

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SESSION 1953—54

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 1st September, 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*), Mr. G. H. ADAMS, B.A., C.M.G., Q.C., Mr. A. E. S. LEWIS (*Deputy Speaker*), Mr. M. E. COX, Mr. F. C. GODDARD, Mr. J. C. MOTTLEY, Mr. E. ST. A. HOLDER, Mr. C. E. TALMA and Mr. L. A. WILLIAMS, LL.B.

Prayers were read.

Mr. F. L. WALCOTT entered the House and took his seat.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: I have the honour to inform the House that the Minutes of the last meeting are not yet ready for circulation among honourable members.

PAPERS LAID

Mr. COX: Mr. Speaker, On behalf of the honourable senior member for St. Joseph, I am going to lay the following:—

The Civil Establishment (General) (Amendment) No. 5 Order, 1953.

The Pensions (Pensionable Officers) (Amendment) Order, 1953.

Sir, On behalf of myself I am commanded to lay the following:—

The Petroleum Drilling and Production (Amendment) Regulations, 1953.

Mr. SMITH entered the House and took his seat.

PETITIONS

Mr. GODDARD: Mr. Speaker, I beg to present a Petition from the Vestry of St. Michael praying the House to pass a Bill to authorise them to pay a pension to employees retiring from the 24th March, 1954.

I also present another Petition from the Vestry of St. Michael praying the House to pass a Bill to authorise them to pay pensions to employees retiring after 25th March, 1953.

I also present another Petition from the Vestry of St. Michael praying the House to pass a Bill to

authorise them to amend the Vestries (Cost of Living Bonus) Act.

The Petitions are respectfully worded and I ask that they be taken as read.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Mr. COX: Mr. Speaker, On behalf of the honourable senior member for St. Joseph, I beg to give notice of the following:—

Resolution that the House of Assembly approve the Order entitled the Civil Establishment (General) (Amendment) No. 5 Order, 1953.

Resolution to approve the Order entitled the Pensions (Pensionable Officers) (Amendment) Order, 1953.

Sir, On behalf of myself, I beg to give notice of a Bill intituled an Act to repeal the Underground Water Act, 1922.

Mr. VAUGHAN entered the House and took his seat.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Goddard: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following:—

Bill to amend the Parochial Employees Pension Act, 1944;

Bill to amend the Vestries (Cost of Living) Act, 1947;

Bill to amend the Parochial Pension Act, 1944.

BILLS READ A FIRST TIME

On the motion of Mr. Cox, seconded by Mr. F. L. WALCOTT, the Bill intituled an Act to repeal the Underground Water Act, 1922, was read a first time.

On motion of Mr. GODDARD, seconded by Mr. VAUGHAN, the Bill to amend the Parochial Pension Act, 1944, was read a first time.

On motion of Mr. GODDARD, seconded by Mr. VAUGHAN, the Bill to amend the Vestries (Cost of Living) Act, 1947, was read a first time.

Mr. MAPPE and Dr. CUMMINS entered the House and took their seats.

On motion of Mr. GODDARD seconded by Mr. VAUGHAN, the Bill to amend the Parochial Pension Act, 1944, was read a first time.

REPLY LAID

Mr. F. L. WALCOTT: Mr. Speaker, I take the opportunity at this stage to lay the Reply to

Question, No. 16, standing in the name of the honourable junior member for City.

ORDERS POSTPONED

Mr. SPEAKER: The first 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 consolidate and amend the Acts of this Island relating to Public Health.

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker, I am asking leave further to postpone Orders No. 1 and 2 standing in my name. It is true that at the last meeting of the House I informed honourable members that I would not be proceeding with these two Bills until some progress was made in the Other Place with the Maude Bill, but on further consideration by the Government, we have agreed to-day to proceed with these two Bills at the next meeting of the House.

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

RESOLUTIONS TO APPROVE BOOK OF REFERENCE AND PLAN, WATERWORKS DEPARTMENT

Mr. SPEAKER: The next Order of the Day stands in the name of the honourable senior member for St. Michael to move the passing of the following Resolution: Resolution to approve the Book of Reference and Plan of the proposed extension of the Waterworks at Beckles Road in the parish of St. Michael.

Mr. COX: Mr. Speaker, As honourable members will see, this resolution is one of those former resolutions which come before the House from time to time when the Waterworks Department intends making certain extension and removal of standpipes. I think on the last occasion when I was dealing with one of similar resolutions, I told the House that that approval to matters of this sort had to be given by the Legislature because the Waterworks Act, as it stands requires this formality, but as honourable members will agree, this is merely what I would term an administration technique. I promised then, but I hope now that this will be the last time that items similar to this will come before the House. I do not think it is necessary to say anything more. I therefore beg to move that this resolution do now pass.

Mr. F. L. WALCOTT seconded the motion.

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

Mrs. BOURNE entered the House and took her seat.

Mr. SPEAKER: The next Order of the Day stands in the name of the honourable senior member for St. Michael to move the passing of the following Resolution: Resolution to approve the Book of reference and Plan of the proposed extension of the Waterworks at Culloden Road in the parish of St. Michael.

Mr. COX: Sir, This is a similar resolution to the preceding one and I also beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Mr. F. L. WALCOTT seconded the motion.

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

Mr. F. L. WALCOTT: Mr. Speaker, I am asking leave to postpone Orders 5 and 6 and proceed with Order No. 7, because Order No. 7 which stands in my name is a non-controversial matter.

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

WEST INDIAN SEA ISLAND COTTON (EXEMPTION FROM DUTY) BILL

Mr. SPEAKER: The next Order of the Day therefore stands in the name of the honourable junior member for St. Peter: Second reading of a Bill intituled an Act to amend the West Indian Sea Island Cotton (Exemption from Duty) Act, 1952.

Mr. F. L. WALCOTT: This is a Bill to make amendments to the West Indian Sea Island Cotton (Exemption from Duty) Act, 1952, so as to prolong this exemption from duty of Sea Island Cotton and allow it to come to the island free of duty. I need not remind this House that it has agreed to bills of this nature before. It is one of these bills which come under the Expiring Laws and the Act will expire on the 29th October, 1953, unless it is agreed to continue it. It is found advisable to do so, hence this Bill. I need not say anything more. As I have said, it is what the House has already agreed to and I therefore beg to move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. COX: I beg to second that.

Mr. LEWIS: The honourable junior member for St. Peter said that he need not remind the House that it has agreed to bills of similar nature, but I think he will remember that on previous occasions, I have made a suggestion which I shall now again repeat. Is it impossible to extend this Bill to the 31st March, 1954, and then let it be one of those bills which come under the Expiring Laws? It seems to me that the Executive is merely giving itself work in remembering certain bills which do not expire at the end of the financial year when it is remembering bills of this sort some of which expire in September, some in December, January, February and so on. This is not a sensible way to deal with these things. I ask again: cannot this Bill like other Bills expire on the 31st March and if you do not want it to continue to take it from those which you pass *en bloc*? Some explanation should be given as to the reason why this cannot be done.

Mr. F. L. WALCOTT: I too think that it should be done in that manner. I do not know why it has not yet been done so. It seems to me that it is one of these things which slip the administration. I agree with your suggestion and I will take the matter up with the Executive. I will assure the honourable member that I will do so. In the meantime there will be no harm done if we pass this Bill as it is to-day. If from a legal point of view it can be put under those in the Expiring Laws, it will be done so. I will not take the liberty to make the amendment now.

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

On the motion of Mr. F. L. WALCOTT, seconded by Mr. Cox, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. SMITH being in the Chair.

Clause 1 was called and passed.

Clause 2 was called.

It reads as follows:

2. Section two of the West Indian Sea Island Cotton (Exemption from Duty) Act, 1952, is hereby amended by deleting the words "for the period of one year from the date of the coming into operation of this Act" occurring therein, and substituting therefor the words "until the 31st day of October, 1954."

Mr. F. L. WALCOTT: I beg to move that Clause 2 stand part.

Mr. COX: I beg to second that.

Mr. LEWIS: I was going to suggest to the honourable junior member for St. Peter that the words "until the 31st day of October, 1954" be deleted and that the words "until the 31st day of March, 1954" be substituted therefor, but in view of what the honourable member said, I would not press him to do so now.

Mr. Chairman, if you would allow me, I would just like to say that this Bill deals with exemption from duty and I think that it is better to work it so that it will expire at the end of the financial year than at the date which it expires now.

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

The question that Clause 2 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

On the motion of Mr. F. L. WALCOTT, seconded by Mr. Cox, the Chairman reported the passing of the Bill in Committee.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On separate motions of Mr. F. L. WALCOTT, seconded by Mr. Cox in each case, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

Mr. CRAWFORD entered the House and took his seat.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND AT COLLYMORE ROCK

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker, I am asking permission to proceed with Order No. 5.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: The next Order of the Day stands in the name of the honourable junior member for St. Thomas: To move the passing of the following Resolution:—Resolution to approve of the compulsory acquisition of a parcel of land containing by admeasurement five acres, two roods, and eight perches situate at Collymore Rock in the parish of St. Michael.

Dr. CUMMINS: Sir, this is a resolution which in accordance with the provisions of section 5 of the Land Acquisition Act, 1949, seeks the approval of the Legislature to purchase compulsorily the property known as "Enmore", at the corner of Collymore Rock and Martindales Road, owing to the fact that the Government and the owners cannot reach a satisfactory price. The property consists of 5½ acres of land and a spacious house and Government feels if they purchase this property, the house would afford immediately, at least, a partial solution to the overcrowding at the General Hospital. If this property is acquired by Government, we can immediately make provision for between 60 and 70 beds for patients at the house and this Sir will go a long way towards relieving the congestion at the General Hospital. In addition to that, "Enmore" is admirably situated to serve as an annexe of the General Hospital. The land affords itself of good strong solid foundations and we have been advised by the architect of Colonial Development and Welfare that eventually you can move the whole hospital to the Enmore site if we are prepared to erect a building three or four stories to accommodate 500 or 600 beds. In view of what this official of C.D. & W. said, Government started negotiating with the owners of Enmore for the purchase of it.

Mr. Cox seconded.

