

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SESSION 1954—55

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 14th June, 1955.

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

His Honour Mr. K. N. R. HUSBANDS (*Speaker*), Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS, C.B.E., M.D., C.M., (*Minister of Social Services*), His Honour Mr A. E. S. LEWIS, (*Deputy Speaker*), Hon. M. E. COX (*Minister of Communications, Works and Housing*), Mr. L. E. SMITH, J.P., Mr. F. E. MILLER, Mr. J. C. MOTTLEY, Mr. V. B. VAUGHAN, Hon. C. E. TALMA, (*Minister of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries*), and Mrs. E. E. BOURNE.

Prayers were read.

DOCUMENTS

Mr. SPEAKER: I have the honour to inform the House that I have received the Statement of Revenue and Expenditure from the Highway Commissioner of St. James for the half year ended the 31st March this year.

Also, the Highways Accounts of the parish of St. Peter for the half year ended the 31st March, this year.

PAPERS LAID

Hon. Dr. CUMMINS: I am commanded by His Excellency the Governor on behalf of the Hon. Premier to lay Message No. 16/1955 from His Excellency the Governor to the Honourable the House of Assembly informing the Honourable House of the terms of reference of the Commission which Her Majesty's Government has appointed for the purpose of making Civil Service preparations for the British Caribbean Federation.

The Message is as follows:—

MESSAGE NO. 16/1955:

His Excellency the Governor

To

The Honourable the House of Assembly

With reference to Message No. 6/1955 dated the 22nd March, His Excellency the Governor has the honour to inform the Honourable the House of Assembly that the terms of reference of the Com-

mission which Her Majesty's Government has appointed for the purpose of making Civil Service preparations for the British Caribbean Federation are as follows:—

1. In the light of the provisions of the Plan for a British Caribbean Federation (Cmd. 8895), and in particular of Chapter VI, to make recommendations concerning the establishment of a Federal Public Service and in particular for the following matters:—
 - (i) initial arrangements for the transfer to the Federal Public Service of those functions which are to be transferred from unit to Federal control;
 - (ii) organisation and structure of the Federal Public Service and the Departments, taking into account the function of Federation in respect of items on the exclusive and concurrent Legislative List;
 - (iii) terms and conditions of service of officers and other employees appointed to the Federal Public Service;
 - (iv) arrangements for the transfer to the Federal Public Service of those officers and other employees at present serving in the units who will be required to staff Federal services;

(In making recommendations on this subject the Preparatory Commission shall have regard to the need for the preservation of existing rights and avenues of advancement of such officers and employees).
 - (v) arrangements which should govern the grant of the right to retire on suitable terms to officers and other employees who are at present staffing such services of the unit Governments as are to be transferred to the Federal Government and who elect not to accept appointment in the Federal Service.
2. To consider the steps which should be taken to unify the Public Services in the area, in the light of the Report of the Commission on the Unification of the Public Services in the British Caribbean Area (Col. No. 254).
3. To consider what steps should be taken to work towards uniformity in terms and con-

ditions of service between the Federal Public Service and the unit Public Services in order to encourage inter-changeability of staff between these Services.

4. To consider and make recommendations concerning the establishment:

- (i) in the interim stages of a body to advise the Governor-General on the appointment of the Federal Civil Servants who would start work before a Federal Government could come into being;
- (ii) in due course, of a Federal Civil Service Commission.

5. In making its recommendations, the Commission should provide for the possibility of the two mainland territories of British Guiana and British Honduras joining the Federation later on if they should wish to do so.

2. The names of the representatives of the West Indian Governments on the Commission are as follows:—

Barbados—R. N. Turner, C.M.G., Chief Secretary.

Jamaica—J. W. H. O'Regan, Acting Colonial Secretary.

Leeward Islands—R. Norris, M.B.E., Assistant Colonial Secretary (Establishment).

Trinidad—S. Hochoy, O.B.E., Acting Colonial Secretary.

Windward Islands—L. Cools Lartigue, O.B.E., Chief Secretary.

3. Sir Hilary Blood, G.B.E., K.C.M.G., the Chairman of the Commission, is expected to arrive in Jamaica about the 21st of June and to proceed to Barbados early in July.

4. Mr. G. Mancini, the Secretary of the Commission, is already in the Island.

R. D. H. ARUNDELL,
Governor.

Government House,
Barbados.
14th June, 1955.

Hon. M. E. COX: Mr. Speaker,—I am commanded to lay the following:— Report by Sir Eric Millbourn on the proposed Deep Water Harbour at Bridgetown.

REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. Dr. H. G. CUMMINS: I am commanded to lay the Reply to Question No. 37 asked by the honourable junior member for St. Peter regarding the sale of pigs from the Mental Hospital Farm.

NOTICES

Government Notices were given as follows:—

Hon. M. E. COX: Resolution seeking acceptance in principle of Sir Eric Millbourn's Report on the Deep Water Harbour.

Hon. M. E. COX: Resolution to place the sum of \$50,000 at the disposal of the Governor-in-Executive Committee to supplement the Estimates 1955-56 Part I, Current as shown in Supplementary Estimate 1955-56 No. 11 which forms the Schedule to the Resolution.

Hon. G. H. Adams entered the House and took his seat.

Hon. G. H. ADAMS: Resolution to place the sum of \$4,500 at the disposal of the Governor-in-

Executive Committee to supplement the Estimates 1955-56 Part I, Current, as shown in Supplementary Estimate 1955-56 No. 8 which forms the Schedule to the Resolution.

Hon. G. H. ADAMS: Resolution to place the sum of \$600 at the disposal of the Governor-in-Executive Committee to supplement the Estimates 1955-56, Part I, Current, as shown in Supplementary Estimate 1955-56 No. 10 which forms the Schedule to the Resolution.

Hon. Dr. CUMMINS: Resolution to place the sum of \$7,000 at the disposal of the Governor-in-Executive Committee to supplement the Estimates 1955-56, Part I, Current, as shown in Supplementary Estimate 1955-56 No. 9 which forms the Schedule to the Resolution.

Hon. Dr. H. G. CUMMINS: Of my intention to move the House into Committee of Supply at its next meeting in order to consider the Money Resolutions of which Notice has just been given.
3.25 p.m.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE TRANSFER OF ELECTRIC COMPANY

Hon. H. G. H. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker, I am asking leave to take Order No. 2 as the first Order of the Day.

There being no objection leave was granted the honourable member.

Mr. SPEAKER: The first Order of the Day now stands in the name of the Hon. Premier: to move the passing of the following Resolution: A Resolution to approve the transfer by the Electric Supply Corporation Limited to the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited of the Orders contained in the Schedule to the Electric Light and Power (Provisional Orders Confirmation) Act, 1907.

Hon. G. H. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that the House is not full at the moment but this Resolution is a matter of real urgency. I think that even the average person knows there were communications that appeared in the Press announcing that the Electric Supply Corporation Limited as it exists now, (that is to say the English Company) has been persuaded that they should do now what many of us feel they should have done long ago; that is, to make it possible for the people of Barbados to take shares in this concern and by so doing show an interest in providing the electricity which one would expect a Barbadian would show in the running of the company, as if it were Englishmen investing money in England. I may say that the English Company has agreed now to start a local company and to transfer the assets, the liabilities and responsibilities of the English Company into the local Company, and to issue shares to local people and to operate the company from henceforth as a Barbadian Company. In spite of the lengthy document which is before you, (perhaps some portion of it is legal language) it really amounts to what I have just said.

The Barbados Electric Supply Corporation Ltd., has accordingly agreed to transfer its undertaking in the Island to the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited which was registered in Barbados on the 6th May, 1955, and has in fact transferred its rights, powers, authorities, obligations and liabilities to the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited in accordance with para 63 of the Electric Light and Power Order No. 1 contained in the Schedule to the Electric Light and Power (Provisional Orders Confirmation) Act, 1907. Such transfer, however, is of no effect until it is approved by the Legislature by

Resolution and registered accordingly. The effective date of the transfer is fixed for 1st July, 1955.

The Board of the Barbados Electric Supply Corporation have for some time considered it desirable that the people of Barbados should be given an opportunity of acquiring an interest in the Company's capital. The new Company will therefore issue locally £100,000 in preference shares on or before 1st July, 1956.

This Resolution gives approval to the transfer of powers to the Barbados Light and Power Company.

It means that local people will be able to bring more pressure to bear on the new Electric Company, and the longed-for extension of electricity all over the island will come about pretty soon.

Some of us have had the opportunity of speaking to subordinate persons connected with the Company both in London and in this island, and we have no doubt that the Company has not a single friend in Barbados owing to the way in which the affairs of the Company were being conducted; but inasmuch as they have agreed to what has recently been proposed, Barbados will co-operate to keep this company alive and to do what we can from our angle to enable them to spread electricity through every town and hamlet in this country.

I do not think there is anything more that I can say now more than to say that at least we are going to have a local company and local shareholders watching over this company, who are anxious to spread electricity all over the island. I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. Dr. H. G. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

Mr. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, it is very heartening to see a Resolution of this type before the House, although I regret to say that with another Resolution on the Order Paper concerning another public utility, there is only the passing of the present public ownership of that company. However, it is heartening to see that for the first time the people of Barbados will be given the opportunity to take shares in the Electric Company. What is worrying me here now is this £100,000 of preference shares; and I am wondering if the Hon. Premier would be willing to explain something further on that. You have ordinary shares held by the principals of the company who decide the policy of the Company, and they need not now give the right to local purchasers of shares; and if that is not done local purchasers will have no control into the alterations of this company. Sir, I will be very happy to have a few details on this matter to which I am referring, because what we have before us may not be the bone and substance of which this Chamber is in search of in respect to this matter. I can very well understand that the agitation in and out of this Chamber may have prevailed upon the directorate of that company to make them form a local company so that the profits accruing out of this company will come back to local shareholders instead of going abroad.

3.35 p.m.

Another factor is that the present English Company is going to die. It is true that you go into voluntary liquidation in order to dissolve the English Company. In other words you dissolve the English Company and in the true sense of the word you are now creating a local company. I am just wondering if this is not just a supple shrewd business technique to impress the Government and the community that such would be done. I do not know if we should let this Resolution pass so quickly. Mr.

Speaker, you are aware of this particular Resolution; and I am very anxious to have it too. I am hoping the Premier will be able to give more details on this; that is what these preference shares will mean ultimately to the people. Mr. Speaker, there are quite a few things I should like to know which are only for my benefit; and I am hoping that you will take the matter into the Committee stage so that we will have an easy opportunity to debate it. In that way we can quite satisfy ourselves on certain points of importance.

Mr. LEWIS: Like the hon. member who has just sat, Mr. Speaker, I regret that this is not a Bill today for the Government to take over the Barbados Electric Supply Corporation. [Hon. G. H. ADAMS: For £300,000!] The Hon. Premier says he must have a lot of money for that, but that is a matter of opinion. I am very sorry to hear that remark coming from him. You would have thought that he would need to have a lot of money for the Gas Company too; but the Gas Company may be in a derelict condition. If the Barbados Electric Supply Corporation Limited had got some sternness from the Government, they might have been able to get that Corporation for as little consideration as the Gas Company.

I do not propose to know anything about these big dealings, but there is the aspect of these preference shares; and I hope that the present Government has not been taken in by them. These prospective shareholders will get a 4 or 5 per cent and that is all that they can demand; they may not even invite you to any of their meetings; you are just a plain nonentity; that is, instead of borrowing money elsewhere at 6 per cent, they will borrow it from prospective preference shareholders at considerably less. Let this Company sell some of its ordinary shares to Barbadians; and if necessary let the Company take steps to share some of its seats on the directorate. As far as I can see, this is just an opportunity for this new company to take over the old company puff up its assets (which will be the shares that the new shareholders will have in it) to about ten times more than what it is worth and that will be their interest in the new company. I have not heard a single word of ordinary shares in this company being issued in Barbados. We have heard:

"The Board of the Barbados Electric Supply Corporation have for some time considered it desirable that the people of Barbados should be given an opportunity of acquiring an interest in the Company's capital. The new Company will therefore issue locally £100,000 in preference shares on or before 1st July, 1956."

I know that when the Company issues preference shares it is only borrowing money at a low rate of interest. It does not mean that you can have a single vote for that money; it does not mean that you can have a seat on the Directorate so far as I know, although I may be entirely wrong. I do not know if the Government will feel that they are in a happy position by having themselves represented on the Public Utilities Board seeing after the expansion and the rates that will be charged by this company; but this is certainly a trick by this new company, and I offer my congratulations to them for the way in which they have presented it to the Government. If the Government had intended to take over the Electric Company and run it as a utility, at the time that nationalisation was preached by members of this Government they would have discovered then that what they might have had to pay for it was not as enormous as they anticipated. The thing to do then was to go to the Electric Company (as you went to the Gas Company) value it

and take it over for what it was really worth and build up your own services on your own lines, and get competent engineers to assist you in running your own Electric Company.

If you feel that the Electric Company is too big an undertaking for you to manage, then this should be your only reason for not doing that. If these people can find the money for expanding in Barbados, I think that the Government is very wrong to feel that the Government of Barbados, cannot risk the same amount of capital and make a success of it for themselves. But, of course, you will have to be very passionately in favour of nationalisation; and if you have the will, you will find the way. If you have not the will, well, all of these stumbling blocks will take place. It is a matter which I am sure, the Hon. Premier would like to answer questions on.

As the Premier himself deplores, nobody is responsible for the absence of any honourable member; but the Resolution now before us is not the first item on the Order Paper. Although the Premier himself said on the last occasion when this House met, that he would like to deal with it today as the first item, he did not make it Item No. (1) on the Order Paper; and that might have misled many other honourable members. I feel that it is placing honourable members at a very great disadvantage after making remarks to that effect and leaving them at that; that is why I suggested to the honourable member who spoke before me to move the House into Committee on the matter, so that those of us who would like to have all these questions answered might be able to understand more.

3.45 p.m.

The formation of a new Company will present the assets of this Company in an entirely different light when they come to deal with it as this new Company: the Barbados Light and Power Company. In spite of going through and valuing the assets of that company and taking it over and probably getting an impartial opinion of it, nobody knows the profits of the present shareholders; and they can puff up their interest in it, and they will value their assets to provide for the handing over, the good will and so on. They will set out the rights which the Government will give to a private individual because this might still be a private company no matter that it is issuing £100,000 in preference shares locally. The Government will find itself with a new company with assets valued at ten times what they would be valued at, if the Government had stepped in and made a valuation of it. These things might happen and they might be quite legitimate. If the Government finds that they are unable to take over this company now, the Company will say "let us form a new company so that we can put our house in order" and when you come for it you will have to deal with it on the basis of the valuation and assets that the new Company takes over. If what I read here is true, it is a question of Tweedledee taking over Tweedledum. As a sop to Barbadians who have been clamouring for a long time to have influential persons in this island with cash and who have been agitating for a long time to get shares in this company, they are getting at least preference shares for their agitation. The idea which the Government had in mind of taking over this company is receding further and further into the back-ground. I think we may hear that the Government will take some of these preference shares, and it might turn out to be a good investment to give some local employment; but they will discover that they will have no more

further control of the Company than they will get from the Public Utilities Board which is a Board set up at the behest and recommendation of the conservative group in this island.

I am very sorry, I must say, that certain members of this House who are familiar with the day to day workings of companies are not in this House to give information in a matter of this sort. I do not know what information they gave privately or what information the Government has been able to get; but the Government can get the worst kind of information of public enterprise bound up in an island like this. When I look around this House, I see absolutely no honourable member including myself to whom anybody would turn for information of this sort. The people of this colony will have to depend on what we decide today without the opportunity probably of their representatives being able to speak twice on an important issue like this.

