

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SESSION 1953—54

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, June 30, 1953.

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

Present:

His Honour Mr. K. N. R. HUSBANDS (*Speaker*); Dr. H. G. CUMMINS, M.D., C.M., His Honour Mr. A. E. S. LEWIS (*Deputy Speaker*), Mr. M. E. COX, Mr. L. E. SMITH, (*Chairman of Committees*) Mr. R. G. MAPP, Mr. F. C. GODDARD, Mr. F. E. MILLER, Mr. J. A. HAYNES, B.A., Mr. J. C. MOTTLEY, Mr. E. St. A. HOLDER, Mr. V. B. VAUGHAN, Mr. C. E. TALMA, Mr. L. A. WILLIAMS, LL.B.

PRAYERS AND MINUTES

Prayers were read.

Mr. SPEAKER informed the House that the Minutes of the last meeting were not yet ready for confirmation.

Mr. SPEAKER also informed the House that he had received the Report of the Accountant General of the Colony for the month of May, 1953.

PAPERS LAID

Dr. CUMMINS by command laid the following Papers:—

Report on the Conference on West Indian Federation held in London in April 1953.

Report on the Treatment of Offenders for the year 1951.

The Barbados General Hospital (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations, 1953.

Mr. Cox by command laid the following Paper: The Animals Importation Control (Amendment) Regulations, 1953.

PETITIONS

Petitions were presented as follows:—

Mr. GODDARD: Petition from the Bishop and Rector of St. Michael praying the House to pass a Bill authorising them to sell the property known as the "Church Village School" to the Vestry of St. Michael.

Mr. GODDARD: Petition from the Vestry of St. Michael praying the House to pass a Bill authorising them to raise a loan to purchase the Church Village Girls' School.

Mr. TALMA: Petition from the Vestry of Christ Church praying the House to pass a Bill to enable the Vestry to raise a loan of \$12,000 for

erecting quarters for the Matron of the Almshouse of the said parish.

The honourable members informed the House that the petitions were respectfully worded and asked that they be taken as read.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Government Notices were given as follows:—

Mr. Cox for Mr. WALCOTT: Resolution to approve the Order entitled "The Sugar Industry (Rehabilitation, Price Stabilization and Labour Welfare) Order, 1953."

Dr. CUMMINS: Bill intituled an Act to make provision for the relief of the poor in this Island.

Dr. CUMMINS for Mr. ADAMS: Bill intituled an Act to amend the Income Tax Act, 1921.

Dr. CUMMINS: Bill intituled an Act to amend the Naturalization Act, 1915.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' NOTICES

The following Private Members' Notices were given:—

Mr. GODDARD: A Bill to authorise the Lord Bishop and the Rector of St. Michael to sell "Church Village School" to the Vestry of St. Michael.

Mr. GODDARD: A Bill to authorise the Vestry of St. Michael to raise a loan to purchase "Church Village Girls' School" to extend the Scavenging Department.

Mr. TALMA: A Bill to authorise the Vestry of Christ Church to raise a loan to erect a stone building to serve as Matron's quarters at the Almshouse.

QUESTIONS

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

1. Will the Government please say whether any funds from the public treasury of the Island have been spent on or contributed to the holding of any Police or Fire Brigade Conferences in the British West Indies during the last four years?

2. If the answer to question 1 above is in the affirmative, will Government please state the dates and places of the Conferences and give some idea of the matters discussed?

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

1. Will the Government please say what useful purpose was served in sending recently a delegation to Trinidad to get information about the working

of the Harbour there, in relation to the establishment of a Deep Water Harbour in Barbados?

2. Will Government say also why the particular delegation was chosen and what was the total expense involved?

BILLS READ A FIRST TIME

The following Notices of Questions were given:—

On motion of Dr. CUMMINS seconded by Mr. Cox the Bill to make provision for the relief of the poor in this Island was read a first time.

On motion of Dr. CUMMINS seconded by Mr. Cox the Bill to amend the Income Tax Act 1921 was read a first time.

On motion of Dr. CUMMINS seconded by Mr. Cox the Bill to amend the Naturalization Act 1951, was read a first time.

On motion of Mr. GODDARD seconded by Mr. HAYNES the Bill to authorise the Lord Bishop and the Rector of St. Michael to sell "Church Village School" to the Vestry of St. Michael was read a first time.

On the motion of Mr. GODDARD seconded by Mr. HAYNES the Bill to authorise St. Michael's Vestry to purchase "Church Village Girls' School" was read a first time.

On motion of Mr. TALMA seconded by Mr. HOLDER the Bill to authorise the Vestry of Christ Church to raise a loan to erect a stone building for the Matron's quarters at the Almshouse was a first time. X X X

Mr. SPEAKER: The first Order of the Day stands in the name of the honourable junior member for St. Thomas—to move the House into Committee of Supply to consider the granting of sums of money for the service of the Colony.

On the motion of Dr. CUMMINS seconded by Mr. Cox Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee of Supply, Mr. SMITH in the Chair.

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Chairman,—the first Resolution is as follows:—

Resolution to place the sum of \$3,648 at the disposal of the Governor-in-Executive Committee to supplement the Estimates 1953-54 Part I, Current, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1953-54, No. 5, which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

As honourable members will see, the Resolution is a supplementary one. In accordance with the usual custom, I think we should take it head by head.

Head VI—Customs—Item 26 (New) Ex gratia refund of Customs Duty—was called.

Dr. CUMMINS moved seconded by Mr. Cox that Head VI stand part.

Mr. J. C. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman,—Under paragraph (b) of the note we see that it is proposed to refund road tax on motor spirits amounting to \$46.00 and \$50.55 to Messrs. R. M. Jones and the British Union Oil Co. respectively. I would like to know if this has ever been done before or if it is something new. The note says that these companies have pointed out that they were unaware that a Bill had been introduced into the House of Assembly on the 14th October, 1952, to increase Road Tax on motor spirits by 5 cents a gallon and thus deliveries of motor spirit from bond on that day had been retailed to the public at 60 cents a gallon, that is, the increase of 5 cents per gallon had not been passed on.

This thing does not seem right to me, Mr. Chairman. If this thing had worked the other way round would these companies have given back to the public the extra money they got from them? Here we are called upon to give these two com-

panies this amount. I do not understand it at all.

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Chairman,—Honourable members will remember that a Bill to amend the Petroleum Act was laid in this Chamber on the 14th of October last year during the afternoon. Purpose of the Bill was to increase the road tax on motor spirits by 5 cents a gallon. Apparently, Messrs. R. M. Jones & Co. made certain deliveries during the day before this Bill was laid and they claim that they were unaware that the Bill had been introduced. Consequently the increase of five cents a gallon was not passed on to the public. The amount asked for here is to re-imburse them. The same thing applies to B.U.O.C.

Mr. J. C. MOTTLEY: I do not feel satisfied. If the price of gasoline had dropped instead of increased do you think they would have refunded money to the people who bought at the advanced price? This does not appeal to me as right. I want to register a word of protest against it.

Mr. ALLDER: Mr. Chairman,—The point raised by the honourable junior member for St. Philip is a good one. I am sure that this part of this item confuses me myself, and others who have seen this Resolution. It is a fact that there are other businesses which suffer loss when prices change. Sometimes goods are bought at a certain price and then next day you hear that the price has dropped, according to the Price Controller, and you have to sell accordingly.

This item of this Resolution seems to be trying to create a precedent because I have never seen anything of this sort brought here before, and I certainly disagree with it. What is more, the Government is apparently to be blamed because in introducing this Bill to increase the tax on gasoline it asked that it take effect from the date of introduction and as a result it found certain businesses unprepared for the change. But that does not mean that I agree that this refund should be made to these two companies. I am sure, Sir, that they are not the only two companies involved in this transaction, and you might get other small gasoline sellers asking the Government for refunds. I think that to prevent others from coming it is our duty not to grant these two companies any refund whatsoever. It is bad; and one does not like the manner in which Government's business is transacted. I am sure that if you continue with things of this sort you do not know what will happen in the future.

I might as well say this: I have had to lose \$4.00 on a case of sardines. I am wondering if I can put in a claim for a refund on that. Because two days after I bought these sardines to be retailed at 18 cents a tin the price dropped to 14 cents a tin, so I am still selling them at four cents a tin less. I do not have the privilege nor the intention of demanding a refund from the Government. It is just a manipulation of commerce which sometimes causes business men to lose and at other times causes them to gain. These companies should be asked to write off these amounts to their bad debts or profit and loss accounts. I am sure that they get more than \$46.00 protection from the Government, and what is more they can always work out these amounts.

I do not like it, Sir, and I feel that this Committee should not give its blessing to this particular part of the Resolution. I would certainly like the honourable junior member for St. Thomas to agree to have it cut out. It is creating a precedent and you do not know how many firms will come and ask for refunds on many other items of merchandise in the future. I know that refunds are granted to factory owners bringing in machinery or equip-

ment of a capital nature. I have known firms to have got rebates on those things because we want to encourage these industries. But because businesses which have been going on for a long time claim that because of the introduction of a Bill they have lost \$46.00 and \$50.55 respectively, I do not see why they should get a refund. I am moving, Sir, that this item be reduced by \$96.55.

There is another thing, sir. Paragraph (a) of this note speaks about a refund of Customs Duty and Package Tax amounting to \$163.01 to Messrs Gittens & Company in respect of duty paid on a Bell and Howell projector imported into the colony and subsequently purchased by the Government for use in the Mobile Cinema Unit.

I am wondering if the Government were sure of what they were doing as far as acquiring this instrument from a local individual is concerned. Has any attempt been made to get it directly from its source thereby reducing the cost? As far as I read it appears as if this individual got down this particular instrument for his private use and Government stepped in and arranged to buy it. You may find that that individual having something like that on his hand, might want to get rid of it because it was shoddy. It is not unusual for bad items to be dropped on the Government.

Mr. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, — I would like to speak on the question of the refund to the two companies relative to gasoline tax. There was a spot of reasoning in the arguments of the honourable junior member for St. Philip and the honourable senior member for St. John. Although I agree that the Government must have given this a great deal of examination before they put it in this Resolution, I feel that we are more or less creating a precedent. We have been told that ignorance of the law is no excuse. Never in the history of British democratic government has the Chancellor of the Exchequer been expected to release information relative to the budget or to the collection of taxes until it was laid on the table of the House. Therefore to say they were ignorant of the introduction of this Bill on the 14th October is not enough reason for these two companies to claim refunds. It might open the door for other people to plead ignorance or innocence. It seems to me that we are just going beyond what should reasonably be expected. I do not know if it is in the best interest of the Government to create such a precedent.

There is also some reasoning in what the honourable senior member for St. John said about the projector. Since the importer is expected to pay duty on it, and since the Government will buy it, there is no reason why he should pass on the duty. It could be sold with the understanding that the duty would be paid. I hope that the honourable junior member for St. Thomas would be willing to throw a little light on how they arrived at a decision to refund this money.

Mr. COX: Mr. Chairman, — I will begin by saying that I hold no brief for any big business. These requests made by B.U.O.C. and R. M. Jones are not in my opinion unreasonable. You must remember that hitherto when the Government came in with Bills to collect greater taxation — such Bills as rum and tobacco Bills etc. — the House used to meet at 12 o'clock noon. That was always considered the heat of the business day. But the Bill in question, as the honourable Deputy Leader of the House has said, was introduced at approximately 3.30 p.m. on the 14th October a time when one would expect that all business was more or less coming to a standstill. Therefore, one can reasonably assume that the companies concerned had already made their deliveries.

The companies have satisfied the Controller of

Customs that they did make their deliveries before this Bill was introduced. For that reason the Controller of Customs has recommended favourable consideration of the claims. Government has agreed that the requests are reasonable, and that is why they are before the House today. The honourable senior member for St. John has raised the question of small gasoline stations suffering as a result of the rise in tax on gasoline at the time, and he went further in saying that they might come to the Government for similar treatment. If the honourable member had really studied what goes on in normal business circles he would not have said what he did; because the stations concerned had already received gasoline from these firms and therefore they stood to gain and not to lose. They got gasoline from the firms at the old price, and whatever gas they failed to sell that day came under the new price. So they could not have been in the same condition as the firm which had already sold it, and they could never hope to come to the Government for consideration of this nature.

The honourable senior member for St. John also made mention not long ago of his having bought sardines to sell at 18 cents a tin and having to sell them at 14 cents a tin. I think I know something about that. I am sorry that the honourable member did not also inform the Committee that pilchards were at that time given an increase. What happened was that we had quite a large stock of sardines and they were beginning to spoil. The Control Board therefore decided to reduce the price from 18 to 14 cents a tin and to increase the price of pilchards and allow milk to remain at the price it was selling at instead of lowering it. These things were done to offset the loss which would be caused by having to reduce the price of sardines. In addition to that is the fact that more often than not whenever shopkeepers make purchases and prices vary they vary in the favour of the shopkeepers. Very often shopkeepers who have these items in stock stand to gain. I do not see how the honourable member could really have brought in such a case as being analogous to the one we are debating. The Government is convinced that these two companies are not making unreasonable requests and that is why Government decided to send it to the House.

Mr. WILLIAMS: Mr. Chairman, — I think that the honourable junior member for St. George has so far made the most valuable contribution to this debate. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer makes his budget speech in England at 3 o'clock, by 6 o'clock merchants are passing on the increase in the price of cigarettes. As the honourable member has said, there would be a budget leakage if people knew in advance of legislation to increase taxes on items. The honourable senior member for St. John has pointed out that the buyer is in a very good position; if the boot was on the other foot the buyer would be in a very bad position. What I am concerned about is that the fact that when the buyer finds himself in a similar position he has no chance of getting back anything. The honourable senior member for St. Michael is telling us that these companies were in a bad way.

Mr. COX: Mr. Chairman, — On a point of order, I must object to that. I never said anything of the kind. I do not know anything about these companies.

Mr. WILLIAMS: I understood the honourable member to say that the companies were placed in a bad position by virtue of the fact that the House meets at 3 o'clock. I thought that business people used to take notice of everything that goes on. It is a very poor excuse. A day is 24 hours long. As soon as the Bill was tabled it would have become law. It would work out as a retrospective tax. As I said, the point raised by the honourable junior member for St. George was the most valuable. These companies

are in a good position to get this refund; but if the boot was on the other foot the ordinary purchaser would be in a very bad position.

Mr. VAUGHAN: Mr. Chairman, — I rise to second the motion made by my colleague for the reduction of this item. I cannot add much to what has been said without needless reiteration as my sentiments are identical.

Mr. LEWIS: Mr. Chairman, — I rise to a point of order. The proper motion should be that this item be deleted.

Mr. TALMA: Mr. Chairman, — Before you put the question I would like to say that it is very unfortunate that this Bill to increase road tax on gasoline by five cents a gallon was introduced on the very day. It is unfortunate for these two companies. The Bill became law from the time it was laid on the table of the House and caught these two firms unprepared. In my view it is not a question of being ignorant of the law. It is a question of not foreseeing what is likely to take place. It is not that the law was enforced and they did not know the law. I agree with the honourable junior member for St. George. I think it is just unfortunate for these two companies. It is a bad precedent to establish to grant these refunds. If we establish this precedent, as the honourable senior member for St. John has said there will be no end to similar applications in the future. It would become impossible to budget specifically for anything. You may budget to collect \$5,000 and it may turn out to be only five cents. I regard it as a very bad precedent, and one which should not be encouraged.

Mr. GODDARD: Mr. Chairman, — I am sure that there must be a fuller explanation for this to have passed the tax authorities. This gasoline was delivered from bond on that day. There are three firms that deliver gasoline, Da Costa's, R. M. Jones and B.U.O.C. Only two have been mentioned here. What happened in the case of Da Costa's, and how did they get to know that this increase had come about? Or did they recover this five cents from their customers? It seems to me a strange way of dealing with this.

Rum was delivered from the refineries on that day at an increase of \$1.80 a gallon. They have not come back for anything. The refineries collected that \$1.80 back from the people they distributed rum to. They sent out a circular saying they understood the duty had been increased from that day — day of delivery — and they expected the retailers to reimburse the refineries. I was not in the island at the time but I know that that takes place whenever duty on rum goes up. As one honourable member has said the fact that duty is going up is always a secret. It has to be. If this precedent is established I can foresee every refinery having a good case for claiming a refund. The Controller of Customs must have been satisfied that these two companies had no means of knowing about the increase in tax. It is a very small amount which in normal business practice could be absorbed in the profit and loss account. If we accept this today we are opening ourselves for similar businesses to come for refunds in the future. A much larger sum was involved when it came to the question of rum.

I do not know if the honourable junior member for St. Thomas can give us a fuller explanation. There must be some fuller explanation as to why these two cases passed the Controller of Customs. I have never seen a case like these two before this House. I think there should be a further investigation. It is a small amount, but the important thing is the principle involved.