Honourable members will ask: "why not proceed with the plan that was sometime ago suggested to develop the hospital on its present site? The answer to that is that the foundations of the present

site have been stated by the late Mr. T. E. Went to be far below 13 and 14 feet. He said after carrying out tests, that there were no foundations available at that depth; therefore, to develop the hospital on the present site would mean that you probably would spend more money underground than above. In the case of Enmore, that is not so. That officer also made tests and had found that the foundations there varied from one foot in the north eastern part to five feet at the other end of the land below the surface. Owing to that information they were advised to abandon the original idea of developing the hospital on its present site. It is felt that if Enmore can be secured it would afford immediate relief to the overcrowded hospital.

As I have said, the owners of Enmore and the Government cannot agree to a reasonable price. The Government considers that the price asked by the owners is too excessive, therefore, it has resolved to take this step under the Land Acquisition Act to acquire this land. As I have also said, this step requires the sanction of the Legislature, hence this resolution. Mr. Speaker, I therefore beg to move that this resolution do now pass.

Mr. Cox seconded.

Mr. WILLIAMS: Mr. Speaker, This resolution really makes me feel frightened because if the various things I have been hearing of the owners of Enmore are correct, I cannot see the reason why Government should be taking this step which would become the dearest in the long run. As a matter of fact I do not believe in acquiring anything under the Compulsory Purchase Act; I think you should avoid using the provisions of the Land Acquisition Act if you can do so. At any rate, I am not going to deal with that aspect of this question now. I am going to ask a few questions which I hope the honourable introducer of the resolution will be able to answer as regards to the policy Government is now adopting with regard to the General Hospital. Before I do so, I will say that I have heard the honourable introducer say that there can be no further development on the present site of the General Hospital. I expected to hear that because it is obvious. It would only be adding insult to injury to carry out further extensions there. Apart from the lack of proper foundations with which I quite agree with the tests of the late Mr. T. E. Went, I do not think that any architect or anybody in their right senses would look at the conditions prevailing at the present site and advise that more extensions could be carried out there. It would be just wasting time and money to do so. I therefore can agree with the honourable introducer over the decision to abandon the question of carrying out further extensions on the present site.

The questions I am going to ask are: What is going to be done with Stockton in the long run? What purpose is that estate going to serve? If you are going to buy Enmore, would Stockton be used; or would it be required in the scheme for further development of the General Hospital in its present environment? As I have said previously, with regard to the future development of our hospital, I think we in Barbados have not been bold enough to carry out a large scale scheme for the extension of our hospital. We content ourselves with just this piecemeal system as soon as there is overcrowding there. We have just bought Avalon; now we are trying to buy Enmore. We should have been bold enough to lay a proper foundation for meeting the needs of a growing institution by planning to erect from a Sinking Fund—even up to fifty years. You should have had an architect to advise you that so much will be needed for your floor space for patients; so much for your operation space; so much for this

and that necessary for a modern hospital and to advise you what you can do now to meet present needs plus what would be needed periodically in the future with the growth of the population. We are just making do by this piecemeal plan of buying a building and reconverting it into a hospital. So much for this.

We are told that if Government acquires Enmore, besides its immediate availability of space for 50 or 60 beds for patients, it can be further developed to accommodate 500 or 600 beds. That expansion will not cost less than one million pounds capital expenditure. I think it is Nassau that has recently erected a modern 200-bed hospital and the expenditure on that venture was in the vicinity of £6,000. I know that as far as we are concerned any architect or any person who knows anything of a hospital would tell us that we are wasting time and Government funds if we continue to extend as we are doing. We have also been told that because the owners of Enmore and the Government could not come to an arrangement of the price by private treaty that Government has to resort to public treaty. With regard to this point I think the Government has been taken down a back alley from the information which I have received. I understand that the owners of Enmore cannot even pay their first mortgage on the acquiring of the estate to their creditors. I am not saying that this Government should be Bolshevik and press the owners to give up their property without adequate compensation because they are sore pressed for money. I will just say that according to section 5 of the provisions of the Land Acquisition Act, it sets out the manner in which the Government must act in regard to acquiring this land but it is really under section 11 that you will have to look to see what price you should pay for this land. I understand that the owners wanted a price in the vicinity of £17,000 for the estate. If what I equally understand that the owners are sore pressed for money is true, it beats me to understand why the Government should resort to compulsory purchase to acquire this estate. It seems to me that you are only just doing so to give the owners any amount of money you would like, but section 11 of the Act tells you that you must pay the price that the land would net in open market. If the owner of this land has not paid his first mortgage and his mortgagee is calling on him for this money, why try to acquire this land by compulsory purchase? I am sorry that the honourable introducer of this resolution did not mention the sum that the owner of this land was asking and what Government had been advised to give, because we would be able to know if the owner was asking a ridiculous sum for it.

According to section 11 of the Land Acquisition Act, 1949, it states:

"Subject to the provisions of this Act, the following rules shall apply to the determination of compensation for the compulsory acquisition of land:—

- "(1) The value of the land shall, subject as hereinafter provided, be taken to be the amount which the land if sold in the open market by a willing seller might be expected to realise at the date of the first publication in the *Official Gazette* of a notification in accordance with section three of this Act or if no such notification is published as aforesaid, of a notification under section five of this Act.
- (2) The special suitability or adaptability of the land for any purpose shall not be taken into any account if that purpose is a purpose to

which it could be applied only in pursuance of statutory powers or for which there is no market apart from the requirements of any Government Department or any local or public authority.

- (3) Where the value of the land is increased by reason of the use thereof or of any premises thereon in a manner which could be restrained by any court, or is contrary to law, or is detrimental to the health of the inmates of the premises or to the public health, the amount of that increase shall not be taken into account.
- (4) Where land is, and but for the compulsory acquisition would continue to be, devoted to a purpose of such a nature that there is no general demand or market for land for that purpose, the compensation may, if the Judge is satisfied that reinstatement in some other place is *bona fide* intended, be assessed on the basis of the reasonable cost of equivalent reinstatement.
- (5) No allowance shall be made on account of—
 - (a) the acquisition being compulsory or the degree of urgency or necessity which has led to the acquisition;
 - (b) any disinclination of the person interested to part with the land acquired;
 - (c) any damage sustained by the person interested, which, if caused by a private person, would not render such a person liable to an action;
 - (d) any damage, not being in the nature of deprivation of or interference with an easement or legal right, which after the time of awarding compensation is likely to be caused by or in consequence of the use to which the land acquired will be put.
 - (e) any increase in the value of the land acquired likely to accrue from the use to which the land acquired will be put;
 - (f) any outlay or improvement on such land which shall have been made, commenced, or effected, within two years before the publication of the notice of appropriation under section five of this Act, with the intention of enhancing the compensation to be awarded therefor in the event or with the view of such land being required for public purposes."

Sir, I still cannot see why this move of compulsory purchase has been used because real estate agents or even solicitors would know what this land of Enmore would bring in open market. You cannot get artificial value for land under the provisions of this Act, you can only get what it would realise in open market.

I will pass on to another aspect of this matter. It has been said in approved quarters that whatever is being proposed to be done at Enmore in case it is acquired, it will just fade out in a cooling out station for the doctors and nurses at the hospital. I say if that is to be the state of affairs, God help us. If we acquire Enmore, we should try and create something out of it. We should do something with it to spare the inhabitants of this colony of the deplorable conditions which are going on at the General Hospital. Among the latest reports was that 87 children were patients in a ward with only 30 beds. I feel that while you must provide somewhere for doctors and nurses to live, you should at least put first things right first.

(A VOICE): That is what we are trying to do by this resolution.

Mr. WILLIAMS: I think that with the present shortage of bed space you should try and remedy that first. My fears are that Enmore will only be another place for nurses and doctors. This has been said openly. It may be a wild statement but too often some of these wild statements come true.

In conclusion, I sincerely hope that any sort of development done at Enmore will be done within the framework of creating more bed space and more children's wards and in whatever way the present hospital is deficient in this manner. I think it should not be used to accommodate nurses and doctors. With these few remarks, I am going to take my seat and await more information from the honourable introducer of this resolution.

Mr. HAYNES and Mr. ALLDER entered the House and took their seats.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Sir, it seems to me that anybody in Lower Collymore Rock or its environs with a white elephant can unload it on the Government and the public would be asked to buy it under the guise of hospital expansion. The way this matter has been brought to the Legislature and the public one would think that the Government had some plan for extending the hospital in this area, therefore, this property was held desirable from the Government's point of view in accordance with its programme and it had to try and acquire it. The public would also think that the enterprise which is being run on this property is highly successful, and is doing so well that if you want to dispossess the owner and acquire the property you must pay a good price for it. One would also think that it is so eminently desirable, both on the part of the owners and the Government, that the owners have fixed a very high price on it and that the Government has to resort to compulsory purchase under the Land Acquisition Act in order to obtain it. It is common knowledge that the reverse is true and that the Enmore Hotel, judged by ordinary business standards is unsuccessful and that the owner is willing, indeed anxious to get rid of the property. But because it sounds well to come to the public and say that you have to acquire this hotel under the Land Acquisition Act because it is difficult to get this building at a reasonable price is the only reason I can find that this resolution is before this House. Sir, ask the people who are concerned with the sale of this property what is the highest offer they have received for it other than that of Government and if they are honest, they will tell you that other offers are far below the price offered by Government. They would tell you that in case Government does not buy it, the highest offer from anybody else is far below that which Government is offering. It is just like when Government purchased "Avalon." Government paid £3,000 for that property over the highest offer that was received and on top of that, spent a lot of money on it. Now another white elephant which the owner has to get rid of and wants to get rid of, we are resorting to the Land Acquisition Act to acquire. When we do so, we are sure to buy it for more than its market price.

Sir, I would like to enquire of the Government what it intends to do with the land at Stockton which it owns adjacent to Enmore. The honourable, learned and gallant junior member for St. Lucy raised the question of Stockton. That property is merely a stone's throw from Enmore and the story that you cannot get proper foundations there is really amazing to me. You also say that you cannot get proper foundations on the present site of the General Hospital although we have solid buildings

there for years and nothing has happened to them as far as we know. A road divides Stockton from Enmore and you are saying that so good are the foundations at Enmore that you can erect a building of four or five stories on it. Stockton comprises of a large area and even if some of the land may not be suitable enough for building on, the major part of the area should be.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable member made the statement that we cannot get certain proper foundations at Stockton. I do not know where the honourable member got that statement from. The Government never made that statement. I must correct the honourable member.