These Electric Light and Power Orders to which this Resolution refers form the Schedule of an Act of 1907; and what the members of the House were able to say then we are going to be denied to say now. If there is no answer worthy of the remarks made, you will get nothing; that is how this Government transacts important business on behalf of the people. This is not a matter which the members of the Other Place will go into minutely (except that some of them would like to get some shares in the new Company,) so that we will be in the dark as to what we are doing. So far as I can see here; "negotiations have been recently concluded with the Colonial Development Corporation which has agreed to provide the substantial part of the additional capital required to finance the extensions." If it is going to do that by way of preference shares it will not have any controlling interest in this concern. This is something which I think the Government should take to heart and try to avoid. It is time that if the Government has an opportunity of investing any money in a concern like this it should be the intention of the Government to acquire the amount of shares which would give them all the privileges of a shareholder, to attend shareholders' meetings and to vote on decisions and perhaps to have two representatives on the Directorate of this Company. I am going to make the motion which I thought the honourable junior member for St. George would have made, in the hope that I will get it seconded; so that at least a short discussion can take place by honourable members who have already spoken on this Resolution. I beg to move that this House go into Committee on this Resolution.

Hon. G. H. ADAMS: Why do some honourable members get up and make statements which if the replies were to be given in the same spirit would show them up? The honourable member is dealing with a Resolution affecting electricity, and one would have expected that he would know what the position is as regards electricity in this island. Nothing which has happened with the Electric Company is unknown to the public; I was a bit surprised to see the statement in yesterday's "*Advocate*" which has apparently come from people of the Electric Company setting out the position so fully. The honourable member thinks that of all the people in this island the most stupid, and the most people whose eyes are open to receive dust, are those of the Government. At one time he would say that Sir Archibald Cuke runs the Government and at another time he would say that it is the Conservatives like Sir Archibald Cuke who are the brains of the Government. How the honourable member can justify those statements I do not know?

3.55 p.m.

Mr. LEWIS: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member should wait until he can quote me as saying these things.

Hon. G. H. ADAMS: The hon. member seems to forget that the Electric Company cannot put up one post or charge a half cent until this Legislature says so. The hon. member seems to forget what is the position of the Electric Company in Barbados; he forgets that the Electric Company works under an Act of Barbados. Every single thing that the Electric Company does has to be approved of by the Legislature; such as, what it should charge, a change in the prices charged, putting up poles and all that sort of thing.

The hon. member says, as regards the preference shares that these shares do not give you the right to attend meetings and to have a voice on the directorate; and the hon. junior member for St. George—I will be milder with him for more reasons than one. To what is he objecting?

Mr. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to really understand what the Hon. Premier means when he says "I will be milder with him."

Mr. SPEAKER: You are out of Order.

Hon. G. H. ADAMS: Let me teach them the alphabet. The Electric Company operates under an Act of this island, which is known as the Electric Light and Power Act, 1899.

Mr. LEWIS: That has nothing to do with the formation of the present company.

Hon. G. H. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I am addressing my remarks to the House, and not to the hon. junior member for the City. Under the 1899 Light and Power Act which is an Act to facilitate and regulate the supply and use of Electricity for lighting and other purposes, it provides for the prohibition of unauthorised supply which means that Electricity can only be provided by this Company; and the Act then says under Section five, that the Governor may from time to time, by provisional order, grant to any local authority, company or persons, the right which may include an exclusive right to supply Electricity for any public or private purposes within any area, and for such period, as the Governor may think proper, but subject to certain provisions.

Under Section Six, it gives you the power to make rules as regards how you shall supply that electricity. The Section reads as follows:—

"The Governor may from time to time make, rescind, alter, or vary rules, including forms in relation to applications for provisional orders, and to the payments to be made in respect thereof, and to the publication of notices and advertisements, and to the manner in which and the time within which representations or objections with reference to any application are to be made, and to the holding of local enquiries in such cases as he may think advisable, and to any other matters arising under this Act."

Section seven, reads as follows:—

"The undertakers shall be subject to such regulations and conditions as may be inserted in any order or special Act affecting their undertaking with regard to the following matters:—

- (a) the limits within which and the conditions under which a supply of electricity is to be provided;
- (b) the securing of a regular and efficient supply of electricity;
- (c) securing the safety of the public from personal injury, or from fire or otherwise;
- (d) the limitation of the prices to be charged in respect of the supply of electricity.

(e) the authorising of inspection and enquiry from time to time by the Governor and the local authority.

In short, sir, what we are doing now with regard to public utilities we did with the Electric Company as far back as 1899. It is merely that some solicitors did not worry to prosecute the Electric Company in the past few years for not carrying out their contract. They may have felt that the Electric Company could have put up a good defence by saying that the Company had done all it could have done and it was not its fault that the Generator broke down. But it is there in the Act that if the Company fails to supply electricity the company can be sued. That is point No. 1.

When you talk of having no authority or of getting a seat on the directorate that is stupid. We did raise the point as to whether the company's Memorandum of Association provided that only the holding of a number of shares permitted you to be on the directorate. They said that you could be a director without having a share in the company. We can nominate a Minister or the Head of the Natural Gas Company or any such person on our behalf. If the hon. member would look up the Law Book he would see that by Regulations we can completely control the working of the Electric Company; and when we say "we" I mean the Legislature. That is the present law and that is what happens now; they are not being affected by the proposition before the House today. What has happened is, that we in Barbados have been complaining of too many breakdowns in the Company's machinery and about the many places that have not got Electric Supply and the Electric Company has said that it will cost them a lot of money. They have not said what I am going to say, but you can read it; the Company's shareholders in Great Britain will not put money into the Company because there was much talk of nationalisation in the island. We had this Company coming and saying that it can borrow the money and that it had approached C.D.C., for a loan. That Company came to us and said: "We need £6,000 will you lend us the money or give us your guarantee to get it? We have approached C.D.C., and C.D.C., has agreed to lend us something if the Barbados Government would show that it would put up some of the money." We said: "Nothing doing." We told them that if they would abolish their English Company and start a Barbados company, then they would find Barbadians prepared to put up money to take shares; we would work on that proposition. The Directors of that Company went back to C.D.C. They had previously agreed to what we had said and C.D.C., said "O.K."; hence this Resolution.

4.05 p.m.

We told them that we believed that Barbadians would find the £100,000 they needed; but in order not to let them down if the Barbadian investor could only put up £80,000 or £90,000 the Barbados Government would put the remainder, whether it was £20 or £3,000. We have no intention either now or later, of sharing the ownership of the Electric Company. Unless we could own it outright we warned them that we would return to our guarantee. Colonial Development Corporation promises to lend the other \$500,000. It is necessary to come to tell the Legislature this and to get their consent to transfer from the English Company to the local Company; it does not affect what the honourable member should have known. Complete and utter control lies with the 24 members of this House. What do preference shares have to do with this? Preference shares

have absolutely nothing in this world to do with what concerns or what are the rights of the Legislature. We can control the profits which they make; we can tell them that they should go into Foul Bay, or Pie Corner. We can tell them that they are charging 24 cents and that is too high; they should charge 16 cents. There is a maximum set out in the Order which they have not yet reached. [A VOICE: And Government sits down and lets them charge pretty near the maximum.] That does not mean anything more than a deliberate and stupid interruption by the honourable member.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken enough for the benefit of the intelligent members of the House. If the Electric Company by its value sheet shows that four cents a unit is enough and the law allowed them to charge 30 cents today they would not dream of charging the 30 cents; because public opinion would be so strong, that this Government would have to bring in an Order to prevent this charge. I was in here 20 or more years ago with the honourable junior member for St. James and his supporters, (and I opposed them) when the Electric Company tried to push up their charges higher than was reasonable. The Electric Company as the law stands now cannot charge one cent more than the Legislature feels is a reasonable price.

Pick up the two Acts and read them. The Electric Company is completely controlled by the franchise which is on the Statute Book, which the Legislature can change from day to day if it thinks necessary. To talk about how the shares are to be put before the public and as to how many local Barbadians are to have seats on the directorate is completely beside the point. The point is can we control the Electric Company? I say, (and I give my authority; the authority means the law of Barbados which a child can read) we as a Legislature will not allow the company to do anything that is not lawful to do. The franchise given to the Electric Company is the same as exists in England today; therefore if you want the enfranchisement transferred to the local company, you have got to come to the Legislature and ask can you allow us to transfer the assets to the local company to be formed in Barbados. We are saying that instead of an English Company taking the trouble to come to Barbados, we are giving the same franchise to the new company that has been formed in Barbados.

In suggesting to you that to have a Director or other means whereby the majority of local shareholders can have an interest in the Company is completely beside the point, in the light of what the law strictly says regarding the terms under which the franchise is given. I will repeat again that some hon. member can, if he likes, next Tuesday suggest that a new Order should be made to the effect that the new Company shall at once cut all their charges by half. That is all I have to say. [A VOICE: You should be man enough to do that! Why close the debate?]

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, the last speaker stated that the junior member for St. James, at a time when he had a sufficiently large number of henchmen in the House, permitted the Electric Company to take steps which, more or less, exploited the position which the company occupied as a monopoly company supplying electricity in Barbados. And according to him, it could not happen with the present Government. In other words, he is satisfied today that the rates charged by the Electric Corporation are fair and reasonable. I want to tell him that there are hardly two other people in this island who would agree with him; because our rates are

higher than the rates charged in Trinidad, British Guiana, or any other island of the British West Indies. Therefore, his Government has not done, or is not doing one single thing more than the Government led by the hon. junior member for St. James in his time. Although legally we have the power to control the rates at which current is supplied, no Government has ever seen fit to control it in the interest of the public of this island.

Now Mr. Speaker, I am really somewhat amazed at the turn of events that this entire affair has taken. The Electric Supply Corporation is now being registered as a local company; and instead of the Government taking any direct steps to acquire all the shares of the Company or anything like that, the Company is being forced to make its registration in Barbados because under the present conditions under which it operates it cannot take any local investments. That is all.

4.15 p.m.

If you were to listen to the remarks of the honourable senior member for St. Joseph, you would think that what we are doing here today is the result of some effort on the part of the Government either to assume direct interest in the corporation or more effectively to control its operation. It is nothing of the kind.

Hon. G. H. ADAMS: I must interrupt the honourable member. He has said something to the contrary to what I have said. I said the control of the company is the same as it is today, they having transferred their rights. If the honourable member continues to misquote me I will get up 59 seconds of every minute.

Mr. CRAWFORD: The Electric Company was functioning under a certain franchise, but the time came when the company wanted to extend and it would not extend, because of the foolish political slip made in an Election Campaign. The Premier said then that if his Party were returned to power, within six months he would nationalise the Electric Company; and as a result of that foolish vainglorious boast, the Company found it impossible to raise an additional cent to expand its operation in Barbados. The Company made their position perfectly clear. They said: "We appreciate the fact that the supply of electricity is insufficient to cope with the demands of the island; we would like to extend and make current more available, but we cannot do it unless we can get more capital." They would get more capital locally if the company were not registered in London. What you could have done was that if you thought there was sufficient local capital to provide the three million dollars which the Company wanted, you could have given them sanction to register the company locally; that would have been the thing to do. But obviously the Local Investment Market could not supply three million dollars needed. Since the London Market was shy of putting one cent in the company through the propaganda of the senior member for St. Joseph, the only thing that was left for the corporation to do was to seek some government or semi-governmental organisation and get financial assistance. The position being what it is, would it not appear to the average person that if the Government were sincere in its talk about the nationalisation of the company that it would not have utilised this opportunity to acquire even partial ownership of the Company by acquiring the money which the company needed and which it could not get and putting it in the Company itself? In other words, the Colonial Development Corporation is advancing \$500,000 to some extent, with the guarantee of the local Government;

and if the Government were really keen on acquiring the ownership of the Company, would not the Government put an amount of money in the Electric Company and acquire ownership to the extent of the money which they are putting in? They have no desire at all to acquire ownership even partially of this Company. They were provided with a heaven-sent opportunity; the Company could not do one thing, it could not get any money.

The Colonial Development Corporation will only give them the money if the Government endorses the loan. I cannot imagine that a Government with a previous nationalisation policy would have assisted a private company to get a loan of \$2½ million from C.D.C., pick up \$½ million in local investments, and would have not one single cent in this Company unless the local market cannot provide the entire \$½ million. If the local market provides \$½ million and the C.D.C. provides \$2½ million, the Company has all the money it wants; and the Government which wants to nationalise this Company will not have one cent in the ownership.

The Government was only fooling the public with political propaganda saying that they would nationalise the Electric Company, when they had no intention of nationalising it. [Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS: That is something new.] As far as the Hon. Minister of Social Services is concerned, poor fellow, he does not understand what has happened.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable member may not refer to the Hon. Minister as "poor fellow."

Mr. CRAWFORD: I mean poor in the sense that he had nothing to do with the boast of nationalisation; he is only doing what he is told to do. A few months ago when the position became acute and the Electric Company could not get any money from anywhere, I suggested that the Government should make the loan, not as any god father of an English concern, but because here was an opportunity offered the Government to acquire some of the ownership. People are not investing money because they want to provide us with a public utility service; they are making money; and if the Government were keen on nationalising this public utility service for the good of the community, they would have grabbed this chance with opened hands. They could get the money from C.D.C. put it in the Company and extend to with the idea of eventually acquiring it completely, in the same manner in which the Trinidad Government operates the Trinidad Electricity Board. [Hon. G. H. ADAMS: Let us nationalise the sugar industry; that is a more paying concern.] I want to suggest to the Government that since it has the power to control the manner in which this Company operates, that they should take active steps to enquire into the charges made and see that those charges are justified. I want to suggest to them that they go further and enquire if the rates for installing new services are reasonable and how the present rates compare with similar rates charged before.

4.25 p.m.

The rates fixed by the company are arrived at on the most arbitrary basis, apparently without any regard to what is justice in so far as a consumer is concerned. Naturally we are all too glad to think that at long last the Company is getting the \$3 million required in order to make the electricity available throughout the entire island both for power and domestic use; and we are all happy to know that this money will become available to the company at the earliest possible date, and there will be no delay in the expansion plans, and that sooner or later there shall be a complete electrification of the rural

areas which today stands so much in need of electricity service.

The lesson which we could draw from this entire affair is that a lot of harm can be done to the economic interest of the community by the irresponsible utterances of politicians who are merely trying to grab power by any means whatsoever, regardless of whether they have the slightest intentions of fulfilling these promises they have made to the public. It is fortunate for us that the C.D.C. exists and that they had the wherewithal and the willingness to help in financing this Company, because this thing in actual effect means little to Barbados. It must be borne in mind that the Company would still be financed by foreign capital and therefore all the revenue which it makes would go abroad. However, the fact remains that we have no electricity and we have got to get it; and if we cannot finance it, we will have to be satisfied to pay the price for it.

I am very, very hurt to think that we are going to allow in this country which is striving towards political autonomy, foreign investment (even though it is British it is foreign to Barbados) to expand this Company to \$2½ million the returns of which investment must be appreciable because even if you make 4% or 5% on your money that is appreciable; and that means that every year the returns on that investment would be representing the hard earnings and wealth of this community, which will be drawn off outside of the country by people who do not live here and who do not spend any money here, and who can use the money they earn from the investments here to develop other foreign companies when we had it in our own hands to do the alternative.

Sir, it is not merely a question of nationalising the Company by acquiring \$3 million in shares; this represents income which is derived and obtained from Barbados, and this income is being carried outside of the country unnecessarily. I could very well see the idea if the company had used its own goodwill and financial position to secure this loan; but not when it could not get this money until the goodwill of the Barbados Government was utilised to secure it. We actually got the loan for them; they could not get it without our goodwill.

Sir, this is the action of people who talk of wanting to run the country; this is the action of people who talk of being able to conduct their own affairs. Do you think there is any country with our political status and with our hopes for further political advancement that would be guilty of what this Government is doing today? Do you think that the Puerto Rico Government, the Jamaica Government, the Gold Coast Government or the Nigeria Government would use their good offices to get a loan for a public utility corporation in those countries merely for the corporation to extend its services, and then for its profits to be ploughed abroad outside of the country? If we were putting down a new industry in Barbados, the returns of which would be highly speculative, one could have understood the reason why Government was unwilling to take the risk involved, either in putting its own investments or in borrowing money to finance it to the tune of \$3 million; but certainly not in a case like this when you are almost sure beforehand of what your margin of profit will be. In the case of this utility company, the risk involved is reduced to a minimum. No government in any country or semi-colony, can justify its claim to conduct all its affairs when it is so stupid to its own economic interest where it could be guilty of an action of this sort. I do not believe that the Electric Supply Corporation expected an action like this at all. As a matter of fact, I have reasons to know that the Company would have been quite prepared to accept

ownership by the Barbados Government to the extent of the amount of capital it had to provide for the company's expansion, either by way of direct loan or by guarantee. In other words, the Company was in this position: it was saying: we cannot get the money on our own behalf and if the Barbados Government can get it and insist on getting it for us in exchange for ownership of the company to the extent of the money it gets, we would be quite satisfied. And the Government knew that. This is nothing that members of the Government are hearing for the first time; they knew it. It is sheer economic stupidity; it is a sheer lack of interest in the country's economy and an unparalleled indifference to what happens to the wealth produced by the people of this country.