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Chairman, — The honourable junior member for St. George asked about the

projector. The people from whom the projector was bought are the agents for the Bell and Howell projectors, and a projector was urgently needed for the Mobile Cinema. One could not have been obtained from abroad in time. These people had just imported the projector in question, and they wanted to help the Government to get one as soon as possible. Consequently they sold this one to the Government. It is a perfectly new projector.

As far as the question of gasoline is concerned, perhaps it will satisfy honourable members if I read the correspondence on the matter. I will read first the letter from R. M. Jones to the Controller of Customs. It said in part:—

"During the month of October last year legislation was passed by the House of Assembly to increase the road tax on gasoline by five cents a gallon. We understand that this increase was brought into effect on the 14th October. Unfortunately we were not informed of this increase by the Controller of Supplies until the afternoon of the 15th. We promptly notified our dealers, on the receipt of this information, to increase the retail price of gasoline to the public by five cents a gallon.

"For your information we would like to state that 920 gallons of gasoline had been delivered on the 14th, and 1,800 gallons on the 15th. For confirmation we enclose a copy of the statement of the Superintendent of the Bulk Installation showing these deliveries.

"When instructing our dealers to advance the price by five cents a gallon we also checked their stock and found that the amount delivered on the 14th, this 920 gallons, had already been sold at the old price of 60 cents per gallon.

"According to the regulations of the Customs Department we were obliged to pay the higher rate of road tax, that is, 26½ cents per gallon on all deliveries from the 14th to the 31st October. You will notice from the above and the attached copy of the statement by the Superintendent of the Bulk Installation that 920 gallons of gasoline had already been sold at 60 cents per gallon and not at the increased price of 65 cents per gallon. Payment of the additional five cents per gallon for road tax has been made to the Customs Department on the said gallonage. The difference paid on road tax on the 920 gallons at 5 cents per gallon is \$46.00."

Then, Mr. Chairman, there is a Minute from the Controller of Customs to the Financial Secretary forwarding the grounds of the claim by R. M. Jones & Co., Ltd. I may say that the claim by B.U.O.C. was along similar lines to that by R. M. Jones. Where DaCosta & Co., Ltd. were concerned they intimated that in their case the increase had been passed on.

Mr. MILLER: Mr. Chairman,—I would just like to ask the honourable member to make it clear if Da Costa said the increase had been passed on or absorbed.

Dr. CUMMINS: The words are "passed on."

Mr. LEWIS: Mr. Chairman,—I think that all shades of opinion in this matter must deserve some respect. I would like to say at the outset that I was surprised to hear the way in which the honourable junior member for Christ Church dealt with this matter. What we have to realise is that this is one of the dangers of making legislation retroactive.

I will deal first with Item A—the refund to Gittens & Co. It is a well known fact that if anyone imports anything and they sell it to the Government and duty is paid on it they recover the duty. I suppose the Government could have easily asked them what they wanted for the projector and included the duty in the price, because the same Government has

got to refund it. Government has not told us what they paid for the projector. But let us say they paid \$500.00 Gittens & Co. will say \$103.00 duty. Government says we will pay you \$500.00 and refund you \$103.00. On another occasion Government might import one at a lower price and then the Government will be told "look how much you paid for one locally and how much less you are paying now for an imported one." We hope that the Government has taken steps to see that the duty was not included in the price, and then recovered still.

When it comes to Item B, this is really a dangerous thing. All members of the House must realise that the British Union Oil Co. is mentioned here, so the Government has got to see that they act absolutely aboveboard where that company is concerned. Justice must appear to be patently done. That is that. This bit of retroactive legislation was laid on the 14th October and although not passed until two or three weeks later would still be operative from that date. Government will tell the Controller of Customs whoever comes to you from tomorrow tell them that the road tax has increased. There are dangers in that too. You cannot have it both ways. You cannot collect back on the rum and on the gasoline too when no one knew anything about the Bill. The Government is on dangerous grounds. This might be a test case for many other things.

When it comes to Da Costa's the Government should have voluntarily refunded them. Government should not put themselves in the position of having a merchant say, "I did not press you on a former occasion; do not press me now." If you adopt a principle stick to it, or the principle is wrong. You should not say you will only refund it to these two companies because they asked for it. Rum is an entirely different thing. Gasoline can be taken out of the bond and used rightaway. Rum is not used that way usually. If you had taken off the duty on the rum they would be breaking it down and breaking up the people who bought it. The rum people cannot apply.

Now I think that some honourable members are confusing the issue. The retailers of gasoline would not be in this position. They sell it for what they buy it for. What I would like to ask the honourable junior member for St. Thomas is whether these items are controlled. If they are controlled you are morally bound to make these refunds. If the rum is controlled you are morally bound to make an adjustment there too. You cannot control the price which a man must pay for a thing and then come back and tell him he must pay more. I do not like that. Government might tell the people at the Customs what to do. But it might result in gasoline being withheld from sale if everyone knew that the price was going up. Every tank would be empty by 9 o'clock and it would be an unfortunate coincidence that everyone ran out of gasoline that day. I do not think it is on all fours with the rum. I think a case can be made out for this, although I agree that it is a dangerous precedent. If one company is willing to absorb this, the others should be told they must absorb it too, or Da Costa's must be refunded voluntarily by the Government. Mention has been made of how small the amounts involved are. But whether it is a small amount or a large one the principle remains the same.

I would like to know whether the Government will make a refund to Da Costa's. It is on that basis that I will vote for or against the reduction of this resolution. If the Government after hearing what I said will make a voluntary refund to Da

Costa's I will vote for the item. I believe that that is what should be done. You should not have a merchant in the position of telling you that on a previous occasion he did not ask you for his pound of flesh. I sympathise with the Government on this occasion; but if they have a principle they should act upon it in the same way with everyone.

Another thing: I make these two items \$199.65. You do not usually put on a dollar and some cents, and the amount in the Resolution is \$201. I am wondering if a mistake has not been made. On the other hand I think that the honourable member's motion for reduction could be made in round figures—\$97.00 instead of \$96.55.

Mr. MAPP: Mr. Chairman,— There is a little advice that I want to give to the honourable senior member for St. John. I heard him say something about selling a tin of sardines for \$4.04. I think he had better correct that for the record.

This debate, sir, can be described as being very extensive, especially when we consider the amount involved. But to my mind the committee has rightly looked at it from the point of view of the principle involved. I was trying to follow the arguments of the last speaker, but I must confess that he baffled me. I could not see exactly what he was getting at. I entirely agree with him that we should judge it on whether it is morally right or not. I feel that we would be doing justice to ourselves if we accept that as the basis of agreeing or disagreeing with this item. But I do not see how the honourable member could ask us to judge the issue on a moral basis and then come back and say that because Da Costa's did not apply therefore we should not vote for the refund for R. M. Jones and B.U.O.C.

I am going to deal with the matter from the moral point of view. I really cannot see how these two companies are morally entitled to this refund. The mere fact that Da Costa's passed on theirs shows that Da Costa's were more aware of the position; that they were more energetic in looking after their own affairs than were these two companies. They had their eyes open, while these two were caught, so to speak, with their pants down. I do not see why we should be called upon to refund them money because they were caught with their pants down. We do not know how many thousand dollars these people rob the Government out of in taxation. What moral law is there that if you are taxed you must pass it on. It can be passed on, and it usually is; but there is no moral law which says it must be. Why can it not be an imposition on a company? There is no moral law which says that a man must pass on a tax.

Mr. LEWIS: I hope that the honourable member is not referring to me when he speaks about there being no moral law that a man must pass on taxation.

Mr. MAPP: I am saying that the two companies are not entitled to one brass farthing. We are entitled to tell them we owe them nothing. It is their fault. They did not look after their interests sufficiently keenly. Why should this be an imposition on the Treasury? Why establish a precedent like this? I am sorry, but I will have to vote against it. If Da Costa's had applied I would have voted against it too. There is no principle involved. To my way of thinking, Income Tax is a direct tax and cannot be passed on. This is indirect taxation because the person on whom you are imposing it may get someone else to pay it for him by passing it on. I think that the Government is being unduly sentimental in agreeing and I do not see why the Committee should support this principle.

Mr. WILLIAMS: There is only one word that I want to add. It is apparent from the correspondence that has been read by the honourable junior member for St. Thomas that Da Costa & Co. have accepted the true legal position of the matter. The Bill became law from the time it was laid. It was therefore law from midnight of the 13th. I quite agree that we have to decide whether or not it is morally right to make these refunds. But as soon as we bring morality into it Da Costa's will be entitled to bring a claim too.

Mr. GODDARD: My questions have been answered fully by the honourable junior member for St. Thomas. Gasolene is a controlled item. It cannot be passed on to the public unless the Controller of Supplies fixes the new price. Rum is not controlled. I think we are morally obligated to granting this refund; and if Da Costa's applies we will be obligated to give them too. The procedure in the commercial world to-day is that the Controller of Supplies has a fund from which he makes his adjustments. I thought he would have dealt with this. He could have made an adjustment through his fund and paid these two amounts. When sardines are lowered in price and the price of pilchards is pushed up the merchants are paid for the reduction in the sardines. They are assessed and they have to pay the Controller of Supplies the increase on the pilchards. If he neglected to increase the price of gasolene he would be preventing the merchants from charging the increase that the Government had imposed. I see the situation now in a different light from when I first spoke. We are morally entitled to reimburse these two companies. They would have been in no position to pass on the increase to the consumer unless the Controller of Supplies had changed the schedule. It would not have come to this House because as I have said the Controller has a fund that he collects from merchants or reimburses them with as prices rise or fall. It is known as an equalisation fund. The Controller could have made adjustments and reimbursed these two companies, but he apparently preferred to pass it back to the Government and let it come before the House. I will vote for it, and I will counsel other honourable members to do the same.

Mr. MILLER: The entire colour of the picture has changed within the last hour. Since we have learned that gasolene is a controlled item I think that that has changed my feeling about the matter. I would like to ask the honourable junior member for St. Thomas if he would try and see that Da Costa's also gets a refund. I am worried that the other two companies did not see fit to pass it on.

Mr. LEWIS: Please allow me to reply to the honourable senior member for St. Thomas on the question of direct and indirect taxation. If you pass through the Customs and they charge you five cents on anything and you pay it; and they come next day and tell you it is ten cents and they can collect it from you it is not on the same footing as Income Tax. They paid one amount on the morning of the 14th but the Government had it in its power to backdate the law and authorise its officers to collect so much from the companies, and to tell them (the companies) that they (the Government) had changed the amount of tax from midnight on the 13th, without telling anyone.

I think that some kind of morality comes in there. I am not arguing the case of the merchants, or the case of anyone else. It is a matter of principle. Government should deal with it from that point of view and decide to refund all three companies.

Mr. MAPP: Mr. Chairman,—The honourable member need have no fear that I think he is arguing the case of the merchants. He has consistently argued from the point of view of principle. But I think that he is mistaken on the matter. Why did Da Costa & Co. pass on the increase? Why were these two other companies not more wide awake to their own interests than to let the Government put one over on them? I think it is their mistake. If they made a mistake I do not see why we should be called upon to refund \$50.00 and \$40.00 to big companies like these. It has been said that we should not mind the amount. But if it were ten dollars I doubt that we would see this item before the House. As I have said before there is no moral law to say that you must pass on a tax that has been imposed on you.

Mr. LEWIS: The honourable member is saying that someone was so alive to their own interests that they knew that this Bill was coming up. I think that is a rather dangerous point to make.

Mr. MAPP: Is the honourable member paraphrasing what I said?

Mr. LEWIS: I think that saying one company was aware of what was going to happen is going a bit too far. There is something else that the honourable member might take to heart. Da Costa & Co. might not only be wholesalers; they may be retailers as well. When you see that someone can make something all along the line from the wholesale to the retail, they own both, although only one is in their name. I think that we should make the refund to all or none at all.

Mr. ALLDER: Every now and again honourable members are introducing some new issue. We should stick to one principle. This is creating a precedent which might become extremely dangerous in the future. Secondly, there have been times when the price of gasolene went up and found the tanks full. The retailers benefited from that, and I dare say the wholesalers also benefited. The public had to sustain the loss. No one considered reimbursing them. Those who have stocks benefit from price increases.

In this respect we should not go away from the principle of allowing businesses, especially businesses, of this size, to sustain what small loss they suffer, nor should we create a dangerous precedent by which business houses in the City may come back with other trivial cases asking for refunds. We have had too many precedents which have caused disrespect for this Chamber. I want to emphasise the necessity of rejecting this item, and I hope that honourable members will do as they previously intended to do by voting for the motion for reduction.

Question that the Head be reduced by \$96.55 was put and resolved in the affirmative the Committee dividing as follows:—

Ayes: MESSRS. MAPP, BRYAN, LEWIS, CRAWFORD, J. C. MOTTLEY, VAUGHAN and ALLDER (7).

Noes: DR. CUMMINS, MESSRS MILLER, TALMA, HOLDER, COX and GODDARD (6).

Question that the Head do now pass was put and carried.

Head VIII—Legal

Head VIII—Legal was called.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to move that Head VIII—Legal, stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. COX seconded the motion which was agreed to.

Head XX—Education

Head XX—Education was called.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to move that Head XX—Education, stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Cox seconded the motion which was agreed to.

Head XXIII (1)—Director of Medical Services was called.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to move that Head XXIII (1) — Director of Medical Services, stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. COX: I beg to second that.

Mr. ALLDER: I am going to sound a new note on this item, Mr. Chairman. I do not know why it is that you cannot get occasional bulletins from this Department controlled by the Director of Medical Services with regard to the state of the health of the community. The Department of Science and Agriculture issues occasional bulletins to the Press so that the public can get an idea of what is going on at that Department. If any disease breaks out among either plants or animals, that Department at once issues statements for the benefit of the public. Here it is, the Director of Medical Services who has something to do with the health of the community does not at any time make any pronouncements on this matter. For the past three or four weeks there has been an outbreak of influenza in this community and I am told that offices of medical practitioners are jammed with people in search of aid. I also know that there are thousands who are suffering from this ailment but are unable to seek medical aid. I do feel that this Department controlled by the Director of Medical Services should keep its eyes and ears to the ground and at regular intervals carry out investigations in the various districts of the island so that it can readily be aware of any outbreak of disease whether it be yellow fever or influenza and make some public pronouncement on it, as regards to preventative measures. There is a general feeling that this Department of Medical Services does not do as much as it should do or can do. I sound this note with the hope that the Director of Medical Services would in future carry out such investigations and issue occasional bulletins so as to acquaint the populace on matters of this sort.

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Chairman, by the remarks of the honourable senior member for St. John, it is quite evident that he does not listen to radio or read the morning newspapers. An announcement was made by the Director of Medical Services regarding this virus disease earlier this week and it was broadcast over the local radio and published in this morning's newspaper. Apparently, this honourable member does not keep abreast with the times.

Mr. ALLDER: Mr. Chairman, if the announcement was made last night over radio or was published in this morning's newspaper, I am not aware. However, what I would like to see done is that such announcement should be made shortly after any such outbreak and not as in this case—three weeks afterwards.

The question that Head XXIII stand part of the Schedule was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Head XXVIII—Subsidies and Grants

Head XVIII, Subsidies and Grants, was called.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to move that Head XXVIII, Subsidies and Grants, stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. Cox seconded the motion which was agreed to.

Head XXXIII—Airport

Head XXXIII, Airport, was called.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to move that Head XXXIII, Airport, stand part of the Schedule.

Mr. COX: I beg to second that.

Mr. LEWIS: I wish to make a few remarks with regard to the Directorate of Civil Aviation. I should have made them under the last Head which was more appropriate, but I can conveniently do so under this Head. I want to say that we have all these directors at the Seawell Airport—the Director of Civil Aviation, the Controller of Civil Aviation,—and what they do, I do not know exactly. I would expect however that they would tell us something of what can be done to make the Airport more advantageous; what can be done to make it better than what it is and other matters connected therewith. With regard to the running of it more economically, I do not expect that they will tell you anything on that matter because they might find themselves out of work.

Mr. ALLDER: I do not agree with this amount of \$950 to be voted for the replacement of fencing at the Seawell Airport. From the explanatory note which states that unauthorised persons have carried away large sections of this fencing, it does appear to me to be a very difficult problem, particularly in view of the fact that a few years ago, it was also reported that a large quantity of electric wiring was also taken away from this Airport. I am wondering, in view of these recent happenings, whether it is necessary to continue spending money on the upkeep of this fencing. Seawell is just the same as any other plantation and I do not see owners of plantations fence in their plantations. It is true that airplanes must land on an airbase which should be a prohibited area, but in this matter, it is our object to enclose several hundreds of acres of land around this airbase with this fencing. This is proving to be a costly matter and what is more there seems to be no protection for this fencing from the hands of unauthorised persons. I feel it would be a saving if instead of erecting the wire fencing, you hire a watchman to see that stock owners do not tether their stock on lands at Seawell or that they do not trespass on the airbase. Definitely, this expenditure will be a waste of money because every now and then you will be called on to replace it. I think my suggestion is a fairly reasonable one.

Mr. BARROW came into the Committee and took his seat.