Mr. CRAWFORD: I merely said that statement in the same manner as a historian would say that England won the Battle of Waterloo. It is common knowledge why Government has not developed Stockton is because they say there are no proper foundations there. That is within the knowledge of every member of this House.

Mr. SPEAKER: I must tell the honourable member again that that statement has not been given by a Government spokesman. He is the only honourable member that has heard that statement.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Sir, if I said that Napoleon was exiled at St. Helena, that does not mean that I was told so to-day; it is a matter of history that that is so. It is also a matter of history that Stockton, according to the Government, is not suitable to build on because of the impossibility of getting proper foundations.

Mr. SPEAKER: Does the honourable member mean to say that he has gleaned that information elsewhere than this Chamber?

Mr. CRAWFORD: Nothing of the kind, Sir. I gleaned that information in this Chamber.

Mr. SPEAKER: Has the honourable member gleaned that information from what any honourable member of this House said to-day?

Mr. CRAWFORD: Sir, It has been said so in this House on more than one occasion in the past. If we refer to the debate on the purchase of Avalon, we would see that the Colonial Engineer said that it was difficult to get proper foundations at Stockton. As a matter of fact, we have it on record to-day that you cannot get proper foundations on the present site of the General Hospital. In my humble opinion, perhaps, there are parts of the General Hospital area that you can get proper foundations but that may not apply to the entire area. I should believe that the foundations of the part of the hospital from the middle gate in Jemmott's Lane up to the end of the junction of Collymore Rock, should be almost the same as that of Enmore or Avalon. I understand that a former surgeon of the General Hospital, Mr. A. Leacock, said that parts of the hospital could be used for three or four-storied erections for the hospital. I may say, though with a certain amount of trepidation because nobody wants to question the capability of Government officials, especially one that is dead, that in a matter of this sort it might have been advantageous to obtain expert advice of more than one engineer before you make this wholesale condemnation of the entire General Hospital area for building on. I will suggest to Government that the late Mr. Went was a very admirable and capable Colonial Engineer, but for reasons which we need not give to-day nothing can be lost but probably something will be gained if the advice of additional engineers is sought on this matter. There are engineers in the colony who have experience in foundations and their advice should be

solicited before you accept what the late Mr. Went said as final.

Let us get back to the question that the foundations at Stockton are not suitable for the buildings which you want to erect there. Certainly, if you expend public funds for the expressed purpose of hospital expansion, the public is entitled to know why the Government should abandon this site and then acquire some other property in the area. It is not fair to have public funds expended on piecemeal additions. I repeat, so far as I have been told, if this present hotel at Enmore were successful, it would not have been in the market at all, and I doubt whether the Government would have regarded the property suitable for hospital expansion. I do not think that Government would have attempted to acquire it had it not been thrown at them. Nobody is going to suggest that any Government which is alive to its responsibility should see a desirable property in the market near public buildings and make no effort to acquire it, but does anybody really believe with all that was said of a new hospital for this island that it would have been erected on the five acres which are contained at Enmore? Sir, the present hospital site has been condemned on many occasions for expansion of it, but when we spoke in the past of removing the hospital, we spoke of removing it to Waterford where the Government has hundreds of acres. I am not suggesting that Government would have utilised all of that land for the hospital, but you would think that if we think of erecting a new hospital, it would be set in the midst of grounds which are appropriate for a hospital and which would produce a sort of atmosphere you would want for a hospital. Nobody would think that you would put a hospital at Enmore which is near houses and the Constitution River Swamp. At any time you think in terms of a new hospital, you would think of an entirely different place than Enmore. It is absolutely absurd to think that you can put a hospital there, if you acquire the property. If you put patients there, it would merely be a piecemeal addition to the hospital but it would be of no use for conversion into an up-to-date and commodious hospital.

Sir, instead of running all around Collymore Rock and relieving people of white elephants, the Government should select a site which would lend itself to construction of a proper hospital and should begin as soon as today to construct some of the buildings on it. Government could start with one or two buildings and continue to erect more as time goes by. In consideration of Enmore for expansion of the present hospital, you must bear in mind that it is not the same side of the road as the present hospital. If Enmore is really to be used as an adjunct of the hospital, for facilities at the General Hospital to be really available to this annexe at Enmore, it seems to me that you would have to block the street. You will either have to block the street or run an elevated project across the road to connect the two sites. I cannot imagine that you are going to duplicate at Enmore your operating room and other general facilities which you have at the General Hospital. It would not be worth your while for the small area which you have at Enmore. Sir, all you can do at Enmore is to provide a few more beds. It can only be an annexe. You will have to cross the public highway to get to it, therefore, there is nothing desirable about it. Sir, we have provided a certain amount of money and have authorised Government to go ahead under the Five Year Plan to lay the basis for future hospital expansion, but nobody would think that you should wander all around Collymore Rock to give us something more hodge podge than we have. Government should get a proper site and

start and lay plans either for an additional hospital or a new hospital which would entirely replace the existing one. There is no reason why we cannot have in this island a General Hospital, perhaps more modern and equally commodious as elsewhere..

I do not know what area of land there is at Avalon but it is surprising when considering the price you have paid for that property that you cannot get there an area which would give you space for 60 or 80 beds on three floors. In other words, does the honourable introducer of this resolution want to tell us to-day that at Avalon there is not sufficient available land on which you can put another building which would provide the same amount of accommodation as you would expect to get at Enmore? Personally, I am not in favour of acquiring this property at Enmore and I am going to vote against this resolution. In Bay Street, aside of the Eye Hospital, Government owns a large area of land. I do not know the exact area but it cannot be less than thirty or forty thousand square feet. We are told that it is to provide a window to the sea. We all appreciate it for that purpose, but the question is: can we afford available land like that adjacent to the General Hospital and aside of the Eye Hospital to be lying idle? If you want it for a window to the sea, you can still build on the site. What should be done with that open area is to erect a three-storied building on it, the bottom story being only columns to support the two upper stories. Erecting such a building, one would still be able to look directly from the street on to the sea. If you utilise that area in this respect, it would give you more than 60 or 80 beds for patients and it would be in close proximity of the General Hospital. It is already Government lands; you will not have to buy it. It only needs a little imagination. There is absolutely nothing to be lost by going on this open spot and erecting a three-storied building leaving the bottom story open to provide your window to the sea. You will be able to provide on the two upper stories for sufficient beds to relieve the congestion at the General Hospital until such time as you can build a new hospital to replace the existing one. I say again that the only reason for buying Enmore is because the owner wants to get rid of it. He may have paid for it more than it was worth, but the only reason why we should buy it is if we can get it for a song. Sir, when we resort to the Land Acquisition Act to purchase compulsorily Enmore, with the experience of the operation of that Act, we are either absolutely lacking of the most elementary dictates of business sense or we do not care how much Government funds we squander so long as we provide some extenuating circumstance which may appear as an excuse for putting 82 children in one room at the General Hospital and other such deplorable conditions.

I believe you could have supported the acquisition of Enmore if there were enough area to take all the congestion at the General Hospital and what will be wanting for future expansion. You have to justify any public expenditure of money in the light of commonsense and in the light of some sensible responsibility for the action on your part.

Mr. GODDARD: Mr. Speaker, I think that in the absence of a clear policy for the expansion of the General Hospital, there is a lot of questions which we would like to ask. We have been making bites at the expansion of this hospital for a long number of years. We have been hearing before this resolution came down to this Chamber that this site at Enmore was to be acquired for nurses; then came another rumour that it was wanted to house the doctors; but now we have been told that it is to be acquired for the expansion of the hospital proper. I

think that a very clear and comprehensive statement should be given by the honourable introducer of this resolution in order to clear up the atmosphere on this question. It is time now that some planned policy should be reached on this question. There can be no complaint about the granting of money for this purpose, because the House has already expressed its willingness to grant sums of money to improve this Hospital and I may say that though a long time has elapsed since that decision, very little progress has been made. Instead, every now and then, Government is coming in a piecemeal fashion to add this and that to the present hospital.

Over a year, we have been told that Stockton is to be made into a beautiful place for the doctors, but up to now, we have heard nothing more about it. The honourable junior member for St. Thomas at that time assured us that something will be done. If the policy of the Government is to expand, bit by bit the hospital on its present site, let the members of Government make up their minds about it and start ahead with something concrete. If Government is going to acquire this 5½ acres at Enmore for the expansion of the hospital proper, decide on that. I will go further and say that 5½ acres is sufficient to make a start; it is more than what the present hospital contains. If you must go across the street, do so. You have bought Avalon which is across the street, now you are trying to acquire Enmore which is on the other side across the street. If your policy is to expand the hospital on its present site, make up your minds on one comprehensive policy of what you intend to do.

I do feel that the hospital can be developed on its present site. It is one thing on which I always agreed. I always felt that patients convalescing and those that do not need surgical attention can be taken care of anywhere in close proximity to the hospital proper. You can appoint some medical staff to attend to these cases. If the Government intends to develop the hospital on its present site, let us get ahead with that.

Sir, I see in the addendum to this resolution that it is proposed to purchase this property from out of Colonial Development and Welfare Funds allocated to this island but the honourable junior member for St. Thomas has made no mention of it. I therefore must ask: have any approach been made yet to C.D. & W.? If you are going to approach C.D. & W. for funds for this purpose you should go in a big way; you should also have some comprehensive plan to show what you intend to do. I wonder if Government has a plan yet of what it proposes to do. People have been waiting a long time to see a commencement in the expansion of the hospital. By now we should be told what size buildings you intend to put up and how much beds there will be in each building. All those sort of things should be finalised by now. We want specific facts now.

I do hope that the honourable introducer of this resolution will reply to these questions and let us know the answers. Let us know what progress has been made with the bungalows which were proposed to be erected at Stockton for the doctors. Let us know if this scheme has been abandoned because the foundations there have been found to be faulty. We would also like to know whether the price that Government has offered for the purchase of Enmore and that which the owners want are at great variance. I too do not like to resort to this Land Acquisition Act to purchase something for Government unless it is absolutely necessary. Is it necessary to do so in this case? If it is, you prob-

ably will be paying more to acquire this property than if you acquire it by private treaty.