4.35 p.m.

I am sorry I have not got before me the last Balance Sheet of the Company to show what its shares are worth and what these shares paid within the last year or so; but on an investment of the 2½ million dollars which the company is now getting as a loan, even at 5% per annum they will make \$125,000. That is nothing to be sneered at. We shall get our share of taxation out of it of course; but imagine what could be done if we had the chance to get the entire amount of money; to say nothing of the advantages of eventual ownership of an appreciable portion of the Corporation. Could you want for an easier manner in which to nationalise the Company? They have not got to provide one single cent of capital. I do not know what the Corporation is worth; but it seems to me that 2 million dollars must go a very long way towards the complete valuation of the Company. The Government has not got to put up its own mortgage; it would not have to make this loan against its own finances. Its only use would be to give consent to the finances and assets of the Company in order to negotiate this loan for itself; and of course, it would perhaps more readily get the subscription of the half million dollars to which the local public would now be entitled. Here is a chance to acquire a three-million-dollar investment and the Government throws it to the wind. If even the Government had not the faintest desire for nationalisation, the moment they got a chance like this they should have bit it in the eye; that is, they should have seized upon it at once.

All the money other people are taking out of the island, let us keep it in Barbados. In the big capitalist countries like America it is the doctrine that public utilities should be controlled by the State. If the Government owns it either partially or completely, it means that they can do two things; it means that they can really control the rates which they charge the public, and it also means that any profits made will accrue to the State. I say this: even a government with an anti-nationalisation policy could not help for seeing the prospects or the advantages of nationalisation in a case like this. It is a very sad commentary on the public affairs of this island that in the year 1955 something like this should take place. If I were the Colonial Office I would say this: if this is the way the colonial peoples who are clamouring for self government are going to manage their own affairs then for God's sake, let them have it. What they are going to risk to do we could not have dared to risk. Can you imagine the howl that would be raised in Jamaica, or even in Barbados, if this suggestion had originated in the Colonial Office and if they had said: "Look here; you want to expand the Electric Company? Well, we are going to take up some of the British taxpayers money and do it

for you and get some of the profits." I imagine how the Colonial Office officials and the C.D.C. officials would bloat over this proposition. They would wish that they could invest all their capital in a manner like that. If it could be assured of similar investments throughout the Colonial Empire, C.D.C. would go on for another thousand years. I am not prepared to be a partner to such nonsense.

In September 1954 when I tabled the Resolution to which I made earlier reference, this is what I said in one paragraph: "The House are of the opinion that in view of the existing circumstances with regard to raising of capital for which the Barbados Electric Corporation is not solely responsible" (referring, of course, to the fact that the political pronouncements of the Labour Government had prohibited their raising the capital) I suggested that in view of that "the Government should take whatever steps would be necessary in order to make the capital available to the Corporation at the earliest date possible;" and I said: "either by way of loan, or preferably by purchase of stock;" in order that the distress and inconvenience which results from the unavailability of electricity may be partially relieved until such time as the Corporation can acquire the entire amount which could be granted from Capital Expenditure, either as a loan with the assistance of the Government, or by the purchase of stock by the Government.

4.45 p.m.

At that time there were two proposals which the company had. It said that it needed \$3 million for completing extensions, but it also said that it could use \$300,000 immediately to make electricity available to a certain number of rural areas with its present machinery. As a matter of fact, the existing plant could have borne an extension programme costing \$60,000 and the company claimed that with \$300,000 it could provide electricity for another 300 rural districts. As far back as September when none of us knew whether they could get money from C.D.C. or not, I came to the conclusion that the Government would have to step in and use its good offices for them to raise the money. I suggested that we should raise the money and lend them and stand responsible for it, and to acquire the proportionate amount of stock. Am I going to sit here and allow the Barbados Government to be the means by which the shareholders in London can get the necessary capital for extending their company and they make the profits out of it? I am not doing that at all. I am as anxious as anybody else to see the Company expand; I know the need for electricity in the rural areas; but I am not prepared to sit down and allow the good name of Your Honour, the taxpayers of this colony and myself to be used by a foreign Company and they make money out of it and we get nothing. I am not supporting this Resolution because I feel that the Government should have the good sense to realise that what they are doing is madness. Until the terms of this loan are changed in the interest of the people of Barbados I am not supporting it.

The question that this Resolution do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative on the following division:—

Ayes: Hon. G. H. ADAMS, Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS, Hon. M. E. COX, Hon. C. E. TALMA, Mrs. BOURNE, MESSRS. SMITH, MILLER, J. C. MOTTLEY and VAUGHAN.—9.

Noes: MESSRS. CRAWFORD, LEWIS, and TUDOR.—3.

Mr. E. D. MOTTLEY entered the House and took his seat.

RESOLUTION TO TAKE OVER BARBADOS GAS COMPANY

Hon. G. H. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I am asking leave to take Order No. 3 as the next Order of the Day.

There being no objection, leave was granted the Hon. Minister.

Mr. SPEAKER: The next Order of the Day now stands in the name of the Hon. Premier: To move the passing of the following Resolution: A Resolution in connection with the taking over of the Barbados Gas Company Limited by the Natural Gas Corporation.

Hon. G. H. ADAMS: This Resolution is for the purpose of buying out the Gas Company; and hon. members, I believe will agree with me when I say that we are lucky to get it at the price at which we have got it. There is a vast difference between giving £30,000 for something and paying more money for something else. The Natural Gas Corporation will raise a loan of \$1 million for the purpose of paying for the Barbados Gas Company and running it; it will pay for the Natural Gas at Turner Hall and run the Gas Company as an institution of the Barbados Government. I do not think it is necessary for me to say anything more. The Schedule to this Resolution is actually the legal wording of the Agreement between the Barbados Gas Company Ltd. and the Natural Gas Corporation. I do not know that anybody can say that we are giving too much for this concern; we are actually giving less for it than what the Company wanted. The appraisal of the value of the assets has been gone into with extreme care and we are not buying rusty pipes out of which, I am told, more than 60% of gas is leaking. Nothing is being given to the Gas Company at present in respect of the pipes in the roads, so that this amount is in respect of the land on which the concern is situated, the buildings, plant, machinery, office furniture, and so on.

As hon. members will see, the Government has got all the available expert advice it could get locally, including the advice of the Head of the Natural Gas Corporation, whom I have had described to me to be a man who knows more than anybody else about the working of the Natural Gas Corporation. I do think that we can feel reasonably confident that we have had very good advice in this matter.

4.55 p.m.

If there is any specific information that hon. members would like to get from me, I will be glad to give it. The Addendum which follows the Schedule shows what it is estimated to cost to lay this pipeline and to renovate the Company as well as what it will cost to run it. The amount of \$1,000,000 represents the price of buying the company out, plus the estimated cost of making it serviceable and supplying the gas at a reasonable price. I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. Dr. CUMMINS: I beg to second that.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question is that this Resolution—

Mr. MILLER: Mr. Speaker,—

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable members must not wait until I am on my feet to show their intention to speak on a motion before the House. It is an insult to the Chair.

Mr. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, there was no intention to insult the Chair.

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the honourable member address the Chair now?

Mr. MILLER: I am addressing the Chair now. I am just saying that there was no intention whatsoever of insulting the Chair. My delay in rising was due to my waiting to hear the remarks of the Acting Clerk.

Sir, even if this Resolution meant the twisting of the figure of \$31,000 to \$61,000, I would say: God bless, go ahead and buy it quickly! I believe that it is almost ten years that I was agitating for the Government to buy this company. I am not saying that they have waited for all that period to realise that the company is a great benefit to the community; therefore, they must take it over and continue to work it. I am saying that the best thing has happened in that Government has taken it over; and the question of whether the assets of the Gas Company to be taken over are worth \$31,000 or \$188,000 does not really matter. It is a fact, of course, that the company at no time in its operation could have found the money asked for the assets, because that money was never invested in it at no time. It is fortunate for the Company that the area on which its building stands was valued at \$2.50 a square foot, because it is really on that basis than any other that the company is worth something.

What has happened is that the bulk of fuel used for cooking in this island has been kerosene oil and imported fuel; and that is because the Company was so lacking in initiative that it was never in the position to operate the gas wells. The Company was never yet in a position to supply the gas. From the time that they began operating Natural Gas they were hoping to plough profit from the sale of it, because they were exacting something like ten times the price of any fuel imported from any foreign country. Of course we are happy to have the service of Natural Gas which has been given to us by nature if not by an act of God.

Mr. Speaker, I hope honourable members will be given the opportunity to hear and debate the reply from the Minister in charge of this Resolution. You have this cowardly act of discussing this Resolution in this manner. For instance, when we were just discussing the previous Resolution with respect to the Electric Company, it was discussed in that manner where knowing that you will not go into Committee on it, you were prevented from having the opportunity to reply. This is a democracy; this is decent manhood; men do not refer to these things in that way; not even primitive man. It is gratifying to find that great souls are persuaded to do simple things; even pigeons do not lack that greatness to their own beings. Men do not do these things.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am not following the honourable member's sequence.

Mr. MILLER: I was referring, Mr. Speaker, to the Resolution; and I was saying that I hope that the information which the honourable members asked for would be given, and that they would be given opportunity to reply. This is a cowardly action to discuss a Resolution like this in the House, knowing that when you do so you suppress not only a man's hands but his entire character and his entire being sometimes. Big men should not be capable of this sort of thing. You like to prey on us as if we were a child who knows that he is locked to a stool and cannot get away from the tie. The Hon. Premier is a gentleman, he is an honourable man. He must be that since he has survived as it were the Crucifixion of Calvary of our time. He has been able to withstand the impact of all of those who have tried to fight against him. He is

a great man, but no great man who has climbed to any great heights has struggled to pull those great heights down.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable member is really overstepping the mark now. The honourable member has given vent to his feelings. I would not say he has done a wonderful job, but I have given the honourable member sufficient latitude.

Mr. MILLER: You will forgive me for doing so. For my whole life I have always followed the dictates of my heart. As I seek to deal with the Resolution, I pray that you will bear with me further. If I may repeat what I said previously, a grand thing has happened that this Government is taking over the Gas Company. Perhaps it is the best thing that this Chamber has done within recent years, seeking as it is to nationalise the Gas Company. May be I am funny if I say that if they wanted a bigger sum to clinch this, I would be in agreement; because I am anxious to see Government nationalise it as some Conservative Government in the past thought it fit to nationalise the two water companies that existed in this island. I do not like to be misled. If the Hon. Premier is armed with these figures, I hope he will let us have them.

5.05 p.m.

Buy it and get it into the hands of the people and let the taxpayers of this island benefit. I just want to let the House understand that I am aware of the assets of this Company. If the Hon. Premier claims that the pipes along the road are of no use then the sum of \$616,507 amounts to a gift to the Company. The Natural Gas Corporation is proposing to go outside for a loan. My argument is that the Government should supply that one million dollars. The Government need not supply any international tariffs. The Gulf Oil Company has arranged to sell Well Turner Hall No. (1) to the Natural Gas Corporation for \$78,158. In this case I am hoping that the Government will ignore these international tariff conventions of the world oil companies. We have few people in this country who would not be interested in this proposal for acquiring the assets of the Barbados Gas Company unless some constant means of power can be ensured.

I believe that the omission on the part of Government to supply the Natural Gas Corporation with the proposed one million dollars is going to be a tremendous blow to the people of this country. I regret that the Government does not see the wisdom of financing the Corporation with the necessary one million dollars which the Corporation has to go outside for.

Another important factor is that the 4½% per annum on the proposed issue of debenture stock must inevitably be passed on to the consumers; for it will have the deplorable effect of increasing the selling price of the natural gas.

I have known the Rum Refinery at Black Rock to have applied for this natural gas service and found that it would require \$800 a month more to use it. I also know other companies who have given consideration to its use and have found similar adverse results. I, myself, once thought of fitting burners for heating ovens with natural gas; but I had to abandon it because I found that it would cost three times as much as using wallaba wood which you have to pay somebody to cut up.

I suppose the Government would say that it was a question of their commitments and that they could not afford the one million dollars. But I am wondering if the Government could not have found some other means of raising this loan.

Mr. LEWIS: Mr. Speaker, as I see it, this is another important piece of legislation which is being dealt with in a very off-hand manner; and unless hon. members take it as their serious business and consider it deeply, I do not see how they will be able to thresh the matter out without the House going into Committee. It is impossible for an hon. member who has not been into the negotiations, or has visited the Gas Company and got to know its assets, to pronounce upon this. But to an outsider, knowing the derelict condition of the Gas Company, from what I hear and from the little that can be seen, the Barbados Gas Company (according to a public admission, I am sure, by the Premier himself) is wasting the natural gas which the Natural Gas Corporation is supplying to them because of faulty pipe lines. This is a very unfortunate thing that should be happening. When they manufactured gas at the Barbados Gas Company, it was said that they needed gas as well as pipe lines. To an ordinary layman all they need now is pipelines; and the Government does not need the pipeline; so what is the Government buying?

The Gas Company has served its time. It has exercised its rights and committed its wrongs and now the Government is taking back from it rights which it has previously given them, because they are not using them.

What do you want the lines for? Here is some thing which I cannot understand. The only thing that Government need from this company is something that they are afraid to take over; that is: the pipe-lines. You say that you would not pay a cent for them, and yet you can have a valuation of £31,000 for the assets on the whole.

The next thing is that if the Government does take over the Gas Company, the first thing Government should see to is that it moves its headquarters from its present site in Bay Street and extend the open "window" along the site. See that you carry the headquarters somewhere inland. It is undesirable to have the Gas Company along the seashore. That was very good in the days when the coal for making the gas came from outside.

Here is the Government buying a building which it does not want. The land on which it stands is said to be 39,000 square feet and the Government proposes buying it at \$2.25 per square foot. I do not know if they can sell it to somebody else; but I am of opinion that the Government should take the headquarters of the Gas Company up to the Pine for instance, or to some other place where it would be nearer to the natural gas well. Certainly they do not need to have it on its present site.

5.15 p.m.

The Gas Company might need expansion and you should get a proper place somewhere else. These things make me feel that in this action the Government is nationalising the energy which Government supplies to the Gas Company; they are nationalising what they are supplying to the Gas Company and then they say they cannot nationalise the Electric Company. It is all very amusing. I am not telling them that they should go about fleecing peoples' property, but they are fleecing the taxpayers in order to buy out this concern. I am going to make a motion that we go into Committee on this Resolution. The Hon. Premier must have heard from the hon. junior member for St. George that it does not become him to get up in this House and behave as he has behaved in this House today. You are transferring your rights from an English Company to another; to be formed in this island; but though you said that you have such great control over the Electric Company, still you wanted to nationalise

it years ago. That is not the type of ignorance to shout out loudly. However, I am hoping that the headquarters of the Gas Company will be removed from that site. They might be able to justify the expenditure of this £31,000.

I am puzzled about Clause 13 of the Schedule to this Resolution; it is divided into (a), (b), (c) and (d). This Clause says this: "This Agreement is conditional upon (a) the same being ratified by a Resolution of a general meeting of the intending vendor". It does not say that the Executive Committee has ratified it.

Paragraph (b) says "the approval of the Governor-in-Executive Committee." If you get the approval of the Executive Committee and you do not say anything about the Legislature, that is a mistake in my opinion. Sub-paragraph (c) says "the Legislature of Barbados". Somebody has to ratify the agreement, another person has to approve of it, and it does not say that the Agreement is conditional on its being accepted by the Legislature.

