class a boy who properly belongs to the first, so far as standards are concerned; and it is very difficult for a teacher to teach a class of boys of different standards. I feel that we should have more teachers. It is of little use spending so much money on education unless we are prepared to get the best for what we are spending. Parents are not satisfied with the type of education which their children are at present receiving.

I am not in favour of superannuation either; because we all know that some children develop later than others. It often happens that a boy does not start to learn until he is eleven or even twelve years old, and he may not have begun his schooling until seven or eight. All these factors should be taken into consideration before we begin to follow the pattern of the educational system in other countries. If our ideas are progressive then we should try to move forward.

I feel that in this matter of investigation, the teachers are not going to give the truth. One teacher told me that if it were known that he had criticised the system he would not get any increase for another year. The teachers are the people on whom we must rely to advise us on this matter. I think it is they who are best qualified to tell us whether or not the system is working satisfactorily.

Another reason why I am not in favour of the motion by the honourable senior member for St. Philip is because that the honourable Leader of the House, as Minister of Education, has given us his assurance that he will investigate the matter with a view to raising the educational standard of this Island.

Mr. DOWDING: Mr. Chairman, the greatest pleasure I have ever had in this House has come to me to-night as the result of the assurance which has just been given by the honourable Leader of the House; that is: that he has decided to accept responsibility for the policy of education in this Island, and I hope that on no future occasion shall we hear from him anything to the contrary. His acceptance of that responsibility is the main reason why I shall consider withdrawing from this vote.

Throughout the Island this question of age-grouping and superannuation has been discussed and condemned, and I am of the opinion that it has been tried long enough. If this House should decide to accept the hon. member's assurance, that assurance should further be guaranteed by the promise of notification at the next meeting of the House that action has been taken in the matter.

The results of this imported paraphernalia are visible in every walk of life in this Island today. Not only have the elementary schools suffered, but the whole educational set-up of this Island has suf-

fered. Boys of today leaving school and applying for work do not know how to compose a letter of application. They cannot even spell correctly. It is not their fault. It is the fault of this system and it must come to an end. I can speak from personal experience. I have known young men who came to me seeking employment, and when I gave them a job, an ordinary job of keeping books which entails simple multiplication, addition and subtraction, they add the debit and credit columns together. Some of them often claim to have no less than half a dozen certificates and when I put them in the office, Mr. Chairman, it grieves me to see, my fellow Barbadians are not capable of answering a telephone. The young men of this Island are being ruined by the present system of education. I see it day after day; and the time has come when we in Barbados should realise that experts come and experts go but we are left to face the ill results of their experiments. We have to stay and see our children walking around, unable to find a job because of the inadequacy of their education. It is a shame and I am appealing to the honourable Leader of the House tonight to note all this and take steps—drastic steps as soon as possible to save the future generation.

I repeat that it is not only the elementary schools which are suffering, but the secondary and first grade schools as well; and I am wondering whether the Education Department is not suffering from what is happening all over the world today. Those at the top are calling on the teachers for so many statistics, and the typists have to do so much typing of statistics that I am beginning to wonder whether this Department is overburdened and whether some of these typists, instead of sitting down and typing statistics and letters all day long, should not be in the teaching field doing their bit to help to restore the educational status of this Island.

There is no getting away from the fact that the employer prefers to employ the man or woman who has left school seven, eight, or even ten years ago. Today, we are voting a lot of money for adult education, making of seamstresses and what not, and what results are we getting? From personal experience I find that there is no comparison between the seamstresses of today and those of say, ten years ago. Money is being wasted. I hope that honourable members of the House and other interested Barbadians will take this matter up and let us have it finalised. I also hope that the Leader of the House will again rise to his feet and give us the further assurance which I have asked for; because I feel that he is, at least a true Barbadian, and that what I have said here tonight will appeal to him. It is indeed a sad state of affairs when you see boys and girls leaving school and unable to find work all because of an educational system which has been thrust upon them—a system which the majority of the people of this Island have never wanted.

Mr. GARNER: Mr. Chairman,—It has come to me like a bolt from the sky to hear from the Leader of the House that the four members of the Executive are responsible for the making of the educational policy of this Island. It is not that I intend to withdraw my motion, because I feel that there are times when principle must go before friendship or party.

I value the education of our young people more than anything else in this world, because I am a product of that age in which a sound elementary education was the order of the day. If I did not have a sound elementary education I could not stand in this House today. Bring any one of the seventh standard boys of today and place him on the floor of this House and ask him certain questions: you would be surprised to see that you are not getting any value for your money. The honourable Leader of the House ought to know that this a big question—education. It is the lifeblood of the people. It means something to the people who you want to emancipate and it means something to the economic structure of this Colony. Barbadians do not all live in Barbados; they travel out, and when they have not got a sound elementary education, where or what are they? This is a fundamental issue, and may I remind the honourable Leader of the House that a year ago when I discussed this question I was promised that something would be done to relieve the condition. We have been told that an investigation has been made; but what useful purpose has the investigation served? The Leader of the House himself knows that if this question were investigated five years from now that he still would not get a satisfactory answer. We have to regard what he has told us tonight with deep concern. He has informed us that just a few days ago he received a report on this question and that it is an adverse report. What more investigation need we have? Only on one condition will I withdraw the motion which I have made; that is: on the assurance of the honourable Leader of the House that he will discontinue this system to-morrow.

It is a shame that boys and girls in schools today cannot answer the simplest questions that may be put to them. We are standing here and stifling our consciences in order to accommodate a set of high-falutin people with their fancy experiments while our children suffer. We know that we are not able to give them all a secondary education; but as legislators, the least we can do is to see that they get a sound elementary education. Why should I compromise with anybody to carry on a system which is nothing short of vicious? If it is the fault of the Director of Education then, I beseech you to censure him, because the system is wrong. If, on the other hand, it is not the fault of the Director of Education as the honourable Leader has urged, but that it is the four members of the Executive who are responsible, then, he should be in a position to say tonight, that he is going to stop tomorrow. A year ago it was promised to me that something would be done. I know, and the honourable Leader himself knows, the value of education; and this is one point I should like to make to him: he is very busy. I know that he means well, but he is only a human who is apt to get tired and overworked. He cannot attend to all these matters. I hope that he will not regard it as imposing when I say that if he will give me the assurance that he will see that this thing is discontinued tomorrow, then on that assurance I will withdraw my motion.

Mr. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman,—When I seconded the motion for the reduction of this Vote I said then that I had no intention of seconding the motion as a means of censuring the Government; but that I was doing so with a different end in view. The honourable Leader has said among other things: give us ministerial status and we will do this and that. The honourable senior member for St. Thomas has said on public platforms: "I am opposed to age-grouping." I have heard the honourable senior member for St. Michael say that he is opposed to age-grouping. The honourable senior member for St. Peter has also said that he is opposed to it; and these are all members of the Government. The only member of the Executive whose opinion, for or against, I have never heard, is the honourable senior member for St. Joseph. He only said that it was a question of educational policy and that he would try it out. What does the honourable Leader of the House think? Whatever he thinks of the others he may think of me. The honourable junior member for St. Thomas (an-

other teacher) also made his position clear and you have heard the views of His Honour the Speaker, not only today, but on occasions in the past; for this thing has been going on for the past seven years.

It may seem quite in order for the honourable Leader of the House to say: "Let us try this system out"; but every member of the Labour Party has expressed disfavour with it. Where are we living, in Fascist Italy or Nazi Germany?

I believe that a direct lie has been told to us this evening. Given that the honourable Leader of the House is responsible for the making of educational policy he should be in a position to say tonight that he will give instructions to have the system discontinued say, at the end of this month. I challenge him to get up and say that he does not know what his Party will do, for the simple reason that every member has openly said that he is opposed to age-grouping. I regret to say it, but I do not believe remarks about the Government being responsible for the making of educational policy. To me this is a puppet government. The honourable Leader is bent on trying out this system; but is it the wish of the majority? If three out of four members of the Executive say that they are not in favour of continuing this system, is not that the decision of the majority? How then can the honourable Leader come here to-night to ask us for time to investigate? Every year we are told the same thing.

