

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SESSION 1956

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 10th July, 1956

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

Present :

His Honour Mr. K. N. R. HUSBANDS (*Speaker*), Hon. G. H. ADAMS C.M.G., Q.C., B.A., (*Premier*), Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS, C.B.E., M.D., C.M., (*Minister of Social Services*), Hon. M. E. COX, (*Minister of Communications, Works and Housing*), Mr. L. E. SMITH, J.P., (*Chairman of Committees*), Mr. F. C. GODDARD (*Leader of the Opposition*), Mr. F. E. MILLER, Mr. J. A. HAYNES, B.A., Mr. E. ST.A. HOLDER, Mr. V. B. VAUGHAN, Hon. C. E. TALMA, (*Minister of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries*), Mrs. E. E. BOURNE and Mr. E. W. BARROW, B.Sc.

Prayers were read.

MINUTES

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

DOCUMENTS

Mr. SPEAKER: I have the honour to inform the House that I have received from the Accountant General the Financial Report for the month ending 31st May, 1956.

PAPERS LAID

Hon. G. H. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the Report on Training Scheme Fund for the financial year 1955-56.

Hon. C. E. TALMA: I am commanded to lay the reply to the question asked by Mr. W. A.

CRAWFORD on 1st May, 1956, regarding the herdsmen at the Central Livestock Station.

Also, Receipts and Payments Account, and Profit and Loss Account of the Government Lancaster Factory for the year ended 31st December, 1955.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Government Notices were given as follows:—

Hon. M. E. COX: Resolution to approve the lease of a parcel of land situated at Grave's End to the Barbados Light and Power Company Ltd.

Hon. C. E. TALMA: On behalf of the Hon. Minister for Trade, Industry and Labour.

Resolution to sanction the Exportation (Draw-back of Duties on Cylinders containing Locally Manufactured Gases) Regulations, 1955.

In doing so Sir, I am asking for leave to withdraw Order No. 8 on the Order Paper which deals with the same matter. I am asking that this Resolution take the place of Order No. 8 on the Order Paper.

There being no objection leave was granted the hon. member.

Hon. C. E. TALMA: I beg to give notice of the following:—

Resolution to approve the draft Agreement establishing the Eastern Caribbean Farm Institute.

Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS: I beg to give notice of the following:—

Bill to amend the Offences Against The Person) Act, 1868.

Hon. M. E. COX: I beg to give notice of the following:—

Bill to amend the Waterworks Act, 1895.

BILLS READ A FIRST TIME

Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS: I beg to move that the Bill to amend the Offences Against The Person Act, 1868 be now read a first time.

Hon. M. E. COX: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

to be of an educational or cultural character and finally approved by the Governor-in-Executive Committee. It is intended that these recordings will be used in the Government Programmes over the Barbados Rediffusion Service, Limited.

I think everybody will agree that it is a worthy object to make these sound recordings and films available to the local Rediffusion to be used in Government programmes and they should be made as freely as possible. I do not think there will be any objection to agreeing to a concession of this sort, I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. M. E. COX: I beg to second that.

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

On motion of Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS, seconded by Hon. M. E. COX, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. SMITH being in the Chair.

Clause 1 and 2 were called and passed.

On motions of Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS, seconded by Hon. M. E. COX, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of the Bill in Committee.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On separate motions of Hon. H. G. H. CUMMINS, seconded by Hon. M. E. COX, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker, that concludes Government business for the day.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: The first Order of Private Members Business stands in the name of the honourable junior member for St. Peter who is not in his place today.

The second Order stands in the name of the hon. senior member for St. Lucy. To move the passing of an Address to His Excellency the Governor relating to the Institution of an annual Christmas bonus for all public employees whose pensionable emoluments do not exceed \$1,500 annually.

Mr. BRANCKER: Mr. Speaker, so far as these Items under Private Members' Business standing in my name are concerned, I understand that up to now copies have not been cyclostyled or printed. If they have been, they have not been circulated among honourable members.