Paragraph (d) says "the Public Utilities Board". Why should the Legislature of this colony pass a Resolution saying that something which the Legislature does has to be approved by the Public Utilities Board? Why should the Legislature say so? Why should it be approved by the Public Utilities Board? Is that something which the Government has set up as a Super-Legislature? I think the Resolution itself should say specifically that the Agreement should be ratified by the Legislature. I do not know what status we are giving to the Public Utilities Board; the Public Utilities Board is to come in when the Government is running the concern and say whether it is being properly run or not. I do not see why the Agreement is to be ratified by the Public Utilities Board; where did they get that idea from?

Hon. G. H. ADAMS: This is an Agreement which the two parties have drawn up; it is nothing which the Executive Committee has sent down. You can see that it is not set out in the English which the honourable member would use. This Agreement has not been made as clear as it should have been made. I agree with the honourable member; but it is clear what is meant. We are just wasting time if you go on to emphasise that the Government has done something wrong. This is a Solicitor's document which has been drawn up, and it should have been done in proper English.

Mr. LEWIS: If anything of this nature is wrong in a Bill, I understand that the Attorney General can correct what is an obvious mistake. The Hon. Premier knows the power the Crown Law Officers have to do that; if it is something so vital, it will only take another day to bring it in its proper form. I am saying that the Governor-in-Executive Committee must have seen this Agreement before it was accepted by the Company, and they had no right to put in the document that it should be ratified by the Public Utility Board. I do not see how the Public Utilities Board comes into this matter at all. Are you making them a party to something which they have to supervise? That is a piece of nonsense: the way in which this Clause has been worded. I am criticising the way in which the Public Utilities Board has been brought into this matter. If this Agreement is to be ratified by the Legislature it has no right going to any subordinate Board for approval; and they have no right to approve of it before we do; therefore leave them out of it. If the Agreement should have been ratified by the Natural Gas Corporation, I would say "yes" because they may say "we cannot run it." Where does the Public Utili-

ties Board come into this matter? They have to stand aloof and report to the Government that something is going wrong. Before the honourable member criticises me for what is here, I would like him to say whether this is in the original copy because if it is, then we may be able to get it put right.

I would like to refer now to the Addendum of this Resolution. The first paragraph says this: "As a result of negotiations, the agreement reproduced above has been made between the Barbados Gas Company Ltd. and the Natural Gas Corporation for the option of the purchase of the Company's assets by the Corporation. This agreement is subject to approval by the Legislature in accordance with Clause 13 (c) thereof. On 27th April, a General Meeting of the Company ratified this conditional agreement. The purchase price is based upon independent valuations."

I would like to know who did the valuation of this Company. If this were considered in Committee, we would get this information and probably comment on our knowledge of the people who valued it. Certainly the honourable member could have said that there is a Clause saying that an independent valuation has taken place, and that Mr. So and So did the valuation for us. Do not try to suppress these facts; this is a case where you are taking over a corporation and running it for the benefit of the people of this colony. This is your first act of running a public utility service like this; let us know who did the valuation, unless you are ashamed or afraid of it. I think the honourable member said that none of this pipeline was serviceable, but they still have ten thousand dollars worth serviceable; they are still getting a lot of money for what they say is not serviceable. Who did this valuation?

5.25 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: The names are mentioned in the Addendum to the Resolution.

Mr. LEWIS: Since that is so, I take it that the valuation was made up by Messrs Joseph Connell and Frank C. Hutson? Well, sir, if the Public Utilities Board had been left out of it, some of these geniuses ought to have helped in the valuation. However, we find here in the Addendum that the well at Turner's Hall belonging to the British Union Oil Company is now owned by the Natural Gas Corporation. We also find that the Gulf Oil Company comes into the picture because they too have a well to sell. I am wondering whether these experts that we have around us now, can help us to get some of these things at a little less high price than we have been paying for them. I am not going to say that all these claims for the Director of Petroleum and Natural Gas are in any way misplaced; but the fact remains that this particular gentleman is the only person in Barbados who knows what he is doing, therefore, there is nobody to assess him. It is a well known fact that any good employee who has worked with an oil company or Gas Company, or any such Company retains a certain amount of jurisdiction over his action when he retires. It is known that he cannot retire from any oil company and go and work for another one easily. They do not let that kind of thing go on; so, those people are tied up with the companies from which they draw their pensions in respect of the services which they have rendered, and which might be in competition with the place to which they are now working.

I would just like Government to say here that we have a very good employee. He is an excellent man; he has knowledge which nobody can check, therefore, we can only believe he is A1. But do

not let us fool ourselves that an employee of that sort can give you information to do harm to any big oil company. It may result in his losing his very life if he does that. We all may remember that we had an employee of an oil company here who was reported to have left the company and he did not live very long after he left here. [A VOICE: Did they kill him?] I do not know, but I am saying that those people are tied down with their knowledge. As is known, everybody is not a geologist.

Those are the remarks which I have to make. In case of this gas well which is to be sold to us, we have to start off to pay \$78,158 for it. That seems to me a lot of money, and there is no guarantee of how long it will last. These estimates and matters of this sort are subjected to nature itself; it might be beyond the ability of man to assess them very accurately. However, we have an estimate here for \$1,000,000 and the Government has said it will advance this money but I must take up a remark which the hon. senior member for St. Joseph made about not being able to buy the Electric Company out because you have to buy the Gas Company and also build a Deep Water Harbour.

Hon. G. H. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of explanation. I never said that Government could not buy out the Electric Company because we had to buy out the Gas Company. I did say that we had to build a Deep Water Harbour. We could buy everything if we have the money, and we would do so if we had it.

5.35 p.m.

Mr. LEWIS: If the honourable member did not say that, he might easily have meant it; because he is buying the Gas Company (and that is not in the Five Year Plan) in addition to building the Deep Water Harbour. But if I remember correctly, this Harbour is supposed to be self-supporting. If this is so all you have got to do is to furnish the money to do it. We were told that it can be self-supporting; and the Honourable Premier should not forget what he says.

I now beg to move that this House go into Committee on this Resolution. And just in case this is not carried—In fact I wonder if there is not some Act of Parliament by which this Resolution could not be carried? The Hon. Premier thinks this is going to disappear? Where are these Resolutions published so that anybody can go to them and say that you could find them like the Laws of 1949 or 1889 for instance? This Resolution has no permanency anywhere; you do not have them printed and bound like the laws of Barbados.

We have just passed a Resolution relating to a certain Act, and all we had to do was to refer to the page of the Act that the Resolution was amending. The Gas Company is a law; the Electric Company is a law; but what we are doing now in a Resolution of this House. That is all that it is.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question is that this—

Hon. G. H. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, it is regrettable, but it has happened before, that after a Government Member has spoken somebody else has spoken. I am appealing to honourable members not to—

Mr. SPEAKER: The motion by the junior member for the City that the House go into Committee has not been seconded.

Mr. E. D. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I intend to second that motion now.

Mr. SPEAKER: Then the honourable member may speak now.

Mr. E. D. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, this Resolution is of great importance to this Community. As you are aware, today I expressed the view

of a minority party that has always opposed the idea of nationalisation; and they oppose the idea of nationalisation more so where private enterprise is well-equipped, financially and otherwise, to carry on a public utility service. That gas in Barbados could be a public utility service cannot be denied. [VOICES: Hear! Hear! Conservatives converted!] I do not know what is there so foreign about that.

Mr. Speaker, gas is an item for fuel. Unlike when it was first brought to this country manufactured, gas is both an item of fuel and of light. Today, with the exception of the metropolitan parish of St. Michael, gas is purely an item of fuel. I repeat, that with the exception of the metropolitan parish of St. Michael which still subsidises this Company by paying them a sum of money annually for the purpose of lighting the streets, it is purely an item of fuel. Fuel for the inhabitants of this country, like all other countries, is really necessary for the preservation of man; and not only for the householder, but for business, and in some cases for the encouragement of industries. Fuel must be very apparent and necessary in this community.

I will never be converted to the idea of Government taking over any properly run public utility; but as you are aware, we have always advocated that a private individual should not be allowed to run a public utility merely for making profit; but that Government should say how they should run it in order to get the best out of the service. But there is more in this Gas Company matter than the bare taking over of it and running it as a company; there is more to it than a government taking over of a public utility or interfering with private enterprise. There is a tremendous amount of argument that can be produced on either side in this debate.

I have listened, Mr. Speaker, to the Hon. Premier and I have listened to my colleague; and now I am wondering how an agreement like this could be allowed to go through without getting the *pros* and *cons*. I am not suggesting that the Government is attempting to stifle debate. As a matter of fact they cannot, as long as some of us are in here. But it is not good for the country not to have the views of the people expressed on an Agreement such as this. There is one thing which I entirely agree with and that is the motion made by my colleague that this House go into Committee on this Resolution. We should go into Committee, because irrespective of what the Hon. Premier may think of what I say, I am to be given the opportunity of defending certain points; and this House should go into Committee for several other reasons, among which is the reason that the Chairman will be able to note your remarks. A few weeks ago, the House went into Committee on something similar to this Resolution, in connection with Foursquare and it is possible in my considered opinion, also to go into Committee on the Resolution.

5.45 p.m.

It is advisable in my opinion that we should go into Committee on this Resolution and therefore I am seconding the motion of my colleague. Somebody asks *soto voce* what can be said in Committee that cannot be said now; but in an Agreement of this nature, there are things about which you want to let rumour be a lying Jade, and you will give members of the Opposition the opportunity to ask questions and get answers to them.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that you would like an adjournment taken at this stage. Am I in order to move the adjournment? [A MEMBER: You cannot do that.] I understand, sir, that I cannot move

the adjournment having seconded the motion of my colleague and therefore I shall continue to speak. There are some phrases in this Agreement about which, as a layman, I should like to find out something and there are some other things. [Interruption].

When Ministers grumble in their chairs they cannot put me out of in here; they either have to listen to me or otherwise walk out. I was saying, sir, that there are some phrases in this Schedule which I would like explained to me. In paragraph (b) of Clause 1 of the Schedule there is the expression "way leaves." I plead ignorance to these things, and if I did not realise that the Premier is an Oxford graduate I would not ask him. I feel that this is wrong; I am sure the honourable member will explain these things for us. If you listen to the remarks of the honourable junior member for St. George, a member of the Government's Party, and then read this debate 3 or 4 months from today you are bound to come to the conclusion that the Government has tried to force this matter upon us. This is a question of acquiring the assets of the Barbados Gas Company and that is why I feel that we should go into Committee on this matter. I do not subscribe to the idea that as soon as some people have any kind of property for sale it is very valuable, but as soon as some other people have it for sale it is worth nothing.

5.55 p.m.

I am not prepared to give professional advice now, but if it goes into Committee and if the question is raised, I would be prepared to give what is my view on the matter. The honourable junior member for St. George made the inference that the Company did not worth anything; the Hon. Premier must have been listening at the time, and that is why I am suggesting that we should go into Committee on this Resolution. Criticism of this Resolution was made by members of his own party. One member actually said that you are giving away money for a property which does not worth it. It is not my duty to say that, but if we go into Committee I will express my views. I have several paragraphs underlined on which I would express my views if this Resolution is threshed out in Committee.

It has been shown here that the price is based on independent valuation. I can only throw this out to the Government, if they appreciate it, that there is a feeling at this stage that it is not wise for the Government to take over this property. However, sir, I think I should reserve any further comments, because I have no doubt in my mind, unless those members who expressed the view that it should go into Committee are those who are inclined to speak in a certain vein and then when it comes to voting, are not prepared to vote as they have spoken.

Another question which I would like to ask the Premier is this: you have heard, sir, that this is an agreement between the Barbados Gas Company Ltd., and the Natural Gas Corporation; you have in the Addendum that as a result of negotiations, the Agreement reproduced above has been made between the Barbados Gas Company Ltd., and the Natural Gas Corporation for the option of the purchase of the Company's assets by the Corporation. This Agreement is subject to approval by the Legislature in accordance with Clause 13. On the 27th April, a General Meeting of the Company ratified this conditional agreement. The purchase price is based upon independent valuation. I am wondering whether Government should not be a party to this Agreement. We are giving you the authority to take over this Company and what I am thinking

of most particularly, is that you have actually said in the Addendum that the present supply of Natural Gas available to the Natural Gas Company comes from the former British Union Oil Company Well No. 19 now owned by the Natural Gas Corporation. You go on to say that it is considered inadvisable to rely on one such well as a source of supply to consumers for any length of time. Thus another well must be secured by the Corporation to avoid any possibility of an interruption in the service to consumers, and to make possible some extension of the present service. As a result of negotiations, an offer has been received from the Barbados Gulf Oil Company to sell well Turner Hall No. 1, which contains gas in favourable quantity to the Natural Gas Corporation for \$78,158. I suggest that it is public property; it is felt by the present Government that the Natural Gas well — No. 19 will only last for another 10 years. Thinking in terms of investment, if you are going to put up \$500,000 and you have only a supply to last for ten years, it would not be a safe and sound investment; hence I am asking the Hon. Premier to say, much as we are all mindful of what happened during the negotiations between the B.U.O.C. and the Gulf Oil Company, whether it would not be better to have the Gulf Oil Company secure in the Agreement or to have a follow up agreement between the Natural Gas Corporation and the Gulf Oil Company. Some members seem to think that \$79,000 is a tremendous lot of money and some might feel that if there is any well in Barbados producing Natural Gas that the Natural Gas Corporation would do well to secure it. I think you should have more information to put before this House than merely to say that you are taking over this well because the source of supply of well No. 19 cannot be relied on. There is nothing in this Resolution touching on Manufactured Gas. For all these reasons, if you are going in for a concern of a million dollars capital (and I am looking at it from a business stand point) then you should have something which you yourself can rely on. That is how it strikes me and how I think it would strike any business man.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, if I may be permitted, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn for half an hour.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sorry but you cannot do that when the hon. member is on his feet.

Mr. E. D. MOTTLEY: I was saying, sir, that it would do well for the Hon. Premier to give an explanation not as to whether they have an offer to buy the well, but something more than that. I am saying that from a business standpoint you should have more than an offer.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Addendum reads as follows:—

The Natural Gas Corporation proposed to borrow \$1,000,000 for the purposes mentioned above, made up as follows:—

(a) Acquisition of assets of Gas Co. Approx.	\$ 150,000
(b) Renovation of gas distribution system Approx.	616,507
(c) Acquisition of Turner Hall No. 1	78,158
(d) Replacement of present 2" field line from well 19 to field regulating station with 3" field line to connect both wells to station	11,842
(e) Additional field lines	25,000

(f) Earmarked for purchase of further sources of gas and/or expansion of distribution system	118,493
	\$ 1,000,000

This is one of the reasons why this matter should go to Select Committee. I am going to ask the Hon. Premier a straight forward question: will the Hon. Premier say if a decision was made as to what size mains they are going to lay down for this Gas? 6.05 p.m.

Now, I know the Hon. Premier is going to be taken to task on the question of the valuation of serviceable lines. I have had once to do with the question of gas and lighting; and we were, so to speak all laymen; all we knew about the question was the raising of the money and that the lights were not bright enough in the street. It meant that we had to bring in experts to enlighten us upon it. The only thing we knew about it then was through the Hon. Sir John Saint. I am sure we have in our midst other men who have knowledge of mine engineering and of gas as a public utility.

There are several questions which still have to be answered. I suppose it is universally known that the lines which were carrying the gas to consumers have actually rotted out and that the Gas was passing through the earth. I take it that the Hon. Premier will be in a position to say when the survey will be made, in so far as it might be humanly possible. I am going to repeat that the pipelines, especially the mains which carry the Gas to the various consumers were found to be actually gone, resulting in a very low pressure to the consumer. I am inclined to think that it was a point out of his favour when the Hon. Premier attempted to explain (on a point of Order) that the price would have been higher except for the deduction of the \$44,747 said to be the portion of the Company's valuation of the pipeline that is still serviceable.