At a certain Election people harangued us about it. The Government as I said before (with the exception of the honourable Leader) in the election campaign throughout the Island opposed age-grouping. Tell me, how long does it take to try things out? I think that the honourable Leader only wants to raise his ego when he says that he can do this that and the other.

Later in the course of discussing these Estimates I shall have something to say about the victimisation of teachers.

I cannot see the value of continuing to give the Department of Education a chance to try out something that is far from proving a success and to which the general public, including the constituents of the honourable Leader, are opposed.

Even school children have denounced the system. As His Honour the Speaker has told us, in school you may see them bunched together—66 and 92 in a class and a single teacher trying to teach some square root, others rule of three and so on. I cannot help feeling that this system is a wicked and vicious attempt to set back the natives of this Island.

A few days ago I was talking to the Headmaster of Harrison College and this is what he said to me: "After much research I have discovered that Harrison College ranks among the three foremost First Grade Schools in the British Empire." The honourable Leader of the House is a product of an elementary school. If there had been age-grouping in his day, he could not have been a Barbados Scholar. With age-grouping he would probably have been superannuated but look at him today—brains!

The honourable Leader of the Government appealed to us just now; I am appealing to him now. He has the support of his whole Party. I am not asking him to withdraw anything. I am asking him just to say that he will give instructions for the discontinuation of this system. Now to do this, all that it is necessary to say is "Cease this nonsense; it is driving the people back to slavery." The public feel that they are being fooled, and that the decision to discontinue the system can be made tonight. If the Executive cannot carry out the wishes of the majority of its own number, the wishes of its own Party and the wishes of the people of this Island, that is: to discontinue age-grouping and superannuation, then the Executive is not a Government; it is nothing but a few officials; in short, it is a puppet government.

Mr. GILL: Mr. Chairman:—If this motion is not withdrawn I intend to support it. Our educational system has been built up over very many years of hard work and guidance. It was a system which was unparalleled in these parts; but for the past seven years owing to this vicious and unjust scheme of age-grouping and superannuation the very foundations of that system have been shaken. To my mind education is not a matter to experiment with. After all the average school life of every child is about ten years; and if, during that ten years he has been experimented with for about seven, there is little likelihood of his being able to get the full benefits of his school life in the last three. This system, unsatisfactory as it is, should be abolished. In my view, seven years of experimentation is too long; but I also realise that in order to abolish this system one would first have to look for more schools and more teachers. I do not object to money being spent on education provided that the people benefit. At the moment we are spending large sums on education, but who are benefiting? The children are sent out of school half educated and half trained. In this way, you cannot expect them to make good citizens. I should like to see children come out of school so educated and fitted as to be able to take their proper places as members of a regular organised society.

I feel that the system has been tried long enough. I have heard it said that it is a failure. Apparently, it has been the custom at this time of the year to draw this matter forcibly to the attention of Government; and only today, at the eleventh hour has the Government given the assurance that they will go into the matter. I have no doubt as to the veracity of the assurance which has been given by the honourable Leader of the Government; but for my part, I should like to hear something more concrete than that, and for this reason I intend to support the motion for the reduction of this Vote.

Mr. BRANCKER: Mr. Chairman,—As I said on a previous occasion I am opposed to the system of age-grouping and superannuation and therefore I am going to support any move for its abolition. This is one of those instances in which we have tried a system for an excessively long time. It does not require five or six years for us to see that however popular a system may be among experts, however good it may be in theory and however eminently it may have succeeded in other countries, it is definitely unsuited to Barbados. We realise that the time has come when we must return to the methods and technique which we were pursuing before age-grouping came into vogue. I have heard a schoolmaster say that it is his opinion that the Director of Education introduced this system as a brake because he has found us so far in advance of the standard which he had anticipated. That may or may not be true; but the fact remains that the system is a failure. We do not doubt the honourable senior member for St. Joseph when he says that he will have the matter referred back for urgent consideration; but unless, as the honourable senior member for the City says, the officials are told that we insist on the abandonment of the system very little is likely to accrue from the proposed further investigation, particularly in view of the fact that the people who would, pre-

sumably, be appealed to for their advice are the same people who, only a short time ago, had said in answer to certain questions put to them, that the system was working well. There is no certainty that the teachers who did not come forward and give their frank information then would not be willing to do so now. If we, the majority of the elected members of the Legislature decide, that after seven years of experimentation, the system is unsuited to Barbados, would a further investigation serve any useful purpose? I quite appreciate that, despite the fact that in the public eye the most important members of the Executive are the four members of this Chamber, still they cannot be expected to give a statement on universal policy without first discussing it with their colleagues. What I should like to suggest is this: as there is little chance of our finishing these Estimates tonight, I presume that we will meet next week either Monday or Tuesday, in which case it might be practicable for the members of the Executive present tonight to call an emergency meeting and inform their fellow members of the opinion of this House regarding the matter, and then they could come back next week and inform us of their decision one way or the other. That would still be an investigation.

We have no wish to inconvenience or embarrass the Government; but it appears to me that many of these members are afraid of the experts. As a certain honourable member has said, they seem to forget that experts come and experts go, while Barbadians remain for all time to suffer the ill results of their experiments. The honourable senior member for St. Andrew has said something about the increase of teachers; but I would suggest to him that under this system we have more teachers than at any other time in the educational history of this Island and we would have to quadruple this number if we wanted to make a success of age-grouping as a system.

I feel, Mr. Chairman, that at this stage it would be useful to give the Executive an opportunity to call an emergency meeting for the purposes which I have just outlined, and accordingly, I beg to move that further consideration of this Head be postponed.

Mr. GODDARD : Mr. Chairman, Much has been said on this subject of age-grouping and superannuation and I am one who is opposed to it. And why ? To my mind, age-grouping and superannuation is a system which demands a sufficiency of schools and adequate staffing which, at present, we have not got. I would suggest to the Government to get on with the school-building programme as the best possible solution to the current problem of congestion in schools. Although I am not a teacher I know the trouble that children can give; and when I hear certain hon. members say that there are cases in which one teacher has to handle eighty or more children in a class, I say it is enough to drive the teacher mad.

We have today a population of about 35,000 school children, and to this number we have the same 124 schools which we had when the number of school children was 28,000. The schools are congested and that is why the children are not being efficiently taught. We want more schools and more teachers.

The school in Church Village has been shut down and the children sent up to the Roebuck Street School. What is being done about that ?

Superannuation and age-grouping may suit other countries where there are a sufficiency of schools and adequate staffing. In the same way it could be made to work successfully in Barbados; but we have not got these facilities, and until we get them we should do away with the system. Every teacher and guardian with whom I have spoken is of the same opinion. If, after a child has been superannuated, there was some place to which it could be sent for training in some form of manual work the ill effects of superannuation would not be felt to such an extent. The absence of all these facilities makes the system more unsuitable to Barbados, and on these grounds I am going to support the motion for the reduction.

Mr. BRYAN : Mr. Chairman, I agree *in toto* with all that has been said against age-grouping. I have always been against it, and have always seen it as a case of having the cart placed before the horse. We should not adopt this system until we have a more established and adequate system of staffing.

Only today I was in conversation with a parent on this question and I promised to use whatever influence I had to hasten the day when this system would cease. It is a long time now since I have been asking the Government to take a serious view of the matter. I am going to vote against the reduction because of the assurance which the honourable Leader has given; but I should like it to be known that if it were not for this assurance my conscience would not permit me to do so.

Mr. MILLER : Mr. Chairman, When I was speaking just now on the question of the vote of censure of the Government the hon. senior member for the City ridiculed me; but this is exactly what I said: The Leader of the Government has said that for the first time he has had an adverse report and that that was sufficient enquiry for any purpose at all. But after hearing the discussion which we have had tonight he considered that age-grouping was stone-dead, and that it might be well to see it die. He therefore felt that a vote of censure of the Government was superfluous.