I hope steps will be taken to have them printed in time for the next meeting of the House.
3.45 p.m.

BARBADOS LIGHT AND POWER CO., BILL

Mr. GODDARD: Mr. Speaker, I am asking leave to take Order No. 9 of the Private Members' Business as the next Order of the day.

Mr. TUDOR: On a point of Order. Perhaps it was my tardiness that made the honourable gentleman rise first. Actually, Order No. 5 comes before No. 9 and I would ask that that be taken.

There being no objection leave was granted the hon. junior member for Christ Church to take Order No. 9 of Private Members Business as the next Order of the day.

Mr. GODDARD: Mr. Speaker, this is a Bill to authorise the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited to construct two or more pipe-lines for pumping sea-water to and from the Company's works. It is well known that the new power station that is under construction now is of such a nature that large quantities of water will be required for

cooling purposes, and they have plans for pumping water from Gravesend into the station and letting it out again into the sea. I am told that the rise in temperature of the water will not exceed four or five degrees. They have already consulted Government, who have given the necessary permission for the leasing of the area required, and everything will be done to protect the public from any danger that may (or that one could expect to) rise. It is quite a simple Bill and all the protection necessary is given in the Bill and I am going to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Mr. BARROW: Mr. Speaker, I remember that on the last occasion on which a private company wanted to limit the rights of the public in the vicinity of Needham's Point, that the Government thought fit to introduce a Public Bill instead of a private Bill in the manner in which the honourable junior member for Christ Church has done today. I compliment him on adopting the right course in the matter. I presume that the Bill has passed all the preliminary stages before being put properly before this Chamber, but perhaps Your Honour will bear with me if I referred to the steadily diminishing area of land which the people of St. Michael and the neighbouring districts of Christ Church, and those unfortunate parishioners whom I represent have no beach of their own, who on Sunday mornings regard what is known as Shot Hall as the mecca of all sea bathers, are losing. These rights are ever diminishing and I am a bit alarmed as to whether in a couple of years' time, at this rate, we will be able to bathe at Needham's Point at all, because barricades have already been put up by the Molasses Terminals and entrenchments will now be dug by the Barbados Light and Power Company. Government had, and private contractors thought it fit, some time ago in 1954 to remove vast quantities of sand from the beach at Gravesend. I asked the question about it on the 26th October, 1954, whether the Minister of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries was aware of the considerable quantities of sand being removed from the beach and foreshore adjoining the lands of the Governor-in-Executive Committee at Shot Hall in the parish of St. Michael; and I earlier asked, Mr. Speaker, (without being tedious), whether any prosecution or prosecutions had been brought in respect of the excavation then taking place at Shot Hall. At that particular time, Sir, the Fire Station was being built, and we have an Act on the Statute Book of Barbados relating to the preservation of the beaches and foreshore, which prohibits even a simple householder from taking so much as a bucket of sand anywhere between, to the best of my recollection, South Point Lighthouse in Christ Church and Harrison's Point in St. Lucy. I am sure that Gravesend is well within the prohibited area. Well, the people who enjoy or used to enjoy the facilities at Gravesend are now confronted with a "trespass will be prosecuted" sign to the North a monstrous conglomeration of tanks for various purposes to the South, about six pipe-lines in the middle of the beach owned by the British Union Oil Company, and now the Barbados Light and Power Company is going to add insult to injury by the effluvia which they will now project, not into the sea, but on the beach itself, and into the water immediately adjoining the foreshore where the less fortunate classes in Barbados were hitherto accustomed to bathe on such occasions as they could find time—Thursdays, half-days, Sunday mornings, Saturday afternoons and Bank Holidays. I would like to invite the honourable junior member for Christ Church to sound out the owners or the lessers of the Barbados Aquatic Club or the Barbados Royal Yacht Club