There are several aspects to this matter of the valuation of the Company's assets. The question of property is a small factor, because the actual property itself is gilt edged. There is nothing against that. But what I do wish to say is this: If on the one hand you say that \$44,747 of the Company's assets is still serviceable, and on the other hand you say that the lines have rotted out, that is one of the reasons why I think that we should go into Committee on a matter like this. The lines running in the Worthing Road have been running for the last three or four months; therefore, we come to the conclusion that these must have been good; and there are other lines in other places which have not been examined and we must again come to the conclusion that they are good. Every honourable member of this House is entitled to know more about this matter. You want \$616,000 to pay for lines; you say that is what you were actually paying because \$44,747 is the portion of the Company's valuation of the lines still serviceable; if the Hon. Premier were in the Opposition today, we are sure that he would want to know how that valuation of \$44,747 in lines was arrived at. Why for argument sake could they not have said \$15,000? Is not enough to get up and make an introductory speech and say that nobody will disagree with the fact that the Gas Company is a public utility. The back-benchers will say even more than that; they will say it is a social service to the community and therefore it should be run by Government. It is not the principle we are disagreeing with; but we are entitled to ask questions. In principle

we agree. You might have the back-benchers agreeing from a different point of view; but we must ask questions in order to satisfy ourselves on doubtful points. It has been found that honourable members of the Government are too often unable to answer questions upon points raised in here from time to time; and in some instances they will even refuse to do so. That creates a sort of ill feeling. It is a most simple and commonplace procedure for honourable members to ask questions; there is nothing embarrassing about it; it just enlightens the public. I have heard this said: "The Government is taking over the Gas Company at the last minute when it has nothing to offer; when it has not even pipes to run through the earth!" Are we not then to ask questions to let the public know how concerned we are about it?

You do not only have to agree with the principle, you have also got to find out in detail why and how you have arrived at certain things. I, for instance, have learned through certain discussions that there is some kind of different piping that is used today. All these are things should be noted; and the Government should then be able to answer and to say that they are not really taking over a dud, but that they are doing something for the island. I therefore beg to second the motion that this House go into Committee on this Resolution.

6.15 p.m.

Mr. CRAWFORD: At this stage I beg to move that this House do now adjourn for half an hour.

Mr. TUDOR: I beg to second that.

Hon. G. H. ADAMS: I am speaking on the motion for adjournment and I am also replying to the honourable senior member for the City. I wish to remind the honourable member that I was very careful to say I have the file before me and I would endeavour to answer any questions which honourable members might ask. When a Resolution of this sort comes before the House, there is nothing which can be said in Committee which cannot be said in the House. All honourable members have to do is to ask questions. The honourable senior member for the City himself has replied to some of the questions which he has asked; to everything he asked the answer is just what you will expect. The Company's valuer valued the land —

Mr. ALLDER: On a point of Order, I am wondering if the honourable senior member for St. Joseph can take the opportunity on a motion for adjournment to discuss a matter which we have been discussing for so long.

Mr. SPEAKER: On the adjournment an honourable member can take full advantage of the situation.

Hon. G. H. ADAMS: The Company's valuation came to £39,400 and eventually we cut them down to £30,000.

Mr. E. D. MOTTLEY: Read the Addendum.

Hon. G. H. ADAMS: This \$44,000 represents the other assets of the Company which are still serviceable and represents 7% of the Company's property. The estimates were based on the result of investigation. If the Addendum gives the impression that we are referring only to mains, then that is wrong. The honourable member can be excused for [Mr. BARROW: But it says so.] Because they have not set it out as clearly as they should have done, it does not mean that we do not understand what they mean. A more thorough investigation could not have been made; this investigation has been going on for years. Practically none of the main which is running along the road is of any use; this money represents items other than mains. It

will take a couple of hours to read, but I am prepared to get up and read item by item if honourable members so desire. There is the windmill, pump, gasholders, mains, natural gas mains, meters, governors, every single item has been carefully checked. The Company said that they wanted £39,400 for the property. I am assuring honourable members that their questions can be answered in a way that would convince them that the Government has done everything possible in this matter.

As regards any suggestion about the gas wells, the only person who really knows about it would be Mr. Garrett who was asked about the pressure; and for anybody to estimate that it would last ten or fifteen years would only be guessing.

Mr. E. D. MOTTLEY: We are only saying that it is not good enough to say that you just had an offer; we want to be assured that it is more than an offer. That should not be part of this Agreement; it would follow that the expenditure of \$1 million would be justified.

6.25 p.m.

Hon. G. H. ADAMS: You have just got to trust people at some time or other. When we gave the Gulf Oil Company that concession, it was understood that we would like to purchase all the Natural Gas; and they never said that they had any interest in it. If we made an agreement to buy what Natural Gas they discovered, we might have to say that we were sorry we agreed to buy it because we do not want it.

I repeat: you cannot get anything more than an understanding before you complete negotiations, because you may want to drop the matter.

Mr. E. D. MOTTLEY: If in the Addendum you say you have an offer, you should have something more than that.

Hon. G. H. ADAMS: If for instance somebody who is keeping a chicken farm says to you: "Would you buy my eggs?" Do you mean to say that you have to put it down in writing that you have to buy every egg? What more do you want? Can we make an agreement to buy all the gas the Gulf Oil Company may find?

Mr. E. D. MOTTLEY: Oh no; I have not said so. I have not said that you should agree to buy all the gas which they find. I want to know if the agreement is secured should you take over the Gas Company.

Hon. G. H. ADAMS: This is as good as bought. I did not understand that you meant it that way.

The question that this House do now adjourn for half an hour was put and resolved in the affirmative, the House dividing as follows:—

Ayes: Mr. BRANCKER, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mr. J. C. MOTTLEY, Mr. VAUGHAN, Mr. BARROW, Mr. ALLDER, Mr. TUDOR, and Mr. E. D. MOTTLEY.—8

Noes: Mr. SMITH, Hon. G. H. ADAMS, Hon. Dr. CUMMINS, Hon. M. E. COX, Hon. C. E. TALMA, Mrs. BOURNE and Mr. F. E. MILLER.—7

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SPEAKER: The question has been decided in the affirmative, eight hon. members voting "Aye" and seven hon. members voting "No." I now declare the Ayes have it. This House stands adjourn for half an hour.

6.30 p.m.

On re-assembling.

GAS COMPANY RESOLUTION

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. senior member for St. Philip has the right to speak.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, this Resolution is asking the House to approve the acquisition of the concern known as the Barbados Gas Company Ltd by the state. As such, in principle there must be general support for the proposals it contains. There can therefore be some argument as to the conditions under which the Government proposes to acquire this service.

We are told from the Resolution that we are to pay for the Gas Company the sum of £31,000 for its present holding. Now it is an open secret that were it not for the benefits of the said Government which for years has openly abetted this concern in its exploitation of the public, that this Company would have gone into liquidation ever since; because they have been buying the gas which they retail to consumers from the Government at a very nominal price, and then selling at 300% of what they paid for it. Had they not been allowed to make this iniquitous and exorbitant profit, long ago the Gas Company would have reconditioned its plant including its mains, in order to prevent the enormous leakage which occurs; because it is generally known that it is because they were able to make such an almost criminal turn over on their investments, were they able to carry on.

Well now, a concern which has been for some time on the verge of folding up and which, if run under normal reasonable lines would I think have had to remodel or close down, the Government is proposing to acquire for £31,000. What are they getting for £31,000? The Company's assets comprise 39,000 square feet of land, some ramshackled building, a little antiquated plant and some mains which, according to the Hon. Premier himself, are completely useless. He says that not a single foot is of any use. Of course, a little later on in this debate, I propose to show how little he really knows of what he is introducing to this House. He does not read these things before he comes in here; and therefore, he comes in with all these half way assertions which are easily contradicted and totally incorrect. Now, as I said, the assets of that company are comprised of 39,000 square feet of land; and, Mr. Speaker, the Government proposes to pay for that land. I want the House to bear in mind that that 39,000 square feet of land actually comprises the most valuable portion of the Company's assets. When you have broken down this £31,000 you will find that (the Company is going) the price you are going to pay for that land is a most fictitious price. This has to be, we are told, in order to give the Company something for its holding. Can you imagine for argument sake any other Company in its sound, sane and sober state of mind agreeing to pay \$88,000 for less than an acre of land in Bay Street? The land is 39,000 square feet. It is not in the heart of the City or even within an area easily accessible to the City which might be conceived to be the City of the near future. It is not in Baxters Road or even Lower Bay Street or Constitution Road; it is fully three-quarters of a mile from the City, of no special desirability, and is priced at \$2.25 per square foot.

The hon. junior member for the City suggested that the area should be acquired and left as an open window to the sea. Well now if his suggestion is implemented, we shall be paying \$88,000 for that "window." There is no reason why the Gas Company should be sited there; and there is no reason why the Government should not afford to let it remain as an open "window" and remove the Company to another spot. The area, I submit, would hardly give more than eight house spots. Are you going to get anybody in Barbados except people in

the Mental Hospital, to pay \$11,000 for a house spot there? It is not a site that you would need for business purposes or which you could re-sell for some proper concern for that matter. Adjacent to it there is, I think, the Ice Factory and above it, and opposite to it are small properties resting on three or four thousand square feet of land. I repeat, you cannot get more than eight house spots from it and I do not see how anybody could pay \$11,000 for one of them; yet Government proposes to pay \$88,000 for the area. It is difficult, irrespective of whatever intentions you may have entered this House with, not to be aghast or flabbergasted, and not to be almost in perpetual wonderment at the business sense of the Government. I do not care who the valuers are. One has to assume that the Government has some business sense or commonsense of their own; and I want to ask the Hon. Premier outside of being a Government Minister if he would pay \$88,000 for less than an acre of land in Bay Street, and by what stretch of the imagination can \$88,000 be regarded as reasonable.

7.15 p.m.

Every time the Government has to acquire land or property it acquires it at some price which, if it were the standard of prices in the community, nobody could own any land or house at all. This is in keeping with the Central Foundry's property at \$26 per square foot. I cannot see for the life of me, how land lying $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from Bridgetown in this area could be worth more than 4/- a square foot at the most. If they got that price for it they are well paid. The Government itself owns land at the Bay Estate running down to this property and while it is true that the estate was bought *en bloc*, they did not pay $\frac{1}{2}$ of this price for the land they owned adjoining this same land in question. I cannot see anybody buying land in Bay Street and paying more than 3/- or 4/- a square foot for it; but the Government is paying \$2.25 a square foot for it. Well perhaps they can explain why they are paying this price for this land.

The remainder of the £31,000 will go for the ramshackled building on this land and the other assets of the company. I was surprised to hear the honourable Introducer of this Resolution who one assumes has paid some attention to the matter, tell the House that the provisional cost of renovating the system of gas distribution would cost \$661,254. In other words, the cost of the complete replacement of the main pipe line is \$661,000 odd and the figure of \$616,507 is arrived at by taking from the \$661,000 odd devaluation of the Company's mains which are still serviceable. The honourable senior member for the City queried this estimate and he was told by the Introducer of the Resolution that you have to replace the mains competely. None of these mains are serviceable but this \$44,000 is in reality the purchase price of the other assets of the company. I wonder where he got that from. One expects that a Minister, (to say nothing of the Prime Minister) when he comes before this House to introduce a matter of this importance, would at least pay himself the courtesy and the compliment of reading what he has to bring before the House. I either have to say that, or to say that he wants deliberately to mislead the House. This \$44,000 has nothing to do with the assets.

Hon. G. H. ADAMS: I object to the hon member misquoting me. I was at pains to use the expression "in the road"; I was at pains to say that the \$44,000 was not for the mains at all. There were certain mains which were included, but other things were included. When the hon. member quotes

me as saying "no mains at all", I even told the hon. senior member for the City that I could give him every item if he wanted it; I even mentioned "governors". I was only trying to save time.

Mr. CRAWFORD: The Hon. Premier said that not one single main is of any use; all of it has to be replaced and the other \$44,000 refers to the other assets of the Company. If he says "in the road" now, it is the first time I have heard it. What happens is that the Hon. Premier has refreshed his memory since then and realises that the entire assets of the company amount to \$150,000, and this \$44,000 must only refer to the valuable or serviceable main lines of the company. It is therefore difficult to reconcile his two statements. The first statement is that you have to replace everything, and this statement now is that we are paying \$44,000 for what is serviceable. If we are paying for the whole assets and we pay \$88,000 for the land area in Bay Street alone, we are paying \$62,000 for everything else plus office furniture, equipment, plant etc. One is justified in assuming that in some act the land value has been boosted out of all conformity to its true value, and it may well be that the other valuations are just as padded.

7.25 p.m.

Mr. Speaker what I am definitely concerned with is the bad principle of boosting land values.

One has to wait and see, (perhaps we may never see) whether or not one shall really get \$62,000 in value from the other company's assets which we are now acquiring. I for one am personally convinced that we are paying more than double what we should pay for the land; and we should not be paying it at all. I do not care what the Government's commitments are in the matter; I am of the opinion that the acquisition price should be reduced by not less than \$40,000 because even if we are paying \$48,000 for the 39,000 square feet, we are paying a lot of money and we can never get it back.

This House should not go on record in sanctioning this proposal at all. It is bound to be quoted against us and used for a long time to come. It will be said that we bought the Gas Company's land at \$2.50 per square foot. I do not know of any business concern or important commercial business sites being sold at a price in any way in proximity to this. Sir, I am not prepared to give my endorsement to the suggestion that we should pay that money for it.

When we consider that we have to spend over \$661,254 merely to replace pipe line, one must enquire how the Government gets these estimates. The number of 21.64 miles of mains at \$661,254 means that the average cost could not be more than \$1 per foot of pipe line; and if that is so, the average cost of installation works out to more than \$6 per foot. This pipe line does not run over any extraordinary difficult terrain, that the installation should cost more than \$6 a foot. If the entire House is in agreement to what we are paying for these things, that is a matter for honourable members; I am discharging what I regard as my responsibility. What I am saying is that by no stretch of the imagination can renovating the pipe line be worth \$661,254; and since the Government is proposing to pay that amount for it, one is left with no other conclusion than that Government is paying an equally fictitious price for the rest of the Company's assets.

Mr. TUDOR: It is difficult, Mr. Speaker, to know just where to begin in criticising the proposed agreement such as the one which is before the House; and it would appear also that words, even phrases, are rapidly losing their meanings. What one takes as the meaning to something which one is accustomed

to, in this Agreement it means something entirely different; and it also appears that so far as arithmetic is concerned, figures not only are losing their meaning but what is more important, their values. All over this Agreement, as you read it, Mr. Speaker, you come across things which on the face of it do not look right and which look more than wrong when you examine them carefully. What I think should be of interest to members of this House is the fact that we have been told by the Hon. Minister who introduced this matter that we are taking over the Gas Company. Taking over is a mild word for what he proposes to do; it is not only a taking over, it is a rescue beyond all reasonable doubts. Although what he said in his introduction was not I think meant to the House to be taken much as to say something on his own behalf, yet I think he said enough to indicate that this Government, possibly he himself, has not really grasped all the essential matters in the transaction.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you are only playing with words if in an Agreement like this, after you have read it, you still say that you are conferring a benefit on the public. You are only playing with words if you cannot justify this Agreement Clause by Clause or all those doubtful parts in it which seems beyond all reason, but which seem not to have the slightest bit of commonsense about them.

7.35 p.m.

First, let me say this on general principle: (it may not of course be known to the Hon. Premier) but there are several methods of acquiring enterprises for public benefit; and even the word "nationalisation" which in the old days used to be a favourite word of the Hon. Premier and his colleagues, is susceptible to more than two or possibly three meanings. There is, therefore more than one way to acquire enterprises for public benefit as I said before; and as I look at this Agreement, Mr. Speaker, I see that this is not one of the recognised ways. We all agree of course that to extirpate is a difficult question. There is no honourable member of this House who would make so bold as to say that these methods should be dealt with in the manner of just snatching whatever property of enterprise you wish to acquire and leave it at that. [VOICES: Hear! Hear!] That is not even commonsense; and yet on the other hand, Mr. Speaker, you can buy out a Company or an enterprise in this sense: that you place an independent realistic valuation on its assets as they are, and negotiate the purchase or the sale on that basis. You can even, as an alternative, enter into an agreement at Government level as between Government and the particular company to wind up its affairs, reissue its shares, or possibly form a new joint company with Government having 5% or 17% or 18% whatever per cent Government might like to take. And there are other ways of doing it; but the way now presented to us is not one of the recognised ways. While it is true, Mr. Speaker, in a certain sense you can claim that you are taking over the Gas Company, yet the very method of the taking over makes it almost impossible for you to be doing the people of this island any justice in the transaction.