Mr. LEWIS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that this is one of the most peculiar items that I have ever had to consider in this House of Assembly. We are going to use the Land Acquisition Act to compulsory purchase the property of Enmore in an instance where I understand that the owner of the land has offered it to the Government. That is what I have heard.

(A VOICE): That is not true.

Mr. LEWIS: As I have understood it, this is not like in another instance where the Government wanted a Fish Shed at a particular place and had to approach the owners of the places in that district to sell them their properties. My understanding of this is that the owner of Enmore has offered it to the Government before the Government itself had set up a Committee to review the proposals for the extension of the hospital.

Another very peculiar aspect of the matter is this. Some honourable members have mentioned about the purchase of Avalon, and I remember well that at the time of the debate on the purchase of Avalon, the site of Stockton was proposed by Government to be used for the erection of bungalows or flats; therefore, I do not know where the honourable senior member for St. Philip got the idea that the Government stated that there were no proper foundations at Stockton. There might not be suitable foundations for very large buildings.

Mr. CRAWFORD: I rise on a point of explanation, Sir. His last statement is exactly what I said.

Mr. LEWIS: Sir, I do not think that the honourable senior member for St. Philip can justify this remark because the Government has proposed to build at Stockton. The peculiar thing about this matter is that Government came to this House with proposals for buying the house and land at Avalon and at the same time for utilising the land that was bought at Stockton by an old hospital Board. If you read your newspaper daily, you would have seen that the Governor-in-Executive Committee appointed a Committee to review the extension of the General Hospital at the very time that you know that this House had considered building bungalows at Stockton for the accommodation of the staff and of some of the staff vacating their premises in the hospital compound and those premises to be utilised for a hospital proper. Well Sir, I have made enquiries and I understand that that Committee has not even met yet. Therefore, if you analyse the situation carefully, you will see that you have proposals for extending the hospital; you have appointed a Hospital Planning Committee and in between you have somebody offering you a property which you have stated that you are acquiring for additional beds for patients. You would expect, if you view this transaction in its true perspective, that the people who are thought competent to advise the Government on the re-organisation of the Hospital should express an opinion on this site. That seems to follow inevitably. That is what everybody would expect. But has that happened? What I see is that three things are happening together. One is that the House has sanctioned proposals for expansion of the hospital on its present site; (2) the Government has appointed a Committee to review the whole matter; and (3) before the first meeting of the Planning Committee, the Government is buying a building under the Land Acquisition Act. Sir, the three things do not make sense. I do not mean to say that it is not a good thing to expand the hospital to that

site, although I do not think that it is a good site to erect a three-storied building to house sick people. It must be remembered that Barbados is not out of the hurricane area and you should not put sick people up three or four stories when you are in the hurricane area. Sir, if you come to ask the House to sanction the compulsory purchase of this property at the very time that you have a Committee sitting on the expansion of the hospital, one would expect that the Committee would have met to make a recommendation for the approval of the site and then you would seek to acquire it. It does seem then that you are acquiring this site because somebody has offered it to you and that you are acquiring it by compulsory purchase because you cannot agree with that person on the price. It is certainly a most peculiar case of compulsory acquisition.

I think this Government is in a most awkward position with regard to the acquiring of Enmore. Government has just bought Avalon just below Enmore at what I regard as a very high price. Another property above Enmore has recently been sold for a big price because the Ursuline Convent could not afford to lose it. Government is now seeking to buy this property of Enmore which is situated between two properties which were recently sold for very high prices. On top of that, Government knows that when it uses the Land Acquisition Act to acquire any land compulsorily that it pays more than what it intended to pay in the first instance. I need not remind Government that they had to abandon using this Act so as to get a better deal when it was about to acquire the land at Eagle Hall to put a market there. In my opinion, Government has not made out a case for the compulsory purchase of this property of Enmore. It seems to me that Government has not a leg to stand on in its attempt to acquire this property. There is only one thing that this House has been told by the honourable introducer and what is stated in the Addendum and that is that there is a disagreement over the price.

I say this by way of protest. When somebody is asking you to pay too much for land, when you resort to this Act to acquire it, you will find yourself the victim of your own action when you get to the Court. I think the honourable junior member for St. Thomas should have stated the price which the Government offered. He should also have stated how far Government disagreed with the price of the owner. Certainly it would be better to disclose that so that the public would read it and see that you did not intend to give the amount that was asked. I have heard that the owner is asking £17,000 for this property and that somebody has offered £12,000 and Government has offered £15,000. I say again that Government should state their position fairly and clearly before the public because Government is about to initiate ministerial responsibility. We have got into the habit of giving Government blank cheques and it is known that the business of the Executive is secret. It was only through questions of mine that this House was made aware of what Government paid for a building out of the funds of which it had to administrate. You saw the big splash in the headlines that Government had bought that property, but the one thing you did not see was the price for which it was purchased. I am warning members of the Government that they are about to accept full responsibility and that they should be more than careful with this matter of acquiring Enmore because when the whole matter comes to light, they are going to be charged with conniving with members of the public. The facts which are

known in this transaction makes very peculiar reading and there are people behind the scenes that are putting the four members of the Executive on the spot in matters of this sort. I say again that the Government has come down at a most peculiar time with this resolution. The Government has a Committee sitting on the expansion of the hospital and within a stone's throw of the Hospital is this property which has been offered to Government. Before the Committee has sat, Government comes down with this resolution to purchase this property compulsorily. Besides seeming very unfair to the members of that Committee, the impression is given that the members of the Government are the people behind this transaction. The public can come to no other conclusion. I, myself, was of the opinion that this Committee had sat on the question and had made recommendations but I have been made to understand that the Committee has not sat at all. When the Committee sits, it may say that Enmore is the most unsuitable site on which to extend the hospital.

Sir, I do not like this resolution at all. I am going to ask the Government to postpone the matter until it gets some more information. In the meantime it should invite this Committee to go and view the site and let the Committee put in an interim report. I think that this House is entitled to know why the plans for the extension of the hospital have not been sanctioned already by this Committee or if the plans have broken down. It seems to me that the Government has not fully made up its mind on the hospital and that all that it is doing is to walk around buying up properties at high prices and setting a price for the sale of land which is not helpful to the community at all. I well remember that the Government was already in the unfortunate position of renting a house for so much money that it had to abandon the rental of it and give living-out allowances to the nurses who occupied it because the rent was too exorbitant. Now by its setting a standard in the purchasing of land, it is doing a grave disservice to the community and not only that, but Government is purchasing under circumstances which I think it should not.

Mr. BARROW entered the House and took his seat.

The next thing is this: you have Committees in connection with the Hospital and Committees for everything being appointed, and it is very strange that in the appointment of these Committees, especially where the expenditure of money is concerned, you do not see a member of this House, except a member of the Executive Committee, on these Committees. In a democracy at least a member of the Opposition could be put on a Committee instead of putting two or three members from the Other Place and one member from this House, who is the Minister in charge of the particular matter. And in this very transaction the Minister was out of the island at the last stage. The honourable junior member for St. Thomas, who introduced this Resolution has only now returned to the island between the appointment of the Committee and the proposed purchase of a place without the knowledge of the Committee. The honourable member cannot say that the Committee recommended this proposition; the honourable member who is the only member of the House on this Committee, was out of the island from the time the Government was compulsorily acquiring this land. (Mr. ADAMS: Not true). Well it was hurriedly done when he came back. Let the honourable member contradict that. The honourable junior member for St. Thomas has only just returned to the island and this Resolution was brought in a week after. I

cannot say that six months ago they decided to acquire this place compulsorily. However, I am saying that the Government has to be very careful if it wants to extend the Hospital and this is the only way it has decided to do it. It is good to know that the Government has come to some decision about the matter, but the way the Government has come to this decision is not at all complimentary to it.

Mr. BARROW entered the House and took his seat.

Mr. F. L. WALCOTT: I am not dealing with the aspects of this Resolution; I am dealing with the remarks which the honourable junior member for the City has made here with some reference to me as a member of the Executive Committee. I want to say that I have the greatest respect for the honourable member's integrity; knowing him as I do I regard him as one whose integrity I would not challenge. The honourable member made a statement to the effect that the reason aback of the acquisition of this property is that the owner of it seems to be in some financial difficulty, and apparently the four members of the Executive Committee were aware of that. The honourable member said that on the eve of the introduction of Ministerial Status the members of the Executive Committee must be careful because as sure as two and two make four anyone who is dealing with a matter such as this, would find it very difficult to explain the position to the public. Just as I have the greatest respect for the honourable member's integrity, I have the same respect for members of the Executive Committee other than myself. With all that has been said about the honourable Leader of the House and his faults, I do not think that anyone has ever said that one of his faults has been graft; and if the honourable introducer of this Resolution can be regarded as not being a brilliant politician, he certainly cannot be regarded as being lacking in integrity and honesty. I would not be associated with anybody who would, in the slightest way, think of buying property with the object of helping anybody who is selling his property. I should like to say that such statements as are being made, are doing more harm than anything else in this community. I do not want to make too strong comments on things which should be dealt with elsewhere, but these are the jibes of the irresponsible against responsible people. I am sure that the honourable junior member for the City has no evidence to prove that the members of the Executive Committee had any motives other than the highest in their decision to purchase this property. To insinuate that this property is being bought with improper motives is to reduce honourable members of the Executive Committee to being the biggest crooks you could ever think about. It is true that anyone who is lacking in integrity will look after his own ends, but we are not here to see what we can put into our own pockets or into the pockets of anybody else. If anyone thinks that the Hospital should not be extended to "Enmore", then let him say that; but let him not make any insinuations against anybody's integrity.

Mr. LEWIS: I have issued a warning to the Executive Committee in the light of what I have heard about this matter and what I heard in the House to-day. I have given chronologically certain things I want honourable members to be careful about; I have not accused them of doing anything.