especially since some of the members of the Yacht Club are also Directors of the Barbados Light and Power Company. Let us save a lot of Government printing let them defer the effluvia; we could give them permission to pass it under the road immediately adjoining the Aquatic Club which belongs to the Government, and lead the water through to the beach of the Barbados Yacht Club. After all, they are the people—at least the most prominent of them—who undoubtedly own the Barbados Light and Power Company, and I do not see they need to come to this House at all. They only need to write to the Director of Highways and Transport to get permission to build an aqueduct in the road, say, in the vicinity of the Aquatic Court Hotel, come down through the back and throw the water on to the beach of the Royal Barbados Yacht Club; but as far as I am concerned, until they are prepared themselves to suffer some inconvenience, I am not going to stand here and allow the customary rights of the public and especially the parishioners of St. Michael, St. George and Christ Church to be steadily diminished and whittled away.

3.55 p.m.

Up to now, I can find no answer to the questions which I have asked the Hon. Minister of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries about sand being taken from Shot Hall beach. No dispensation has been awarded either to the Public Works Department or to any private contractor to go to Shot Hall and take away sand from there. The whole contour of the beach at Shot Hall has been altered for the worst; we already have a monstrosity in the way of industry and employment—we have to put up with the tanks which have been erected by the Molasses Terminals, and the pipe lines which they have there. All that is done in the name of private enterprise; and the excuse in this, as in every other instance, is that we are providing employment for people. I would like to say that we all know that that argument does not hold good for Molasses Terminals, because they have actually increased the number of the unemployed rather than diminished the number of those persons who are seeking gainful employment.

We have the noxious fluids emitted from the British Union Oil Company Limited; and the Barbados Light & Power Company Limited, and its predecessor, the Barbados Electric Company has been there for years — for something like 60 years. Why should the working-class man in Barbados be the man who always has to suffer whenever they want to throw something on the beach, or to narrow the already restricted amenities which are there for the benefit of the members of the public?

It would appear to me that we have a complete and utter disregard for the welfare of the more unfortunate classes of this Island, because if you want an illustration of Socialism, in reverse, anyone like myself who, 20 or 25 years ago, was accustomed to going up to Shot Hall and having a sea bath, running up and down the beach and playing a game of cricket or football, will know that that is no longer possible, because of the infringements and encroachments which have been carried out on the customary rights of the people of the surrounding parishes. Right next door, we have two bastions — one is a first line of defence, and the other is the last outpost of imperialism. Those two bastions of racial intolerance in Barbados have all their rights preserved and guaranteed by the present Government reviewing the lease of the land and the foreshore to the Barbados Aquatic Club; you have the last outpost of gingoistic imperialism in the role of the Barbados Yacht Club and have an entity of ownership and interest between

the members of the Barbados Yacht Club and the Barbados Light & Power Company Limited.

These same people under the role of Barbados Yacht Club—I hope they are dying a race—these people hold ideas such as they hold in a progressive century, if not in a progressive Island, and I hope they will not be found in Barbados in a short space of time. I had hoped that their sons and daughters who are growing in a more enlightened atmosphere will not cling tenaciously to the outmoded beliefs which they support.

Now you have the honourable junior member for Christ Church in his innocence without realising or canvassing in his mind all the possibilities which are now opened to the Barbados Light & Power Company, asking the representatives of the people to further permit this company to encroach on the already limited amenities which we enjoy. I would really suggest to the honourable members that they think twice before they support this measure. If I were a representative of the parish of St. Michael I would be even more vocal in my protest, if that were humanly possible, than I am now. This is nothing to do with any individual or with one's private dislikes; it is a question of a principle which is being disregarded day by day, overlooked, and in many instances, not even considered or remembered by other members of the public, or those who arrogate to themselves the role of representation and speaking on behalf of the masses of this island.