Mr. WILLIAMS: What I have to say is not in common with what the honourable senior member for St. John has just said. It is necessary to have security at the Airport therefore it is necessary to have a fence of this nature. What strikes me forcibly is that according to the note accompanying this head of the Schedule to the resolution, Government has only now decided to erect a more durable fencing and I would have thought that better means of security prevailed so as to prevent people from committing depredations on the Airport. There, you have the Controller of Civil Aviation and Airport Manager, and the Police and yet it is necessary to come in with this resolution for the amount of \$960 as a result of depredations. It is not good enough to have things of this sort occurring. At any rate, so long as the Airport is not for military use where it would only be necessary to have a proper runway,

you are bound to erect a good fencing around it and the Manager must have good security officers to look after all these things. What is regrettable is that we have all these officers to do this simple job of work as compared with the Jamaican Airport which gives services to about ten different airlines and yet Government must come in here and ask for this sum of money which could be spent on other purposes.

Mr. LEWIS: This depredation is nothing new at Seawell nor is it only confined to the outside. It has been reported in this Chamber that things which were locked up in a storeroom at the Airport—electric wiring and other material of that nature — were missing. There should be closer inspection and better protection of the property at Seawell. This sort of thing should not happen because it places this colony in an awkward position. It should not go forth to the world that because of depredations, animals break in and roam on the runway to endanger the lives of those who travel by air at our Airport. We must have a very substantial fencing erected in the close proximity of the runway. What is most remarkable is that we have a Police Post at Seawell and yet members of the public are in a position to do as they like with public property there. Now, we have been promised closer supervision of the property there. If the authorities have promised closer supervision in the future, certainly there must have been staff to do it there already. The promise has been made in this resolution and no mention is made of additional staff to cope with it; certainly, those who should have been doing this closer supervision have neglected to do so. This makes me to believe that the slackness in this respect will continue.

The question that Head XXXIII stand part of the Schedule was then put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to move that this Resolution as amended for \$3,551.45 do now pass.

Mr. BRYAN seconded the motion which was agreed to.

On motion of Dr. CUMMINS, seconded by Mr. BRYAN, the CHAIRMAN reported progress with leave for the Committee to sit again.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER assumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the motion of Dr. CUMMINS, seconded by Mr. BRYAN, Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER adjourned the House for half an hour.

On re-assembling,

REPLIES TO QUESTION NO. 1

On re-assembling, Dr. Cummins laid Replies to Question No. 1 standing in the name of the honourable junior member for St. Michael.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. SPEAKER: On the adjournment, the House was in Committee of Supply.

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

REVOTE FOR REPAIRS TO KILN AT LANCASTER FACTORY

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Chairman, — The next Resolution is for the sum of \$1,850 to be granted from the Public Treasury and placed at the disposal of the Governor-in-Executive Committee to supplement the Estimates, 1953-54, Part II — Capital, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates, 1953-54, No. 6, which forms the Schedule to this Resolution. It is a revote of money that was voted towards the end of the last financial year to spend on repairs to the kiln at Lan-

caster Factory. It will be remembered that this kiln had fallen into disrepair and this money was needed to put it back into good repair. When this money was voted on the last occasion, it was too late to make use of it and as a result, it lapsed. This resolution seeks to restore that amount of money so that the kiln at this pottery factory can be put into working condition. I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Mr. COX: I beg to second that.

Mr. LEWIS: Mr. Chairman, — When this Resolution was before the House on the last occasion, I think I pointed out that it was rather late in the financial year to deal with it, but it was eventually passed. However, that is a minor point. I also made the point that this Chamber should know what was done with the money realised from the sale of articles made in the pottery department of this Factory and I noticed that when the matter was discussed elsewhere, someone actually asked the same question, so it can be seen that it is a matter of interest. I am still interested in this question and I would like to know today, since these articles which were made at the Factory were sold, to what fund has the money been put or whether it was put in the Treasury. I think the honourable junior member for St. Thomas can remember what took place on this question when it was discussed on the last occasion. Some honourable members argued that the Factory was run by a Revolving Fund and if the sale of the articles of pottery made at this factory was put to that Fund, then the repairs to the kiln should come out of that Fund. If that is so, the argument for the need of this money does not hold water.

The next point which I want to make is that there was an explosion at that Factory similar to the one which put this kiln into a state of disrepair and I understood that it was brought about by a certain amount of carelessness. Experts in this matter voiced that opinion. I therefore would like to know what steps have Government taken to see that in future, the machinery at this factory is so handled as not to cause another explosion by carelessness. If this is not done, this House may be called upon, possibly in another week or so, to vote money again for this purpose.

Another point arises in my mind. The Government on the last occasion came to us in a hurry to get this money and that was the reason why it was passed so late in the financial year. Government could not wait for the sum of money required to be put in the Current Estimates. Now, three months afterwards, Government has come back to this Chamber asking for a revote. What is the cause for the delay? Has the commencement of repairs delayed over this period despite the haste at that time; or has the work been started without the authority for the granting of these funds? If repairs have not yet been started, certainly this matter is not as urgent as it was made out to be. I would like the honourable introducer of this resolution to enlighten this Committee on these points. Some of these points were also raised in the Other Place. I also understand that a private enterprise is starting a venture of this kind. That business may cut this Factory out of the export trade which it gets in this respect if it suffers longer by this set back. I think this fact was also mentioned in the last Addendum to this resolution. Something is wrong somewhere. I do not know if the advice on financial matters which the Government is getting is wrong.

Dr. CUMMINS: Looking through the files on this matter, I cannot find anything in answer to the points raised by the honourable Junior Member

for the City, but I will promise to furnish him with the information he is seeking at an early date.

The question that the resolution do now pass was then put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Chairman, I beg to report the passing of two resolutions in Committee of Supply, one with an amendment.

Mr. COX: I beg to second that.

Mr. LEWIS: Mr. Chairman, I would like to take opportunity on this motion to say that since the House in Committee of Supply have turned down the amounts which were requested for the payment of *ex gratia* refunds of Customs Duty to Messrs. R. M. Jones & Co., Ltd., and the British Union Oil Co., Ltd., I hope the Government would take it that it would be difficult to adopt the measure which was suggested by the honourable junior member for Christ Church. By the vote, this Committee is against that principle. I therefore hope Government would not make any attempt to pay out these refunds by any other means.

The question that the Chairman report the passing of two resolutions in Committee of Supply, one with an amendment, was then put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair and reported likewise.

On separate motions of Dr. CUMMINS, seconded by Mr. Cox, the resolutions were read a first and second time and then agreed to.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT (PART TIME OFFICERS) (AMENDMENT) ORDER

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker, I am asking leave to take Order No. 3, which stands in the name of the honourable senior member for St. Joseph as the next Order of the Day.

There being no objection leave was granted the honourable member.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before the honourable member proceed with this resolution, the honourable senior member for St. Philip wishes to give notice of two Addresses to His Excellency the Governor and I hope the Government will find it possible for him to do so before the introduction of the next Order.

Dr. CUMMINS: As Your Honour pleases.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable junior member for St. Thomas has been granted leave to take Order No. 3 standing in the name of the honourable senior member for St. Joseph as the next Order of the Day:—To move the passing of the following Resolution: Resolution to approve the Order entitled the Civil Establishment (Part Time Officers) (Amendment) No. 2 Order, 1953.

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker, This Resolution deals with certain increases in salaries to be paid to Part Time Officers. As a result of the recommendations and implementations of the Report of Sir Errol Dos Santos, similar treatment is being recommended for these Part Time Officers as is mentioned in the Schedule to the Resolution. I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Mr. COX: I beg to second that.

Mr. WILLIAMS: Before you put the question, Sir, allow me to say a few words. As I see it, this Resolution attempts to increase the salaries of these part-time medical officers and on the basis of the recommendations of the Dos Santos Report. What I cannot understand in this House is a practice has been followed in which when the Government gets advice on matters like this which it knows will cause

repercussions, it yet brings it to this House without stating clearly on what basis has it granted such increases. Government also by its policy of dealing with some group of persons on the one hand, and another on the other, opens the avenue to start the ball rolling. Presumably, as soon as you increase these part-time medical officers, you will discover by the report that you will have to treat your part-time technical staff with the same consideration. I make reference to your temporary relief teachers, who, on the female side are married women for the greater part, temporary nurses at the General Hospital and the other people who do this part-time work. With regard to part-time nurses at the General Hospital, I happen to know that a lot of them is contending that if part-time teachers are to be granted an increase, they too should be dealt with likewise. They are saying that they are employed on the same conditions and their case is on all-fours with these part-time medical people and teachers. Obviously, it is so. I have aired this point of view only to let Government know that as soon as it gives these increases to these part-time medical officers it will have to consider the other groups; therefore Government before bringing down a resolution for any one group of persons should look into the matter most particularly and try to prevent anomalies from creeping in. Everybody knows my feelings over these matters of increases; even the newspapers have taken me up on the matter. Barbados is a small place and one must be careful particularly when dealing with salary increases. You must decide on a principle for making your increases and try to at least arrive at some equitable conclusion which will not create anomalies.

Mr. ALLDER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to draw to the notice of the Government Bench that every time increases in salaries are given to Government servants many of another section are being left out of consideration. I do not know if this is purposely or accidentally done, but you will find that many employees in the lower scale of the Government Service who have not yet been considered as regards to these increases. I am told that there are some watchmen and other persons who work with the Department of Highways and Transport conveying stones and things of that sort with animal-drawn vehicles, have not yet got any consideration. I take it that when this House agreed to the Dos Santos Report that it agreed that all employees of the Government were to be considered in this matter of increases of salaries. I do hope that inasmuch as this resolution is only brought down to facilitate the granting of increases to the part-time medical practitioners, that Government will in the not distant future bring down another for those workers in the lower scale of Government employ who seem to have been forgotten. There are quite a few of them and they are wondering why they have not yet been considered.

Mr. MAPP: Mr. Speaker, some of these part time medical officers may be deserving of consideration, but it is regrettable that Government cannot be consistent in dealing with the Report and Recommendations of Sir Errol Dos Santos. I do not want to travel over old ground but I would like to say that I have noticed that the Colonial Secretary in a speech which he made in the Other Place on certain salary proposals said that so far as the Executive Grade of the Civil Service was concerned, vacancies were being left open for certain annual graduates who were coming back from the University College of the West Indies. As far as I understand it, this runs counter to what Sir Errol Dos Santos recommended. I know the Salaries Commissioner did

have it in mind that certain of the officers at present in the Service were deserving of promotion but I cannot go into the details of this matter now. I would only like the Government to be more consistent. Government should not at one time when it suits, follow the recommendations of Sir Errol and at another time when it suits them, ignore his recommendations.

I see here that the Medical Officer of District "A" is set down for an increase. It is true that this officer has been applying for a long time for this increase.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before the honourable member goes further I must remind him that if he is going to make any reference on the maladministration at that particular institution, he is entitled to do so, but I do not think the honourable member should make any reference of any particular officer whether that officer is employed part-time or whole-time.

Mr. MAPP: Mr. Speaker, I was about to refer to Item III, Prisons, and the proposed salary for the particular office. I really cannot question your ruling, but I think that if the officer carrying out the duties of that office does not deserve the increase proposed, I should be permitted to say so. If honourable members of this House believe that that particular officer does not deserve the increase, they should be able to say so.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable members may make criticisms on maladministration, but the honourable member will do well if he refrains from making any criticisms on any particular officer.

Mr. MAPP: I thank Your Honour for your ruling, but I think Your Honour has anticipated me a bit. I was not going to deal with maladministration; I was about to say that this particular officer for a long time previous was applying for an increase and now that an increase has been granted to the office, this particular officer will draw it. What I would like to point out to Government is that now that they have seen fit to increase the emoluments of this office, I hope they will see to it that the holder of the particular office does his job properly so as to deserve the salary which he is going to draw. I shall say no more on this occasion on this matter.

I am going to ask Government to be considerate so far as other employees at the Prison are concerned. For a long time honourable members of this House have made representations directly to the Colonial Secretariat on behalf of these employees and even these employees have made direct representations themselves. They have done everything possible to bring the conditions under which they work to the notice of the administration. It is a fact that these employees lack certain amenities and facilities which are given to other employees in the same bracket, such as policemen. I can only come to the conclusion that it is because of the lack of any feeling or support by the head of that particular department that the Government has so far done nothing in the matter.

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker, I must rise at a point of order. I do not see these other employees, of which my colleague is making reference, mentioned anywhere in this Schedule. Warders and other employees at the Prison have already been dealt with by a resolution which was passed by this House a few weeks ago. I see mentioned in this Schedule only part-time medical officers.

Mr. MAPP: Mr. Speaker, I know my colleague is anxious to get through with this resolution, but I am only saying that I hope that Government will

not only deal with the part-time medical officer, so far as the Prison is concerned, but will also be considerate to the other employees there who have been making representations for quite a long time. Unfortunately, I was not in my place when this House was dealing with the salaries increases to that particular branch of the Service.

Sir, it is alright to deal with Part-Time Officers but greater consideration should be given to permanent officers. I see here that an increase is to be granted to the surgeon who is employed part-time at the Lazaretto. For years now, very few inmates are contained at this institution. It therefore seems to me that we are paying out increases to people without taking into consideration whether the work of the office merits the increase. I am wondering if the Government ever investigated the matter of converting all these part-time medical jobs into a whole-time job to be given to one officer. Here it is, you have part-time jobs for a Medical Officer at District "A", a Surgeon at the Prisons, an Assistant Health Officer, and a Surgeon at the Lazaretto. There are certain days when the Assistant Health Officer has nothing to do. (A VOICE: That is not true.) I am making reference of the Assistant Port Health Officer if that is the same officer that is called Assistant Health Officer. I feel Government should investigate the possibility of converting all these part-time medical jobs into one whole-time office. If we go on making increases like these, we would be paying out more money than would pay for two medical officers who will be prepared to work full time in the posts.

Mr. GODDARD: Mr. Speaker, the honourable Senior Member for St. Thomas has urged for consistency in regard to the Dos Santos Report. I would like to tell him that Sir Errol recommended that the surgeon of the Prison should receive for his part-time office \$1,800 as compared with \$1,152 which was proposed in this Schedule. The proposed recommendation of Sir Errol worked out at five dollars per day and I do not think any honourable member would say that five dollars is too much to pay a doctor every day for visiting and attending to people at an institution. If the honourable senior member for St. Thomas wants Government to be consistent, Government should have followed this recommendation of Sir Errol. It must be remembered too that this medical officer has to visit the Prison as often per day as he is called by the Superintendent of Prisons. Sometimes he has to visit the Prison three or four times a day. I think the honourable senior member for St. Thomas who is always questioning the work of this officer will bear me out in this statement. I think the honourable member will agree that on this recommendation of Sir Errol, the Government is very inconsistent.

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

Dr. CUMMINS: I am asking leave to take Item No. 6 as the next Order of the day.

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that I should rise again to withdraw this request. I do so now and ask for leave to take Item No. 4 as the next Order of the Day. With regard to Your Honour's request regarding the honourable Senior Member for St. Philip, I will give him the opportunity now of proceeding with his business.

There being no objection leave was granted the honourable member.

NOTICE OF ADDRESSES

Mr. CRAWFORD: I beg to give notice of the following Addresses:—

*The House of Assembly
To
His Excellency The Governor*

The House are of the considered opinion that in view of—

- (1) the special circumstances which attach to the levying and distribution of Labour Welfare Funds (the corresponding funds which accrue to the sugar interests being distributed as an outright gift).
- (2) the fact that the existence of Labour Welfare Funds has resulted in a tremendous saving to Government in expenditure on Housing from public funds, that
 - (a) Housing loans to sugar workers from Labour Welfare Funds should be free of interest, and that incentive rebates should be given for prompt repayment of loans;
 - (b) Operating costs of the Labour Welfare (Housing Loans) Organisation should be defrayed from public funds.

*The House of Assembly
To
His Excellency The Governor*

The House are of the opinion that portions of the land of the Government-owned plantations, Dodds and Summervale, in the parish of St. Philip,—more especially portions situated alongside or near to the main public highways should be utilised for,

- (1) the establishment of one or more experimental proportional profit farms.
- (2) housing schemes for the parish.

*The House of Assembly
To
His Excellency The Governor*

The House are of the opinion—that in addition to the obligation of the state to provide its citizens with maintenance in old age and also in case of sickness or loss of capacity to work, that the comparatively prosperous position of the colony, the high level of taxation and generally burdensome cost of living entitle the community to a comprehensive system of social security.

2. That a modest social insurance plan could be provided as a beginning, for an approximate population of 200,000 at an estimated annual cost of three million dollars which would furnish the following average benefits:—

Maternity benefits for female workers, \$5 per week for 13 weeks

Widow's Allowance for the first 13 weeks	\$2.50
Over 50 when widowed	2.00
Retirement pensions at 62; married couple	3.00
Single person	2.00
Family allowance 2/- weekly for each child after the first, with free milk and school meals for children of elementary schools.	

Orphans \$1 per week.