Now, here you have a company which is not a flourishing affair; and even those who until now have been most favourable towards this company have not claimed that it has any place for improvement. That it was and is a dying concern is admitted by everybody, and by the Government most of all. Moreover, it is not only a company which is or was dying, but a company which knew that its end was near and was prepared to go into voluntary liquidation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the point is (and this is the most interesting thing about it) here on the one hand you have a Government which has a Natural Gas Corporation set up, and on the other hand an enterprise which is not definitely on its feet. Who will therefore have the bargaining position? Which side is the stronger? On which side should terms be enforced with greater vigour and more advantage; on the side of the concern which cannot keep itself alive or of the Government with its statutory creation? But with the terms of this Agreement, the reader gets the impression that it is the Government which is about to go into voluntary liquidation and that it is the Gas Company which is seeking to acquire the assets of the Government. Such is the impression, one may gather from a reading, whether cursory or detailed, of the agreement. Let us for example start from the point that a weak and dying company has somehow or other got the Government of this island in its clutches so as to be able to enforce the sort of agreement which is disadvantageous to the Government and advantageous to itself. I think it is time that one thing should be consented to in this House, if it has not been consented to already and that is that the public of this island know that in all these matters which refer to the expending of public money and to the acquisition by Government of enterprises such as these, a wicked and wilful waste of public funds is always involved. I know nothing at all about the sale of land and the prices which should be asked for or paid; but there are people in this House who do know; and I should be very surprised if any of them would say that this particular site could ever be sold at \$2.25 per square foot. Consider what is written in this Addendum: the acquisition of the assets of the Gas Company is to cost the Natural Gas Corporation \$150,000. That is what the whole show is worth. Thirty-nine thousand square feet of land at \$2.25 per square foot cost approximately \$87,750; but in addition to the price of land there is something which the Hon. Premier has not yet explained, and I hope that he will if he can; that is: the portion of the Company's valuation still serviceable. Eighty-seven thousand dollars and \$44,000 is \$131,000 roughly, and they still have got \$19,000 or \$14,000 or whatever it is which is not accounted for in the acquisition of the assets. I wish to emphasise this: there is nothing which the Hon. Premier has said as yet, that indicates to this House just what is being taken over for \$150,000 in these assets, apart from the land and whatever it is that is still serviceable. We have not yet heard what is still serviceable and which is valued at over \$44,000. We do not know that and we ought to be told that at sometime or other. Unless a complete breakdown of these assets and the values placed upon them are given to this House, we are at liberty to feel that vital information is being withheld from us; and those who withhold it or are a party to withholding it ought to be very heavily censured.

7.45 p.m.

It is true that the Premier has not committed himself to an opinion as to whether the price of this is as it should be, but knowing the way that the Government works, we have to be thankful that they have only put down \$2.25 per square foot instead of \$3.25; and if the price had been even more than it is now there is no doubt that argument, or what passes as argument, would have been found to justify it. I wish to emphasise that this House has no reason to be satisfied that the assets of the Barbados Gas Company would ever be worth \$150,000; and the House certainly feels disturbed when it discovers that land which, according to those who

are in the best position to know, would not be worth more than \$1.20 per square foot has suddenly been inflated out of all proportion to \$2.25 per square foot. Secondly, I do not know how carefully the Premier has read the terms of this Agreement, and I do not think he read them very well. He could not have done so, because some moments ago he was asking this House to believe that there are mistakes in the text of the Agreement, but that the Executive Committee has not changed them because it is an Agreement, not between itself and the Barbados Gas Company, but between the Company and the Natural Gas Corporation. I do not know what you would think of an Executive Committee which, in theory if not in practice, is supposed to look after the interest of this country thoroughly and zealously, and yet allows an Agreement to come before the Legislature for this transfer in which there are things with which they are displeased and which according to his words, do not suffer them to introduce any change or amendment.

While I am on this point, I should like to say that the Premier could not have read this Agreement because he would never have permitted the implied insult to the House which is contained in Clause 13 to the effect that the Agreement is conditional upon (a) the same being ratified by a Resolution of a general meeting of the intending vendor (b) the approval of the Governor-in-Executive Committee (c) the Legislature of Barbados and (d) the Public Utilities Board. The honourable junior member for the City made mention of this point but I do not think he stretched it far enough. The point is that the Legislature, this House especially, is the parent body of the Natural Gas Corporation and of course, of the Public Utilities Board. This House has called them into existence, and how comes it now that the Legislature and in particular this House, is put on a level with one of these two bodies, the Public Utilities Board which is making it seem as if the Public Utilities Board, (an organisation set up by this House) has as much right to pronounce upon an Agreement of this nature as the Legislature itself. Any member of this House who zealously guards the privileges of this House of Assembly must feel disturbed to discover that not enough care is being taken over this Agreement in order to safeguard the prerogative of this Legislature.

On the question as to whether the Natural Gas Corporation has power to make agreements of this nature, I do not know; and I do not know how true it is that the Public Utilities Board should be called into a matter of this nature before the Government has actually acquired the Gas Company as a running concern under the Corporation. These are matters which need to be answered; and if we do not know the answers to them, we must be forgiven because those who have introduced them do not seem to know either.

Going further, Mr. Speaker, you will observe that in the Addendum to this Resolution the cost of the complete replacement is set down as \$661,254. A deduction is made from that of \$44,747 for the serviceable portion of the Company's assets, so that the net estimated cost of renovating the system of distribution is \$616,507. I wish honourable members of this House to grab this point clearly and see if they do not feel disturbed and outraged about this rather surprising cost per mile of main. The pipe when put together, renovated and improved, could only be 22 miles; that means that the cost per mile of this renovation is \$30,000. There must be something wrong. I do not know what is the cost per

mile of road, but the Minister of Communications knows, and I wonder whether he himself when he read this, did not feel a little disturbed when he discovered that a mile of gas pipes is liable to cost much more than a mile of road. I wish to emphasize this; honourable members on this side of the House who express these doubts, must do so, because, at no stage of this discussion have we been told quite frankly by the Minister who introduced this motion to ratify this Agreement; "Here is the breakdown of costs."

7.55 p.m.

Hon. members might possibly be disturbed with what appears to be the high cost of renovating these mains, but if a breakdown in the cost was presented to them, they would not feel so disturbed about it and they might possibly be able to agree with the Government. Mr. Speaker, each hon. member must ask himself whether it is possible that the cost of laying down a mile of pipe-line mains must necessarily be estimated at \$30,000 per mile. That is not a matter which the Government must be allowed to get over by remaining silent or sneering or shrugging their shoulders; because in the last resort, it will be the public's money which they are spending. What the public must not be allowed to forget is that in the terms of this Agreement until the Natural Gas Corporation can acquire the \$1,000,000 which it would take to set this new thing on its feet, (permission is being sought and granted today for sums up to \$1,000,000 to come from the Public Treasury to pay for this thing,) in the last resort it will be the people who would be paying for it. I do not mean to say that the money will not be returned; but until it is returned it is the people's money which will be used, and the people therefore have a right to know and know in the clearest possible terms, how and by what method of calculation it is derived at that the cost of laying down a mile of Gas mains is \$30,000. You will remember, Mr. Speaker, that this renovation which is to cost over \$660,000 is rather more than half of the whole amount which is necessary for putting the expansion and distribution of Gas on its feet. Of the \$1,000,000 which is proposed to be spent, more than \$660,000 would be swallowed up in the renovation of gas mains and it is estimated at \$30,000 a mile. I would not be easily convinced that these figures are true, because this House has not been treated with the courtesy of a break down on any of them. I do not know how other hon. members feel about it, but this is a matter which should be gone into very carefully; and I know that such is the state of the minds of the Ministers of the Government, that they will find it quite easy either not to say anything or to indulge in the several kinds of explanation they put up. A favourite remark of the Hon. Premier in advance of these matters is always that the best and highest advice was sought, but the remark that he makes which makes me most angry when he says it, is always this one: that we were lucky to acquire it. Whenever a senseless expenditure is taken on, the only palliative he can find to justify the gross folly is to say we are lucky to get it at that price. I must say that his good fortune is a rather miraculous one, because everything he manages to acquire for us and we are lucky in getting according to his remarks, has depleted the Public Treasury by leaps and bounds. Whenever I hear that we are lucky to acquire this thing I know that there is a raid on the Treasury, and we are bound to pay heavily for it. It is a shame to say that for the outlay of \$1,000,000 on that plant, what you are actually taking over cost only a little more than one-tenth of that amount; that is to say \$150,000

is all that the Gas Company has to offer; that is all that Company is worth. It may not even be that because the price of the land has been inflated. It must be remembered that \$850,000 is now to be spent to make it into an enterprise that can serve the island.

Do you wonder, Mr. Speaker, that hon. members feel disturbed? There is no other word for it. When it takes \$850,000 to put something into operation which you are acquiring for \$150,000 but which if figures retained their actual valuation you would be able to acquire for \$75,000 or \$80,000, sir, that is what is at stake. You are not only spending \$34 million to put a new enterprise on its feet, but you are even taking over something at a price which it is not worth. That is what this thing is all about; and people have got to understand it: therefore, if an hon. member falls into the habit of believing that he can take the Hon. Premier seriously when he says that we are lucky to acquire this, the mere mention of the word "lucky" by the hon. senior member for St. Joseph should always sound a warning that it is "tanto" money spending.

We come now, Mr. Speaker, to the financial aspects of this whole matter. Here again, this Resolution has not been explained with any degree of satisfaction. Part of this Resolution, at least Clause (d) says that pending the raising of the loan, the Governor-in-Executive Committee will be authorised to advance from the Public Treasury to the Natural Gas Corporation sums not exceeding a total of \$1,000,000 for the purposes aforesaid. This is the position we have reached; you are taking over or giving sanction to the taking over of the Gas Company. You are paying too much for it we are saying, and you have agreed to spend more than \$34 million on renovating what little is being taken over, so that your company would be able to make it a going concern. You are in addition to that authorising your own Public Company to raise a loan of \$1,000,000 by instalments. I do not know why it is put in that Clause "by the issue of the debenture stock" but you are also telling them that they can acquire the well from the Gulf Oil Company.

8.05 p.m.

The point, Mr. Speaker, is this: it is not sound, it is not sensible for this House to accept Paragraph (d) without further guarantees about this matter from the Government. It is not enough to say, Mr. Speaker, that you are allowing the Natural Gas Corporation to raise a loan in a certain way, that is by the issue of the debenture stock, while pending the raising of that loan you are going to advance that money from the Public Treasury. What do you mean to have here? Are you putting on them impossible terms of raising the loan which you know to be impossible before hand? We are authorising you to raise the loan; but if you find it difficult to get through we are going to advance you \$1,000,000 from the Public Treasury; is that what is meant? That is perhaps the most crucial part of the whole Agreement; and I wonder if for the time that we have been here discussing it, we have really grasped all its implications. When, Mr. Speaker, you cut out all the verbiage, you come down to the fact that this Government, no matter what is put into the schedule of this Agreement, no matter what is set out here, in the last resort it will be a million dollars of public funds out of the Treasury which will be financing this. I suppose that if they had decided to spend a million dollars, they can claim with some justice that they are taking over the Gas Company. Is it going to take them \$1,000,000 to do this? If it is going to take all this, can you not

try to save something to the people of this island by paying the Gas Company less for its assets? I want to emphasise this: at any time the Natural Gas Corporation can say that it does not wish to raise any more money in a given set of circumstances, because the Corporation knows that it can fall back on the Public Treasury; and if it can fall back on the Public Treasury in such a way, it means therefore that this House is being asked to consent to the expenditure of \$1,000,000 in ways which we possibly might not approve and for reasons which are not clear to us.

I wish to say this in conclusion. I do not disagree with the acquisition by Government of the assets of the Gas Company, if only for the reason that the products can be made available to more and more people over the length and breadth of this island. Any honourable member might be glad to ratify and underwrite this Agreement; but because we are in favour of an Agreement it does not follow that we should be in favour of all the confounded nonsense and all the effusions that come behind the explanations when an Hon. Minister is introducing a measure in this House. It is a fallacy; and I want to emphasise that very strongly. There are matters however, which go deeper and which I am confident that I could well leave to other people; but there are other aspects to it which, when pointed out to this House will shock the realisation when you understand that this Government does not know what it is doing and does not even care to know when told.

Mr. BARROW: Mr. Speaker, I would be completely lacking in my sense of duty if I did not draw certain aspects of the Resolution which is now before the House to the notice of other honourable members and to the notice of the general public.

I should like to preface my remarks by saying this: had the acquisition of the assets, (if any there are) of the Barbados Gas Company been a part of the established programme of the Government which was introduced at the time of the Five Year Plan or at any time thereafter, then one would justifiably feel that the public has been given some notice that it was the intention of this Government to buy out what has become known as a company on the verge of insolvency; and if this intention could have been disclosed at some reasonable period before the introduction of this Resolution into this Chamber, the full interplay of public opinion would have had an opportunity of letting the Government know the true sentiments of the persons who have so inadvisably tied them into bond.

Now this is not a Resolution to nationalise the gas undertakings of this colony; this is not a Resolution to provide a fuller and a better service of a particular public utility for the benefit of the members of the general public; this is a Resolution to give the Government the authority to save the shareholders of the Barbados Gas Company from going into voluntary liquidation. Anybody who takes the slightest interest in the business transactions which go on in this country from year to year would know that the Gas Company, over a very long period have for several reasons: (1) their inefficiency, (2) on account of the depredations which they have made on their investment and their failure to blow back profits which they made in their early years, for these and other reasons that Company has been on the verge of insolvency.

8.15 p.m.

No one in his right senses could therefore, by any stretch of the imagination, describe the Barbados

Gas Company as a profitable undertaking or as a going concern.

With those premises over in the background, we should now examine the Agreement to see in what way the public of Barbados would benefit from this Agreement either as it stands or in whatever way human ingenuity can amend it. The operations of the Barbados Gas Company do not extend beyond the boundaries of the parish of St. Michael except for one main which runs into the parish of Christ Church which, as you know Mr. Speaker, is more or less considered as part of the metropolitan area; at least that is what is envisaged in the Local Government Bill. We must also bear in mind that it has never been declared or advertised to the public prior to the introduction of this Resolution, that the Government had any intention of taking over the Barbados Gas Company and all its assets and liabilities. But I feel that members of the public ought to know due to their inefficiency as has been disclosed by the Premier himself, their failure to maintain (as they are bound to do by law) their equipment in a proper state of repair, their failure to extend their services to accommodate those other citizens of this island who may feel disposed to avail themselves of what is considered and perhaps misrepresented as a public utility, that they were faced this year for the first time in their history and at the very time of the making of this Agreement between the Natural Gas Corporation on the one part and the Barbados Gas Company on the other part, — It is rather remarkable that this Company should be party to an Agreement. I am sure that the honourable senior member for the City is aware of this: that almost on the very day on which the commodity known as pro-gas was introduced in Barbados that this Company could have signed an Agreement with the Natural Gas Corporation to take over the Company. This is bottled gas which has been brought into use in this island on almost the exact date on which this Agreement was made, this Oil Company having served notice on the public and on the Barbados Gas Company that they would provide a service for people such as my constituents in St. George, who were not served either by the Natural Gas Corporation or the Barbados Gas Company; and people living in such districts as Navy Gardens and within proximity of the Barbados Gas Company have been given that service to which I have referred. As regards Spooners Hill (the district in which the Premier lives), Belleville, the whole of Bank Hall and Bush Hall, in none of these areas was the Gas Company prepared to put in one service; and this Oil Company having served notice that they were going to introduce bottled gas in this country, then it was that the Directors of the Barbados Gas Company knew that their day was doomed. The reign which they had on the long suffering public, the profits made and paid out in the United Kingdom (without creating further employment in this island, by extending their mains even as the Electric Company in its feeble way had done,) they realised that the only salvation for the investments of the shareholders, (I challenge the Premier to deny this) was to foist it on the unsuspecting public of Barbados. I would like to say this when you look at the bottom of the Addendum to this Resolution, it discloses that the complete system of distribution had to be renovated at four times the cost of purchasing the Company itself; and would a Company think that a Socialist Government would take over adjust and renovate the existing system which is limited in its operation? Nine parishes in the island of Barbados will not be able to benefit in any way from the acquisition of the assets

and liabilities of the Barbados Gas Company. These parishes have nothing to do with this concern, and yet they are going to tell the electors: "We have done this for your benefit." After \$1 million has been expended, not one of these parishes will have benefited one iota from the use of the service which the Barbados Gas Company now so inadequately provides. No wonder when I travel about this island I hear the members of the Government referred to as "Swindle, Theft and Company." [Laughter]. I would like to ask the Premier if he has ever read the Natural Gas Corporation Act of 1950, apart from the day on which he introduced the Bill in the House. 8.25 p.m.