Mr. ADAMS : Mr. Chairman, There were two men (Mussolini and Hitler) who, I believe, when they were in power could give an assurance off-hand that they would wipe out so and so tomorrow. But this is a constitutional country and there is a democratic way of doing things. The hon. senior member for the City has made an address that would be useful if he had made it for the average child. I have never expressed an opinion for or against age-grouping. When, on a previous occasion, this matter was debated I said that I was as much interested in education as any man in this Island. Nevertheless, I do not know whether a certain theory would work out this way or the next way. Nor do I know for instance, when a piece of Latin is being taught at its best. If a builder came here and told me that aluminum roofing is better than shingles or that mud is better than shingles, I would say try it out because you are an expert. By the request of the hon. senior member for St. Philip I am supposed to stop this system by the end of this month. I am surprised that he should ask me to do a thing like that before the matter is brought before the Executive Committee. I am sure that the hon. member has misunderstood me. Let me remind honourable members that this matter was raised during the discussion of the 1949—50 Estimates Soon after that questions were asked by the junior member for St. Thomas to this effect : To enquire of the Senior Member of the Executive etc. : "Is the Government aware that it is the trend of opinion among Elementary School Teachers that the machinery set up for the successful working of the system of age-grouping is inadequate for that purpose ?" Then he asked about children leaving school, and the last question was : (4) "Is the Government prepared to investigate the working of the Elementary Schools with a view to ascertaining the wisdom of perpetuating the system of age-grouping and continuing such experimentation in the Syllabus before the pre-requisites of better staffing, accommodation and equipment are provided? The Government's replies in effect were as follows : "There are more children

in the schools than ever before. The establishment of teachers and class-room accommodation both need increasing. These conditions and the continuance of voluntary attendance by children make any school organisation difficult whether it is based on age-grouping or not."

"The Government is not aware of any experimental Syllabus hampering the teachers unless it be the memorandum on the teaching of infants up to seven years old."

"The revision of the Syllabus is necessary, if the standard of education in infant classes is to be improved. Recent tests have shown that it needs improvement. Because of the drawbacks of accommodation and large classes the new infant time-tables were not made compulsory, but sent to Head Teachers as suggestions."

"The working of the Elementary Schools is being investigated all the time by the Inspectorate. The building programme has now started. Other relevant matters such as improved staffing, equipment and regular attendance are receiving the attention of the Government. In any event the Government believes that the majority of teachers would not wish to discontinue age-grouping, and if it were discontinued it would be necessary to reintroduce it when the new accommodation becomes available."

These answers were given on the 22nd of August. Whatever may be the individual views of any member of the Executive, the Director of Education says that the system should be tried as an experiment. The Report on the experiment and the last Report which came as a consequence of the questions posed by the honourable junior member for St. Thomas show that the majority of teachers are in favour of its continuation. What was the Government to do but send these answers down?

I am a product of the reverse of age-grouping. My son was always two years below the average of the form in which he was placed. If the question arose as to whether he should skip a form I would emphasize that he should do so. I skipped a form when I was at Harrison College. If there had been age-grouping then, I might not have been here tonight and probably my son might not have won a Barbados Scholarship.

The Government enquired from the teachers as to how the system was working; if they have lied to us or fooled us, then that is the end of age-grouping. But to ask me to get up in here in an unconstitutional way like a Stalin and say that it will stop tomorrow, is the height of absurdity.

There will be a meeting of the Executive on Saturday morning next. Why cannot honourable Members take an assurance from me? Think of your duty to yourselves and to the people of Barbados. This is not the first time that I have said in this House that the four of us are responsible for the policy of the Government. Already in this debate I have said to honourable members that nothing can come down here unless we recommend it. The administrative side of a department is a different matter. How can this Government formulate its policy on Tenantry roads, Water Works or anything until it gets a report from the particular department on the state of things, as for instance: Is this curriculum in schools going right? If not, how can it be improved? How much money will 56 miles of tenantry roads cost and so on. I will say this: that the results in the schools are not as good as they should be. As regards the question of age-grouping and superannuation I will start investigations this very week-end.

Honourable members will remember the circumstances surrounding the passing of the "Five-pound Bond". There may have been one or two exceptions, but the majority of us in the House at that time voted for the "Five-pound Bond." I want to say this to the honourable senior member for the City: whatever may have been his experience, the same has not been mine.

There was a great wave of protest against it. As soon as the clamour arose and we realised that the people throughout Barbados were opposed to the "Five-pound Bond" we removed it.

If this system had proved a failure and this Government was today still defending it, then the people should turn the Government out. Tonight, I am not defending it, I am not condemning it. But what I say is this: that the information which we received was to the effect that the majority of teachers were in favour of its being continued. Since then, tests involving comparatively simple arithmetical and English problems which were for the purpose of ascertaining how the system was working, have revealed bad results. What can a Government, faced with that kind of thing do about it? How can honourable members expect me in such circumstances to comply with such a request as they have intimated? Anybody reading between the lines can see what is my personal feeling. But can honourable members expect me to say "Yes" behind the back of the Executive to something which they have not discussed? This file which contains the report as to the state of teaching in schools has not been seen by any member of the Executive except the Colonial Secretary; but I am perfectly sure that when they see it or when anyone else sees it, it will be said that it is a report which needs investigation. An investigation of the curriculum is needed. I am not saying that an investigation as to whether or not age-grouping is succeeding is needed. But anyone who reads this file would at once agree with me that a certain amount of investigation is needed. Do honourable members expect that this can be done overnight?

I will see about the re-organization of the curriculum as well as the methods of teaching. Honourable members have heard me say before, that I am in favour of teaching children under a breadfruit tree, if necessary. But can you just with a wave of the hand abolish this system and have everything running smoothly again next week? If this were tried honourable members would find that they would have to come back to the House for several things in the rearrangement such as extra teachers, and even for tarpaulins for improvising classrooms. This is not the first time I have said such things.

I realise that I am being very personal when I say that I am a product of the system that is the very opposite of age-grouping. I started in an Elementary school and I am here today purely as a result of education. I did not begin with a silver spoon in my mouth. I uphold any good system and condone no evil one, whether by a little white club or by a schoolmaster.

When I spoke about policy I was only answering the honourable senior member for the City. The Department of Education is responsible for education. As far back as 1943 when we amended the Education Act, those amendments gave the Director of Education all those wide powers which he now has. (Cheers). His views have proved a natural thorn to constitutional Government. If it will give honourable members any satisfaction. I will say this: the question of changing the Education Act is already under consideration, and the effect of the proposed change will be that I, or whoever happens to be in my place as the person responsible for Education, will be put in the position of a Director in so far as the Chairman of the Board is concerned, just as the Department of Science and Agriculture Act puts the Director of Agriculture as the Minister of the Board.

I really do not thank the honourable members for suggesting that I am too busy or anything of the sort, because that is to suggest that my being too busy is responsible for the present position. If anyone is to be blamed it should be the Nicodemus-like schoolmasters who told the Government one thing and said something else otherwise. If it had been reported to us that there was grave doubt among schoolteachers as to whether or not the system should be continued we would have gone into the matter since April last year.

If honourable members would pay careful attention to those answers to the honourable junior member for St. Thomas they would see what is the Government's attitude to Compulsory Education. As regards age-grouping and superannuation we may come to the conclusion that it is bad whether or not you have all the teachers.

I am appealing to honourable members to see with me. As regards removing any excessive powers of the Director of Education, and with the responsibilities on my shoulders as Minister of Education, I give the assurance that when the Executive meets next Saturday morning I will report as quickly as I can, the views of honourable members and the Executive will then take the necessary action.

Mr. GARNER: Mr. Chairman, I have attempted in no way to ask the Leader of the House to exercise any prerogative such as Mussolini, Stalin or any such person would use. But truly, sometimes I feel sorry that we have not got a Stalin around here to dictate policies. All this talk about democracy is only to fool people. I feel sorry for the honourable senior member for St. Joseph. It is true that I have a certain amount of respect for him; but tonight I do not feel disposed to compromise with anybody on this matter. I cannot understand the honourable member. At one time he says that he is responsible for the policy of the Government, then he goes back on his word and says, "There are only four members of the Executive and we cannot do this or that without———

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, I have not said that. I have said just the reverse; that is: that the four members of the Executive are responsible for policy.