Unemployment and sickness—

Married couple	\$3.50
Single man	2.50
Married women, unemployment	\$ 2.00
Sickness	2.00
Maternity grant	10.00
Death Grant 10 years and upwards	\$30.00
Under 10 years	15.00

Industrial injury compensation at slightly higher rates than at present in existence.

3. That in order to obtain the above-mentioned benefits, the maximum contributions from the worker need not exceed 40 cents per week and that in view of the fact that, the average worker, need no longer contribute to Life Insurance and Friendly Societies, this amount is not beyond his capacity to pay.

4. That the maximum weekly contribution in respect of each worker would be 25 cents on the part of the employer who would no longer be expected to provide retirement pensions or workmen's compensation insurance.

5. That Government contribution to the scheme would be financed, in part, by Old Age Pension expenditure (now around half million dollars annually), Poor Relief expenditure, Insurance allowance on incomes and the existing family allowance on incomes etc.

6. The House are also of opinion that, without prejudice to the above, the existing Old Age Pension should be immediately increased and the Qualifying age lowered.

**BILL TO MAKE BETTER PROVISIONS FOR
LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN THE ISLAND**

Mr. SPEAKER: The next Order of the Day stands in the name of the honourable junior member for St. Thomas: Second reading of a Bill intituled an Act to make better provisions for Local Government in the Island.

Mr. GODDARD: Mr. Speaker, I was not aware that this House would have proceeded with this Bill today. I do know that it was on the Order Paper for quite a long time, but I received my copy of the Bill only on Saturday last and I think other honourable members received theirs at that time also. In my case, I would like to ask the honourable junior member for St. Thomas to postpone consideration on this Bill until the next meeting by which time I would have the opportunity of studying the Bill and comparing it with the one which passed this House during the last Session. There are many things which may need reconsideration. I understand that the amendments which were made to the last Bill have not even been inserted in this one. (A VOICE: Oh yes, they are.)

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker, the honourable junior member for Christ Church is wrong in his assertion that this is the same as the original Bill without the amendments made to it. This is the same as that which passed this House with amendments. Because of that I need not say very much on it.

As honourable members will remember, this Bill was introduced in this House during the last Session and referred to a Select Committee. That Select Committee held several meetings and the recommendations of that Committee was afterwards dealt with and incorporated in the Bill. That amended Bill is the one with which we are now dealing. This is the Bill which passed this House during the last Session but which when it was sent to the Other Place was rejected, lock, stock and barrel. Since then, I notice that the several Vestries of this island have bestirred themselves and are holding meetings in their several districts and are even telling the people—I may say erroneously—that this Bill is not in their interests. I attended one of such meetings in the parish which I have the honour to represent. My colleague and I were in-

vited to attend that meeting and after most of the Vestrymen had spoken on the Bill, we were asked to give our views on it. We know that this Bill is most undesirable by certain sections of this community. At that meeting, the people were told so long as they carried on any business or owned a half acre of land, this Maude Bill when passed would increase their taxes. My colleague and I had to do our best to disillusion the people from so thinking. We told them that far from this Bill increasing their taxes, they might pay less as taxes on land would not be on a flat rate as it is now, but as was proposed in this Bill, it would be raised on the profits of the land.

Adult Suffrage seems to be still the greatest bone of contention by the opponents of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, but this House, of course, has dealt with this matter on the last occasion and have sanctioned it, and I am sure this House will sanction it again. As I have already said, this House is conversant with this Bill, therefore I need not say very much. At this stage, I move that this Bill be read a second time.

Mr. COX: Mr Speaker, I have much pleasure in seconding the motion for the second reading of this Bill. I would like to say that since this House passed this Bill on the last occasion, quite a lot of controversy has been going on over it and as the honourable member who has introduced it has said, quite a number of people is going around misinforming and misleading the populace on it. Those people are saying that this Bill is not in the interests of the majority of people of the island. Regrettably, Sir, that information came from persons who I am sure know better than to give out false information. In the parish of St. Thomas, one of those persons who is misleading the people is a member of the Other Place. One of the sections of the Bill on which much misinformation is given is Section 66 of this Bill which deals with the rating of property. The Vestry of St. Thomas, most particularly, are going around that parish telling the electors that this section will make them pay rates on a chattel house valued from \$100. Mr. Speaker, it is true to say that many of those electors have not the opportunity of reading this Bill and perhaps, even if they had the opportunity they may not be in a position to interpret it correctly. However, I was present on an occasion when both the honourable senior and junior members for St. Thomas did try to explain that section to the people in reply to the misinformation given by others. When it comes to a chattel house valued at only \$100 in these days, I do not know what type of house that would be because a house of that value does not exist nowadays.

Sir, I will read Section 66 of this Bill because I would like it to be known by everyone that chattel houses to the annual value of \$100 would be exempted from taxation. This does not mean a house that is worth \$100. Section 66 states:—

“(1) Where a chattel house, the annual value of which does not exceed one hundred dollars, is occupied by the owner thereof, such chattel house shall be deemed to be a single hereditament and shall be exempt from liability to be rated in respect of the period during which it is occupied by such owner.”

“(2) For the purpose of this part of this Act, a chattel house and the land on which it is erected (together with any land forming part of the curtilage of a chattel house, shall be deemed to be a separate hereditaments.”

Sir, I was also approached by people who stated that this Bill will cause the people to pay a tax on

the house as well as the curtilage would be valued separately for taxation. The latter part of this section explains as clear as crystal that the house and the curtilage are separate and distinct, therefore the rating would only apply to the house and that house must be over the annual value of \$100. While there might be many people throughout the island who by what was told them did come to the conclusion that this part of the Bill is not in their interest, I think honourable members would appreciate that this is not so, but would see that the rateable value which is at present limited to an annual value of £7 (I cannot remember if this is the correct figure) for exemption, it has been raised in this Bill to \$100 which is far above one hundred percent.

Now Sir, I regret that this Bill met with so much opposition in the Other Place. I think it was grossly unfair to the electors of this colony, more particularly to their representatives when we made it abundantly clear in our election campaign that we were prepared to pass a Bill of this sort. There is no doubt that the opposition who fought the election stated that they were against it. It is therefore regrettable when we sit in this Chamber and pass something which carries to the letter the wishes of the people, as expressed by their representatives, that the body in the Other Place which is more or less handpicked should treat so discourteously this question which we consider is of such great importance. No doubt, Mr. Speaker, the Vestry System of this Island is something which should have been abolished many years ago. The behaviour of several vestries stinks to high heaven. All of us are cognizant of the unhappy and unfortunate display of things done by some of these Vestries and I have no doubt that if investigations were made into some—I would not say all—they would reveal something worse, more glaring, more corrupt and more dishonest than the Caura investigation which was carried out in Trinidad sometime ago. Only recently have we seen how very high-handed and indiscreet the Vestry of St. Michael has acted in giving consideration to a matter concerning one of its servants. We in this island try to educate our people to the highest in order that they can be qualified and fit to fulfil any of the various jobs which become vacant from time to time. I have been informed that the employee of that Vestry did everything possible to get leave to qualify for higher work in this Island but we have seen from statements in the Press that at one time that Vestry in their deliberations said that he is dismissed; on another occasion, subsequently, they said that he is not fired, and finally that he is fired. Do you want anything more disgraceful than such behaviour? That state of affairs shows that these bodies operate not so much for the benefit of the community but for the benefit of a few. It shows that malice, victimization, discrimination and things of that sort abound in that Vestry. In addition to that Sir, very often, monies are being spent without any proper account being given for same. On this point, I will say very little of what I happen to know from the information which I have received. At any rate, one can see from the behaviour of some of these Vestrymen on these Vestries the reason why they would like these Vestries to retain their position. One can easily see that uppermost in their minds, they feel that if this Bill is passed — and indeed it will be because the wishes of the people can only be flouted for a time — their power will go as well as the opportunities and the privileges which they enjoy at present unmoled. This is

the reason why we have such strong opposition to the passing of this Bill. This is the reason why we have responsible people who claim to be interested in the masses getting out of their beds at nights and going around trying to influence the populace against this Bill. It is sad to relate that for the three hundred years of this Vestry system that these people who for all that time retained that power, never for one night before this Bill was brought down, got out of their beds to do anything to benefit the people but are getting out of their beds on this occasion. They realise that this Vestry system is their last stronghold of conservatism in this colony.

Sir, I am sure if one examines the conditions of the poor of the island through a visit to some of the various almshouses, one would see that the poor is still terribly neglected and despite the fact that these Vestrymen are claiming that they are kind and good to the poor and if you abolish this system, you will not know what would become of the poor. I say here now that they are not so much interested in the poor; they are interested in themselves. Sir, if you take a look at some of these various almshouses, you will see that some of the inmates as tall as I, wearing pants reaching them to their knees while those of small stature are wearing pants dragging on the ground. Sir, we do not want to continue with **eleven almshouses, eleven vestries, eleven parochial treasurers** in this island any longer. More often than not, some of these parochial treasurers are contractors for parochial buildings and do ten jobs in one. We do not want this system to continue any longer. Where the poor is concerned, we want to see them in nice cottages which we can call cottages for elderly people. Of course, we will not call them cottages for elderly gentlemen, but we can call them cottages for elderly people so as to get rid of this stigma of pauperism which is a stain on these almshouses and which is associated with the days of slavery. We must pass this Bill to bring to an end this state of affairs. The Leader of the House was very mild after this Bill was turned down by the other Place during the last Session. For myself, I would have demonstrated against their action and would have brought as much pressure as possible to bear on them for their acting in that manner. Of course, I am speaking for myself, not for the Leader of this House or for the Government, neither am I saying so by way of any threat. What I will say is that if this Bill is not passed, then the people of this island as a whole should be organised to voice their protest in no uncertain manner.

Mr. Speaker this Bill, as honourable members would see, commends itself to the improvement of this island. We cannot forever subscribe to a system which offers no advancement at all to a true democratic set up. It has been said on many occasions that the people who do not pay taxes directly should not have the right to vote at elections of parochial bodies. Mr. Speaker, needless my reminding this House that in England there is Universal Suffrage for the House of Commons as well as for local elections. In Jamaica the same thing exists as well as in Trinidad and in British Guiana. Are the people of this island less intelligent than the people of those countries? Has any case really and truly been made out that the people of this island should now have the right so long as they reach the age of twenty-one years, to vote for people of this Assembly, to say that they have not the right to vote for any ordinary election? I contend although I know that rich people will argue against it, that the poor people of this island who are not paying taxes directly are the people who are bearing the burden

of taxes by their indirect taxation. They are the people who consume the items that are brought into the island to make the profits for the big people and as a result of these profits which are made by the sweat and toil of these people, they enable the big people to pay their direct taxation. Because of that, I say that these poor people should have the right in saying who should sit on these local bodies to regulate for their later years in life which through their circumstances, they are unable to make any preparation. This Bill makes such provision. By the vote with which he or she is entitled, he would be able to elect the person whom he feels should have the right to say the type of place in which he should live in his later years, how much food he should get, and the care he should receive from the nurses and attendants at the institutions provided for him. It is not good enough to say that because these poor people do not pay taxes directly, they should not have the right to vote. Of course, Mr. Speaker, we know that the persons who are now elected to these parochial bodies on this limited franchise have every reason to fear of the extension of the franchise to the *hoi polloi*, but Sir, that fear is associated with the fact that they have failed miserably to convince the people that they are really interested in their well-being and welfare. They realise that the people know that as a result of their management or mismanagement in these affairs that they happen to be in their present poverty-stricken position. This is the reason why these Vestrymen are reluctant in granting an extension of the franchise to everybody who reaches the age of 21 years. Sir, I now appeal to those people to have a change of heart so as to let those poor people realise that not only in words but in deeds are they in favour of improving their condition, that they are not their arch enemies but rather their friends. Sir, I am sure that if they do that, like anybody else, they would eventually be elected on the popular vote.

In closing, Sir, I say that this Bill is in the interest of the community as a whole; it has everything to commend it to the benefit of the people of this island. I sincerely hope that sane judgment will prevail on this occasion and that this Bill will eventually find itself on the Statute Book. Sir, again I have much pleasure in seconding the motion for the second reading of this Bill.

Mr. GODDARD: Mr. Speaker,—I did not expect that consideration of this Bill would have been started today, or I could have presented figures to refute all the statements that have been made by the honourable senior member for St. Michael. He has condemned the Vestry system lock stock and barrel as if it has never been of any use. But he knows so little of the working of the Vestry that it is easy for him to do so.

The vestries of this colony have done very admirable work indeed. But they have had to work within the confines of the law. They are only administrative bodies, and they have to lay rates according to the law and expend those rates accordingly.

The vestries that I know—I happen to be in two, St. Michael and Christ Church—do very good work indeed, and at very little expense administratively. In St. Michael, and generally all over the island, vestries as far as I see are being accused of not taxing themselves to give amenities to the people. They have increased their taxation over the last eight years—I will not go back any further—by something like 500 per cent.

Where is that money spent? Throughout the island generally vestries spend 50 per cent of that money on the poor of the parish. Our almshouse

is a model institution. It is better than the Government-run hospital and we spend well over \$40.00 a month per inmate. The food and attention that the patients get is better than what patients get at the hospital. When you are condemning you must know what you are talking about.

As I was saying, 50 per cent of the revenue of the vestry is spent on the maintenance and support of the poor. About 5 per cent goes to Sanitation; about 7 per cent goes to the churches; and street lighting and such other things take up the remainder. We are more generous than the Government, and we lead them in paying salaries to our employees. It is easy to condemn a system that you know nothing about, and about which you will not take the trouble to learn anything. Now what do the services performed by the vestries cost the colony? A lot of voluntary work is done by these bodies. We have members in Christ Church who give up a great deal of their time attending to the wants of the parish. They are civic minded and public spirited people. The honourable member talked about going out at night. Our members go out at any hour in the interests of the parish.

The vestry system needs to be amended, and vestrymen know that better than the honourable member. We have always asked for a widening of the scope of the vestry system to allow us to do more; because we are working under a law that is in many cases very ancient. We need a Bill to amend the system and widen it—call it the Maude Bill or anything else. We believe that you should have a Mayor and Corporation for the City of Bridgetown and we also feel that with smaller units in the parishes the poor people can be better looked after. We do not want 11 almshouses. You can reduce those; but if you have too big a system in a thickly populated island like this the poor will not get the personal attention that they get to-day. When vestry officers distribute to the poor every Wednesday they get to know the people whom they are distributing to. With a centralised system you will not get that, and in addition it will cost the colony more.

Sir John Maude himself says that. You will get the professional politician who will take care of himself. In defending the Vestries I am mindful that we could do more. But we cannot do more under the present system; it will have to be widened. One of the big misconceptions is that the Government cannot get ahead with the Public Health Scheme that they are planning unless the Maude Bill is passed. That argument is without foundation. If you are going to put up country hospitals and clinics, go ahead and put them up. There has been one at Speightstown for the last two years, and they have only now got a medical officer to run it.

When Government throws out the present vestry system I hope they will get something better; but I doubt it very much. It seems to be the view of some honourable members that you only need to bring in the Maude Bill and automatically there will be no more poor people in the island. But we will always have them. The poor that we take care of in St. Michael and Christ Church are better off than many other people.

The system that the Government is proposing under the Maude Bill will cost more and you will have to tax yourselves more. The more you spend the more you will have to tax. If the rich man pays it, it will fall somehow on the other fellow. That should be borne in mind whenever taxes are being increased. Taxation in this colony is already very high indeed. It cannot go very much

higher, because you will drive away money from these shores. It is easy to say that Labour produces all these things. That is alright provided there is the capital to institute the various businesses.

I know that this Maude Bill will pass this House. I say you need something better than this Maude Bill. We want an improvement on the present vestry system; widen up its powers. But there are many things in this Bill that are absolutely wrong.

Mr. WILLIAMS: Mr. Speaker,—I think it is fair to say that most of the fears entertained by the opponents of this Bill are groundless. One of the chief criticisms of the Bill by members of the Other Place on the last occasion was the fact that the size of the units which are being carved out would be detrimental to the efficient distribution of charity to the poor. I would like to remind them of the size of the average administrative unit in England, and of the fact that the average Barbadian is well acquainted with the means test.

As regards the other objection that the proposed system would lead to too much party politics in local government, I do not suppose that Barbados is isolated from the rest of the world and an intensification of party politics is a world wide phenomenon. All these are isolated points about which one could go on arguing until doomsday, and they could be refuted one way or the other. Another contention is that we are giving representation to people who do not pay taxes. They base their assumption on the fact that in England which is an industrial country, if you go into a shop and buy two pounds of sugar you are paying indirect taxation. That will also apply in Bridgetown and on a plantation where the labourers are concerned. So an argument like that does not get you very far.

Then there is the suggestion that we should give companies a vote. One of the honourable members even went so far as to say that when it suits us we follow English legislation and when it does not suit us we do not follow it. But the point about giving companies a vote was debated in England for a long time and was turned down.