Mr. ADAMS: Over and over again the honourable member accuses the Government of being stupid but sometimes he goes over the border-line and repeats slanders with the intention of himself confirming them and letting us know what is in his mind. That is what the honourable member

has done this afternoon and what he has done more than once. The honourable member who introduced this Resolution is replying for the Government; therefore I am not replying on behalf of the Government. I have the gift of sleeping, thank God; I can sleep when stupidity is being talked. The honourable junior member for the City has the unfortunate habit of accusing us of being easily fooled, but accusations of that sort are an indication of the person who makes them, not against the Government. The honourable member is in the habit of saying "I hear so and so"; he knows that he is going out of politics and all the dirtiness he can do he is doing it in his last session in the House. I am not trespassing on what the honourable junior member for St. Thomas will say on behalf of the Government except to remind honourable members that we have not hidden anything from this House. We said in the Estimates, by implication, at any rate, that we are doing these things at the General Hospital, and we said explicitly that we are not removing the Hospital from Jemmott's Lane. I did not believe in purchasing "Enmore" because I know the cost of land in that neighbourhood; but where else could we buy but the closest spot of land? I went to "Enmore" with a member of the medical profession who was absolutely opposed to that place until he saw the spot; he then encouraged us to buy it considering its proximity to the General Hospital, its being level and many other things. We had been condemning the place before we had seen it.

I thought it necessary to make that explanation; the Government as a Government unitedly and collectively has come to this decision and has brought the matter before the House. I had no intention of speaking because the matter is in the hands of the honourable junior member for St. Thomas who will reply to any point he thinks he should reply to. I got up to ask honourable members to bear in mind that the sort of slanderous talk by the honourable junior member for the City goes into the Press, and the fact that we have sat in silence is not to be taken as an indication that we are guilty of anything. To remain in silence is sometimes a mistake and I think we should publicly deny an accusation as soon as it has been made.

Mr. HAYNES: I do not think the Government would go in for this expenditure without first giving the matter serious consideration. Knowing the cost of constructing buildings to-day I say it is far cheaper to alter a building than to erect one. But what really brought me to my feet is the footnote in the addendum to the Resolution which tells us that we are getting some money from Colonial Development and Welfare Funds. Every time you take up your newspaper you can read that British Guiana, Jamaica or some other colony is getting money from these Funds and you never hear anything more about the matter. I am told on good authority that if we were to ask for some of this money a lot of our development schemes would be carried out. I am hoping that this initial venture will be followed up.

Mr. ALLDER: I am hoping that those honourable members who have expressed themselves against this Resolution will support a motion for the postponement of the Resolution for six months. I intend to make such a motion and I have reasonable grounds for so doing. To the owner of this property I would say: "How sweet to the storm-stricken seems a safe harbour?" It is well known that this property was on the market for sale months ago and private investors were reluctant to purchase it; even the owner of the property admits that he wanted to sell it some months ago and

if that is so it seems to be impossible for any reasonable argument to be put forward for the compulsory acquisition of this property. If the owner of this property is desirous of selling it I do not see why the Government should attempt to purchase it by force. What is more, I have heard that the price offered for this property was as low as £12,000. Whenever an attempt is made to fleece the Government, you have a lot of specious argument being advanced to justify the throwing away of the taxpayers' money. It is not the first time that we have heard such points raised in this House when properties of this sort were for sale; but even if the owner of this property was not trying to get it sold months ago and private investors refused to buy it, I would still object at this time to giving authority to the Executive Committee for the purchase of the property for the purpose of extending the Hospital. The reason for my objection is that the properties which the Governor-in-Executive Committee owns are sufficient to carry out any amount of extension to the Hospital. The Executive Committee have shown a lack of capacity to make proper use of their existing properties around the Hospital. These properties have already been mentioned and I daresay that everybody knows how long the Government owned them and how long has been the delay to make use of them so as to alleviate the congestion which now obtains at the Hospital. The only people who would resort to the indiscriminate acquisition of adjoining properties in this way without making any effort to utilise them would be the present Government. I think that "Stockton" was bought over 10 years ago for the purpose of relieving the then congestion at the Hospital; to-day all the landmarks to that property have been removed and all that are left there are bushes and crabs and whosoever will can go in and enjoy themselves. It seems to me that the only ambition which the Government has is to spend money indiscriminately and not with the object of seeing that the benefits from such investments come back to the people within as short a time as possible. No private investor would spend thousands of pounds in acquiring property and then allow it to go into ruin; he would try to get back something on his investment.

The reason why I am opposing this Resolution is that it is my feeling and the feeling of other people, that the Government is only purchasing this property because its owner is selling it. If the owner of this property had been continuing to carry on a lucrative business he would never have been seeking a purchaser of the property; business has failed hopelessly and therefore the owner of this property has been running around with his agents to get anybody who has the ability to purchase it, to do so. Although the Government finds it difficult to give us sufficient information as to this transaction I have heard the figures offered by private individuals and also those which the present owner expects the Government to pay. It is all going to end up with the Government calling in an arbitrator and the result by arbitration has been, on many occasions, many times worse than if you had bargained with the owner or his agent directly for the acquisition of the property. We have had experience as to these matters in this colony.

The honourable senior member for St. Philip has raised a very interesting point — a point which was uppermost in my mind for some time — as regards the extension of the Hospital. I have often said that the delay in relieving the congestion at the Hospital could only come about as a result of the preference for wickedness. One

sees that an individual who wants to extend his property or construct a new one, and who has the capacity which the Government has, always succeeds in a very short while, but with a Government administration comprised I suppose of all the best and biggest brains there are, it takes 15 or 20 years, perhaps until Doomsday, and then nothing is done. The present Hospital could carry another storey quite easily; you do not want any scientist to tell you that. I have visited the Worthing coast and seen buildings carrying two and three storeys erected on the sand and there is no sand at Jemmotts Lane. However, it has always been said that the best brains are not always found in the highest places. If I were in the place of the honourable senior member for St. Joseph, I would not come every now and then and ask for funds to purchase property and then nothing is done with it; of course a Resolution like this will pass this House comprised as it is, but if this Chamber were comprised differently honourable members would not saddle the Executive Committee with more than what their capacity affords them to handle. At the present time the Executive Committee have shown a woeful lack of ability to utilise the buildings and properties adjoining the Hospital for the improvement of services and accommodation. The honourable member knows that long before the last General Elections two and three people were sleeping in a bed at the Hospital; he knows that a child died as a result of two and three children being put in a bed, but up to now he has done nothing to relieve the situation. The honourable member has succeeded in reaching a pinnacle and he succeeds in living there; but I cannot say that he is the politician the public thinks he is; otherwise things would not go from bad to worse continually. I believe in the results of a man's efforts, not so much in his personality.

When we were dealing with the last Estimates the honourable member asked for a blank cheque for extending the Hospital; he realises the control he has in this House but honourable members should know that a Resolution like this should not be given the blessing of this Chamber.

At this stage Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER took the Chair.

Mr. ALLDER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, — I am saying that the present properties which the Government owns at Bay Street can be extended to accommodate just as many patients as are being accommodated now. There is a window up there which is definitely a very large area and which could be utilised. I am not so interested in seeing the sea; I am interested in the accommodation of the infirm so that they can be restored to their feet. By constructing a three-storeyed building at least you could accommodate 200 or 300 more people; I am sure you could build a storey of a lighter structure on each of the existing buildings and you will have the same space per ward as you have on the ground floor. If two-foot blocks have been put in the bottom structure you need not put them in the top structure; 12-inch or 18-inch stones would be sufficient to provide for another storey on top of the present buildings. Of course the Treasury is there and it is easy to say: "Taxpayers, we want money." And every time they spend the money badly and call for more, they are putting more money out of circulation; they are doing harm to the unemployed and even the employed. It is of no use using power because you have it in your hand; the point is to use it intelligently; if they had to find the money themselves they would not spend it at all. Another thing is that finding the

money to buy this building is not all: I do not agree with the honourable junior member for St. Andrew when he claims that you can use this building as it is. (Mr. ADAMS: He did not say that). Apparently this building is very old and the little additions which have been made to it from time to time would not make it adequate for use as a Hospital; it would be a question of paying £17,000 for the building and then developing it. Of course, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know how much the Government has to pay when it is carrying out construction work; can't hon. members see that the present Administration has bitten off more than it can chew? Any sensible businessman would attempt to utilise the property which he has already and when he sees what is wanted then he would acquire more property; but the Administration just wants to own property and the only people that that policy benefits are those who have properties to sell. The honourable senior member for St. Joseph cannot say that anybody has benefited from the purchase of "Stockton" 15 years ago, except the agent or solicitor who sold it, and the owner; for all these years thousands of pounds of the taxpayers' money have been lying idle and to no benefit at all. If at that time the money were intelligently spent the community might have been less pauperised than it is to-day.

Another point is this; it is just a week or two ago that we read of a Committee being appointed by the Head of the Administration for the purpose of recommending ways and means of extending the facilities at the Hospital. (Dr. CUMMINS: No such thing). The honourable member is Chairman of the Hospital Board and I believe it would be better if he were absent from such Committees. I am sure I read that the Head of the Administration appointed a Committee comprised of people who are always put on Committees from which the public cannot see anything being done. If this Committee has been appointed and has not yet made any recommendations to the Administration, then it is stupid, in my opinion, for us to talk about giving the Executive Committee permission for the acquisition of additional property. I think that this Resolution should not have been brought forward until this Committee made its recommendations because, as an honourable member has already pointed out, after permission is given for the acquisition of this property, the views of the Committee might be quite different from that, but a large sum of money would have already been spent.

I quite agree that the manner in which Bills and Resolutions are presented here by the Government is different from the manner in which they are presented in the Other Place; on many occasions I have had to leave here frustrated because of the lack of information on matters. I have to wait until the same measures are introduced in the Other Place to get information about them because the Officer who handles Government business in the Other Place realises his responsibility in the matter different from the members of the Government in this House. However, in this important matter which pertains to the Hospital and which calls for the expenditure of a large sum of money, not only should we be serious in expending the money asked for, but we should see that these areas which are being acquired are most suitable for the purpose for which they are intended. I am discussing this Resolution with a knowledge of what is intended by the Government to be paid for this property.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the honourable member suggesting what the Government is willing to pay for the property in spite of the fact that it is going through the process of compulsory acquisition?