Mr. GARNER: Mr. Chairman, I am sure that three of them said that they were opposed to age-grouping; so it seems to me that the honourable Leader is the only one who has not yet opened his mind. But this matter is urgent; it is fundamental. This is the biggest vote we have in the Estimates and the honourable Leader must not expect us to approach it foolishly and ignorantly. He is talking about experts; but I have seen experts come here telling us this, that and the other, and after a while and they themselves get down to the Barbados way of life, it is another matter. It is not what the experts say, it is the results of their actions that matter, and it is on these that we are basing our arguments tonight. We are condemning the system along with what has been told to us by the school teachers. We are not trying to bring a vote of "no confidence" against the Government. The hon Leader knows that to embarrass his Government would be the last thing that I would do. We are choosing between serving the Colony and the Government. I choose the former. If, for the sake or argument, I had to choose between serving a friend or a principle, I would prefer, as at this moment to serve the principle. I have no intention of withdrawing my motion and I am asking the House to agree with me. The hon. Leader is not a dictator, but he is a rational being. If he is prepared to accept the motion for the postponement, then I will withdraw my motion for the moment.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The motion for the postponement has not been seconded.

Mr. GARNER: Somebody is going to second it. If the hon. Leader will accept it, that is all we ask at the moment. What is the use? If all of us are against age-grouping because of the complaints which we have heard from parents and the visible results of the system, how can you in fairness say that we are not going to be obliging tonight because our actions amount to a vote of censure against somebody? Who are greater in this Colony, the experts whom we import down here or the elected members of this Chamber? We have to see to it that the money voted here is well spent. We were elected here because we made certain promises to the people, among them—Education. I am serious about this thing because I feel sorry for the people when I see them unable to read and write. How can I let this thing go on? I cannot do it. I intend to do everything within my power to put a stoppage to it, once and for all. It is vicious. It is no good!

A scientist goes through his laboratory and carries out certain experiments. He obtains certain results, and on those results he either promulgates or annihilates. We have given age-grouping seven year's trial. Are you going to sit here tonight and say that we should give it another trial? We know that we are not getting full value for our money. We also know that the teachers are hard pressed. But are you going to expect the teacher to bring home work from school to correct? If we were producing better boys and girls as a result it would do; but we have just the reverse. Therefore, how can we, as representatives of the people entrusted with the welfare of the children of today who are the men of tomorow compromise in a vitally important matter like this? We want to make sure that those who are following on behind us are going to get an education. Are you going to please somebody and let the education of this Colony go to nothing? Are you going to give the Government further latitude to carry out this system? I am appealing to hon. members to register their disapproval not against the Government, but against superannuation and age-grouping.

Another point is this: The Government have stated that if and when they get the necessary accommodation and staff that it is their intention to reintroduce it.

Mr. ADAMS: I said nothing of the sort. I said that the majority of teachers had said that age-grouping could be made to work successfully.

Mr. GARNER: If the hon. member would re-read the paragraph dealing with this matter he would see that I am telling no untruth. These people intend to re-introduce this thing; and I am telling you that the experts are not going to run this Colony so long as the people who have a desire to see the affairs of this Colony run well are in power, and not by second hand people who come down here as experts, like a certain expert who, purporting to have this, that and the other was found upon investigation to have, not even "O.G." behind his name. Perhaps if you made further investigation you would find others who also possess nothing. I want to have that paragraph read again by the honourable Leader. I do not want anyone to get the impression that I got in here and lied to him.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, the Government has not made any decision to re-introduce age-grouping. In any event the Government believes that the majority of teachers do not want to discontinue age-grouping. The hon. senior member for St. Philip has said that the Government has already hinted that they will take the opportunity to put the system

back into operation. I have said no such thing. What I have said is just what the teachers have said.

Mr. GARNER: It is of no use carrying this debate further. I can see what it is leading to. I know where all this thing has come from. I have not got to please any expert in this Colony. If we do not vote the money they cannot do anything. We are the bosses. If we have got to pay the piper, we have got to call the tune. When the other fellows had their day, they did what they liked. I am going to do what I think is right. I would be doing the children of this Island an injustice if I did not see to it that age-grouping is abolished.

The honourable Leader has protested against my motion as being a vote of censure against this Government; but that is not so, because, before discussion of these Estimates began I hinted to the hon. junior member for St. Thomas that I intended to make the motion I have made, and I am not prepared to back down from it, whether I stand or fall. I hope that hon. members will be honest to themselves and to posterity; that is, that they will be inspired to make their decision for the good of the country and not for the sake of Party only. Some hon. members may be inclined to think that friendship should come first. But we are in the valley of decision; and since it has come to that we cannot allow our boys and girls—the men and women of tomorrow—to be brought up under a false system which, instead of fulfilling our fondest hopes, will assuredly lead to disappointment, frustration and possible disillusionment. It has no good results, it can produce no good results; it has been found wanting! *Mene, Mene, Tekel Upharsin!*

Let me remind honourable members that this is education. Upon it depends our future progress. Without education, you on the other side of this table will have no one to replace you and all the good work of the honourable Leader will be lost for want of men capable of interpreting and placing the right valuation upon it. The children too, will not be able to appreciate the sacrifices which the honourable Leader has made for them.

We are not getting enough education for our money, and I ask honourable members to vote conscientiously, regarding it not as a vote of censure against their Party, but as a vote against an objectionable system in the realm of education. God will measure you whether you are a man or a mouse; and if you seek to please yourself by deciding to establish and strengthen a system which will deny the children of this Island the benefit of a sound education, you will be doing them an absolute disservice. I sit, leaving you to use your conscience as God would have you use it.

Mr DOWDING: Mr. Chairman, Any honourable member sitting around this table must appreciate the strong feelings of the honourable member for St. Philip on this matter. They must also appreciate that this unsatisfactory state of things has been going on for too long and that the least we can do tonight is to postpone this Head. The honourable Leader has given us his assurance that the matter will go before the Executive; but his own words about accepting whatever the experts say must leave us to conclude that these experts have some sway of the Government, and it must be stopped. We need not call in any experts to show that this system has failed. But if the honourable member will allow the postponement of this — (Mr. ADAMS: Wasting time.) He says that it is wasting time; which brings to mind his own words which he used earlier in his speech; that is: he is now making himself either a Stalin or a Mussolini.

All we are asking for tonight is simply the postponement of this matter until it has been discussed by the Executive. After this has been done the honourable Leader can come back to the House and tell us of their decision. No honourable member expects that this system can be abolished overnight. If the honourable Leader does not accept the motion for postponement then, we shall press for a division;

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I want to ask the honourable member not to raise any point about postponement because the motion for postponement has not been seconded.

Mr. DOWDING: Mr. Chairman, I am using the word "postponement" because I intend to have a decision on age-grouping and superannuation taken tonight. I repeat that none in this House expects that the system can be reviewed and changed overnight; but if we were given the opportunity of hearing that a Committee had been appointed to investigate the working of the system, the House would at least feel that it is not existing under a system of government in which its wishes are entirely ignored. If the honourable Leader's attitude is averse to this, then it is the duty of honourable members who disagree with age-grouping and superannuation to vote for the reduction of this Head by Five dollars. It is their responsibility to their constituents and to their children.

The Executive is quite capable of taking immediate steps in this matter. If they have the policy of education in their hands what is there to prevent them from saying that the system is wrong and that it must be stopped? To state that the blame for the continuation of this malicious system should be attached to school teachers is, in my opinion, getting beside the point. Honourable members must realise that no school teacher is going to commit himself by saying something which will probably cause him the loss of promotion or bring him into disfavour with the education Authorities. You get that in every profession—even in the medical profession. Surely, as the honourable senior member for the City said at the beginning of his speech, if the members of the Executive Committee are responsible for educational policy they should accept the motion for postponement and let us bring the issue to a close.

I now beg to second the motion for the postponement of this Head.

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Chairman, I have not taken part in this debate so far as passing an opinion is concerned until now. Since discussion of the Estimates began I have been absent for a little while, having had to leave hurriedly.