Some people who say that the Maude Bill is bad still tell you that services like sanitation, poor relief, etc. should be centralised. It seems to me that most members of the Other Place agree that those services should be centralised. But would it then be necessary to have 11 separate bodies to administer the rest? Some people tell you to centralise highways, and sanitation and leave poor relief to be administered by the vestries.

Another argument centres around the special rate which I myself, as a member of the committee which sat on this Bill, have some objection to. But this is how it arose: Part of an area may have a special service which the rest of the area does not provide. I am told it is based on the medieval principle that if a finger is affected the whole hand is affected. If there is an epidemic in Prospect the whole of St. James will suffer so the whole unit should be called upon to pay the special rate.

As I have said before, much of the argument is centred on the size of the proposed units in relation to poor relief. When one comes to think over this point, it must be borne in mind that for an island of this size our communications are no worse than those of other places where the administrative units are large. The argument that your administrative units will be too large and therefore personal contact will be less does not hold water

DINNER ADJOURNMENT

At this stage, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House do now adjourn for three quarters of an hour.

Mr. ALLDER seconded.

The question was put and agreed to and Mr. Speaker adjourned the House accordingly.

RESUMPTION

On the re-assembling:

Mr. WILLIAMS: Mr. Speaker,—Most of the people who are against this Bill and who are determined to hold on to the Vestry System agree that there should be a mayor and corporation for Bridgetown, but still maintain that you should have 11 *ad hoc* bodies for the rest of the island. As I have said, they also believe that you should have centralised services like public health and highways but have poor relief administered by 11 *ad hoc* bodies. I cannot for the life of me see how any piece of legislation which attempts to do anything like that could be better than the old Vestry System. It would be completely unsatisfactory and would serve no useful purpose.

As I said, there is also the argument about party politics creeping in under the new system. Well that is a trend all over the world; and anyone cognisant with what is happening in the U.K. must realize that sooner or later the same thing will happen in the field of local government. I also said that there was an argument that the man in England who buys a pound of sugar is paying indirect taxation whereas the same is not true of Barbados. But the man in Barbados who buys a pound of sugar from a shopkeeper who pays trade tax is paying indirect taxation, and the plantation labourer, when taxation is raised, pays indirectly by virtue of the fact that he is contributing to the national income.

There has been the complaint that the duties of the local councils are not defined. I think that Sir John Maude in his report does define these duties, and equally in the Maude Bill provision is made for what the duties of the councils should be. But what beats me as regards the people who are opposed to this change is this: They say the proposed system will be unwieldy. You have small borough councils in England that are responsible for police services, light, sewerage, hospital services, soup kitchens and a hundred and one things. How can you say these councils will be unwieldy only to pass on poor relief? It would be nothing to have public assistance committees in the various parishes. The contention is that it would be unwieldy, if not uneconomic. I certainly cannot agree with that.

With these brief remarks, Mr. Speaker, I will sum up by saying that the contentions of those who are opposed to this Bill are untenable, and it is my feeling that provided the overhead costs of administration are certainly watched, and fully gone into, I have every assurance that this Bill, along with its ancillary legislation — which too many people lose sight of — will be of great help to the people of this colony, and will cut out quite a lot of the practices which Barbadians of all walks of life know exist especially in relation to the parochial treasurers. So provided the costs are watched carefully, I take it that the Government would be wise to adopt this new system.

Mr. ALLDER: Mr. Speaker. — Nothing pleases me more than to support the passing of a Bill of this sort. And if the Vestry System and the system proposed in this Bill are two evils, I prefer the lesser

evil which Sir John Maude proposes. I feel that Sir John Maude's recommendations will save the people of this country from the maw of the vicious and corrupt Vestry System of the past. There is no argument to justify its perpetual existence. On all sides the community has been presented with nothing but corruption, patronage, victimisation, arrogance, aloofness and selfishness from the type of people who gained seats on the vestries through a limited franchise. The only people who can justify the old system are those who are parasites on the system along with those who always look out to gain patronage.

What has caused me to be so strong on the old system is the stupid method adopted by the present vestries, led by the one in St. John, in fighting the Government on this issue. Listening to their remarks one can see nothing else but prejudice and snobishness. The remark that the Executive Committee, comprised as it is at present, should have the responsibility of hiring and firing employees is nothing but prejudice; not that the present system is any better, because every parochial employee has to be servile to every one of the members of the vestry. No Chief Sanitary Inspector can hold his head up as a man and do his duty free from the fear of victimisation by his parochial employers. And this Bill tends to free these human beings, who would be able to go about their duties and do their jobs like every Civil Servant and be secure so long as they do their jobs efficiently.

What is remarkable is that the members of the present Vestry System are not against many of the things in this Bill. What they are chiefly against is the reduction in the franchise which would destroy their hopes of maintaining control of parts of the colony. Take St. Michael's Vestry. That body is dominated through a limited franchise, by big business. A few who are not in big business have got seats, but they have to be of service to their big chiefs. They are of no use whatsoever to the small taxpayer. St. Michael's Vestry will soon be handling a million dollars of money of the taxpayers' of this parish. With the political prostitution which has been carried on for the past number of years, the open corruption and bribery and disadvantages to employees, can you continue as a progressive government, to allow a system like that to remain?

All the progress that might be intended for the people of this island by legislation passed in this Assembly can be negated by the vicious vestry system. When it comes to taxation I know of the case of a small business man whose business does not give him a guarantee of \$200.00 a month regularly. But for the past three years his tax bill has been increasing by nine dollars. His taxation is definitely out of proportion to the amount of trade that he does. Of course the excuse is going to be that he should keep books. But we know that small business men cannot hire book-keepers, and many of them do not have the ability of keeping books. Because of that do you mean that you should sit as an authoritative body and tax these small people out of existence?

To justify their continued existence the vestries are talking about the poor. Look at what is done to the poor. People who are in need of assistance from the Poor Law Guardians are not given assistance; but the political parasites who give service to members of the Vestries can get what they want under the Head of Poor Relief. The vestries are corrupting too many people. They are making people who can do better dependent on the taxpayers many of whom can scarcely help themselves. A woman whose husband is dead and she has a small

house bringing her about 3/- a week is told that she has a house and is not entitled to any assistance from the so-called Poor Law Guardians. How long have they become interested in the poor as such? I am saying that taking into account the rating put on small businesses in St. Michael and other parishes, if big businesses were asked to pay commensurately the parochial coffers would be several hundred times richer than they are to-day. They talk about helping the poor; but they are creating more paupers by their vindictive methods of taxation. There is no use overtaxing the small trader so that in a short while he will have to shut up his shop and when misfortune steps in he has to fall back on their hands. Encourage people to thrive commercially. When they are on their feet tax them reasonably.

Why do you think that these vestrymen are so bitterly opposed to this Bill? It is because they fear having other people in power to tax them. I do not agree with the policy that a few should monopolise the wealth of a country and sit in judgment on the others by way of taxation. Nor do I agree with advantage being taken of those who do not monopolise the wealth of the country. I do not think a better thing could be done than to change the old system and bring in what all progressive minds feel to be a justifiable change in this progressive age. The policy of these vestries is definitely bad, and they have been encouraged to some extent by the policy of Government in the past.

I will explain what I mean. The parish which I represent has a Playing Field Committee. Government when they allocated money to be spent on playing fields in the various parishes allowed vestrymen to take control of it and do as they liked. The members of St. John's Vestry own all the land in the parish, and they refused to release one square foot for the purpose of establishing a playing field. At this last minute, when threatened with the Maude Bill, they have decided to act. But instead of getting a playing field like those of other parishes, with a reasonable acreage of land, and which could accommodate the numerous youths who might be using it, they say that their land is too valuable; they will spare a half acre and build a hall on it. Government has encouraged these gentlemen to carry out the reactionary policy that they are carrying out by failing to stipulate that representatives of the parishes in the House of Assembly must be co-opted on the Boards which have to spend this money and provide amenities for the people. These gentlemen have a free hand, and those in St. John are saying that the people can go and play on someone else's playing field or on a bit of pasture belonging to an estate. They do not realise that the people want somewhere of their own where they can go any time of the day or night. When they go on someone's land and he feels like erecting a barrier and keeping them out he can do so. In St. John plots of land have been recommended for a playing field. Plots of land which bear nothing but sour grass. But these gentlemen say no. One who owns most of the land in this island says no. Sour grass land is just as valuable as cane growing land. We will spare a half acre. All that shows why the present system should go and the members of it should go along with it.

I have listened to a worthy gentleman by the name of Michael Greaves fooling the taxpayers in the parish. He says: "You know us; you can come to our homes whenever you want us. You can find us in rain or storm. Are you going to be satisfied with those four members of the Executive employing you? Must the Chief Sanitary Inspector be satisfied with these four members of the Executive employing him

and firing him?" Tell me Mr. Speaker, is it not the same system now? The only person they do not fire is the P.M.O. They fire from the other fellow right down the line. The system proposed in this Bill will give these employees the same security of tenure as Civil Servants have. You cannot fire a Civil Servant except the Governor gives his assent. There is no greater security than that. But to-day, if a member of the Board passes one of these parochial employees and the latter does not bow down to the ground by next day he is suspended. After a short suspension you get a lot of terrorising going on, and one reads next in the newspapers that his connections have been severed from his former employers.

I do not mind that my colleague here has on the last occasion made a speech against this Bill, and that he seems to be preparing another speech which will be of the same tenor. I am cautioning him that I always believe in going on the side of the majority who have given us the honour of representing them in this Chamber; and they are definitely in favour of the change. I want to counsel him that although those in power on the Vestry of St. John have been going around smearing politicians by suggesting that you will have to pay every member of these councils and that the politicians are professional politicians and therefore there is the possibility of corruption, I am asking him not to mind the influence brought to bear upon him.

Mr. VAUGHAN: Mr. Speaker, — I protest against the reference by my colleague.

Mr. ALLDER: I withdraw those remarks, but as a politician I am not beyond pressure being brought to bear upon me. But pressure can be right or wrong, and the right people have brought pressure to bear upon me to support this Bill. I am asking my colleague to find himself on the right side.

We have heard to-day from a former speaker how up-to-date these almshouses are kept. I have gone through St. Michael's and water dropped from my eyes at what I saw. It is alright to stay outside and hear how well these people are treated; but it is different when you go inside and see for yourself. What I know is that if you view the building from outside, you get the impression that you are looking at the Marine Hotel or the Ocean View. But when you go inside you see the misery. It is not as nice a picture as they are trying to paint. There is nothing but misery. The question is, however, that we do not want to be proud about having so many almshouses. We want to take such measures as will prevent the number of people in these places from increasing. Such measures as reasonable taxation, and a reasonable spending of the money collected. What you get now is nothing but a system of racketeering. You create expenditure with the hope that a number of individuals will get rich within a year. Regardless of the criticism of the public the law permits you to do as you like. The public can be as suspicious as they like. If you have an indiscreet churchwarden who buys the whole of Bridgetown no one can stop him. He buys it, and only after he has bought it everybody talks about the "people's money" and all that. You want a system which does not have loopholes through which crooks can pass.

What is more, Sir, every Vestry is now running helter skelter to borrow money to do this, that and the other. What kind of people do you have on these vestries when putting a roof on a rectory is going to cost £1,500? If the rector were going to put a roof on his home himself would it cost him that? If the Churchwarden were going to put a roof on his

home would it cost him that? I am speaking of the Vestry of St. Joseph. Every now and again you see them trying to involve the poor taxpayers. They know they are sheltered by a limited franchise and whatever they do they will get back in next year. Those are the things you are up against. That is why I say they are not so much against the other things in the Bill as they are against the proposal to broaden the franchise. If that were out they would not be so bitter against the Bill. And they try to disguise that by talking about poor relief.

There is another case in point about how they look after the poor. There is a man in St. John's almshouse. He has sugar in the blood and a bad foot. The wife applies to the Poor Law Guardians and they give her 60 cents a week for herself and five small children. Is that looking after the poor? I do not like indiscriminate charity; but you should deal with necessitous cases. They ask if you throw them out what will the poor do. The answer is that the poor will be better off.

Vestrymen create sinecures to help their friends. The Vestry of St. Michael has recently adopted a policy of "I want to help your daughter; therefore I will create a post." Then you get a duplication of posts. Then to remove shame you remove one of your employees and tell him "you will hold on to these two jobs now." Take Mr. Sharpe who is working in Church Village. How can he do his job there and one in Cumberland Street too? You are either overworking the man or you have created too many posts in the Parochial Service. You have a Building Inspector and a Building Supervisor. Some of the vestrymen are accusing each other of having created posts and being unable to find anything for the supervisor to do. And they still continue to pay out the taxpayers' money. Must we sit here as reasonable people and tolerate that nonsense?

They have a system by which big business is allowed to put up all kinds of pretences to get off taxation. Big business can spend a couple of hundred dollars, and the vestry spends the taxpayers' money pretending to be defending a case. Big business gets off and that is that. The small trader is nowhere unless he has friends at court. The merchants put him in half way in the commercial grave, and the tax gatherers come along and finish covering him up. Only this morning four people came to me, and said they only had a small house 16 x 9 with a shed and look what the vestry was charging them for taxes. I am sure that under these new regulations the house described to me by these people could not be rated at more than \$100.00 per annum. And these vestrymen are going around the parishes telling the people that the vestries tax them only on one; but the Government will tax them on both house and land.

I hope, sir, that the re-introduction of this Bill is not merely a matter of form. I hope that the battle will be carried through to the extreme. Win or lose, let us see and know that the fight has been fought. I heard a remark by one of the members that when the Bill passes this House it has to pass the Other Place, and he smiled when he said that. I have always felt that inasmuch as this House is supposed to be the mouthpiece of the real people, there is no greater authority than this honourable Chamber. Regardless of the imaginary powers of the various little groups, the ultimate power rests with this House, and although the opponents of this Bill may try to fight it as long as they can they must be beaten in the end.

I know that it is going to pass this House. I hope that when it reaches the Other Place those honourable members who opposed it last time will realise that this is a progressive age and if a man has a

quantity of biscuits and he refuses to part with one or two to a hungry man he eventually loses all. There is no sense in obstructing legislation like this. When this Bill is passed and implemented there is going to be a ding dong battle. They will not only lose legislative power in this chamber but they will also lose parochial power on the vestries. No one wants to destroy a man politically for the sake of destroying him; but when the people realise that those who have had the opportunity of doing good for them have failed, they will do more than destroy.

With those few remarks, Mr. Speaker, I give the new system which is just about to be introduced my blessing with the hope that we will see it in practice in the not distant future. (Cheers).

Mr. TALMA: Mr. Speaker, — As on a former occasion I welcome this Bill, knowing as I do that the principle of it is sound. I can well envisage the great amount of benefit and advantage which will be derived by the poor classes of this country when the Maude Bill is implemented and the vestry system is abolished once and for all. The vestry system is long outmoded. It might have served its day and generation 100 years ago; but certainly today it is outmoded. The vestry system does not need amending, sir. It needs to be abolished entirely. When we think of the disadvantages which have accrued from it to the poor people of this country from time immemorial and even today, I could not expect that any member of this Chamber today would rise and defend such a system, a system that has caused suffering, embarrassment and privation to the less fortunate people of this community.

The principle of this Bill which members of the Other Place and many misguided people of this community are opposed to is based on adult suffrage. And the masses have merely to ask themselves this question: Since the franchise has been widened as far as elections to the General Assembly are concerned have they not derived a certain measure of relief and benefit, although that relief and benefit may not be as much to date as many of them may have expected? If they think of the numerous children of poor parents who today are getting the benefit of a secondary education; if they think of the general rise in the living standards and conditions of the masses, they will see for themselves that any Bill the objects of which include liberalisation of the franchise; any Bill which brings about adult suffrage by which the average man and woman can exercise the sacred right of saying who should pass laws and administer funds is for the benefit of the community and not just for the benefit of a few.

It is not necessary, Sir, to reiterate the numerous points made by the honourable senior member for St. Michael and the honourable senior member for St. John. I must at this stage compliment them for their very good contribution to this debate. But I will say this: It is not surprising that the Other Place should have adopted the attitude that they adopted, because the members of that Chamber are drawn from the class with vested interests. They are the landlords of the country, so to speak. They, or the people of their class are the identical ones who dominate the vestries. One can therefore understand why they treated a Bill of this nature with that contempt and disdain and in the summary manner in which it was treated by them on the last occasion. They did not even have the decency to discuss it thoroughly or to give good reasons why it should not be accepted. They had it within their power to throw it out and they threw it out in a most vehement and vindictive manner. But they cannot continue forever. I believe that in the interim many of them have realised that a Bill of this nature must meet with their consent when it

comes up before them again. But as I have said, they could not have been expected to act otherwise, because in this Bill the last straw of power of people of that class is being snatched out of their hands.