I would like to remind honourable members in dealing with the Bill in general, that it has been preceded by a petition to the effect that the Company may be authorised to construct and maintain certain pipe lines and marine works in the sea beyond the shores at Gravesend, St. Michael, for the purpose of conveying sea water to be pumped into the company's circulating water pumping plant and thence returning to the sea by such pipelines. By Section 3 of the Bill, the company is authorised to construct and maintain two or more pipelines beginning at a place near the shore of Gravesend in the parish of St. Michael in this Island to be approved by the Governor-in-Executive Committee, thence continuing on or under the foreshore and along the sea bed to a place in the sea to be approved by the Governor-in-Executive Committee for the purpose of conveying sea water to be pumped from the sea into the company's circulating water pumping plant and thence returning to the sea by such pipelines.

When referring to fumes and pipelines, I omitted to draw to Your Honour's attention the fact that the Commissioners of Highways of the parish of St. Michael have thought fit to throw off storm water right at the end of the most desirable part of that beach. We have the pipelines of the British Union Oil Company, we have the pipelines of Molasses Terminals and we have the Commissioners of Highways throwing storm water through an outlet pipe of about 3 feet in diameter; and all the dirty water sweeps down from Culloden Road and Bay Land down through the Garrison straight to that beach.

4.05 p.m.

Now, so little do we care about the facilities provided for the public in the way of bathing sheds, canteens and other amenities of that nature, that we are now going to allow a private company to drive piles and put down more pipe lines at Gravesend Beach. I am sure if one little boy were to climb up on one of those piles they would want to prosecute him.

In this same Bill before the House, the Executive Committee has asked the Company not to throw any obnoxious stuff into the sea, but there is no provision for prosecuting them if they do not carry out

then some of that saving should be passed to the displaced workers.

5.05 p.m.

One would conceive that the new machinery costs money and that the investment has to be capitalised at some time or the other, and that the industrialists are entitled to recover the capitalised cost of the new machinery from the savings resulting from its installation.

Sir, while we are concerned with the question itself of industrial expansion and keeping our industries alive and in a vigorous state of health to compete with other industrialists abroad, we also are under obligation to keep the people employed in these industries and, secondly, we are also expected to see to it that the savings in production cost is passed on to the consumer. To some extent, it may be true to say that the soap factory here enjoys a monopoly. There is nothing to prevent any company from embarking on the productions of soap, but while that is so theoretically, it is not so easy; so you have to say from all the circumstances involved that the Roberts Soap Factory enjoys a partial monopoly.

We have our price control apparatus and it is the duty of the Control Board to take steps to ensure that the saving in production cost is passed on to the consumer.

It is these two main points with which the Address concerns itself mainly: (1) compensating the displaced labour and (2) ensuring that the saving in production cost is passed on to the consuming public. I submit that neither of these things is asking too much or in any way is endangering the continual progress of the industry; therefore, those of us who have some interest in the plight of the workers in this country must endorse the principle contained in this Address.

Mr. VAUGHAN: Mr. Speaker, the stand which the last hon. member has taken is unusually sound for him that I can do nothing more than to praise the soundness of it.

Mr. CRAWFORD: May I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that I have never at any time known the hon. member to be in the position where he can appreciate a sound speech.

Mr. VAUGHAN: Mr. Speaker, I was saying that all the arguments of the hon. member are entirely sound. Here is the proposal to manufacture soap to be competitive with other industries in the world, and inevitably to make soap cheaper for every consumer of soap in this island. As a result, every family will be looking forward to buying soap cheaper and the Government is there to see to that. I think the Government has something to do with prices and you cannot reduce your cost of production by 40 percent in the manufacture of an article and leave the price to be paid by the consumer at what it was before.

I will not go over what the hon. senior member for St. Philip has said. It is too sound for repetition. You can only endorse it. It then remains that all he is simply asking us to do is to support the last part of the Address which says that the House respectfully requests Your Excellency to take all the steps necessary to protect the interest of the workers and the consumers alike, that applies to every person in the Island. It does not apply to the Soap Factory workers alone.