I cannot see the point in trying to postpone this Head. Honourable members know that I have always uncompromisingly opposed age-grouping. In 1943, or whenever it was that the question was raised in here as to whether or not the Hayden policy should be accepted, I expressed myself as being opposed to it and I am just as opposed to it today. But I want to tell honourable members this: It is evident, from the expression of opinion here tonight, that age-grouping will have to be abandoned. It is the will of the people through their representatives. But it cannot be done by Monday morning. Even if the Executive were so minded, there are other obstacles that stand in the way. The schools will be given Easter vacation within a few weeks' time, and this is my personal view: if anything is to be done it can hardly be done before the reopening of schools, so I can see no advantage in postponing the matter.

The honourable Leader said a little while ago that discontinuation of the system would have taken place long ago if the teachers had spoken the truth. But about 75 per cent. of the teachers said

that it was alright; consequently the Government went on with it.

I am appealing to honourable members on the other side of the Table first of all to withdraw their motion for the reduction of the Vote, and secondly, the motion for the postponement.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The question is that further consideration of this Head be postponed. Honourable members in favour of that will please say "Aye" those against will please say "No". I think the "Noes" have it.

The following division was taken:—

Ayes: Mr. ALLDER, Mr. BRANCKER, Mr. GARNER, Mr. MOTTLEY, Mr. GILL, Mr. DOWDING, Mr. GODDARD and Mr. WILKINSON.—(8)

Noes: Mr. SPEAKER, Mr. MILLER, Mr. MAPP, Mr. BRYAN, Mr. COX, Mr. F. L. WALCOTT, Dr. CUMMINS, Mr. ADAMS, Mr. WARD, and Mr. BETHELL—(10).

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The question has resolved itself in the negative; eight honourable members voting "Aye", ten honourable members voting "No".

The question now is that item 29 be reduced by five dollars. Honourable members in favour of that will please say "Aye", those against will please say "No". I think the "Noes" have it.

The following division was taken:—

Ayes: Mr. ALLDER, Mr. BRANCKER, Mr. GARNER, Mr. GILL, Mr. DOWDING, Mr. GODDARD, Mr. WILKINSON, Mr. MOTTLEY, and Mr. BETHELL—(9).

Noes: Mr. SPEAKER, Mr. MILLER, Mr. MAPP, Mr. BRYAN, Mr. COX, Mr. F. L. WALCOTT, Dr. CUMMINS, Mr. ADAMS, and Mr. WARD—(9).

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The question has resolved itself in a "tie", nine honourable members voting "Aye" and nine honourable members voting "No". I now vote with the "Noes."

The question now is that the sum of $801,787 be voted under this Head. Honourable members in favour of that will please say "Aye", those against will please say "No"; I think the "Ayes" have it.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to move Mr. Chairman that you do now report progress and ask for leave for the Committee to sit again.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

The question that the CHAIRMAN do now report progress with leave for the Committee to sit again was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

The Chairman reported and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT FOR FORTY-FIVE MINUTES

Mr. ADAMS: I beg that this House do now adjourn for three quarters of an hour.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question is that this House do now adjourn for three quarters of an hour. 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.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY—ESTIMATES FOR 1951-52

On re-assembling,

Mr. SPEAKER: On the adjournment, the House was in Committee of Supply on the Estimates for the year 1951-52.

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair, and the House resumed Committee of Supply, Mr. SMITH being in the Chair.

HEAD XXI — DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND AGRICULTURE

The items and the respective amounts to be voted under this Head were read.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to move that the sum of $168,403 be voted under this Head.

Dr. CUMMINS seconded the motion which was agreed to.

HEAD XXII — PUBLIC LIBRARY

The items and the respective amounts to be voted under this Head were read.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to move that the sum of $15,258 be voted under this Head.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

Mr. BRANCKER: Item 19 "'Extension of Library Service" calls forth comment from me as usual. Many years ago it was decided to open the Library at night and I have been agitating along this line in this Chamber. The note to this item says: "It is proposed to extend the hours of the Library service on an experimental basis from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., and provision is included for an additional Clerk and an additional Counter Clerk on a temporary basis; also for electricity expenses." I suggest that the extension of the hours of the Library Service should be from 5 p.m. until 10 p.m., and that the Library should be opened on Wednesday afternoons on which afternoons it is now closed. It would be only a question of employing more staff and there are plenty of capable people who are willing to join the staff and serve as additional clerks so that the Library will not be closed on any afternoon of the week. Reading is a branch of education which we must encourage at all costs; with the amount of material which we have to staff the Library, there is no reason why it should be closed as early as 9 o'clock. In any event, let additional staff be employed so as to dispense with the closing of the Library on Wednesday afternoon or any other afternoon of the week.

Mr. MILLER: There is a Branch Library in Speightstown and I am thinking whether it would not be a wise thing to have one in St. George as well. It is my duty to ask the Government to supply the people of St. George with an amenity such as this; I am obligated to those people and it is in their interest that I am asking that such an amenity be provided. I hope that that will not be taken as a criticism of the Government.

Mr. MAPP: In connection with item 21 "School Libraries Department", I see from the note that provision is made for a continuation of the trial scheme for a further year. I do not know how long the scheme has been going on; I am recommending to the Government that this School Library Department be extended on an experimental basis in respect of adult education, especially in the parishes where no branches have been set up. There is no Evening Institute in St. Thomas. Doubtless proper administrative arrangements could be made, and the extension would be of great assistance to those who are in need of adult education. I hope that the Government will work the system on a better basis in years to come; there is no doubt that there is a crying need for adult education. I hope that on the next occasion we will see more money provided for a scheme like this.

Mr. ADAMS: If the honourable member will look at Appendix 10, he will find that the sum of $1,014 has been put down for the Speightstown Centre, in connection with the Evening Institute, and that two Centres are in St. John and so on.

Mr. MAPP: This Appendix deals with places where branches of the Evening Institute are already established, but I am referring to places where no branches have been established. The School Libraries Department should be extended to those districts where there are no branches of the Evening Institute. Electricity could be installed in the schools and classes allowed to go on.

Mr. ADAMS: All these suggestions are reasonable and sensible and are worthy of the utmost consideration. I will pass on the comments and suggestions of honourable members to the proper quarter. As regards the opening of the Library at night, I think the closing hour of 9 o'clock was specially fixed so as to prevent people from missing the buses.

The question that the sum of $15,258 be voted under this Head was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD XXIII — MEDICAL DEPARTMENTS

(1) *Director of Medical Services.*

The items and the respective amounts to be voted under this Sub-head were read.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to move that the sum of $6,493 be voted under this Sub-head.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

Mr. MAPP: I think the remarks which I am going to make now should be made in connection with item 23, "Quarantine Control". We know that quite recently the public have been scared and warned about guarding themselves against certain communicable diseases such as small-pox, and so on. There was a suspected case of small-pox landed here some time ago and it looks to me as if the methods employed by the Director of Medical Services were hardly wise. We must take precautions against disease, but a person who is in such a responsible position as the Director of Medical Services, must be careful as to how he acts. If you are not sure that a suspected person really carries a disease, you may well give the public the idea that you are making an unnecessary alarm. You may shout "Wolf, wolf", with the result that when the wolf does come, the public will disregard your cry. The Director of Medical Services may have issued that warning so as to get everybody prepared in case there is an outbreak of disease, but that sort of thing can be carried too far. The Director should be sure of his facts; we do not want to say anything which is apt to make the public adopt a wrong attitude towards warnings which are given them, but in this matter of quarantine control you should make sure that cases of disease are real before issuing any warning. I am wondering if suitable precautions are taken against the landing of cases of communicable disease at Seawell; however, we know that the Officer from the General Board of Health is always there. People landing here from Venezuela and other places can well bring diseases to Barbados, and it is necessary for suitable precautions to be taken at Seawell. In a conversation which I had with a former Clerk of the Board of Health, he said he was not so sure that the precautions taken at Seawell were quite what they should be.

Mr. MILLER: I am wondering if the Government is not considering using Pelican Island for housing cases of tuberculosis. I hope that this will not be taken as a criticism of the Government; but every month you have cases of tuberculosis and I feel that the Government could make a sanitorium at Pelican Island for housing these cases. You have a lone bird—the Caretaker—at Pelican Island. and I am throwing out a hint to the Government that the Director of Medical Services could visit that island and tell them if it could not be used with advantage for the purpose I have mentioned. I am asking the honourable senior member for St. Thomas to regard what I am saying with some seriousness; the Government will find that Pelican Island can be used as a sanitorium for tuberculosis cases. I am asking the Government to act on my suggestion immediately; I am asking them to give it some consideration and examination and probably there will be produced on that island the greatest sanitorium in the West Indies.