What I want to say now is this: If we have adult suffrage for the General Elections it stands to reason that adult suffrage should also be granted in respect of local government elections. The argument which has been adduced that people who do not pay direct taxation and who do not own real estate or land should not be allowed to vote has already been answered. In direct taxation covers that point. And when we think of the qualification needed for one to be a district councillor under this Bill we realise that these councillors will be drawn from the rank and file, and they will be more interested in the welfare of their own people than are the vested interests who never consider the wants of the poor elements of the community. That is patent, Sir. It is not only a question of adult suffrage. It is also a question of qualification; because there will be no qualification save that of being 21 years of age and a British subject. The qualification to be a councillor in this Bill, I repeat, is merely that of being 21 years old and being a British subject. And that is what the vested interests are mainly opposed to. They are opposed to the average man and woman being able to stand for election as a district councillor and to take an active interest in the affairs of the district. So when the majority of members of the Other Place are opposing this Bill they are merely trying to retain the little vestige of power that now rests in their hands, fearing, and rightly so as far as they are concerned, that that power will pass into the hands of a different type of people who will regard sympathetically and justly the needs of the poor of the community.

I do not care to speak much longer, Sir, because by doing so I am merely delaying in a way the passing of this Bill. It is so apparent that the House is in favour of passing this Bill that I do not care to expend any more time in explaining the reasons why this Bill should be passed or the principles on which it is based. But what brought me to my feet mainly was to make a point relative to the proposed division of the island. Speaking on behalf of the majority of people in my constituency, I think they fear that the division of the island into three districts will result in certain hardships and inconvenience being meted out to many of the poor classes. It would be a better thing if there were four districts. I can bring a few points to show my reason for that view. When we compare St. Michael and Christ Church the first point which strikes us as far as the vestry system is concerned is that there are 16 members on each of those vestries. Under this present Bill it is intended to lop off the bottom part of Christ Church and tack it on to the metropolitan area, leaving the greater part of Christ Church in the southern district. The majority of people in Christ Church are contending that that is not a fair way of approaching the problem. We feel that there should be four districts, St. Michael (1), Christ Church (2)—on the basis that each vestry is comprised of 16 members and the interests of Christ Church cannot be served with four seats on the southern district council—and an eastern and northern district. There will be less confusion instead of this arrangement which will cause people not to know where to vote. I am not attempting to perpetuate the old parish boundaries. But everyone knows where these boundaries end and where they begin and it would be easier and fairer in view of the fact that Christ Church is the second largest parish in area and population, and at present its vestry is comprised of 16 members just as is the Vestry of St. Michael. Under the new arrangement

Christ Church will only have four seats in one ward. (A MEMBER: That is alright.) Someone has said that is alright. It is alright for St. Thomas, a little back alley parish. I am saying that Christ Church is the most residential parish in the whole island; it is the parish in which most of the tourists and visitors to the island reside. I am asking that that parish be given better treatment under the present Maude Bill.

The suggestion that the majority of English people live in the lower part of Christ Church and that sanitary services and other services would not be as good if it remains in the rural district as it were tacked on to the metropolitan area has been advanced. But it is untrue to say that sanitary services in Hastings and the Navy Gardens and the lower part of Christ Church as a whole is not up to the standard of St. Michael's.

There is another point which I raised on the last occasion and which was answered by the Leader of the House to the effect that there are subventions, grants-in-aid etc. But if Christ Church collects enough taxes to see after their own affairs why not let them continue to do so rather than to take off the wealthy part and tack it on to the metropolitan part leaving the southern part to go hat in hand asking for grants-in-aid which may not be given. The people in Christ Church are in favour of the new Bill. We are in favour of adult suffrage, lower qualifications etc. as set out in the Bill. But in connection with the divisions of the parishes we feel that Sir John Maude has not considered us as fairly as he might have done.

We in Christ Church are not thinking exclusively of visitors and birds of passage. Although we do try to provide as many conveniences and amenities to the tourists as possible. We are thinking of the benefits to be derived by the people of Barbados. We are thinking of how the poor classes would have to travel very far to receive their little pensions or grants or other relief, and of the other hardships that will result from having this arrangement of parishes under the Maude Bill.

The Government seems to be under the impression that it must follow slavishly the recommendations of Sir John Maude as far as the division of the island is concerned. I am saying from a practical point of view that if the suggestion which I have made were adopted it would prove in the long run to be beneficial, not only to the Government, but to the people in general. I certainly would like to give this Bill my blessing except in so far as I have intimated. And I hardly believe that it is necessary to make a motion since I fear I would not receive the necessary amount of support. But I certainly feel that there should be four districts and I have given arguments to prove my contention. I could repeat those arguments. (A MEMBER: You are flogging a dead horse). I have been told that I am flogging a dead horse. I knew that. But whether I am flogging a dead horse or not, I am going to express the views of the majority of people in Christ Church. I shall at a later stage make a motion in committee even if I stand alone.

Mr. CRAWFORD: I want to join issue with the honourable member who has just spoken on the particular point when he said that Sir John Maude had recommended the division of the Island into three districts. As far as I recall, Sir John Maude recommended two suggestions,—either three or six districts. I, personally, am inclined to the view that six districts are by far the more suitable division for the purposes of Local Government. I feel that the division into three districts is going to be unwieldy and unproductive for the reason that you cannot possibly narrow down your eleven parochial administrations suddenly into three and reasonably

expect to get proper results. I think it is absolutely impossible to do so. It may be argued that if the single Central Government runs the entire island, there is no reason why three municipal administrations cannot take care of the local set-up. I would say that the functions of the two types of government are entirely different and distinct; one has more intimate connections with the everyday activities of all types of people under its control and far fetched as it may appear, without claiming myself to be any prophet, I am firmly of the opinion that if we start to operate with three bodies some parts of each area will be forgotten and we will have to do something about it. That will bound to cause serious dissatisfaction. I feel Sir, that the correct number is six divisions and I think that is going into all the details of what I would call the intricacies of Local Government. If we look for a minute at the municipal set-up of the various parishes, those of us who know what are the functions of the Vestry and the day to day services subsidiary boards perform, such as poor relief, sanitary services, highway services and what not, we will see that even as inefficient as they are, we can hardly reconcile the desire to have them more efficient if we adopt what the proponents of the Bill seek to do by their decision of reducing the number of municipal authorities to a mere three.

On the other point, I am absolutely in agreement with the honourable Junior Member for Christ Church with regard to the division of Christ Church. It seems to me that there is little justification for chopping off the richest part of that parish and attaching it to the rich municipal metropolitan area and leaving the less developed part of that parish to be attached to other rural parishes with a rural council which by sheer necessity must have a lower standard of administration and a lower standard of municipal services. Subventions will not be given by the Central Government to any District Council which cannot afford to provide certain elementary services. What may happen is that if the metropolitan area with the other part of the rural parish attached can with their resources afford a certain level of administration, those who cannot afford it might ask for a little help now and then from the Central Government, but certainly, they will not be able to carry on in the same way as the metropolitan area. This will mean that you will have divided the parish of Christ Church into two and will be giving the well developed part a much higher standard than the poorer less developed portion. There is, of course, something in the argument with which one can agree that Christ Church should form its own municipality, but I think in fairness to the other parishes that are attached to the less developed portion, that rather than attach the whole of Christ Church to them, it should be cut into two. The present proposal merely means that you are guaranteeing a sufficiently large income to run the metropolitan area so that you will be able to provide certain services for the metropolitan parish and that part of Christ Church which will be attached to it.

One other point. I think that it is the honourable Junior Member for St. Thomas who said that one of the purposes of this Bill was to rationalise the question of land taxation. In the present Bill, taxation will be derived from the profits which you make on land instead of the present basis which is a uniform rate per acre. I want to suggest to the honourable Junior Member for St. Thomas that although that may be a better method, yet, it does not cover satisfactorily the question of land taxation for the simple reason that you will find in the

end that land from which profits are not made might conveniently be stepped up. It may mean that owners may throw up valuable land which could be put under cultivation for some reason or other known to themselves and because no profit will be derived from it owing to the fact that it is thrown up, the owners will pay little or no taxation. In other words, it seems to me to be a case for not only taxing land when profits are derived, but also taxing undeveloped land which owners might refuse to develop for some reason or the other, so as to make those owners contribute their fair share of taxation to the parish. It could be that those owners might only be keeping that land idly to sell in later years for a better price. It is an absolute necessity that proper taxation should be levied and some step should be taken to get the maximum taxation possible from undeveloped land which is potentially profitable.

With regard to the other proposals of the Bill, they have already been discussed at length in this Chamber, therefore there is no reason for extensive discussion tonight. If I may again refer to what I think is the unfair division of Christ Church and the division of the island into three districts, I hope something will be done with them when the Bill is considered in Committee. However, at this stage, I will say that I commend this piece of legislation to honourable members with the sincere hope that it will have a speedy passage and a more successful appearance before the second Chamber than it had on the last occasion.

Mr. HOLDER: It gives me great pleasure to support this Bill. I believe my views on this Bill are well known to honourable members therefore I shall only speak on it in a general way without making reference to any particular section. I have listened carefully to the points made by the honourable Junior Member for Christ Church, especially when he stated his point of view in regard to the division of Christ Church for the purpose of local government and although I do not want to draw swords with him or any other honourable member, I feel that the changes which this Bill will bring to local government will work for the good of the community. It pierces one's heart to hear and know that Vestrymen are going around in their parishes and holding meetings with the expressed purpose of blocking this Bill from reaching the Statute Book.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair in place of Mr. SPEAKER.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was saying that Vestrymen are going around in their parishes and holding meetings with the expressed purpose of blocking this Bill from reaching the Statute Book. They are saying that the Vestries are doing good work which cannot be done better by changes which this Bill seeks to implement. Sir, I am a Vestryman for the parish which I have the honour to represent, and speaking of the good which the Vestry of St. James say it is doing for the parish, I can only say that it is far from being good. I will even go further and say that the Vestry system in St. James is rotten. If I may refer to the Almshouse which is the oldest almshouse in the island, one would be surprised to know that with this old and out-dated administration which the Vestrymen are calling a good system, running water has only been installed at that almshouse a few months ago. Even to this date, cooking is done in the kitchen there in antiquated iron pots. The ward for isolating cases of T.B. can only accommodate two patients. Would you then say that this Vestry System is one which you should try to keep

into existence? I feel there is room for a change. When one thinks of the various scales of taxation and the cheeseparating policy adopted by some Vestries to cover themselves from taxation by keeping land tax as low as possible and shifting the greater burden on those who pay trade tax, one wonders how members of those bodies can say that they have the interest of the poor at heart. I think the honourable Senior Member for St. John put it very nicely when he made reference to the way in which Poor Relief was distributed in St. John. That is the most conservative parish. I know also that in other parishes the parishioners would be glad to have playing fields and places for recreation, but they cannot get them because the great landowners, some of whom are Vestrymen, would not give up even a half or quarter acre of land for this purpose. Three years ago, a philanthropic gentleman donated one thousand pounds to the Vestry of St. James to purchase a piece of land in that parish for a playing field and up to the present moment that money is lying down owing to the fact that none of the great landowners of the parish would give up one square foot of their land for this purpose. Many of the Vestrymen of that parish are rich landowners but none is benevolent enough to do so.

Sir, for the last three centuries, these parishes have been run by these Vestries and although Vestrymen today know that the system is antiquated and outdated, they are still trying their very best to drag on the system. To many of them, it is their last privilege. I do hope that in the near future this Bill will not only be passed by this House but will also be passed elsewhere. As I have already said, it will work for the good and benefit of the community as a whole. (Cheers).

Mr. VAUGHAN: Sir, I will begin my speech by emphasizing that I am not a defender of the present Vestry System. Public opinion knows my stand on the Maude Bill as well as the present politicians in this House. These honourable members can only oppose that stand by erroneously suggesting that I am in favour of the present Vestry system. Sir, for them it is only black and white but I want to inform them that for me, there are many other shades between black and white. I am not a friend of those who have vested interest; as a matter of fact, if there is one politician whom vested interest objects to in this country, that politician is me. I am speaking from personal experience. I have been told by a former employer when I was formerly a member of this Chamber, that if I did not represent vested interest, I would be dismissed from my employment. I have evidence that my latest dismissal has been brought about owing to the policy for which I stand; so that if anybody should suggest that I am on the side of vested interest because I am opposed to this type of local government which this Government seeks to bring into force, it will be slander against my political convictions.

Mr. MILLER: On a point of order, Sir, for my information I would like to know if the honourable member is speaking in his own defence or whether he is speaking on the Bill before the House (Laughter).

Mr. VAUGHAN: I insist Mr. Deputy Speaker, that because I am in opposition to the Maude Bill that I am not a defender of the present Vestry system. On the last occasion, I emphasized that one of the flaws of the Vestry system was the limitation of the Franchise and if that were corrected anything else of the system could be corrected. I said so because the majority of the Vestries in this country are still filled by that type of person who has

very little idea, or who cares very little about modern amenities for the under-privileged masses of the country. Until that type of person is removed from the Vestry system it will always be a bone of contention, and rightly so. The honourable Senior Member for St. Michael argued that a change is necessary at all costs. The honourable member means to suggest that whether the change is for the worse it does not matter but I would say emphatically if that is the example of the change the Government has in mind this Bill should be rejected. Sir there is a change in Government thinking in my opinion. They talk of soaking the rich, but for me, they are drowning the poor. Recently, every other week, Government has introduced oppressive taxation and if that is an example of the change, I will tell them that the people do not want that change. Sir, all the abuses which my colleague enumerated against the Vestry system cannot be guaranteed; I think he is mistaken. However, the question which we should ask ourselves is: Can we guarantee that all the abuses which we now condemn under the present Vestry system will not be perpetuated under the Maude Bill? As far as I can see, and this is my opinion, all this Bill seeks to do is give the Executive Committee more power over Local Government.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill seeks to divide this country into three areas for the purpose of Local Government; but how absurd it is to give these Councils less administrative power and expect them to carry out more efficient functions than the small boards which operate now under the Vestry system. Where at present local boards operate to meet the demands of between seven and fifteen thousand people according to the number of inhabitants in the respective parishes, you are now going to divide the country into three areas; that is to say, you are amalgamating two, three or four of these parishes so that you will have an average of about seventy thousand people in each area and you are going to grant administration to a smaller body of people, called a Council, with less executive power over this larger body of people. This is political absurdity. Here it is, you increase the number of people in your areas and reduce powers of the Council. Can anything be more absurd? Can any good emanate from minds like this Government? Sir, I can more agree with the proposal of amalgamating the parishes as the honourable Senior Member for St. Philip has said, into six areas for proper administration; but not another, not one less. I am not in agreement with the division of Christ Church as has been proposed so that the non-productive part can be attached to St. Michael which will be the municipality and the productive part to St. Philip. The other nine parishes can be amalgamated to form four divisions.

Sir, those honourable members who have condemned almshouses in this island, should read the book by the Barbadian author, Lamming, who has said that in the absence of the almshouses in the various parishes, there are no other places to serve the destitute. If there ever were a fair-minded officer of this country, it was Dr. Weatherhead, when he was C.M.O. He commended the Vestries for their medical services to the poor of the various parishes. I am in agreement with the centralising of public health services, but because you should centralise certain services, that is no argument why you should abolish the present Vestry system and divide the island into three areas. As I have said, I am an enemy of vested interest, but because I am such an enemy, I will not allow the misquotations by certain honourable members on taxation to escape my atten-

tion. The proponents of this Bill say that the imposition of tax on land will be according to the profits derived from such land. I can tell you that the tax imposed on land in the rural areas at present, even as high as it is, cannot bring in the rates to pay for the essential services and functions which the various Vestries have to perform. If I may give you quotations of land tax in St. John, in 1947, it brought in \$20,800 odd as against \$1,929 which resulted from trade tax, and \$2,000 odd which was derived from houses. In 1952, land tax brought in \$36,000 odd as against \$4,000 odd from trade tax and \$4,000 odd from houses. It can be seen that trade and house taxes bring in but a bare per cent. of what is collected from land; therefore, if this change in the rate of taxation on land as proposed in the Bill will cause a deficiency in the collection of the amount of taxes on land, then those who have suggested it have no conception on taxation relating to the economics of the country. What will happen in the year when land profits are normal? Where will you get the money from to run your local services and functions? Here it is, you have three sources for the collection of taxes to run your local functions with the taxation on land trebling that of the other sources. There is no guarantee that land will make a profit every year. Where will the Councils get money from to meet their needs in these years when no profit are derived from land? Have you any idea, Mr. Speaker? Government has not the faintest conception of what local government means; its members have only heard of local government; they have not given the fundamental system of local government any attention.