It is this Government's responsibility to assist unemployed and specifically it is a responsibility of the Barbados Workers' Union; and this goes with those who are employed or were employed in the soap industry. Because of that, this is only an un-

necessary request. This is bare political verbiage. It has no meaning and all of us know it has no meaning. The major part of the hon. member's speech was aired on the later part of the Address and that is meaningless.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's understanding seems to come and go in fits and starts. I distinctly said that our experience of the molasses workers who were displaced was such that we have to impress on the Government that it is their duty to protect these workers. I pointed out that the molasses workers were never treated satisfactorily. Even up to now—

Mr. VAUGHAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of Order. I did not know that the hon. member could make two speeches.

Mr. E. D. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I remember quite well about ten years ago that I incurred the wrath of the socialist members of this House. If I recall aright, an hon. member brought into this House an Address which had as its object the prohibition of the importation of tractors. I took a stand then and I was threatened that because of it I would lose my seat. I said then that to resist improvement in any industry is something like turning the hands of the clock back. Mr. Speaker, I think we in this Island should be very proud that we have people operating this factory who do not want to get all out of it to put in their pockets, and do not want to improve this industry or any industry to compete with what they have in Trinidad or in other colonies. If an industry remains stagnant, it is going to receive severe competition from similar industries in the sister colonies which are going on improving and improving.

If the idea of this Address was to resist the importation of this machinery, I would have definitely opposed the Address if I stood alone; but fortunately for the Address, it says that the House has the honour to inform Your Excellency of the proposed intention of the Roberts Manufacturing Company, a concern operated under the Trade Laws of Barbados, to import and to install a Mazzoni Soap Plant costing nearly \$100,000 B.W.I. arriving from Italy through Peru. That speaks very well for the concern.

As I have said, they are not just sitting by and making money and not improving their industry. I heard someone mentioning the name of Mr. K. R. Hunte. I look with appreciation on young men — like Mr. K. R. Hunte—who have been able to push Barbados in many respects in this way. Even though you may be a socialist, you can see that if there were not people to start such developments, there would be no opportunity not even for a Trade Union in the country to ask or find work for the people.

5.15 p.m.

Now, I just want to draw this to the hon. members attention who introduced this Address.

This House understands that the effect of this installation will be to diminish the demand for labour by 50%, Electricity by 30% and the cost of production by 40%, then, the silent partner, the Government will collect more income tax. There is no argument about that. The hon. member who introduced it will agree that is so, and not as someone has intimated that big dividends will go into the pockets of the Directors. Can you imagine a Socialist country or Communist country like Russia not wanting to spend money in improving an old 1920 plant to compete with the United States? Let us imagine a place like Russia not having any kind of plant and sitting up and saying we are not going because it may displace a couple of labourers. Now,

Sir, I think hon. members will agree with me that this ought to be commended.

"The House is firmly of the opinion that all workers likely to be dismissed as redundant should be paid compensation of not less than four weeks' wages for every year of service, and that the price of soap to the consumer be commensurately diminished."

Well, you may pass it here; but let us give credit to the people who do business for having some ability. They are far-seeing people; they can understand competition is so great that although Government gives authority to big manufacturing people, their manufacturers' representatives have made representation that they can get soap to sell the consumer much more cheaply. That is a recognised fact, but naturally you give reduction because we have to develop industries and actually have to find work for a number of people and so on. But Sir, these people who run this company realise that they are in competition with the big companies who could manufacture and send soap here through the manufacturers' representatives and sell it more cheaply. They had to do this. So it goes without saying that as soon as you reduce the overhead cost of production, naturally the consumer must get the benefit. But business people must realise but there is not much competition in Barbados. In Trinidad or Jamaica business people are paying some youngsters to do some research in some laboratory in which some scheme can be worked to get things produced more cheaply; that is why I am one of those people who believe in free enterprise, because if it had been for Government we would never get this done, because it is making so much money and so many people are going ahead and so on. Although I partly agree it is sort of superfluous, I am going to support it.