Mr. ALLDER: The reason why the Government is purchasing this property is due to the fact that previous negotiations have broken down; how far has the Government gone in bargaining with the present owner? What was the amount asked for this property? I thought that this Chamber was the place where the most information is to be given because we are directly responsible to the people whereas the members of the Other Place are not. However, as I said, I am moving that the consideration of this Resolution be postponed for six months. The honourable senior member for St. Joseph has asked *sotto voce* if we should postpone the consideration of this Resolution until four persons are sleeping in one bed: well I say that since three persons were sleeping in a bed the honourable member has not done anything. I feel that if the consideration of this Resolution were postponed, that would still be leading towards the desired end: if we give the Government permission to purchase this property now I am sure that two years hence the place will be in a condition worse than that in which it is now. What is more, the Government will have to spend money in employing somebody to be in charge of the property; but if we do not give our assent to the compulsory purchase of this property, that will force the Administration to develop the existing properties to capacity and then we will have a clear vision of what is needed. I feel that if the consideration of this Resolution is postponed it will only cause a longer measure of suffering to the owner of this property who wants to relieve himself. If in another 10 or 15 years the Government feels that this property is needed in the service of the people, it can still be acquired: if the Government does not buy the property now you will be surprised to see how much less it will be sold for, because there is no business which can be carried on there successfully. The people who used to live in these mansions are now running from them; it is only the people who have become rich recently who want to live in these mansions. I hope that the Government, after hearing the opinions expressed by honourable members on this healthy side of the House where men's minds are as free as the air they breathe, will really change its mind. I notice that if anything is brought here, even it is something for cutting off men's heads, there is a calm resolve even against the inner conscience of some honourable members, to see that men's heads are cut off by an act of the all-powerful Government. I am appealing to honourable members to support the motion for the postponement of this Resolution. It is not true to say that a postponement of this Resolution will cause more people to sleep in one bed at the Hospital: the Government has more in its hands than it can really deal with. I beg to move that the consideration of this Resolution be postponed for six months.

Mr. J. C. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker,—We as the elected representatives of the people, have a direct interest in the manner in which the problem of health is handled. I should like to say that any measure which comes before this honourable House merits our careful consideration, but we are not compelled to cast prudence to the wind and rush madly into the acquisition of properties for the extension of the Hospital. We have it stated in the addendum that funds are available in respect of the Hospital and still there are three people sleeping in a bed. To what use are these funds being put? I do not think that the acquisition of this property is the answer to this problem, and with the information which has been given to us this afternoon, I feel that the Government should accept the motion for the postponement of this

Resolution. I am going to second the motion for the postponement of the Resolution and I am expressing my views in the matter. I feel that this Government should make a more comprehensive survey of this Institution beforehand and get down to brass tacks and do something directly. I and I presume that in this case it is none other than agree with some of the suggestions made by my colleague; I agree that the Government has sufficient room at the Hospital so that an extension can be carried out without acquiring this new property. The hon. junior member for St. Thomas who introduced this Resolution has to satisfy us about this Resolution; the allegations which have been made in respect of this Resolution and some of the revelations which were brought out, demand that the Government postpone the consideration of this Resolution and give us more information in this matter so as to satisfy the enquires of hon. members on this side of the Table. Without any more ado, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to second the motion for the postponement of this Resolution.

Mr. TALMA: I had no intention of joining in this debate, but now I cannot help making a few points as far as my position is concerned. It is easy to criticise, but to criticise constructively is not so easy. I have listened to some constructive criticism in some cases and to some very destructive criticism in some others. We know the difficulty which is being experienced at the Hospital and to adopt a *laissez-faire* policy will cause greater difficulty to be experienced. We do not want to cause any situation to arise and cause chaos; if that is the intention of hon. members, you can well understand the nature of their contribution to this debate.

At this stage Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair.

Mr. TALMA: I was saying, Mr. Speaker, that it is quite easy to criticise, but it is not easy for many people to offer constructive criticism. All or most honourable members fully realise the grave inconvenience which is being suffered at the General Hospital and I take it that most honourable members have a genuine desire for something to be done and done as quickly as possible to relieve such a bad state of affairs. When the suggestion is made that a property adjacent to the Hospital should be acquired, it is quite easy to say that there is enough available land in the area and there is no necessity to acquire more land. It is all well and good to say that the window to the sea should not be there; but in my humble opinion, the majority of the people of this island are satisfied with this window being there. The suggestion of building there and still having that window to the sea is not very practicable in my opinion; the majority of honourable members agree that additional accommodation is needed at the Hospital and if that is so, the purchase of this property is desirable because it is adjacent to the Hospital, it is a suitable place to be acquired and it has been accepted by people who have a knowledge of matters of this sort. If the Government had not taken this step probably some honourable member would have brought forward an Address asking for the purchase of "Enmore" and probably he would criticise the Government for not purchasing it. Today you do something and you are criticised; if you do nothing you are also criticised. The members of the Opposition agree that something should be done in this matter of additional accommodation at the Hospital and now that something is being done they say that this Resolution should be postponed! We are doing something in keeping with the provision of the Five Year Plan in respect of the extension of the

Hospital; now we are implementing the proposal there is opposition to it.

I should like to say that the Land Acquisition Act is only enforced for settling the question as to the price of a property; if the owner will not sell the property he is forced to do so. The guiding factor in all these matters is the question of price. I just mention that because of what is stated in the addendum; I feel that the question of extending the facilities at the Hospital is an urgent one and the question of the acquisition of land at Waterford or anywhere else might take quite a long time to be accomplished. In any part of the world a hospital must be in the heart of the City; it has to be centrally situated because in case of casualties it must be within easy reach of the people. If the Government is acquiring this property for the extension of the Hospital I see no reason why anyone who is genuinely interested in the people should be opposing this matter in the manner in which certain hon. members have done this afternoon. I feel happy to know that something is being done to help the poor, distressed people at the Hospital; now that the development programme has been started immediate relief will be brought to these people.

Mr. VAUGHAN: This is an issue with which I attempted to be in sympathy at first for the reason that the congestion at the Hospital is something which should not be tolerated by any Government with any pretension to carry out social services. I was persuaded at first by this Resolution and I accepted the position that here at last is an opportunity which seems to bring relief to the disgraceful conditions at the Hospital, but that is one side. If that were the only alternative I would still have to stand by my persuasion; but it is not. The Government has property at "Stockton" and I must be given sound reasons as to why "Stockton" cannot be built upon so as to provide the accommodation which is so necessary at the Hospital. From month to month the Government is acquiring properties and leaving them useless; now the Government wants to acquire "Enmore" which will take quite as long to be rebuilt, and the Government will spend as much money in rebuilding it, as new buildings at "Stockton" will require. I am therefore no longer persuaded that the purchase of "Enmore" is essential for the relief of the disgraceful conditions at the Hospital; Every day of my life and even up to today I can hear about conditions at the Hospital; I have a conviction that if the Hospital were controlled by a Statutory Board the conditions there would be better. The Government cannot find any rational excuse as to why conditions at the Hospital must continue as they are. I have agreed that the Hospital must be built up within the same area and I do not see why the Government cannot build at "Stockton" which is already there in the area. For the reason I have given I am supporting the motion of the hon. senior member for St. John.

Mr. LEWIS: I am speaking on the amendment. If the amendment were to the effect that the further consideration of the Resolution be postponed so that the matter can be brought up in the near future, or if the postponement were moved for the purpose of allowing the Government to make a report on the particular site, I would be willing to vote for it; but to say that this postponement must take six months is, to my mind, unreasonable. It is acting unfairly with the situation as it exists with the owner of the property; if it is known that the Government has expressed its intention to purchase this property compulsorily, the gentleman will be unable in the meantime to get anybody to purchase his property. Somebody outside the Government might want to purchase

this property and how can the owner attempt to negotiate for the purchase of the property for six months if an amendment of this nature is agreed to? If the consideration of this Resolution were postponed for the purpose of enabling the Government to make a report on this property or something like that, I would be willing to say that the Government might invite its Committee to visit this place and let the House have a report on it. I am expressing my opinion on the amendment which is before the House, because the Act under which we are considering this Resolution says that certain preliminaries have to be gone through and I understand that those preliminaries have been gone through and complied with. It has therefore been notified at large that the Government wants to purchase this property and is willing to pay the price for it as fixed by law. In my opinion a postponement of this Resolution for six months is merely to persecute the owner of this property.

Mr. ALLDER: I am asking leave to amend the time limit in the motion I have made.

Mr. COX: I object.

The question that leave be granted the hon. member to amend his motion was put and resolved in the negative.

A division was taken as follows:—

Ayes: MESSRS. WILLIAMS, LEWIS, BARROW, ALLDER, CRAWFORD, J. C. MOTTLEY, VAUGHAN and GODDARD—8.

Noes: MESSRS. SMITH, HAYNES, MAPP, Mrs. BOURNE, MESSRS. TALMA, HOLDER, F. L. WALCOTT, ADAMS, COX and Dr. CUMMINS—10.

Dr. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker,—This whole debate this afternoon has been founded on rumour. The first honourable member who spoke said clearly that he had been hearing this and hearing that; and the honourable junior member for the City has also said so too. They have all admitted to base, false and wild rumours and have made false allegations. Honourable members should be sure of what they are speaking on.