Mr. Speaker, let me inform you that you will not get rid of pauperism by changing the Vestry system, nor with a change in the franchise. Whenever the artisan and that type of intelligent person from the masses is elected to the Councils, then the abuses of which we now speak and which we rightly condemn shall cease to exist. It is the personnel who now dominates the Vestries that is the greatest evil to the system. It is my contention that the present personnel of Vestries knows very little of controlling local government and knows nothing of modern methods of reform. When the type of personnel of which I spoke are elected to Councils of Local Government, then all the necessary reform would follow. I know my politics; but I know my politicians better. I see four honourable members sit down in this Chamber and have never given heed to any of the constructive criticisms of mine. I see nothing more in this Bill than an attempt by the Labour Party to control the whole island. They now control four parishes. This Government has no other intention but that. The improvement of medical services by rural hospitals built to serve more than one parish is something on which I can enlighten this Government. Nothing like that interests its members; all they want is more power. That is all behind their bringing in the Maude Bill. There is absolutely no necessity for this Bill to improve local services in this country; there is no necessity for this elaborate farce. Of course this Bill will pass this House, for no power here on earth can stop it, but I predict that should it pass this Legislature and begins to function, the inhabitants of this island are going to curse the day that it passed this House. I repeat this Bill is no improvement on the Vestry system that needs reform—none whatever. The Vestry system cries aloud to heaven for reform, but this Bill cannot reform it. I am convinced of that.

I shall give an example of the poor minds of Government by the way in which they administer the Labour Welfare Funds. The parish of St. John

from 1947 to 1951 was responsible for the production of 75,986 tons of sugar

Mr. COX: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I think the honourable member is out of order.

Mr. VAUGHAN: I was saying, Sir, that the parish of St. John paid through the tonnage of canes it produced the sum of \$108,000 into the Labour Welfare Fund during 1947 to 1951. The Vestry of St. John asked for \$33,600 for the purpose of playing fields and Government refused to grant it.

Mr. ALLDER: I know the case of which the honourable Junior Member for St. John is making reference. The Vestry of St. John applied to Government on that occasion for \$18,000.

Mr. VAUGHAN: Sir, the Government on that occasion refused to give the St. John Vestry \$33,000 out of their contribution to the Sugar Welfare Fund. I made reference to that to show the way Government disburse funds for the benefit of the poor. Government has in hand from the parish of St. John \$108 thousand odd towards the Labour Welfare Fund. The Vestry of St. John asked for \$33,000 to erect a suitable playing field and out of that huge sum which Government holds from that parish, it has denied that parish less than one-sixth. I do know that the personnel of the St. John Vestry is one of the most reactionary in the colony but there are still one or two who genuinely desire to give that parish proper playing fields and who feel that a sum less than \$33,000 cannot give the parish a proper playing field. I may say that everything which my colleague said against the poor law administration in St. John is true but this is mainly due to the limited thought of the personnel who control that Board of the Vestry. It is also the duty of Government where poor law administration is concerned to inspect and make recommendations. That being so, condemnation does not fall entirely on the Poor Law Guardians; it must fall on Government too.

If we must have improved functions in local government and improved services to the local inhabitants of the area, they can only come by more money being put into local government. This can only be derived from rates on the local citizens, or alternatively, it must come from substantial grants-in-aid to the local government from the Central Government. Sir, nowhere in this Maude Bill I see any mention of any percentage of the money needed for the running of the services of local government being guaranteed by the Central Government. The Bill speaks vaguely of grants from Central Government. In England, which has the best system of local government in the world, provision is made for the running of local government by a substantial percentage of the money needed coming from the Central Government. Subject to correction, it is something like 40 percent. of the money needed for local government which is granted from the funds of Central Government. There is no similar type of suggestion being written in this Maude Bill.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the honourable member saying that if this is the contribution from the Central Government in England to local government there that this percentage should be the contribution of the Central Government here to local government?

Mr. VAUGHAN: Sir, what I am saying is that there is no guarantee at all by this Government to carry out the improved services by local government which the Government is talking about. Sir, according to this Maude Bill, the fact that a trader making a thousand dollars a year will not have to pay parochial taxes is no extraordinary liberality, because he will have to pay income tax. The trader will be called upon to make a return to the Income Tax

Commissioner and if he makes a profit of a thousand dollars, his income tax will be assessed from that return; therefore, to call on that trader to pay a trade tax after paying income tax on that profit will be quite unfair.

Sir, I will also point out that every resident in an area more or less benefits by the local services, and should contribute his fair share to taxation. I must however point out that the least to benefit from these services is the rich resident. Because of his wealth, he can afford to obtain on his own most of the services which Government may provide. The real benefits which the rich get from local government is from the services in health to prevent epidemics. He has, and rightly so, he should be made to contribute his fair portion of taxation, but the average citizen should also be made to pay his shilling or whatever it may be of taxation to local government. But is this done? The rich man pays his taxes even under this present Vestry system which some honourable members say is rotten. Under the Vestry system a person can protest against his tax should he think it is not justifiable. Some honourable member spoke very heatedly in this House some time back because his taxes had been raised by nine dollars.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I do not think the honourable member should make reference to that.

Mr. VAUGHAN: Sir, what I meant to say is that if a trader does not comply with the law and send in a proper return to local government sitting in financial assembly to lay rates and then finds that he is over-taxed, he should not say it is not fair. When you allow that to happen, it is not the fault of the Vestry system. You cannot condemn a system because of that. As regards to the corruption of officers working under the Vestry system, I will say that under any type of system in any part of the world, there is corruption of officers. It will happen in any age. It depends on the quality of personnel on the local government. It cannot be remedied by a change of the system. We all know that in Trinidad representation of the masses on local government comes from among the masses. They are the personnel on the local councils and yet we read periodically of the stinks of corruption there. The only thing that can correct corruption is the quality of personnel under the system; there is no foolproof system against corruption. You cannot therefore say that the Vestry system is one which breeds corruption because it does not breed any more corruption than any other governmental system. I may tell you that the American system of local Government is known throughout the world as a system of vast corruption and that is because it is a big and highly developed country. Sir, all the things of which honourable members are condemning the Vestry system, there is absolutely no guarantee against them in any new system which may be adopted.

Sir, the one reform which is vital is a change of the franchise under the Vestry system and it is the only thing which recommends itself in this so-called Maude Bill, but that is not enough. You can liberalise the franchise without the introduction of this monstrosity in the system of local government. I repeat and emphasize that I am in favour of the reform of the Vestry system. I am in favour of the division of this island into six areas as has been expressed by my honourable colleague and the honourable senior member for St. Philip. I am convinced personally and politically that change would be adequate reform. The honourable Senior Member for St. Michael talked of poor houses here. Is that a fault of the Vestry system? Sir, there is no poor houses in Barbados in com-

parison with the sister colonies of Trinidad and Jamaica which have a municipality and local councils. You do not see any trash or mud houses here, but you will see them in those two colonies. The Vestry system can as any other new system, have a housing authority just as the Bridgetown Housing Board, so long as the district is populated enough to warrant it. There should be such boards throughout the length and breadth of this country, but none of these functions is contained in this Bill for the large proposed areas. All I see in this Bill is that you are increasing your population under local government councils and reducing their functions. Nothing can be of greater absurdity for administration than to legislate for the reduction of local government functions while increasing the numbers under the control of a local council.

Mr. MILLER: We are again discussing the famous Maude Bill and Sir, the big question before the House now is what is the argument we had hoped to hear produced against it? What is heart-rending and disturbing after a long and strenuous debate is the speech made by the honourable Junior Member for St. John. What I am unhappy about is to see the honourable member championing the cause of the opposition and trying to maintain that fire which we hear of him on several occasions, but which tonight shows lack of enthusiasm and even the strength of his own convictions. It is lamentable when a man finds himself in that condition. Sir, I say that because I feel strongly on the matter. Sitting across the other end of the Table, aside of his colleague who sponsored his campaign, the honourable member quoted figures which he knew was wrong and which his colleague refuted and his speech proved him to be an arch-enemy of democracy.

Mr. VAUGHAN: Sir, I quoted figures obtained from the Vestry of St. John. I applied for and obtained them from that Vestry.

Mr. MILLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the honourable Junior Member for St. John claims that he can put the case of the Conservatives better than the case of the people whom he represents.

Mr. VAUGHAN: Sir, I rise to make objection to that statement. I would not have myself being misquoted in this Chamber. Did Your Honour hear me say that I can put the case of the Conservatives better than the people whom I represent? If there is one politician to whom vested interests objects, that politician is me.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I do not think the honourable Junior Member for St. John meant that you said so in your speech tonight.

Mr. VAUGHAN: I know the only way honourable members can answer me is by misquoting me. They cannot answer me in any other way.

Mr. MILLER: I make no attempt to misquote the honourable member. The honourable Junior Member for St. John has said so several times already.

Sir, I hope you will forgive me for taking up your time, but I am on my feet mainly because of the speech which the honourable member made. I do not like to criticise speeches of honourable members, but on this occasion the speech of the honourable member was perhaps like a professional mourner or one who lives an empty hollow life. When this Bill was first before this House, the honourable Junior Member for St. John, as a matter of fact, was willing to compromise. He said he would accept it, if it made provision for the island being divided into six districts. Now, tonight, the honourable member says he is not representing vested interest but is in opposition to getting rid of this old creaking vestry system which is the most

water-logged, exhaustive bit of furniture in the community and of which even members of the Vestry wish to be rid. This Vestry system cannot work anywhere else in this world. This is the sort of thing which we have to fight against.

The Leader of the Opposition who also attempted to champion the cause of the Vestry system made reference to good almshouses in the island. I am at a loss to understand what he meant by good almshouses. I know that the majority of poor people in the almshouses, before they went there were the people who possibly for forty or fifty years worked in the fields but did not earn sufficient to provide against this end. Those are the people who fill the eleven almshouses of this island. But, Sir, imagine in this little island of Barbados with its population of 220,000 having eleven almshouses; yet you have the honourable Junior Member for St. John who is like the very people whose lives come to an end in these work-houses and institutions, making a speech for their continued existence.

Mr. VAUGHAN: Sir, must I understand from the honourable member's speech that I have championed almshouses?

Mr. MILLER: If you are championing the Vestry system, you are only championing a system for the survival of such things as almshouses. Sir, the chief argument against this Maude Bill is Adult Suffrage. I had the opportunity of listening to a meeting held in St. George by Vestrymen of that parish and Adult Suffrage was their chief complaint against the Bill. They feel that with the ratepayer only having the opportunity to vote for local government, they can fix that type of person in a wax mold; that is, they can make him vote for whom they want to be representatives. This shows you the way in which this system creaks and how undemocratic it is. Sir, we have in St. George a married woman who owns a bit of land. Her husband pays the taxes and supports her and their children, but because the piece of land is owned by the wife, he is not entitled to vote for the Vestry. It is only on that franchise that the Vestry system can survive and that is why Adult Suffrage was the only question that was worrying Vestrymen. If there could be a compromise on that question the Bill could go through with their blessing.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think the qualification as it is now was passed by this House.

Mr. MILLER: This House now sees the necessity of abandoning that bit of legislation. It was passed by this House two hundred years ago and we are saying now that local government is incapable of functioning properly on that bit of legislation. As I was saying, Sir, here is a man who is particularly interested in politics and in his own parish, but his wife owns a piece of land and although he supports her and their children; although he is the breadwinner, he is not allowed to have a say in who should represent him on the Vestry.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable member cannot blame the system for that; it was the result of a law which was passed some time ago by this House.

Mr. MILLER: Sir, I only said so to show how undemocratic that law is to-day and it is for that reason that it should be thrown to the winds. Democracy is the outcome of experiment. True democracy comes from men making mistakes and blunders, yet fighting their way through; therefore, it must be revolutionary in the hearts of men. True democracy comes from men who are inspired to do something good for society and who get together to make some improvement for society. I will leave

this question for another. I will give an example of Vestry administration from the Vestry of St. Michael. I believe the Fagan case will live in history for another century or more. I think it is the worse thing that could happen in Vestry administration during the twentieth century. This case shakes this Vestry system which the honourable Junior Member for St. John wants to preserve.

Mr. VAUGHAN: I rise to protest again, Sir. I began by saying that I was not a defender of the Vestry system. I never said I want the old system. How then can the honourable member say that I want to preserve the old vestry system?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think the honourable Junior Member for St. George did an injustice to the honourable Junior Member for St. John when he said that the honourable Junior Member for St. John in his speech defended the Vestry system.

Mr. VAUGHAN: I emphasized in my address that I condemn the vestry system more than anybody else.

Mr. MILLER: The honourable member is saying that he condemns the vestry system more than anybody else. He yet in speaking of corruption said that you will get as much corruption under a local government system as under the Vestry system.

Mr. VAUGHAN: Sir, I rise again at a point of order. I said that the Vestry system does not cause corruption. Under any system you will get corruption, but it is not the system which causes corruption, it is the quality of the personnel working under the system that causes corruption. I will not remain seated if any honourable member misquotes me. They can't get away with that while I am in my place.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable junior member for St. George seems to be dealing more with the honourable junior member for St. John than with the Bill before the House. The honourable junior member for St. George made reference to a parochial employee just now. Under an Act, parochial employees are given security of tenure and they are subject to dismissal under the terms of that Act.

(His Honour the Speaker resumed the Chair in place of Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER.)

Mr. MILLER: Sir, I was pointing out the corruptions that occur under the Vestry system and was making reference to a case in point in the St. Michael Vestry, but the speech of the honourable junior member for St. John is so deeply interwoven with the whole fabric of the Bill that I cannot in any way separate him from the Bill. I was at pains to explain some of the corruptions of the Vestry system and how they could be thrown to the winds if the Vestry system is changed to Local Government.

I will now turn attention to the Eagle Hall Market. This market is now under construction. I was told by someone that the plans for this market were drawn for the Vestry. Government has an architectural department and I fail to see why that department was not entrusted with the job of drawing the plans. The structure of that building hurts me very much particularly in view of the fact that I happen to pass that district two or three times a day. The structure of that building takes us back to three hundred years ago and it is the relics of that age. I would say that it is undignified. As you know Sir, architecture is a living art and a country is measured by its cultural arts, therefore, you have in this age contemporary architects entering into any subject which they have to produce with a view to creating com-

petition. I can only say that it is a disgrace to the architect who produced that plan for the Eagle Hall Market to the Vestry. I am told that the plans for this market were designed and drawn for the Vestry according to specifications. The architect had to conform with the views of the Vestry. This is what we have to suffer owing to this type of Vestry system. We must be denied even structural work of art because of this creaking old wicked Vestry system. When you really examine that market structure which is now under erection at Eagle Hall, you can only say it is a disgrace to whoever earned the money for drawing the plans; more especially when there would have been so many who would have volunteered to produce on that spot something to its credit—a spot of architecture that would be consistent with this period.

All these things happen under this Vestry system. If I may refer again to the Fagan case, you will see that because that man could not reduce himself to be an ordinary canvasser was the reason why he was victimized. That is the type of thing which prevails under the Vestry system. Employees must learn not the job which they do, but must have a knowledge of the men who employ them. If you pay some attention to this Vestry system, you will find that promotion is given to those employees who prove to be good canvassers. The members of Vestries are wondering whether this Government can make provision for better local government and run it efficiently even for a short period. I can only inform them that mother nature has never known to discriminate in the distribution of her talents and since this Government happen to be that of the bulk of the population of this island, the bulk of the gifts of mother nature is with us. These are facts. It will only be a question of application and time alone will be the answer to this question.

In conclusion, I wish God speed to this Bill and to the members of the Government. I have a strong suspicion that when this Bill goes to the Other Place it will be sent to Select Committee and perhaps when it is sent back to this Chamber, the Other Place will know too well that this House will not accept the changes which were made. At any rate, under democratic rule, before any advance occurs, it must encounter some difficulty.

Mr. MAPP: Sir, I am going to be very short in my address because I feel we are flogging a dead horse. I do not want to prolong such a pastime for any undue length of time. Sir, I feel that the Government must be commended for bringing down this Bill exactly as it was even though some of us may feel that there should be certain amendments inserted in it. Government has acted wisely in bringing it down as it was because so far as Vestries are concerned, the opposition to this Bill is negligible; in fact, it can be said there is hardly any opposition at all to this Bill save that of the honourable Junior Member for St. John who seems to be very lonely in the role which he is playing. The opposition to this Bill comes from the Other Place. They are the opponents to this Bill and to the wishes of the people, therefore, now that the Government is sending back this Bill to the Other Place as it was formerly, without any amendment, I think this action is a very wise one.

However, I hope that at some future date Government would bring in an amendment to this Bill so as to give names to the northern and southern districts to perpetuate the memory of certain men who contributed something notable to his island. I do not think we have to build a bridge or something of that sort to do that; we can do it in this way. Let us have names as "the O'Neale district," or "the Adams District," or whatever name you

may care to perpetuate, but just to name these the northern and southern districts seems to me too dead; let us keep alive some of the names of those who have made this island famous and contributed to its history. I am sure the Government will give this due consideration in the future.