I suggest that we should be consistent when it comes to the expenditure of public funds and we should weigh very carefully the social and economic advantages of certain steps.

There is one other matter which I should like to draw to the attention of the persons who were unfortunate enough to return the Hon. Minister of Communications for this parish and that is this: the Company's supply is not a privilege which is enjoyed by the inhabitants of Carrington's Village, The New Orleans, Bank Hall, the Bay Land or any of those areas apart from the one to which he aspires, and who were responsible for returning him to this House, and the \$118,493 which the Resolution envisages to be spent on extending the services would provide approximately four miles of main which could never reach St. George, St. Peter or St. James, and this amount of money could be swallowed by Carringtons Village overnight. As regards the anticipated expenditure by the Corporation after they have acquired the Gas Company, there is no provision for the extension of the service other than that of spending \$118,000 at the rate of \$30,000 a mile. What I should like to tell those of the constituency of the Minister of Communications is that they should not be surprised if that \$118,000 is spent in the direction of Navy Garden and those very areas in which they are now getting competition from the distributors of bottled Gas. So when they go before the public and tell the public that they have carried out one other intention, (that is, that they have nationalised the Gas Company,) let them also tell the public that the Government of Barbados also owns the sources of supply: that is Turner Hall; and we are acquiring Well No. 1, as a sort of reserve and we already own No. 19. In other words, we are not nationalising gas; we had gas in 1950 under the Natural Gas Corporation Act.

Unlike the days when you had to bring coal from Newcastle and from other sources and distilled the coal and produced and stored the gas in tanks in Bay Street, in these days it is unnecessary in order to sell gas to the consumer, to pass it through Bay Street at all. As a matter of fact, when you bring the gas all the way from St. Andrew and you take it to Bay Street then to take it back up to Spooners Hill, that probably accounts for the \$30,000. But leaving that alone for the time being, what I should like to say is that since it is unnecessary to store the gas in Bay Street, the acquisition of the building or any of the equipment in Bay Street is an error on the part of the Government. In other words, what I would invite the Gas Company to do is to go into voluntary liquidation, because of their assets: notwithstanding the land which they are selling to us at \$2.25 per square foot, the buildings are only offices and show rooms for the Gas Company. If you take gas up to Bay Street to distribute it to all the consumers, you are only inviting more loss through leakage etc.; that is the basis of this transaction which the honourable senior member for St. Joseph has been trying to put

ever honourable members of this House. He never pointed out what profit the Gas Company made last year; he never pointed out what dividends were paid; he did not point out or invite honourable members of this House to concur in this Resolution on the basis that he wanted the Deep Water Harbour too. The Deep Water Harbour would be a self-supporting expenditure; in simple language it would pay for itself.

We want the Deep Water Harbour to pay for itself; it should be a harbour which should be the sort of heart of the community or the lifeline of the community that must pay for itself. But if the Gas Company with the capital as reorganised from \$140,000 to \$800,000, when all that is done and it cannot pay for itself even then, how are they going to pay interest on \$1,000,000? They are going to pay interest on \$1,000,000 because in the same Resolution and elsewhere (I want to take the honourable senior member for St. Joseph to task on this point) they have to give the Natural Gas Corporation the authority to draw on the Public Treasury of this island until (and this is quoting from Paragraph D of the Resolution) "pending the raising of the loan." They have not suggested how the interest is going to be paid. The interest cannot be paid unless the price of gas is quadrupled. I am submitting that the interest cannot be paid on \$1,000,000 by the Company as an economic proposition; they cannot do it now, and I do not see how they are going to do it out of their own funds. But they will do it by drawing upon the Treasury and this will be a further burden on the taxpayers of the colonies.

8.35 p.m.

Already we have the same Natural Gas Corporation having the power and the right, and indeed is obligated by law, to sell Gas to individual consumers if they demand it and if they are in the area. The Natural Gas Corporation without having this Resolution has powers of distribution co-equal if not with superior powers to the Barbados Gas Company. I wonder if the enormity of the crime which the Government has committed has now dawned on the minds of honourable members. The Natural Gas Corporation can say: "You can go along in your own sweet way; we can put down every mile of pipe and make available a consumer service." In other words the Barbados Gas Company unlike the Barbados Electric Supply Corporation, does not have a monopoly in this country for the distribution and selling of gas to individual consumers. I wonder, as I have said before, if the enormity of the act which is now being committed by the Government has dawned on honourable members.

Some honourable members on my right have said that we are buying a going concern. It is a going concern in the sense that it is going out of business; but not in the commercial sense of the term, that is, something which is an economic undertaking. There would be some justification for the purchase of the Barbados Gas Company on those terms by the Government or by the Natural Gas Corporation, if by Statute Law that Company had a monopoly over the distribution of gas and it was a Universal Public Utility. Sir, how can anyone in their right senses suggest that we should buy the Barbados Gas Company after we have passed the Natural Gas Corporation Act of 1950 giving the Natural Gas Corporation full power to distribute Natural Gas themselves. We even made it mandatory that wherever the service was, the Natural Gas Corporation should supply the gas to any individual consumers on the same terms that it is supplied to anyone in the particular area. That, therefore, Mr. Speaker, is the background

against which the Government has now been induced to take over what is being described as a derelict concern.

I think it is almost dishonest in trying to put over a Resolution of this kind. You have failed to state that the Barbados Gas Company from the date that this Agreement was made (when I say date, I am using the word metaphorically) was faced with the prospect of being run out of the island by the distribution of Bottled Gas by the several companies in the island. I am going to say that it is going to cost something like \$30,000 a mile to put down a pipe to distribute this gas, and it seems unlikely that anywhere in the next ten or fifteen years this Government or the Natural Gas Corporation will be in a position to widen the present scope of its distribution so that the island as a whole would benefit. The Highways Commissioners of the parish of St. George, in keeping with other parishes, are given \$18,400 to put down one mile of parish roads per year. Now this pipeline which is to be re-instated in many places has a diameter of about two inches, but certainly not more than three inches, because if it were more than that, it would have a greater diameter than that which comes from the main source. In other words, in order to put down 5,280 feet of pipeline in a narrow track it is going to cost twice as much according to this Addendum than building a whole road itself.

Now, all is not well in the State of Denmark, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Government since it is going to spend \$661,254 on the 21.64 miles of main to complete the replacements that the Company now holds, how can they have the temerity to suggest that this is a Public Service and they are doing the electors and taxpayers of this country a favour, and that we the unsuspecting public must consider ourselves lucky to be able to buy the Gas Company at all. I invite the honourable senior member for St. Joseph to go to Mr. Woodall, the Chairman of the Directors of the Barbados Gas Company, and ask him if the introduction of Bottled Gas into this country was completely unconnected with their decision to sell the Company to the Government. I also invite the honourable senior member for St. Joseph and his satellites to go to Messrs DaCosta and Company Limited and ask them what they think of the decision of the Barbados Gas Company to foist this Company on members of the Governor-in-Executive Committee. Alongside of that, without any reflection on what we have just passed even on the same date that you have passed a Resolution in this House for the Barbados Electric Supply Corporation Ltd., now the Barbados Light and Power Company Ltd., to go on its own way rejoicing in the security and the taking over of the Company in keeping with the terms of the Act, from which they will derive the authority to provide electricity service throughout the island, do you think that the time is now ripe for them to hand over the Barbados Gas Company to the Government?

Mr. Speaker, at this stage I beg to move the adjournment of the House for three quarters of an hour.

Mr. ALLDER: *Rose to speak.*

Mr. SPEAKER: The question is that this House do now adjourn—

Mr. ALLDER: Mr. Speaker, I did not second the motion for the adjournment.

Mr. SPEAKER: I was under the impression that the hon. member had seconded the motion.

Mr. BARROW: I will resume my speech. [A MEMBER: The hon. member has already taken his seat.] It was intimated to me that the Hon. Leader of the House wanted the adjournment.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will clarify the matter. I was of the opinion that the hon. senior member for St. John had seconded the motion for the adjournment, but the hon. member has said that he has not seconded it and I have to take his word. The hon. senior member for St. George took his seat having been under the impression that his motion had been seconded by the hon. senior member for St. John. If there is no seconder of this motion I will allow the hon. senior member for St. George to continue his speech.

Mr. BARROW: I thank you for your indulgence, sir. In view of the fact that I do not like to make statements without backing them up with substantial authority, I would like to draw Clause 9 of the Natural Gas Corporation Act 1950-56 to the attention of hon. members on the other side of the House, who do not take the trouble of reading the laws of Barbados. Clause 9 of the Act says this:

(1) It shall be the duty of the Corporation, subject as hereinafter provided:—

- (a) to manage and work any natural gas undertaking acquired by the Corporation under this Act;
- (b) to establish, manage and work such natural gas undertakings as may be required in the public interest.

I think that will answer the query made by the hon. junior member for St. Lucy when he enquired whether the Natural Gas Corporation had any power to acquire any undertaking.

- (c) to advise the Governor-in-Executive Committee, if so required, on all matters relating to the searching for, winning, getting, storing, treating, use and distribution of natural gas.

(2) For the purpose of sub-section (1) of this section the Corporation may—

- (a) acquire licences or leases under the Petroleum Act, 1950;
- (b) distribute and sell natural gas either in bulk or to individual consumers, in any part of the Island.

What are we taking over these derelict premises in Bay Street for? Sub-clause (C) says:

- (c) construct, reconstruct, maintain and operate natural gas plant, transmission pipes, distribution pipes and all other plant, buildings and work necessary for carrying out their duties under this Act;
- (d) carry on all such activities as may appear to them requisite, advantageous or convenient for or in connection with the discharge of their duties under sub-section (1) of this section.

It may be argued by the initiated that that may be true, but you will have to compete with a Public Utility Company. I would say in reply that competition has always inured to the benefit of the consumer. It may be further argued that the consuming public would have to buy appliances from the said firm at exorbitant prices, but the Act has taken care of that because Clause 10 states:—

“(1) In addition to the powers conferred by subsection (2) of Section nine the corporation may carry on all or any of the following particular functions. . . .”

That is discretionary; if it is not an economic proposition, if people can buy gas from any store in Bridgetown at a more reasonable price than the Corporation will sell it, then the Corporation in its discretion can refrain from carrying out those duties and so run the risk of incurring a loss. In addition to the powers conferred by subsection (2) of section

9, the Corporation has the power to do all these things before the Government brought down this Resolution. The Corporation had the power to carry out the following functions:—

- (a) the manufacture, provision, sale letting on hire connection, maintenance, repair removal of any natural gas fittings;
- (b) the maintenance of shops and showrooms for the display, sale and hire of natural gas equipment of all kinds; and
- (c) the advertisement of such natural gas equipment whether by way of demonstration, exhibition or otherwise.

8.55 p.m.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to pause there for a little moment. What power have they in any way remotely or ancillary to the sale to the individual consumer of natural gas, (or any kind of gas for that matter) as has now accrued to the Natural Gas Corporation which they did not already possess and not only possessed but were in a better position to provide and supply than the present Barbados Gas Company? I say, absolutely none. It is a great pity that the Resolution itself did not make it clear in the Addendum or in the terms of the clauses of the Resolution with which we are asked to concur that this new undertaking was to be a subsidiary or a Swindle and Death Company instead of the Natural Gas Corporation. You are now going to spend \$1,000,000 when you need not to have spent one cent at all. The position in respect of the Barbados Electric Supply Corporation is a horse of a different colour. I am wondering why the challenge thrown upon the then Government by that then august and conservative body as the Barbados Chamber of Commerce to nationalise the Electric Company was not accepted and which up to now they have declined to accept.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is a great pity that in computing the price of \$150,000 which is to be paid for the acquisition of assets of the Gas Company, the hon. senior member for St. Joseph who introduced the Resolution did not deem it expedient to give us a break down of this amount. I believe that such a breakdown would be revealing. I do not want to say anything more on it because I consider it the duty of the person introducing this Resolution to give us a breakdown of this amount, and not for that duty to fall on any other member of this House to whom these figures would not normally be available.

In considering the Addendum to the Resolution I would like to take up a point made by the hon. junior member for the City and that is with respect to the valuation. I think it was Your Honour who drew to the hon. member's attention that the preamble to the Agreement recited that the valuation has been made up by Messrs Joseph Connell and Frank C. Hutson, a copy whereof has been served to us. I think, Mr. Speaker, that it must have escaped your attention that it does not state on whose behalf that valuation was made; and it is rather significant in the Addendum in the first paragraph that this phrase should occur:— “The purchase price is based upon independent valuations.”

In other words, it is true that it is fairly clear from the preamble to the Resolution that Messrs. Connell and Hutson made a valuation, but it is not so clear that that valuation is any one of the independent valuations which were referred to in the Addendum to the Resolution. That is a very significant point and following and pursuing that course, I would like to reiterate the question raised

by the hon. junior member for the City when he enquired as to the identity of the persons who made the independent valuation of the Company's assets.

Now, like the other hon. members who have spoken before me, I am more or less non-plussed by the provisional estimated cost of renovation of gas distribution system which is made up as follows:—

"Cost of complete replacement (approx. 21.64 miles of main)	\$661,254
Less portion of Company's valuation still serviceable	\$ 44,747
	\$616,507

That is only the cost for renovating the existing mains; there is no provision apart from the \$18,000 to which I referred before for the extension of the services. The last part of that estimate says:

"Less portion of Company's valuation still serviceable, \$44,747."

That phraseology bites me; but there again I feel that the hon. junior member for the City who scrutinises these Bills with great care found a chink in the arm of the Government. As Your Honour told us, Messrs Connell and Hutson did make a valuation but the term valuation in this Resolution is used in three separate and distinct ways. In the preamble it is referred to as the valuation made by Messrs Joseph Connell and Frank C. Hutson. In the first paragraph in the Addendum the clause used is that the purchase price is based upon independent valuations (valuations in the plural) and then in computing the cost of renovating the system of distributing, the deduction is made of the Company's valuation still serviceable. I feel hon. members are entitled to an explanation. I see the hon. senior member for St. Joseph there thumbing his files. I consider that these debates, if they have served no other useful purpose, have drawn to our attention that this Chamber performs purely a debating function; it has no legislative authority; it has no dignity. I suppose, as a member has been so fond of telling us, we should read and refer to the material which is laid before us; and this said material which he should be fully acquainted with at the time of debate but which he is not, and which keeps him thumbing over the files which his secretaries have placed at his disposal days and days and even months before, but which from his frequent excursions through the Caribbean he has no time to read.

I feel that the points raised by hon. members especially the more important ones are not going to be answered, and that the answers will remain in the realms of the unknown until some public spirited person discloses the full facts of these transactions to the general public.

9.05 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the true position of this transaction will remain in the realm of the unknown until some public spirited person discloses the facts to the general public. I feel that we could have made some better contribution if we could get the Ministers of the Government to read their papers. If they had warned us in the Five Year Plan or warned us at the beginning of the session of the merits and demerits of this Resolution, they could have come in here prepared to make a full and frank disclosure of all the material facts effecting this Resolution instead of indulging in a policy of concealment, and conducting the affairs of Government in the conspiratorial ways and acts to which they are accustomed.