In the Five Year Plan, the sum of \$950,000 has been included for meeting the cost of various improvements and extensions at the General Hospital, including the provision of 100 additional beds, a new kitchen and laundry, equipment, a new mortuary, etc. Again in the Annual Estimates an amount of \$250,000 has been included under Capital Expenditure for work during 1953-54 on these improvements and extensions. You will remember, Sir, probably a year or so ago, that an announcement was made in this House of Assembly as regards the extension of the General Hospital. It was proposed at that time to build a hospital on the present site. It was also proposed to demolish the houses of the resident staff on the grounds of the present hospital and to build flats for them at Stockton. It was also proposed to buy a bit of land extending from River Road down Wellington Street for the extension of the laundry and kitchen. All these proposals were mentioned in this House. What has happened since? As I said earlier this afternoon, the late Mr. T. E. Went since those proposals were made, sank trial holes to test for foundations on the proposed present site for the building of this 100-bed block and those trial holes went as far as 13 and 14 feet deep without coming to a proper foundation. Quite naturally, that site was abandoned, and for the very good reasons that if you continued to build on this site, you will have to put more money underground for foundations than you will have to put above the ground for hospital wards. Consequently, that was

abandoned and the Government started to look around for a proper site in the vicinity, if possible, on which to build this proposed extension. It is true that during that time this Enmore site was offered to the Government and I do not see anything wrong in its being offered to the Government. Some honourable members think that it is something dishonest in the owner offering this site to the Government and the Government investigating it. The Government has nothing to do with whether the owner is in debt or cannot pay his mortgage or any of the tripe that I have heard this afternoon. That does not concern the Government. What concerned the Government at that time was that it wanted a site to build a hospital. Enmore was offered to the Hospital Board and one afternoon, the Acting Colonial Engineer, the Medical Superintendent of the General Hospital, the Secretary and myself went and visited the site. We went all over the house and all over the grounds. The Acting Colonial Engineer expressed his opinion as to the condition of the house and the Medical Superintendent was there to say whether he thought the house could be converted into wards to alleviate the immediate congestion of the General Hospital. He so decided and the Colonial Engineer thought that the house was suitable and he estimated that a sum of \$4,000 would be needed to convert the house as it stood into suitable wards for housing patients and that it would have floor space for 50 or 60 beds. It was therefore felt that by acquiring Enmore and making it suitable for receiving patients, it would be relieving the congestion at the General Hospital in this way. Under present day methods of surgery, within a few days,—probably five days,—a patient that has undergone surgical attention is able to get out of bed and though it would not be suitable for him to leave the hospital, it was thought that this convalescing patient could be removed to Enmore and there left to recuperate thus leaving room at the General Hospital for the receiving of more patients. That was decided by the Medical Superintendent and as I said, the Acting Colonial Engineer declared that the house was quite suitable, sound, without any blemishes, and that it would take in the vicinity of \$4,000 to convert it into wards for the purpose needed. The Acting Colonial Engineer went over the grounds and in his opinion then said that it would be suitable for further building. We were not satisfied with that and we asked him to go next day with his usual paraphernalia to sink these trial holes and he reported that the foundations ranged from one to five feet.

Unfortunately, Sir, the four members who form this Government are not omniscient; they are not gods, or big experts like some honourable members. We have to take opinions on expert matters from heads of departments who are there to advise us. On the recommendations of these gentlemen,—the Acting Colonial Engineer and the Medical Superintendent,—Government proceeded on them. I hear from honourable members on the other side of this table that members of this Government were the owner's friends. If that is the type of honourable member this Government have to deal with who can only see dishonesty in everything, God help us.

I will add this statement. Subsequently, the recommendations were reported to the Advisory Board of the General Hospital. A meeting was called and the reports of these gentlemen were taken plus that of Mr. Woodehouse, who is attached to Colonial Development and Welfare and who was asked to go and make an inspection of the site and

to attend the meeting. Mr. Woodehouse, who seemed to have some fore knowledge of the place, informed the Board that it was quite suitable for our purpose and we could, from time to time, build additional blocks. It was his opinion that probably in the course of time, we could remove the whole hospital over there, the site being sufficiently large enough to make provision for a five-hundred or six-hundred bed hospital if we were prepared to erect buildings of three stories. Sir, on the opinion of these gentlemen, who know more about such matters than the members of the Advisory Board and I, the Advisory Board Committee reported to the Government who then said that Enmore should be investigated about price and from then on the price question started. The honourable junior member for St. Lucy wanted to know why the Government had to take this course, that is, to purchase this land compulsorily. I think the honourable member ought to know it is because of differences in price, the owner wanting one price and the Government not seeing its way to reach that amount. Because the owner would not budge, this resolution is before the House.

Now, as far as Stockton is concerned, I must give some word about it. It was proposed to build some flats there to house the resident staff and that proposal was made because it was decided to demolish certain houses in the compound so as to erect a new block for a hospital. As I have said already, the lack of proper foundations at the present site has caused these plans to be altered and as you know, only a portion of Stockton can be used. Stockton was bought years ago. This Government does not know the reason why it was bought. Only a portion of it can be used for building. We were told so by the late Mr. Went. As I said earlier, it is not just erecting a building for wards, we have to make provision for kitchen staff, laundry and auxiliary services of that sort. Because of that, there would not be enough room at Stockton to develop the annexe of the hospital. As I have said, members of Government are not experts in such matters, Government has to go by the opinion, not of the James Street, Lucas Street people, but of heads of departments of Government who are supposed to know what they are talking about. We were carefully told that Stockton cannot carry this annexe. The honourable junior member for St. Lucy spoke in such a manner as to show that he has no knowledge of the facts. The honourable senior member for St. Philip, as was evident, was just blowing off gas and the honourable senior member for St. John spoke unintelligently. Sir, we were told by one of the local experts of this House that we could go to the next portion of Avalon and build an annexe to accommodate 60 or 80 beds. That local expert also said that we could go next door to the Eye Ward and erect such a building. Of course the honourable member spoke without paying any attention to recurrent expenditure in running this place. Let me tell the honourable member that Enmore is sufficient in itself to accommodate its own staff; so that is the position.

Sir, this Government is trying its best to relieve the congestion at the General Hospital. Everybody has been complaining of the conditions there and justifiably so. A year or two ago, we had in this House a debate which lasted for a whole day about the overcrowding at the hospital. Now Government has come forward with something concrete, we are told by some honourable members to postpone it for six months.

Reference has been made to a Committee which was appointed by the Governor in connection with

the developing and planning of the hospital. I may say that the honourable junior member for the City said that this Committee was appointed in my absence and all that sort of thing. There is no truth in his statement because I was only absent from this colony for two weeks and this Planning Committee was appointed before I went away. It is true that the Committee has not yet sat, but it cannot sit before it has something to work on. These are the terms of reference of this Committee:—

- “(i) To advise the Government on a phased programme of hospital extension designed eventually to provide a modern hospital in Bridgetown; and
- (ii) Having regard to the proposals made in the Five Year Plan, to prepare a detailed scheme with estimates of cost for the first stage of the programme which must—
 - (a) relieve the present overcrowding in the Hospital;
 - (b) provide adequate accommodation for the treatment of Tuberculosis; and
 - (c) provide a Health Centre for the Bridgetown area.”

Sir, this site was decided on before this Committee was appointed. I may say Sir, that there was agitation for Enmore as an annexe to the Hospital before Sir Alfred Savage left this island. Enmore was actively considered from that time as a means of providing an extension of the General Hospital and it was decided on before this Committee was appointed.

I do not know if there is anything more which I can add.

I think it is the honourable junior member for Christ Church who asked about whether it has finally been agreed to purchase this site from C. D. & W. Funds. I will only say that it is proposed to meet the cost of this property from that fund.

I hope, Sir, that honourable members will use their commonsense in deciding on this issue whether Government should be given permission to take this step to acquire Enmore and the land on which it is contained so as to relieve the congestion at the General Hospital. Its acquisition will not only relieve the congestion at the Hospital but we will also be able to start to erect a building for a 100-bed hospital because provision has been made for that purpose in the Five Year Plan.

Mr. BARROW: As I understand it now, there is a motion before this House to postpone consideration of this Resolution which is making provision for the compulsory acquisition of Enmore for the purpose of hospital extension. Sir, you may correct me if I am wrong. If this motion is before the House I make no apology to the honourable junior member for St. Thomas for rising after he has replied to the criticisms of honourable members. I think, Sir, that the motion for the postponement of this resolution can be construed as meaning two things: (1) that the honourable mover of this motion for the postponement is against the purchase of Enmore by compulsory acquisition; or (2) that he is against the purchase of Enmore at all. It is not sufficiently clear to me which of the two meanings the honourable mover of this motion wants us to infer from his argument. We all know the deplorable condition that the hospital has been in for the last twenty-five years. It certainly is within the memory of the oldest honourable member of this House that this deplorable condition of the General Hospital has always been the topic of discussion.

Sir, any resolution which would tend to alleviate the conditions which exist at the General Hospital today cannot be easily brushed aside. You cannot brush aside this Resolution because you are against compulsory acquisition, or because you do not like the particular occasion for the purchase of the particular property, or because you do not like the personality of the members of the Government. All those things have nothing to do with it. You should support this Resolution if you wish to alleviate the deplorable conditions at the Hospital.

Although I am supporting this Resolution, I would like to emphasize some points which were made by the honourable member on my right and also ask members of the Government to be very careful about the purpose to which this property when acquired is put. The first thing I would like to say is that if you want to increase accommodation at the Hospital, it is generally accepted from experience that the wrong way to increase accommodation for patients is by putting them in a property which is far removed from the surgery and the kitchen and from the attendants and doctors who are in the hospital.

Dr. CUMMINS: On a point of explanation, Sir, I said that Enmore would be a separate entity. It would have its own kitchen, nurses and staff.

Mr. BARROW: That is precisely the point I am making now. I was about to say that the moment you buy Enmore, you should build a kitchen there.

Dr. CUMMINS: I rise again on a point of explanation. I have just said that it would cost \$4,000 to convert Enmore to the use for which it is intended. You will not have to build any kitchen or laundry there; they are there now.

Mr. BARROW: Mr. Speaker,—I am against the expenditure of \$4,000. I have a better suggestion to make. We need not set up this new hospital outside of the present hospital. Inside the present hospital, next door to the surgery, we have a large building which is being used by the administration for offices. In addition, we have the Secretary of the Hospital living inside a building which is in the present compound. Now, all these people that work in the office are not medical people; they are civil servants more or less. If you move all these people to Enmore, you will have an entire block of buildings left where you can put patients. Enmore contains enough room to house all these people who work in the administration and can do so without any expenditure as far as I have been able to find out. The buildings which are at present occupied by the administrative staff can be used for putting beds and without any expenditure to do so. I have visited this place, not as an expert, but as a representative of the people. I take an interest in hospitals. I have had the opportunity of going into a Swedish hospital of seven stories and there the kitchen and the laundry were situated on the top floor. I do not think we should approve of spending money on Enmore for putting patients there. When you spend this \$4,000 on Enmore, you are putting up a hospital within a hospital. You will create difficulties, not only on the administrative side, but on the medical and surgical side as well. I can tell you that the doctors at the hospital are against the putting of the hospital at Enmore. If Government consults the doctors on this question, it will find out that they are against it. If you consult the Medical Superintendent on this question, he will probably tell you that it would be much easier to let the administrative staff vacate these buildings in the compound and to put patients in them. By so doing, he would not have to run across the road to see how patients are getting on. It certainly would be much easier for him to have

all the patients within one compound than quartered all over the place. We know the economy of large-scale production. It is much easier to have consistency as to diet when it is prepared in one kitchen; naturally, you will not have consistency in this respect when you have three or four kitchens all over the place.