Sir, what brought me chiefly to my feet is the fact that I feel that certain things said by the two honourable members who opposed the Bill cannot be very well ignored. As it was rightly said, the Vestry of St. Thomas was foremost in holding meetings to disprove the Bill. It is true that some Vestrymen have misrepresented the Bill, by telling downright lies about it. (Shame! Shame!) I feel this paragraph which I shall read in a moment from the recommendations of Sir John Maude would go a long way in clarifying the atmosphere and would give the answer to many of the misrepresentations in which these Vestrymen and other opponents to the Bill have been indulging. The opposers of this Bill are saying that the introduction of this new system of local government will cost the colony more than the old Vestry system and that Sir John Maude said so. I have read his report extensively and have looked through it again to see if it were possible that I was mistaken in my view that this was not so. It was the honourable Junior Member for Christ Church who said that in some part of the report by Sir John Maude, he admitted that the new system of local government would be more costly. Far from admitting that, Sir John Maude in paragraph 112 of his report states as follows: "The present system with its eleven Vestries and thirty-two Parochial Boards is far too complicated for the size and financial resources of the island and for the services which these bodies administer." I think this paragraph is the answer to their misrepresentations. This quotation will contradict one of the chief arguments of the opposition. I hope that the honourable Junior Member for St. John would listen to it, read and inwardly digest it. Sir John said that the present system is far too complicated for the size and financial resources of this island. This Vestry system is the one which the honourable Junior Member for St. John wishes to continue. At one time in his speech, he said he was in favour of the present system and at another time you cannot tell of what he is in favour.

Sir, let us extend the franchise, and widen the scope so as to bring in more people to have a say in the working of the districts in which they live by the passing of this Bill.

It is just sufficient for me to quote that to show that the Leader of the Opposition could see no further. He is a member of the Vestry System. He feels that all the good in this world is in that system. I feel that to pay too much attention to what he said would be to pay too much importance to what is really a psychological weakness with those who are opposing the Bill.

Now, Sir, there are one or two other misconceptions which have been stated chiefly by the honourable junior member for St. John. It does not seem to me that he can honestly say where he is. Because we have him saying that he is in the van of progress. He says he is not defending the Vestry System; but on the other hand he really cannot say what he is defending, or what he would like to have changed. He says the Government is saying that if it is not black it must be white, but there are various shades between black and white. I would like to know which shade between the present vestry system and the system proposed in this Bill he would like. Most of the people who are against the Maude Bill say

they would like to see some change; but they cannot tell us what they would like. The honourable junior member for St. John has stated an objection to the Bill that formed one of the chief arguments of the opponents of the Bill in the Other Places—that more power would be centred in the Central Government. One of the Government's spokesmen in the Other Place pointed out that that is not so; that with the control as it is at present there is a positive danger of local government being not local government at all. We are faced with a continuous and gradual process of centralisation. At present there are some bodies that are simply doling out funds. What will happen as a result of the provisions of the Maude Bill is that there will be greater control by the Central Government over certain spending. That is a necessity in this day. He who pays the piper should call the tune. If we say that the Central Government should come to the aid of the local bodies and give them grants-in-aid, I think it is only fair to say that the Government should control the spending of the money. At present many of these local bodies are very inadequately controlled, or not controlled at all by the vestries, far less by the Central Government. These bodies do not have the resources to carry out what they are doing, and in the case of St. Michael, St. Lucy and St. Andrew they have put their roads entirely under the control of the Central Government. In other cases, and I refer mainly to tenantry roads, they cannot repair these roads and they have to ask for bigger grants from the Central Government every year.

So, Sir, apart from Poor Relief I really fail to see local government as it should be operating in this island in this modern age carrying on services at all. The present local boards are merely doling out funds, some of them inadequately supervised by the parent bodies, the vestries.

As I said at first, there is really no necessity to debate this Bill at length. There would be nothing we could add unless we came up against strong opposition. Tonight we have heard a very weak case put up by the opponents of this measure. They have added nothing to their previous objections, and it is only because of the repetition of certain misconceptions that I am on my feet and that some of us on this side of the House have prolonged this debate to this extent. I am very glad to see that opinion in St. John is so divided; that the division is apparently leaning more heavily on the Government's side on this occasion; and that there is such a big split in ranks so firmly welded together in the past. It shows that at least some intelligence can emanate from St. John. I would say that it is **appalling in this day and age** to get people like the honourable junior member for St. John repeating parrot fashion all that the reactionary elements have stated and what they will continue to say even though the dice are so heavily loaded against them. Indeed the mere reference to the position of playing fields in St. John should make the honourable member vote in favour of this Bill. In fact one of the reasons why I believe that we do not have a proper system of playing fields is that we have too many authorities dealing with them—eleven vestries—and it is the fault of the Central Government for putting it in their hands. There must be chaos. As the honourable senior member for St. John has said, there are wealthy landowners in that parish who cannot find land to sell for the purpose of a playing field. The position in my constituency is the same. Since the money was offered not a piece of land can be found for the purpose. Not a grass piece. Everything is cultivated. The landowners cannot cut off any of their profits. That is the

attitude of the landowners in some of these districts. It is no wonder that these people are against the Maude Bill.

Everyone knows that the system of Poor Relief as administered in this colony today is merely increasing pauperism. It makes the people of the island paupers. And to imagine, Sir, that there are people in the House of Assembly today defending the continuance of such a system would be to imagine that the public conscience is dead, and that our constituents do not read what we say. Anyone who gets up and says that the Vestry System should be retained; that you should just widen the franchise, does not deserve to stand in any constituency in any part of the world for five minutes. Anyone who spoke as the honourable junior member for St. John spoke should not stand in any constituency in any part of the world.

Mr. VAUGHAN: Mr. Speaker,—Again I have to rise. I said emphatically that I have no intention of defending the present Vestry System. To say that I have defended the Vestry System is erroneous, wrong and untrue.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable member is disclaiming defending the Vestry System. You will not ascribe such defence to him.

Mr. MAPP: The honourable member reminds me of a player in a football match who claims that he has no intention of kicking the other fellow, but kicks him down and injures his shins. The honourable member specifically said that if we extended the franchise that is all that would be necessary. However, Sir, I think it is merely flogging a dead horse and the sooner we get this Bill passed the better.

Mr. BRANCKER: Mr. Speaker,—I support the remarks that have been made while regretting the necessity of having to speak on this matter, if for no other reason than that of having received the Bill as recently as Saturday night. Even though one may be fully cognisant of the subject matter before one, it is the habit of the intelligent mind to seek an opportunity of refreshing himself by re-reading any document, particularly as weighty a document as this before one has to deal with it in detail.

I would like to digress for a moment to deal with the point made by the honourable senior member for St. Thomas relative to a slight change which he would wish in this Bill. He said that we might commemorate the names of some distinguished Barbadians. While he bewailed the fact, I was happy to recall that while we may not have either at the moment or in prospect an "O'Neal District," Barbados can at least still boast of having a Mapp Hill.

Now, Sir, in considering this Bill I think there are two main aspects we can consider. After the General Election it was, or appeared to me to be, the verdict of the electors that a Bill of this sort should be placed on the Statute Book. It is said that people vote in a General Election more with one thing in mind than another. But the fact remains that the bringing down of this Bill was not an unimportant plank in the platform of the Labour Party, and it was one on which the electors expressed their feelings. I will always say as I said with regard to the free hot meal for elementary school children and free secondary education, that this Bill is one of the planks of the election platform which it is our duty to put in some form on the Statute Book.

I certainly will support the amendment which the honourable senior member for Christ Church will propose when we go into committee, in respect of the proposed division of the island. It may well be that for a start instead of beginning with three divisions we should begin with four or five. Because we will be going from 11 to 3. It does strike me that it

would be better to experiment with four or five. That, however, is purely a matter of detail. The electors have expressed their feeling where this Bill is concerned; this House passed it during the first session, and now that it has come back to us after having been rejected by the Other Place it is our duty to maintain our position as representatives of the people and to re-affirm our previous decision.

For those reasons, Sir, although there are a few amendments which I would favour, and support, I will vote for the second reading and urge the members of this Chamber to agree to the passing of this Bill. There might be some justification in the argument of those who feel that we should begin by modifying the present system and just widening the franchise. On the other hand there is the fact that this Bill has received the sanction of the electorate. I am never hasty to follow the reports of these experts. It is not because this expert from the U.K. recommends a Bill of this sort that I am supporting it; because apart from Sir Douglas Ritchie on the Deep Water Harbour I rarely find myself in agreement with these very distinguished persons who come here and spend two or three weeks and for a considerable fee tell us things about our island which, on a little reflection, we could find out for ourselves.

Speaking as a vestryman it seems to me that in debates on this Bill one hears a certain ring mainly in the voices of those who are not vestrymen; and one wonders whether you would hear that ring in their voices if they had had the privilege of being elected as vestrymen. I would say here, Sir, that with a properly run parochial institution one can envisage taxation in St. Lucy being reduced as a result of the proposals in this Bill, and that is an added reason why I feel it incumbent upon me to support it. In order to maintain the high standard of the parochial institution in St. Lucy land taxation has had to go to a figure which is I believe the highest in the island. But it is a well run institution which has been favourably commented on by every person who has visited it. If we are, as proposed in this Bill, linked with other parishes, they will help us with our finances, and with our ability to run a parish properly we will be able to assist them in running their parochial affairs with a higher standard of efficiency. It is a terrible thing that one has to pay such ownership tax on a house in St. James and the Vestry of that parish does not give us electric light simply because of a lack of intelligence and human sympathy possessed by the majority of the members of that vestry, or I should rather say the dominant element on that vestry.

Again I ask honourable members to support this Bill and to support the amendment which will be proposed by the honourable senior member for Christ Church when we go into Committee. We could not dream of allowing a non-elected chamber to feel that their attitude over a matter which we have previously passed has affected the stand that we already decided we would take when this matter came before us again. I do not think that there are any other aspects I should deal with before we go into Committee, whether to-night, to-morrow morning or at some other time in the future. I give my support to the motion for the second reading of the Bill for the reasons I have mentioned.

Mr. LEWIS: Mr. Speaker,—I think that the Government should be pleased with at least one aspect of the passing of the second reading of this Bill. I refer to the enthusiasm with which the debate on the second reading has been conducted. On the other hand some honourable members should have been glad of the opposition offered by the honourable

junior member for Christ Church and the honourable junior member for St. John because it gave them the opportunity to say something on the Bill. Otherwise it would have been a mere whipping-up of enthusiasm if those honourable members had not so severely attacked the Bill.

Now, Sir, there is no gainsaying the fact that a Bill of this nature has not been forced upon the people of this colony. For years and years we have been hearing of some reform in the vestry system; but the people did not seem to have any clear idea of what that reform should be. Still, they saw the evils of the vestry system as it operated in this country and they were against it. The Government brought in an expert to report on it and to advise us, and out of his report has come the Bill that is before us to-night. So even if we do not agree entirely with the proposals in the Bill, there is no getting away from the fact that a desire for a radical change in the vestry system has been expressed through the ballot at the last General Election at least. It was significant, Sir, that that election was the first on Adult Suffrage. It is said that Adult Suffrage will not suit local government and that it has only been in England for a comparatively short time. But in my view, wherever you are having elections, and whatever you are having them about, and it concerns human beings, the human beings that have reached a mature age should have a right to vote in those elections.

As far as the Vestry System is concerned, there is no getting away from the fact that there are people who go into it to protect their own interests. Endeavouring to provide the necessary amenities to cure the evils of poverty is not their main reason for seeking election to the Vestry. I remember when the Royal Commission was in Barbados, Mr. Morgan Jones in answer to a vestryman who said, "we give our time free and our services to the people free" asked, "do you mean you get nothing in return for it?" The vestryman said no. Mr. Morgan Jones replied, "you do not regard being able to see your competitors trade returns a first class return for your giving up your time to serve on these vestries?" I feel, Sir, that if this Bill changes that system it will be doing a good service to this country.

I believe, Sir, that that is one of the greatest evils in this system. The people who "trust" goods from the big merchants, even when they make a good profit, are afraid to send and tell the vestries that they have made a profit, because the merchant who credited them with the goods will be there to examine their returns; he is going to see how much money was made and he will send them a bill for what they owe. If this is shifted to the Central Government I think you will get a more equitable system of taxation for local government.

Vestrymen of this colony have undoubtedly been shirking their responsibility and at the same time endeavouring to maintain power. They have no headaches. They do not supply electricity; they do not supply water, transport or anything like that. They merely collect rates particularly for looking after the poor, and it seems to me that in their distribution to the poor they think more of whom they are going to spend the money with than anything else. When food is to be bought the money must be spent in a particular direction and things of that sort. Vestrymen have allowed the system to become corrupt because of the privilege and the power that it confers upon them.

So far, Sir, as the division of the island into three parts for purposes of local government is concerned, I am unable to say whether that is a good

or bad thing, although it does seem to me that a drop from 11 divisions to three is a rather drastic change. I am always in favour of allowing as many people as possible to take an interest in their community, and I regard it as unfortunate that at a time when we are trying to get rid of what we regard as the evils of the vestry system, we should not permit as many people as possible to take an interest in the affairs of the island. It seems to me that we are afraid of the people that will come in, although there is a great deal of government supervision and control. I hope that that is not so, and that it is just a precaution that has been found necessary in the operation of local government elsewhere.

I did hope, Sir, that in the interim the Government would have given some consideration to certain aspects of the Bill as we passed it the last time. I will just mention one or two. The first is the method of taxation for local government. I think that we should have taken the opportunity to get rid of trade tax. My view of local government is that it should be based on property taxation. I am at a loss when I hear people speak against adult suffrage for local government while at the same time they are willing to retain the system of trade taxation. If there is one thing that cuts the ground from under their feet it is the fact that you are collecting indirect taxation from every person in the area. I think that the Government should take that into consideration and let us get away from the nonsense of people paying trade tax in addition to income tax. Let us have property taxation for local government. It will have to be graded and put in a way to create a different psychological effect.

As the Bill has been re-introduced I feel that the Government is creating a situation in which local government units will have to come to them for money. I say that for this reason: They are allowing too big an exemption for proprietors of businesses and too high an exemption for taxation. It is something that I really do not understand. The Vestry has a precaution against that in the Act and that is something the Government should do. They should never place a local government authority in the position of begging them for money. It creates irresponsibility. Let them run their own affairs and give them a good opportunity of doing so. Let the situation be such that only ignorance could make them dependent on the Central Government.

One honourable member has said that most of the Vestries are sending down Bills now to borrow money for repairing churches on account of the Maude Bill. I do not think that that is so. I think the real reason lies in the threatened disendowment of the Church. They feel that if church property is to be turned over to the Church they should get it in the best possible condition so that they will not have to repair it for some years.

The next thing is that unless the Government is providing in this Bill for some proper system of auditing of accounts what are they doing? Practically nothing. I hear someone saying the Auditor General. That is not the point I am making. I do not mean the system of public auditing of the accounts of local government bodies; I mean for the people who send in their returns on which taxation is based. An honourable member has said, the Commissioner of Income Tax. That is not the point either. It is on the returns sent in to the Commissioner that he will tell the Councils what taxation to levy.

As far as the advantages under which parochial employees have worked in the past are concerned, we can only hope that that will change. No Maude or any other Bill can of itself change that. We can only hope that their new masters will not misuse them in the same way. As far as playing fields are concerned I do not think that we should blame the vestries; because as far as my memory serves me the Central Government buys the land for playing fields, and the Central Government has in their power to acquire land through the process of law.

Those are a few of the things relative to which I shall suggest changes when the Bill is in Committee and I am in the House, because I feel that they are worthy of consideration. There is no getting away from it that we should not make these big allowances for the running of businesses even though the Central Government will catch up with these people who manipulate their profits so as to show a small trade return and a big income tax return.

Question that the Bill be now read a second time was put and agreed to without division.

ADJOURNMENT

On the motion of Dr. CUMMINS, seconded by Mr. Cox, Mr. Speaker adjourned the House until Tuesday next, July 7, at 3 o'clock p.m.

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ERRATUM

In Debates of House of Assembly of 26th May, 1953, page 108, Column 1, after line 8 please read:

The erection of such a sanatorium exclusive of furnishing beds and mattresses would be in the vicinity of \$600,000.

While this is a project where the recurrent costs are not negligible, I do not think that you should seriously think on its recurrent costs. You must view this sanatorium in the light of a social service which you should provide for the community. I have been reliably told by several doctors that the predominant amount of T.B. cases are not notified through the lack of confidence by the afflicted in a doctor being able to cure them and other matters connected with it. Having regard to the figures I have quoted, a 100-bed sanatorium would give a recurrent cost of \$100,000 annually. I think the recurrent cost of the General Hospital is in the vicinity of \$30 per bed per week. Figures which have recently been given by the British Ministry of Health and the National Association for the prevention of T.B. for 1952 show that in Manchester the cost was in the vicinity of £7. 8s. per week and the overall recurrent cost was £8. 17s. per week. I think the figures I have quoted compare favourably with these figures from the Ministry of Health.

Mr. Deputy Speaker — I sincerely hope that some favourable consideration will be given to this matter. I know there are some people who say that you will die of something even if you do not die of T.B.; therefore why worry over that disease when it does not carry the highest death rate; but I think it is our duty—a duty which we owe to mankind—once there is life, it is worth saving. I sincerely hope the Government will give favourable consideration to this question whether it be to the large project or the small project which I have suggested.

I now formally move that this Address do now pass.