Mr. Speaker, quite apart from a break down of figures which was not given to us and for which we

are now asking, quite apart from the question of valuation of the assets as to how many they were and by whom they were made, I should like to ask the hon. senior member for St. Joseph this: (and I know he has volunteered an answer to the hon. junior member for the City) what does Paragraph 'B' of the Schedule to this Resolution mean? I am sure there are some lay members apart from those members of the legal fraternity, who are completely unacquainted with this terminology. I would like to know a sounder interpretation than the one which is so shrewd and so cavalier to the hon. senior member for St. Joseph.

I should like to refer Your Honour to Paragraph "B" which is stating the assets of the Company refers to the following:—

"All easements, way leaves, rights of way licences and other proprietary rights held possessed and enjoyed by the intending vendor in connection with its business or undertaking in the said Island."

I challenge the hon. senior member for St. Joseph to find the expression "way leaves" in the two competent authorities on legal phrases. A Copy of one of them is available in this Chamber. I challenge him to find that expression anywhere in Shroud's Judicial Dictionary or Sir Roland Burrowes "Words and Phrases Judicially Defined" I am sure the Hon. Premier did not read the Resolution and the schedule to it when he suggested to the hon. junior member for the City what a "way leave" is. Your Honour has been a school master and perhaps you would be able to tell him what a "way leave" is. He said, that a "way leave" is a right of way; according to him a "right of way" is more and more "rights of way" appertaining thereto. The normal terminology used in conveyances of this kind is: "All easements, profits, rights and licences." And that covers easements of light, rights of way, and every other kind of privilege enjoyed over the property either by persons or by the Government. But if there is one legal expression that you have expected to find in a conveyance or in agreement of this kind, is the word "profit"; because the privilege of taking something out of another man's land would be a privilege or right which would be naturally appertaining to such an organisation as the Natural Gas Corporation or the Barbados Gas Company. The one term which is always used in mining leases, and which is always used in the normal transfer of domestic wells from one person to another individual is left out; and by way of substitution we find an expression which is as novel as it is confusing—"way leaves" which must have come off the Lunatic Asylum.

9.15 p.m.

I must emphasise this again: why should we all ways have the experience of having the members of the Other Place sending back down to us Resolutions and Bills and making caustic comments which appear in the newspapers, tantamount to an accusation that hon. members of this Chamber are ignoramuses and do not know what they are doing. The Executive Committee should perform its job of scrutinising carefully Bills which are drafted, and see in what way they affect the rights of the public, or if they are done in the proper manner and to the best advantage of the community. Today, for the first time we hear of a new interpretation of the relationships existing between the Executive Committee and the Crown Law Officers when the senior member for St. Joseph, said: "of course there are a lot of mistakes, but we have nothing to do with that; it is an Agreement between the Solicitors and

the Natural Gas Company or words to that effect. If this Agreement has been drawn up in some clandestine manner between the Solicitors of the Gas Company and the Executive Committee had no control over these mechanism as we must infer from the remarks of the honourable senior member for St. Joseph, then I suggest to the Government that they let the Solicitors who drew up this Agreement pay for it. I think it displays a sense of irresponsibility for any Minister to come into this Chamber and want to shelter behind the fact that he has not drawn up an Agreement, but that the Crown Law Officers or the Crown Solicitor has drawn it up, but the Executive Committee had nothing to do with it although there are glaring mistakes in the drawing up of this Agreement. It shows a complete lack of understanding of constitutional Government and complete failure of the responsibilities which fall on their shoulders to bring things into this House which have not been closely scrutinized; and the hon. senior member for St. Joseph has often told the junior member for the City. "We have already gone through these matters in Executive Committee and if we send it down it will be 'right.'" Now it will be sent back by the Other Place though they may read the debates of this House, and the members of the public will get the impression that the members of the House are taking no interest in the legislation which comes before us; we stampede it through the House we make no suggestions or criticisms, and it is a good thing that we have a second Chamber otherwise the Parliament of Barbados would be made to look like a bunch of nitwits in the eyes of the other colonies! That is because of the recalcitrant attitude of the hon. senior member for St. Joseph whenever glaring mistakes are pointed out to them from time to time. There is hardly a Bill which comes before this House when the hon. junior member for the City and other hon. members do not have cause to draw the Government's attention that due care has not been taken in the preparation of these matters which very often involve the expenditure of colossal sums out of the Public Treasury of this island.

In paragraph (b) of Clause 1 of this Schedule mention is made of "way leaves"; the next thing we will have is "bay leaves"! I may be ignorant and so are all hon. members; are you going to repeat "rights of way" so that we can understand when you have already mentioned it so that the people who read Dutch can understand? But they have trampled on the desires and hopes of the unsuspecting electorate of Barbados and kept them ignorant of what was going on behind the scenes; they have kept them ignorant of the true state of the nation and of all those matters which vitally concern their day to day existence, but they have reached the stage where the iron has reached their souls.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is now electioneering.

Mr. BARROW: I am speaking on the remarks of the hon. senior member for the City; it is not my intention to electioneer. Sir, appearances are deceptive; I am speaking on the remarks of the hon. senior member for the City who has his constituents within earshot. It is only that they have been allowed to get away with these things and they are unaware and completely unconcerned as to whether matters of this kind entirely impede these items which the members of the public expect them to carry out.

9.25 p.m.

I would also like the honourable senior member for St. Joseph to explain whether he is now saying

that the \$44,747 represents the assets of the Company in contradistinction to the pipeline, or is he saying that that represents the pipeline; and the reason why I ask for that explanation, is because I still have my doubts about it. I think that particular aspect of the question has been adequately dealt with from the criticisms made by the honourable junior member for St. Lucy and the honourable senior member for the City.

I come now to the financial implications of \$1,000,000 for which is the total sum that the Company is on the market. According to the document which has been laid on the table of the House today, the Government within the next twelve months will be going on the money market for another \$15,000,000 to finance that scheme plus this million to buy out this Company and the six million dollars. How is Government going to effect or act on the other schemes which the Government now finds itself obligated to embark upon? Since the Natural Gas Corporation is not strictly speaking a Government concern; it has legal status and personality of its own independent of the Governor-in-Executive Committee; since it must be run as a commercial undertaking, it seems to me that the Natural Gas Corporation will be competing for investment funds with the Government, because these funds are not going to be raised under the two Loan Acts that are under the auspices of the Government. This particular loan of \$1,000,000 must be raised by the Natural Gas Corporation as a commercial undertaking; and the Government has inhibited the chances of the Natural Gas Corporation getting this loan by doing something which I consider the most amazing piece of financial juggling that has been engineered in the twentieth century. In other words, this aspect of the matter could not have been left to the Solicitors. The Government in its wisdom has inhibited the chances of the Corporation getting this loan by putting the interest rate on the loan at 4½%, especially after I pointed out to them on a previous occasion that the Bank rate was not 4½%. The rate on the money market is always ½% over the Bank rate and the private investor in Barbados would have to possess like the Hon. Minister for Communications in relations to the Hon. Premier, a love which surpasses all human understanding to lend the Natural Gas Corporation money at 4½% when on the money market he can get 6% and on investments in the United Kingdom he can get 1½% over the Bank rate, which the Conservative Government in England has pushed up to the highest peak within the last 27 years.

Mr. Speaker, the only conclusion I can come to is that there are two inferences, and I am not willing to disclose which of them I have arrived at in the process of my reasoning. The first conclusion, to which I can come is that the Government has some private benefactor who has already volunteered to more or less take over the Natural Gas Corporation by lending it \$1,000,000; and the next conclusion is, and I have hinted this before, that they do not intend to raise the money at all until a Socialist Government gets back into power in England, and that will not be before the next five years. They intend to raid the Treasury of this island to underwrite this money until such time as the rate of interest comes down to accommodate what they have so unadvisedly stated in the Resolution. There must be in any civilised community some kind of liaison between your legal advisers and your financial advisers and the Governor-in-Executive Committee as such; as a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, one justification for having officials in your inner councils of Government

in Colonial territories is that such a machinery should be placed at your disposal. Well, if the machinery is there, I can only come to the conclusion that the persons responsible for maintaining the machinery and seeing that it functions efficiently have not got the technical training and ability to get it running smoothly. The machinery of Government is probably more important than any other kind of machinery in a civilised community; but when you have bakers doing a mason's job (and I am referring to certain Government officials) and when you have stevedores making pastry and cane cutters repairing motor tyres and doing upholstery, you must expect that kind of confusion which has been created by this Resolution before us. When you come to the present Ministry, I doubt that one single member apart from the honourable senior member for St. Joseph has even a suggestion to offer in the inner councils of Government, or even understand the nature and quality of what he is doing; and even if any such one did understand what was the nature and quality of what he was doing, he would not know that what he was doing was wrong.

9.35 p.m.

I wonder if any of the Hon. Ministers have looked back on the terms and conditions under which leases were granted to the Gulf Oil Company. They were prospecting. The nature of prospecting is that you may or may not find the mine for which you are searching; but this 'hole' in the ground which the Gulf Oil Company probed (about six inches in diameter) this 'hole' in the ground is going to cost the taxpayers \$78,000. Well, Mr. Speaker, I believe you were a school boy during the first World War when the following saying was current: "If you know a better hole you can go to it." For a hole to be worth \$78,000 what a hole to be in! If the Government had carefully scrutinised the provisions of the lease granted to the Gulf Oil Company, it seems strange that they would have made this arrangement with the Gulf Oil Company because the mineral rights already belonged to the Government, taking into account every aspect there-to, particularly the hole; it could not cost them 5/- to open such a hole; but to pay \$78,000 for it is something which appears to me that should be investigated. If I knew a better hole than that one I would go into it. But what a hole to be in! The cost of that hole is more than that of many public and Government buildings erected in this island. Did they employ anyone to go and look at that, or did they rely on the omnipotence of the honourable senior member for St. Joseph? It is not enough to come in here having things only printed on a file. Government is not discharging its duties to the public if they are afraid to voice their dissatisfaction or to query any item which, in their opinion, does not entirely inure to the benefit of the public.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw your attention to—

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable member has drawn my attention to and I observe that there is a lack of a quorum. I will have the bell rung for five minutes.

The Bell was rung for five minutes. A member came into the House.

Mr. BARROW: I personally feel, (to refer back to the Resolution itself) that some time limit should have been imposed in this Resolution so that after a given time the Natural Gas Corporation would no longer be able to draw on the Public Treasury. By leaving it open like this it does seem to suggest that the Corporation will have an indefinite period for which they could draw from the Public Treasury.

I have always been, Mr. Speaker, a staunch advocate of public ownership of utilities which are wide spread in their operations, or in which there is a reasonable prospect of making their services and commodities universal; but I think that a protagonist—

Mr. ALLDER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to draw your attention to the lack of a quorum.

Mr. E. D. MOTTLEY entered the House and took his seat.

Mr. BARROW: When it comes to the subject of public ownership of essential services, I feel there is no member of this House who is a greater protagonist of public ownership of the economic undertakings than myself; but let no one delude himself that the Barbados Gas Company in the light of moral conditions, in the light of the powers which already exist and are vested in the Natural Gas Corporation itself, in the light of competition which they are already getting from a substitute of their service, and in the light of the shocking state of disrepair of their assets, and in the light of the state of verging on insolvency, let no one delude himself that the public of Barbados apart from a few individuals like the Hon. Premier who have the doubtful privilege of paying rather high rates for this commodity from the Barbados Gas Company, let no one delude himself that any benefit will inure to the working-class people of this island, to the taxpayer in general, or to the Government itself from the acquisition or by the purchase of assets of the Barbados Gas Company.

9.45 p.m.

Like the other public utility company the Gas Company is almost entirely owned by aliens in the legal sense of the word; it is a foreign company. It has never been a large-scale employer of labour. Apart from the initial reconstruction, the periods of replacement and renewal of pipelines, that Company has not been a large scale employer of labour. In view of the fact that no extension of the service is anticipated, and it is unlikely that the Natural Gas Corporation, apart from the initial period to which I have referred, will be able to increase its staff so as to relieve the unemployment situation in this colony—

At this stage Mr. Speaker left the Chair and the Chairman of Committees took the Chair.

Mr. BARROW: In view of those facts, as I was saying sir, I do not think it would be honest for any of the five Ministers to make any public statement that this Resolution is really in the interest of the people of Barbados. But again there is always some machiavellian manoeuvre behind the expenditure of public funds in this manner. I predicted over a year ago that the Deep Water Harbour would be commenced three months of the date of the election, and the document which was laid on the table of this House to-day unwittingly disclosed that Mr. Millbourn did not think that they would have him corroborate something which I had anticipated several months ago.

You will remember, sir, that I said earlier in the debate that the Gas Company had not extended its service beyond the parish of St. Michael. In other words, another \$616,000 is going to be spent in St. Michael to the total dereliction of the other ten parishes in the island of Barbados to keep one man in office on the eve of an election. In the same way that the Aided Self-Help housing has been put upon us, in the same way that all the pipes are put in the parish of St. Michael, this is another piece which fits into the general jigsaw of the imagination of the members of the Government. No self-respecting Government should take over an undertaking in this

state of insolvency; no self-respecting Socialist Government should take over any kind of enterprise which is on the verge of liquidation and when it faces the prospect of enlightened competition. No self-respecting Government should take over the assets of a Company which are only one quarter of the prospective expenditure to bring the company up to the level of efficiency, in which it should have been operating for years, and has not even been able to extend its services and make them available outside the parish of St. Michael or to the people of the working classes. But the members of the Government in their arrogance consider that other persons in this island do not have sources of information; that other persons cannot make enquiries into the organisation of public departments, that other persons are not able to see behind the political manoeuvres of the Ministers and that other persons would be afraid to voice their opinion on any matter which, if the true facts had not been exposed, they would foist this upon the public as a measure for the benefit of the island and as a gesture of the genuine Socialist policy of nationalisation;; but when you take all the facts which I have already outlined into consideration, the financial aspects of this Resolution, the state of affairs of the company itself which has not been disclosed to the members of the public by the Premier who considers a drive to the airport more important than a matter of this nature, when you take all the facts into consideration, the only persons who stand to benefit one iota from the transfer of these assets are not even the investors in this prospect, but a few expatriates and alien shareholders in the United Kingdom. Have you ever looked at the balance sheet published by statute of the Barbados Gas Company? Have you ever seen the list of shareholders, (the registered office is not in Barbados), how much tax does it pay in this island? 9.55 p.m.

Those are the factors which should have been put before the Government. What is the rate of return over cost of production? That is one of the factors. Then, within what period does the Government consider that the Natural Gas Corporation would be able to make this an economic concern? None of those facts has been told us, but the public will be told in vague and general terms: "look now that we have come to buy over the Gas Company they have got up and criticised it." I can write their speeches for them. Every cent of the purchase price of the undertaking is coming out of the colony and when you buy the pipes which are not manufactured

locally but which will be here in time, as you look around the parish of St. Michael, which will be around election time, there will be a great stir of activity. Lorries will be dumping stones from quarries and friends of persons; the roads will be dug up and in fact this place will be a place of confusion. You will not be able to pass your home. In other words, it is a systematic plan to deplete the public resources of this island in the interest of the person who represents the parish of St. Michael and whose popularity is on the wane and who is now tottering on the brink of political extinction, the person who has run the whole gamut of his ability and now has reached saturation point in his contribution in which even the feeblest man can now make a better contribution. All these things they must now turn their factors to remain in office to the utter consternation of the more enlightened members of this community. I am sure Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, that everyone, not only in Barbados but in the West Indies would have applauded them if this undertaking which has been so loosely described as a public utility were not the subject of this debate tonight, but another public utility whose control is vital to the interest of any country which wants to expand its industrial activity and which public utility would be able to provide employment for the people of this island, who would like to have jobs, but cannot get them. Sir, to spend public money in a particular parish at a particular time for the personal aggrandisement of an individual member of a Parliamentary Chamber in my submission is the antithesis of Democratic Government, and the antithesis of constitutional rectitude and moral probity.

Mr TUDOR, Mr. CRAWFORD and Mr. BARROW left the House.

The attention of Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, was called to the fact that there was no quorum, and Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker ordered that the Bell be rung.

There still was no quorum.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: There being no quorum, in accordance with the Rules of this House I now declare that this House do now adjourn until this day week, Tuesday, 21st June. 1955 at 3 o'clock p.m.

This House now stands adjourned.