Dr. CUMMINS: I would like to suggest that on the next occasion when an infectious disease is suspected the Director of Medical Services be advised by my colleague. As regards the honourable senior member for St. George, he does not know where the sanitorium should be placed. He suggested that it should be placed at Gun Hill in the first instance and now he has gone down to Pelican Island. I hope that the honourable member, who is an expert in this matter, will get in touch with the Director of Medical Services and decide where the sanitorium should be placed.

The question that the sum of $6,493 be voted under this Sub-head was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

(2) General Hospital

The items and the respective amounts to be voted under this Sub-head were read.

Mr. ADAMS: I ask leave to add the sum of $960 to the sum to be voted in Appendix 1, D. Salaries, (Medical) making the total of that item $19,874. The reason for that is this; the post of Anaesthetist was created by the Civil Establishment (General) (Amendment) No. 7 Order, 1950, with a salary scale of $4,320 x 240—$4,800 per annum. The Contract rate authorised by Resolution No. 74/1950 was $4,800 x 240 — $5,760. It is now proposed to appoint an Officer on Agreement at a salary of $5,760 per annum, but legal authority exists only for the payment of a maximum of $4,800. We cannot get an Anaesthetist for less than that salary. It is therefore necessary to provide the sum of $4,800 by law and to vote the remaining $960.

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

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to move that the sum of $481,958 be voted under this Sub-head.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

Mr. BRANCKER: I would like to get some information as regards item 37 dealing with the Nurses. Some time ago a recommendation was made for 66 additional nurses; I would like to know how many additional nurses have been taken on and what is their rate of pay. I understand that there is some dissatisfaction existing among these nurses; it is alleged that they are being paid at a rate lower than that at which they were made to understand they would be paid when they were taken on, and that there has been a decrease in the rate of pay since the first month.

Mr. ADAMS: The item to which the honourable member is referring has been fixed by law under a Civil Establishment Order. It is out of order to discuss what has been fixed by law.

Mr. BRANCKER: In my copy of the Estimates the item is to be voted and other items in respect of nurses are to be voted. I am asking for information as to the rate of pay of these nurses whose appointment was sanctioned by the Legislature after Dr. Hallinan made his Report.

Mr. BRYAN: I see that the sum of $21,500 is to be voted under the Head "Domestic", Item 1,

"Renewal and repairs to furniture, bedding, crockery, etc." I would like to know if anything has been done to implement the recommendations of Dr. Halliman in respect of the Porters' Domitory. The bedding is in a very bad state, and I feel sure that although Dr. Halliman made his recommendations, nothing has been done about the matter. Despite the fact that other Institutions have provided their staff with uniform, nothing has been done in the case of certain employees at the Hospital. As regards the cooks, those in respect of the Nurses' Home are provided with uniform, but some others are not, and it does seem that you are making fish of the one and fowl of the other.

Mr. MILLER: The honourable junior member for St. Lucy has referred to the question of the rate of the payment of nurses, and I would like to refer to an occurrence which has taken place at the Hospital a few days ago and of which the Government should be made aware. A nurse who received her first salary reported to the lady in charge that it was stolen; and the report was made that it was stolen by a junior. A policewoman was brought to the Hospital and the nurse who was accused of the theft was searched. This is a serious thing to report to the Government; you cannot do that sort of thing unless a person is under arrest. The poor, helpless nurse who cried out was carried into a room and examined by the policewoman which was not a proper thing to do. This is not a trivial matter; this nurse has not returned to the Hospital. I am asking the hon. senior member for St. Thomas not to treat this matter as a joke but to make a note of it. No policewoman should be permitted to go into the Hospital dormitory to search a nurse unless she was under arrest; I do not know that it is right to accuse a nurse of the larceny of another nurse's month's salary and subject her to the examination to which this nurse was subjected. This is no criticism of the Government; I feel that as a member of the public and of this House, it is my duty to see that things go right. I am asking the hon. senior member for St. Thomas to investigate this matter; I view it very seriously and I should like the Government to view it in a similar light.

Dr. CUMMINS: I have no information as to this matter; I promise the hon. member that I will make an investigation and let him know the result.

Mr. ADAMS: If the hon. senior member for St. George is correct, one can only assume that the nurse allowed herself to be searched. No policeman has the right to search any person unless that person is under arrest; no policeman could possibly fail to be informed before he puts on his uniform, whether or not he has the right to search any person without permission.

Mr. MILLER: I do not know the legal side of the matter. All I am saying is that a junior coloured nurse at the Hospital was accused of the theft of another nurse's salary, and she screamed hysterically most of the day before she was exposed to the examination. I say that that is wrong; there would have to be some chain of circumstances leading up to the arrest of this nurse before she could be subjected to that examination. To bring in a policewoman to search this nurse when she was not under arrest is a serious matter. This nurse has not returned to the Hospital and I feel that an injustice has been done. I am asking the Government to investigate this matter and see that it does not happen again.

Mr. ALLDER: If the case as related by the hon. senior member for St. George is correct, it should be taken with a certain amount of seriousness. The dignity of this young woman has been thrown to the ground as a result of a misunderstanding; while it is illegal for a person to be searched before he is legally apprehended, you must agree that this young woman who has not been at the Hospital for very long, might have been scared and would have submitted herself to anything which might have been introduced to her. I hope that when the hon. senior member for St. Thomas investigates the matter, he will see that those who were responsible for such an embarassment to the young woman are censured and that she is reinstated in her job. This young woman must have gone through a lot of trouble to pass the examination so as to get that job and her hopes and aspirations have been destroyed through that scandal.

The question that the sum of $481,958 be voted under this Sub-head was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

(3) Lunatic Asylum

The items and the respective amounts to be voted under this Sub-head were read.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to move that the sum of $177,973 be voted under this Sub-head.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

Mr. BRYAN: In connection with item 33 "Provisions", I would like to draw to the attention of the hon. member in charge of matters relating to this Department that there is a certain amount of dissatisfaction among the staff over the diet which is supplied at this Institution. I have perused the diet sheet and I find that there is the absence of green vegetables. One could not help noticing how often salt fish is served; it is served on five occasions during the week and even on Sundays. Fresh beef is served but the diet is not up to the standard which we saw in earlier days. When you consider what arduous work has to be performed by the staff I feel that more nutrition should be in the diet which is supplied. I suggest that a little conference should be held between selected members of the staff and the powers that be, so that some satisfaction among the staff might result.

Mr. BRANCKER: I notice that the amount of this item 33 has been reduced in these days when prices are going up. I understand that in the past when attendants did not like rice they were given an alternative; but recently orders have been given that if you did not eat the regular food which is provided, you must either be satisfied with nothing at all or provide your own food. There is no alternative for rice in respect of those who do not like it. Surely it is hardly kind for the people who are responsible for running an institution to give such orders and to find that attendants are not given any alternative dish. As regards item 40, "Incidentals", I understand that the attendants have been asking the responsible authorities for cloaks; they have to take some of the inmates out on walks, sometimes a quarter of a mile or so from the Institution, and then it rains. I feel that the Institution should provide cloaks for the staff when they have to go out on these walks. (A MEMBER: What about the inmates?) if the matter receives the consideration which it deserves, I take it that the patients would not be overlooked.

The question that the sum of $177,973 be voted under this Sub-head was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

(4) — Lazaretto

The items and the respective amounts to be voted under this Sub-head were read.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to move that the sum of $34,457 be voted under this Sub-head.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

Mr. ALLDER: I notice that at the Lazaretto the number of the staff is becoming greater than that of the inmates. I am wondering if we are going to continue to allow this Institution to cost us all this money. I should like to know if arrangements cannot be made by the West Indian Governments for one colony to take over all the lepers from the various colonies; individual Governments could contribute funds for the maintenance *pro rata* of the persons sent over from the respective colonies. Although the population of the Lazaretto has been reduced, yet the vote for provisions and fuel is still high; the amount of that item is $14,000. If my suggestions were implemented, that would bring about a great saving to the colony, and the premises down there would be utilized for other purposes. I cannot see why we should spend all this money on this Institution; I repeat that the number of the staff is becoming greater than the population and the vote still appears to be high. This Institution should not cost us so much money; if the population has been reduced, the expenditure should also be reduced. If you have 20 patients down there (A MEMBER: There are 30) I do not see why the Institution should cost us so much money; I think that something should be done to have the cost reduced. If you have down there inmates who are capable of working, I do not see any reason why they cannot be given the necessary cooking utensils and materials so that they can cook their own food. It is necessary to reduce this vote; this Institution is costing us too much money.