As regards to the future development of the hospital, I want to endorse what the honourable junior member for the City said that if you set up this Hospital Planning Committee to go into these matters, at least, you should give that Committee the opportunity to express its views, not on the question, perhaps, of whether you should buy Enmore or not, but certainly as to the manner in which it should be used now and in the future. Therefore, the honourable introducer of this resolution should answer the question which I think was put in a befitting manner by the honourable junior member for the City, as to why this Committee was not consulted on this matter. In the explanatory note, as well as the explanation given by the honourable introducer of this resolution, it has been clearly pointed out not only the reason why Government was purchasing this property but also as to what use it would be put. I think its use is a matter which should be left to the Committee.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I hope that there would be immediate relief from the congestion at the hospital as a result of this purchase; not necessarily by putting patients at Enmore, but by the purchasing of the place. I also hope that the Government will call a halt to this piecemeal additions that has taken place at the hospital because this manner of planning cannot solve our problems. I hope to see plans for the development of one central hospital. Mr. Speaker, the postponing of this resolution will really be a disservice to the suffering members of this community and we must not lose sight of our main objectives when we come to consider a resolution of this kind.

The question that this resolution be postponed for six months was put and resolved in the negative, the House voting as follows:—

Ayes: Mr. ALLDER, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mr. J. C. MOTTLEY, Mr. VAUGHAN and Mr. HAYNES.—5

Noes: Mr. SMITH, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. MAPP, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. BARROW, Mrs. BOURNE, Mr. TALMA, Mr. HOLDER, Mr. F. L. WALCOTT, Mr. ADAMS, Dr. CUMMINS, Mr. COX and Mr. GODDARD.—13

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

OLD AGE PENSION BILL

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 amend the Old Age Pension Act, 1937.

Dr. CUMMINS: This Bill is to amend the Old Age Pension Act, 1937, and its object is to increase the emoluments paid to the enquiry officers who deal with this pension. I would like to tell honourable members that these enquiry officers received the same salary from 1937 until 1948 when they were given an increase. Since that time their duties have increased. Sir Errol Dos Santos has since reported and as a result increases have been made to certain part-time officers and Government feels that these enquiry officers are also entitled to an increase in their salary.

I will also tell honourable members that the salaries of these enquiring officers are now arranged on a proper basis, that is to say, the salary of each enquiry officer is based on the number of old age

pensioners in his district. The principle adopted is that where there are 1,000 pensioners the basis of the amount paid to the enquiry officer is \$660 per annum. That is the minimum paid to a probationer in the Civil Service. On that basis, the revised salary of these enquiry officers are set out in this Bill. In the district where we have the greatest number of old age pensioners—3,233—the present salary of the enquiry officer of that district is \$840 per annum and the revised salary is \$1,200 per annum. In St. George, the present salary of the enquiry officer is \$672 and the revised salary is \$780. A similar revision is given according to the principle adopted to the other enquiry officers down the line as honourable members will see.

I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Mr. COX: I beg to second that.

Mr. J. C. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker,—I think at this stage a meed of praise should be given to the Government for at long last adopting my suggestion of increases in salary of these enquiry officers. I am glad to see that these people have been taken care of in the manner which has been set out in this Bill. I would say that the increase to each of these deserving enquiry officers is generous, though, it could be more. At any rate, something is better than nothing. I want to commend the Government for bringing down this Bill to give increases to who I would term as the Cinderella servants of Government. I will not compliment myself for putting up a successful fight on their behalf.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Just one point, Mr. Speaker. I am a bit worried in my mind whether the principle we have adopted for the remuneration of these enquiry officers is correct. I gather from the honourable introducer of this Bill that the enquiry officers will be paid according to the number of old age pensioners in the district and the more pensioners there are in the district, the greater will be the remuneration. I feel it should be worked on a different basis. I feel that the officers having the greater number of old age pensioners to deal with should be regarded as the seniors. Anyhow, be that as it may, I really want to suggest that some attempt be made to post these pensions to old age pensioners by means of money orders. It is extremely difficult for large members of the pensioners to walk from one end of the parish to the other end to the payment officers. It takes time to do so and very often, these pensioners have to pay a messenger out of the small pittance whenever they are unable to go for it themselves. I know several who have to do it. Sir, this pension is small enough already and there is no reason why the recipients should be further penalised to walk from their homes to the payment office be it near or be it far. Let us take the parish of St. Philip as an example. There are now two payment officers but it is physically, the largest parish of the island. You can imagine what it means to an old age pensioner to walk from Marley Vale or Bayfield to Six Cross Roads in all sorts of weather. I think it is the easiest thing to make a money order for the amount of money weekly and post it in a franked envelope to the pensioners. I do not think this suggestion needs belabouring year after year. When you do so by adopting this suggestion which I make you are merely showing a little sympathy to the people who have to trudge these varying distances.

Finally, I would like to say that the pension which these old age pensioners are now receiving has been raised once since it came into being and that was in 1948 when these enquiry officers also got an increase in salary. Since then, Government servants

in all categories have received increased remuneration and I think Government can find some money to pay a moderate increase to the present pension of these old people. I feel they should be given some portion of increase on the existing amount. We can find the money. I feel that the time has come when there should be some proper attempt to institute even a moderate Social Security Scheme which would provide at least the elementary social benefits for the entire population. In the interim, there can be no justification for attending, as we have been doing, to the enquiry officers and leaving out the old age pensioners themselves.

Mr. LEWIS: Mr. Speaker, I am going to speak on the principle of this Bill. I will at first speak on increases which are to be given to the pension enquiry officers and to make that increase operative as from the 1st April, 1952. Sir, so far as the increase is concerned, I have been hearing for a long time that these enquiry officers have a lot of work to do and I think some investigation should be made with regard not only to the size of the district in which an inquiry officer carries out his duties, but also with regard to the distances they may have to go to investigate cases. I have been made to understand that in the course of a year some enquiry officers in the smaller districts do just as much travelling as some of those living in the bigger parishes. I think it would be better if these enquiry officers were given this remuneration based on the travelling that is done.

As regards to giving them backpay as from 1st April, 1952 I would like to say that this House has based all increases in salaries of the various branches of the Service to operate as from this date. This is the policy since the increases have been given. I take it that when this House passes a bill, resolution, or an order saying that salaries are increased from a certain time that it is understood that people who were in the Service after that date would be getting the increase. That is to me as plain as a pikestaff. I however understand that in some recent legislation passed by this House which is the sole authority for payments out of the public purse, that the Financial Secretary issued a dictum as to whom this back-pay should be paid. As a result some who retired from the Service since the 1st April, 1952, have received no backpay. I intend to bring back this matter to the House on a specific motion. I will only say now that I think this action on his part is unconstitutional and immoral. I do hope that something will be done about it. Any person who was in the employ of Government on the 1st April, 1952 but has since retired should get that backpay and, as a matter of fact, his pension should be revised if necessary. Nobody has any right to change that order or whatever measure it was that effected the increase. It is unconstitutional to do so.

Sir, I am glad that the honourable senior member for St. Philip is in his place because I am sorry that I cannot agree with his suggestion on the posting of these pensions to old age pensioners. As I see it, if these pensions are posted to these people, they will then have to journey to the Post Office to negotiate the money order. I think this course will be more difficult for them.

Mr. CRAWFORD: On a point of order, Sir. I have an explanation to that point though I did not repeat it today. I have already pointed out that any rural shopkeeper of credit would exchange the money order for cash.

Mr. LEWIS: Sir,—In that case, you will have to send these people a negotiable document, not a

money order. Certainly, if the particular pensioner is sent something which can be regarded as something for that pension and will be negotiable to that extent, it will be something which I will regard. I will still say that the Post Office is farther away from the majority of these old age pensioners than their pension office. Unless you send them a negotiable document, the suggestion of the honourable senior member for St. Philip is of no value.

Sir, I sincerely hope that all of those officers who may have retired or died since 1st April, 1952, would be given the backpay which accrued to them. The members of this Government should see to it that none of these resolutions, orders or bills which have as their object the increase in salary of members of the Service are not changed by any Civil Servant at all. They have no authority whatsoever to do it.

Mr. COX: In reply to this statement by the honourable junior member for the City with respect to retired officers after 1st April, 1952, not receiving back pay, I will tell him that the matter is in the hands of the Financial Secretary. There were two or three people who came to me and showed me letters which stated that because they had retired since 1st April, 1952, they could not receive backpay. In the case of one person, he had worked many months after that date. I will tell the honourable member that the members of the Government owe it to themselves to see that no injustice is done to any of these people.

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

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

Clauses 1, 2 and 3 were called and passed.

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

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On separate motions of Dr. CUMMINS, seconded by Mr. Cox in each case, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

THE ADJOURNMENT

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now stand adjourned until next Tuesday, the 8th September, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

As the honourable junior member for St. Thomas has warned honourable members earlier — if 'warn' is not too strong a word—Government has in mind to go on with these Bills which are part of the general plan which includes the Maude Bill. As the honourable member pointed out, these bills are to a large extent dependent on the Maude Bill, they having certain sections that envisage the passing of that Bill. In order that these Bills may become operative without depending on the Maude Bill, the Government is going to propose that they be sent to Select Committee and will accept this suggestion from any honourable member. In that stage, any necessary amendment whereby none of these Bills will be dependent on the passing of the Maude Bill can be made. If I may give an instance, there is a section in the Public Health Bill which reads: "Every Council shall appoint a committee 'to be known as the Public Health Committee, 'etc.'" Instead of saying "Council" we would erase that word so that the Bill can be independent of the passing of the Maude Bill. This is obvious because nobody can force the Other Place to hurry up with the Maude Bill.

It is conceivable also, as I foreshadow, that the House will have before it a Message as to the proposals of ministerial status.

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