"The House is firmly of the opinion that all workers likely to be dismissed as redundant should be fully compensated" and I believe myself I have overheard that there has been some agreement between the Barbados Workers' Union and not only this company but other companies operating in Barbados. In fact, there have been talks—agreements have not been reached—between commercial houses and the Barbados Workers' Union on some compensation to persons laid off by companies through no fault of their own. It has been going on for some time, and it is unfortunate that the hon. junior member for St. Peter who is strong in his fight for the Workers' Union is not here to say more on it. What I am saying is, that I have heard that negotiations have been going on for some time.

"The House respectfully request Your Excellency to take all the necessary steps to protect the interests of the workers and the consumers alike."

I suppose we are bound to support this Address of this sort and in doing so we feel that improvement in any industry, Mr. Speaker, is an asset to the community. As I said in the beginning, many years ago Socialist members of the House talking through their hats passed an Address to bar the importation of tractors because they would be putting people out of work. I say now what I said then. What would have happened if the Assembly representing people like Laurie Pile, passed an Address to prevent him from getting machinery to improve the production of sugar at Bulkeley, because it would put the middle class gang and people who work around the sugar windmill out of work? What would have been the position of Barbados today if you remained with the old windmill system and by keeping horse-men and not bringing in lorries to do the work? I am glad the hon. junior member for St. Lucy was sane enough to bring an Address of this type and

not one like that brought by his counterpart not many years ago who said it would be a good thing to prevent tractors from coming here because people of his constituency said that bringing in the tractors would be putting the men who work the plough out of work, not realising that the operation of the mechanical tractors meant greater production, and greater production meant getting more revenue for the colony such as this. The hon. junior member for St. Lucy has also stated that he understands the effect of this installation will diminish the demand for labour by 50% electricity by 30% and the cost of production by 40%. I know he has always shown a full sense of responsibility in these matters.

Mr. TUDOR: I would like to inform the hon. member that I got it out of the horse's mouth if that satisfies him.

Mr. E. D. MOTTLEY: I am glad he got the information out of the horse's mouth and not from the donkey's. I said he has always shown a great sense of responsibility in these matters, and that he must have got these figures from responsible sources: and I have no doubt that the management of the company would never attempt to hide figures, because in a company of this sort you can always get figures,—not like some companies who if there are figures to be had people can work on them to make them difficult to get, and even the legal authorities would not stand up to getting the figures produced. I am going to support the Address, Sir, and I hope that it will be taken that we are fully conscious of the effects of this company to give Barbados a more efficient soap manufacturing company so as to be able not only — not only I say, Sir,—it is not merely a matter of supplying soap more cheaply—but finding work for people, exporting it to the neighbouring colonies and thereby letting this Government collect as third party a better income, that is, Government starts off to collect 40% of all the money they make. It is not a matter of making the soap and creating work for people here, but doing a business which could supply soap to the Windward and Leeward Islands who have no such concern there, and the Government here would get a better income tax. As to the compensation of workers, I say I am still of the opinion that such a matter could well be left out because, if we know the hon. junior member for St. Peter well enough—and you, Sir—I am sure in this matter with the assurance we have had from the time he has been into public affairs, he will protect the workers of this colony.

5.25 p.m.

Mr. BARROW: In connection with this Address, I am entirely in sympathy with my colleagues who have already spoken on the matter. Some few weeks ago, I drew to the attention of the members on that side of the table that, along with the rest of the world—the more heavily industrialised, the more politically advanced and culturally civilised parts of the world—our poor benighted Colony of Barbados was in need of a technological innovation, which is the only shortened term to describe what is happening today; and I was met with a tirade—well, I would not like to qualify it by calling it a harangue, or a philippic, from the hon. junior member for St. John who said that the effect of the processes which were taking place today in the industrial world, would tend to create more employment rather than increase the volume of unemployment. As far as I know, Mr. Speaker, there is not a single plant which has been automated in the Island of Barbados. The Mazzoni machine which the Roberts Manufacturing Company has imported into this Country is not auto-