The question that the sum of $34,457 be voted under this Head was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

(5) *Board of Health*

The items and the respective amounts to be voted under this Sub-head were read.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to move that the sum of $25,284 be voted under this Sub-head.

Dr. CUMMINS seconded the motion which was agreed to.

(7) *Government Bacteriologist and Pathologist*

The items and the respective amounts to be voted under this Sub-head were read.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to move that the sum of $3,625 be voted under this Sub-head.

Dr. CUMMINS seconded the motion which was agreed to.

(8) *Health Centre*

The items and the respective amounts to be voted under this Sub-head are read.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman,—I beg to move that the sum of $7,273 be voted under this Head.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

Mr. WILKINSON: Mr. Chairman,—With reference to item 16, is it really necessary to buy a motor car?

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Chairman,—This Health Centre is to serve several parishes and it is quite necessary to have a motor car to take the nurses around when visiting for the purposes of giving lectures and things of that sort to the several institutions.

The question that the sum of $7,273 be voted under this Head was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

(9) *General Nursing Council*

The items and the respective amounts to be voted under this sub-head are read.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman,—I beg to move that the sum of $300 be voted under this Head.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

The question that the sum of $300 be voted under this Head was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

(10) *Maternity Hospital*

The items and the respective amounts to be voted under this sub-head are read.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman,—I beg to move that the sum of $29,814 be voted under this Head.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

The question that the sum of $29,814 be voted under this Head was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

(11) *Other Services*

The items and the respective amounts to be voted under this Sub-head are read.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the sum of $18,622 be voted under this Head.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, I should just like to draw attention to item 7, Antibiotics and Insulin for treatment of indigent persons. There are a great many people who cannot afford to buy penicillin, antibotics and the more expensive drugs, and it is right that some provision should be made whereby a poor person, who might otherwise die from lack of money to buy these new cures, should have them free. This money has therefore been set aside for the purpose; but the Director of Medical Services will be in control of affairs. When application is made through his office, he will examine the circumstances of each particular case and dispense assistance in accordance with his judgment.

The question that the sum of $18,622 be voted under this Head was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD XXIV—BARBADOS REGIMENT

The items and the respective amounts to be voted under this sub-head are read.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the sum of $50,646 be voted under this Head.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

Mr. BRANCKER: Mr. Chairman, I want to draw attention to item 20, Pay and Efficiency Grants, for which the sum of $10,000 is to be voted. I am wondering if the Honourable Minister for War (laughter) would be good enough to break up that item for the benefit of this community and let the community know on what basis the men in the Regiment are paid. For instance, is a sergeant's pay in the Regiment in a ratio with that of a sergeant of the Barbados Police Force, is it comparable with the rate of pay of any other known body, or is it just a rate of pay peculiar to the Barbados Regiment? The feeling which I have been able to ascertain is that the permanent members of the staff should be paid at a rate comparable with that of the Barbados Police Force. That is, that a permanent sergeant should receive not less than a sergeant of the Barbados Police Force, which would be somewhat less than that of a sergeant in the Jamaica Regiment. Of course, we know that the cost of living in Jamaica is much higher than that in Barbados.

As to the cost of a parade, the rank and file of the Regiment are nowadays paid a half crown. These young men are for the most part drawn from distant parts of the Island, and while I know that these parades are not intended to be money-making affairs, I also realise that if a fellow lives in St. Andrew or St. Lucy and his 'bus fare is 52 cents return, that is, from the country to the Drill Hall and back, that leaves him with only 8 cents for, perhaps, a cup of tea or some such slight refreshment, as after his long journey he must feel the need for some refreshment. I am, therefore, suggesting to the responsible authorities that an increase be made in the remuneration at present paid for attendance at parades, having regard to the amount of 'bus fare and other important factors as I have just mentioned.

I presume that the Barbados Regiment is not intended merely for the people of Bridgetown, but for the encouragement of the youths of such parishes as St. Joseph and St. Lucy.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, I wish that the honourable member had done what the honourable Leader of the Opposition is accustomed to do, and what I have often appealed to honourable members to do, that is, to give me notice of their intention to ask certain questions. Honourable members ask abstruse questions which would mean looking up files. Why could not the honourable member have given me notice as the honourable junior member for St. James did when he wanted to know what was the breakdown of a certain item? He gave me his questions and by a reference to the file notes all the answers were prepared and I was then able to reply. If the honourable junior member for St. Lucy had done the same thing, I would not now have to stand here and plead inability. It is impossible to go to the telephone. give questions like these to the Secretariat and likewise, receive the answer. It may be that the answer was given in some previous year, since it is likely that the item on which the information is wanted, may be an old item so to speak. I am sorry; I cannot help the honourable member.

Mr. ALLDER: Mr. Chairman, Like the honourable junior member for St. Lucy, I regret to see this $10,000 on the Estimates. The Barbados Regiment is another of those old conventions for which we have to pay and the presence of which is, to me. embarrassing. In my view, over $70,000 a year is too costly for a mock army. It is an institution that is non-productive, and therefore, not a cent should be spent on it.

Another point. I notice that no criticism has been made under Item 27, Arms and Ammunition. which shows an increase this year of $1.100. The inference is that we can spend up to any amount on this item.

Another item to which I should like to draw attention is Item 36, Medical Expenses. On this item there has also been an increase this year. Last year it was $960; this year it is $1,440. Now, I have been told that this money is spent only on staff. I wish to draw the attention of the honourable member responsible for this Department to a certain incident which took place recently. A certain private, while out on drill got an injury which irritated his hernia. He applied to the Department for assistance to enable him to obtain medical attention and he was refused. He had to seek medical attention elsewhere for which he had to pull his pocket and pay. although he was hardly in a position to do so, the high fees that were charged. This means that he, as a result of their refusal, not only suffered physically, but also financially. I feel that some provision should be made for medical assistance in case a private should suffer any injury in the course of his regimental activities. If that young man had not been there doing his bit for the benefit of the army, he might not have been put to the pain and expense that he has been forced to undergo. Honourable members know that I have always been against this arms and ammunition grant and I still am against it; but I do not always want to be beating the air.

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Chairman, the honourable member seems disposed to talk for the sake of talking. A few weeks ago, when certain Supplementary Estimates for this Department were being discussed the honourable member made the same criticism which he made to-night. I was at pains to explain to him that this money for medical treatment is for staff officers and their families alone. He also enquired about the man who allegedly developed hernia while on drill, and he was given an answer. It appears that his memory is failing him.

The question that the sum of $50,564 be voted under this Head was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD XXV—PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

The items and the respective amounts to be voted under this Head are read.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the sum of $162,327 be voted under this Head.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

Mr. ALLDER: Mr. Chairman, Sometime ago I asked a question on the maintenance of Government property (Item 72 in these Estimates), and no reply was given. I should like to ask the honourable senior member for St. Joseph what is the position now. There were also questions involving the amount charged for fees for stock. I suggested then the necessity for the reduction in the fees and an increase in the rental of the Turf Club. I also enquired whether the rentals of the Garrison Flats had been reconsidered, and no replies were given to any of these questions.

Mr. MAPP: Mr. Chairman, Item 25, is "Life-saving Apparatus at Beaches". I notice that $100 was voted last year and that provision for the same amount is being made this year. I am wondering whether the honourable Leader will tell us whether or not it is difficult to acquire this apparatus.

Mr. WILKINSON: Mr. Chairman, Item 32 is "Military Buildings taken over by Colonial Government". I think that we are spending a lot of money on the maintenance of buildings. I notice that the tenants who rent the Garrison flats have been given very short notice to leave, many of them by the 8th of next month. I wonder if the Government could give me any information on this matter. Some of these tenants have been living there for years. I know one lady who is so distressed that she bought a piece of land intending to build on it; but she has found it impossible to get a house to rent until her own is built. Is it possible for the Government to be a little more considerate and give a little more time to these tenants? I presume that the people who expect to go up there are people in the Government Service who will be paid an allowance for rent.

My next question is on Item 69, "Housecraft Centre". I have to draw the attention of the Government to the lack of an enclosure on the southern side of this building. An attempt was once made to raise a garden and keep the ground in good condition; but the stock still come through the barbed wire fencing and destroy whatever efforts are made. Nothing has been done about it and I should like to take this opportunity to remind the Government that some steps should be taken to fix up this enclosure so as to give a good aspect to the place.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, As regards the Housecraft Centre, the Government has under consideration a proposal for purchasing additional land next to the Housecraft Centre which will be enclosed; so that that matter is being specially considered. There is some complication about the legal ownership of the land on which the Housecraft Centre is standing but the point about the enclosure is receiving consideration.

I cannot, for the same reason which I mentioned just now, speak definitely on a Head like this. There are over 70 different items and possibly, over 70 different files; therefore, I could not possibly find myself in a position to answer off-hand a question like, for instance, how many people are paid for their sheep and cattle and so on. If any honourable member still wants an answer and he will write his questions and hand them to me I will give him the answers when the House meets again. The hon. senior member for St. Michael is on the Garrison flats Committee. He will probably answer better than I.

Mr. COX: Mr. Chairman,—In reply to the questions asked by the honourable junior member for St. James relative to the notice which has been given to some of the tenants who now occupy certain of the Garrison flats, the position is that it has become difficult to find quarters for certain Government Officials and opportunity was taken to give notice to some of those persons who would be least affected by the removal. Consequently, a notice was circulated telling those tenants that within six months' time the Government might find it necessary to terminate the tenancy. Since then we have had to give notice to three of those tenants in order to find quarters for the Anaesthetist who is expected to arrive here shortly, Mr. Armstrong a Police Inspector and some other individual whose name I do not at the moment remember. I should like to say that the other people who have occupied the flats for so many years have not been given notice, and that it has been decided to consider each case on its merits. It might be well to state that the Government's notice does not necessarily apply to all the tenants, because many of the flats occupied by them are unsuitable for occupation by persons like the ones I have just mentioned. But as I said before, it has been found difficult to obtain quarters for, more particularly, expatriates, and as a result notice had to be given to some of these Garrison flats' tenants.

Mr. ALLDER: Mr. Chairman, I have been told that all during the war years many of these people paid as low as $15 per flat per month, and many of them had houses rented out at high rates. I feel that such a procedure is wrong. We have a lot of civil servants who find it difficult to obtain houses with suitable accommodation and who would very much appreciate being able to rent some of these flats. Over and above this I have always felt that the Garrison Barracks catered to a kind of segregated element. The first time that the Government made use of one of these flats was when they wanted to provide accommodation for one of the superintendents at the Government Industrial School. That should not be so. If the Government has rentable property and we are asked to vote large sums of money for their maintenance, the Government should get profitable rentals for them regardless of who the tenants are.

Mr. COX: Mr. Chairman, I should like to inform the honourable senior member for St. John that I think it was in the year 1949 soon after the honourable senior member for St. Peter and I had become members of the Garrison Flats Committee that it was decided that the rentals for these flats were too low, and when the Colonial Secretary and the Colonial Engineer went into the matter it was found that we were losing as high as 33 per cent. in many cases; and we then and there expressed the opinion that people should be paying what we described as "economic rents."

The question of civil servants having the option of renting some of these flats has also been considered, and an alphabetical system has been arranged giving priority to strangers, Government officials and other public servants, such as teachers of secondary schools and so on. That means that any other local employee can apply for the renting of one of these flats provided that priorities are more or less satisfied.

Mr. MILLER: Mr. Chairman I should also like to draw your attention to Item 32 for which the sum of $23,090 is to be voted. This is undoubtedly a huge sum. I should like to know whether this amount is to some extent offset and in what way; and whether the Government is left with some small margin of profit.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, If the honourable senior member for St. George will look in the Revenue columns on page 4 of the Estimates, he will find the answer. If the Revenue is $14,800 and we are asking for $23,090, then you have the answer in those very figures.

Mr. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I see $11,000 in respect of Government property; but I also see under Head V, Item 2, Government (ex-Military) properties, $14,800.

Another point on which I should like some information concerns Item 59, "Seawell." We have already spent large sums on Seawell and I should like to know why I again see this item here.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Chairman, I am afraid I have not got that file which would furnish information on that item. Note 59 to the Item on page 81 says: "Merged with the Department of Science and Agriculture," and my impression is that this note refers to the words in italics under "Seawell" on page 81; i.e.: "Machinery, Buildings, Upkeep of Gardens and Grounds." Nevertheless, as I am speaking subject to correction, I shall check that item and let the honourable member know later on.

I think that Item 32 to which the honourable member refers should have been put under the Head "Government Properties" instead. You will notice that the notes to the Revenue side on page 4 of the Estimates are bracketed. It is conceivable that the $23,090 is covered by the whole Revenue from Government properties including Government (ex-Military) Properties which is $25,800.

Mr. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I am wondering if the Government would not consider giving priority to civil servants to occupy these flats. We should remember that it is largely on civil servants that we are relying to carry this programme through. On some occasions people who are absolute foreigners are given priority, and I wonder if it does not appear human that civil servants should be given the option of renting these Garrison flats.

Another enquiry I should like to make is with reference to the flats at the Drill Hall. I am not suggesting that anybody should be thrown out; but there are a great many civil servants who are working night and day in the interest of the Government and the welfare of the community and I think that they deserve some consideration in the matter of providing them with suitable quarters. Considering that a civil servant might pay about $25 a month rental for a house to-day, if the Government were to revise their rates it should yield an additional 25 or 30 per cent.

As I said before, I am not criticising or opposing anything. I am merely asking for information, and after all, I think that I am entitled to some reply to my questions. I can skipper my ship; I am not asking anybody to give me a tow.

Mr. ADAMS : Mr. Chairman, I do not see why the Government should refuse to rent flats to civil servants. I do not see why, if civil servants made application for renting these flats, that they should not be eligible to occupy them. But what has been happening is that, as I have already explained, for years now, until we bouht the Colonial Secretary's house, many officers have come here and found it difficult to get suitable places to live in. Perhaps I should not have quoted the Colonial Secretary's house. Officers must have first choice; but if places were available I do not see why Government should refuse to help civil servants.

I cannot remember the exact amount, but a sum is being made available for the purpose of making loans to civil servants—a revolving fund to enable them to buy houses or to extend their houses. Honourable members will therefore see that civil servants are not being ignored.

The question that the sum of $162,327 be voted under this Head was put and resolved in the affirmative with out division.

HEAD XXVI—PENSIONS

The items and the respective amounts to be voted under this Head were read.

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to move that the sum of $434,075 be voted under this Head.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

Mr. BRYAN: In connection with item 3, "Police and Fire Brigade Pensions and Gratuities", and item 6, "Public Pensions and Gratuities", it has been brought to my attention that a petition signed by pensioners in the lower brackets, was sent to the Executive Committee. I think that something should be done for those whose pensions are very low. Despite the fact that rents, taxes and the cost of living have gone up considerably within recent times, nothing has been done on behalf of these pensioners. I say that some consideration should be given to them so as to assist them in making two ends meet; they are deserving of assistance. I am asking the Government to make an effort to give some consideration to these pensioners.

The question that the sum of $434,075 be voted under this Head was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

On the motion of Mr. ADAMS, seconded by Mr. WILKINSON, the CHAIRMAN reported the passing in Committee of additional Resolutions totalling in all the sum of $2,907,652 and that the Committee had asked for leave to sit again.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

THE ADJOURNMENT

Mr. ADAMS: I beg to move that this House do now adjourn to Monday next, the 19th day of March, 1951, at 4 p.m.

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