

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SESSION 1958

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 27th May, 1958.

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

PRESENT

His Honour Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS, C.B.E., M.D., C.M., (*Premier*); Mr. J. E. T. BRANCKER, (*Leader of the Opposition*); Mr. W. A. CRAWFORD; Mr. L. E. SMITH, J.P. (*Deputy Speaker*); Mr. F. L. WALCOTT, O.B.E. Mr. E.D. MOTTLEY; Hon. R. G. MAPP, (*Minister of Communications, Works and Housing*); Mr. K. N. R. HUSBANDS; Mr. T. O. BRYAN; Mr. F. C. GODDARD; Hon. F. E. MILLER, (*Minister of Social Services*); Mr. E. StA. HOLDER, Mr. C. E. TALMA; Mrs. E. E. BOURNE; Mr. J. C. TUDOR; M.A.; Mr. C. E. SEARLES; Mr. L. StA. THORNE; Hon. D. D. GARNER, (*Minister of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries*); Mr. H. A. DOWDING, M.B.E.; Mr. T. W. MILLER.

Mr. CLERK: I have the honour to inform the House that I have received the following letter:

"Gothmarc",
Bank Hall Road,
St. Michael.
16th April, 1958.

Sir,

Having accepted the post of Premier of the Island of Barbados, I beg to resign the office of Speaker of the General Assembly as from today's date.

..... I should like to thank honourable members for the honour they bestowed upon me when they elected me as Speaker of this ancient Assembly, and for the consideration they have shown. This has made my task a pleasant one.

I would also like to thank you, Sir, for the able assistance you have always so readily given me during my tenure of office.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
H. GORDON CUMMINS.

The Marshal bearing the Mace cradlewise entered the Chamber and placed the Mace under the Table.

Hon. Dr. H. G. H. CUMMINS: Mr. Clerk, I am commanded to inform the House that His Excellency the Governor has given leave to the House to proceed forthwith to the choice of a new Speaker. That being so, Sir, I beg to nominate the hon. junior member for St. Peter as Speaker of this House.

The hon. junior member for St. Peter is well acquainted with all of us and we with him; he has held this office before and he therefore needs no lengthy introduction. I am quite sure that many members of this House will be pleased to see him in his old place.

Hon. F. E. MILLER: Mr. Clerk, I beg to second the nomination made by the Premier.

Mr. BRANCKER: Mr. Clerk, Parliamentary usage in Great Britain and other democracies usually has required, and quite rightly so, that the appointment to the Chair of the elected Assembly, wherever possible, should be treated as a non-Party measure. We have always done so in this House until the regrettable occurrence in December 1956. I had intended, as on this occasion when we agree with the nomination made by the hon. junior member for St. Thomas, that in accordance with that wellknown usage to second the nomination, but I speak now to assure the House and the Speaker-elect, as I believe he must have realised in December 1956, of the full support of the Opposition, and I am glad to do all I can to ensure his return to the Chair. He will have assisting him the most good-natured and good-humoured of members of this House, the one who can get over the most difficult situation by a joke and by creating a laugh in the person of His Honour the Deputy Speaker. I think it is all to the good that one who has studied Parliamentary Procedure and who has taken a course in that subject, should have at his right hand one whose ability is wellknown to handle any situation with ease and by means of a joke to get the House back into the humour into which it should usually be.

So, Mr. Clerk, as this matter really is, I believe it will carry, and I do not think we need on this side say anything of the hon. junior member for St. Peter more than we said in December 1956 when we recommended that the tradition be maintained: that is, so long as Mr. Speaker is returned by his electorate, he should be re-appointed as Speaker of the Chamber. If you do not do that, at least you have two Speakers in the Chamber, an experienced one and an inexperienced one, one who is there to learn. In England they have always decided that if the Speaker is returned he should go back into the Chair; that is the result of sound experience over hundreds of years in the greatest of Parliamentary Democracies. If it is not desired to take the particular member, well then you promote him into the Other Place, the local House of Lords.

I think it is correct to say that everybody in this island is looking forward to the hon. junior member for St. Peter resuming the Chair of this House after the respite which he has undergone. We feel that he will be returned to us refreshed to resume the post which he left off less than two years ago, or to be exact, seventeen months ago. We do not need to tell him as we would tell a new Speaker, that the office is one like that of a Chief Judge which no Party man can fill adequately, because as speaker, he should not attend their Party meetings. That is the tradition of the English House of Commons and it should be the tradition of the Barbados House of Assembly, because we look forward to the hon. junior member for St. Peter maintaining those very high traditions which always belonged to this House and which he has seen in operation in the Mother of Parliaments.

We are happy today to lend our support to the motion made by the hon. junior member for St. Thomas, the new Premier. So, Mr. Clerk, we wish the Speaker-elect a happy tenure of office, and we trust that the Clerks will do their best not to err in respect of the law of procedure and thereby perhaps unwittingly lead the Speaker astray. Of course, the new Speaker is an experienced Speaker, and not likely to be led astray by Clerks making mistakes as to procedure and Law as with a first-timer in the Chair.
3.25 p.m.

Mr. GODDARD: Mr. Clerk, I am happy to support the hon. junior member for St. Peter as Speaker of this House again. It seems evident because our Party will be supporting him, the Democratic Party is supporting him, and he has been nominated by the Government. I am very pleased to see that we are having a Speaker whose nomination has been a willing choice of this Chamber and I therefore look on the office of Speaker to be carried on with that independent spirit which the Speaker-elect has always shown. I do hope that while he is there in the Chair he will not show any party favour and so allow members of all parties to approach him on all occasions. I look forward to his carrying out the duties of Speaker with the same favour to all. The time has come when we should try and heal some of the breaches that have taken place in this Chamber over the last two years, and I look forward to him leading the way, so that all hon. members can at all times go to him with the full confidence that their secrets will not be disclosed to others.

Mr. Clerk, the Speaker-elect has been accused both in this House and outside of this House of impartiality and I have always defended him and I will continue to defend him because I do not see the fault laid at him to have existed. I feel he was always impartial and I do not know he will continue in the same manner when he takes that Chair again.

Sir, I have great pleasure not only in supporting him but knowing that the entire House will support him and thus make his nomination a unanimous vote, and thus strengthen his hand. By that he will feel he has the full confidence of all members.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Quite contrary to the dog show which was seen on the last occasion by the House when the Speaker was elected, the election today of a Speaker has been done in the best parliamentary tradition and there has been the utmost unanimity on the part of all three parties of the Chamber. Now that all the formality has been fulfilled, I should like to come back to realities. I really must confess that I marvelled at the equanimity in which the Hon. Premier proposed as Speaker the hon. junior member for St. Peter because, as you will recall Mr. Clerk, it was his promotion to the Chair on the last occasion - which was unjustifiable and done in the most scandalous manner - that caused the hon. junior member for St. Peter to be no longer Speaker. It must have taken a tremendous amount of brass and the utmost gall for the Hon. Premier to get up here today and without offering any apology at all for the scurrilous treatment meted out the hon. junior member for St. Peter merely to say: "I propose the hon. junior member for St. Peter as Speaker".

In the colony of Trinidad a very outstanding politician is supposed to have directed opprobrium to himself for saying that in politics anything goes and that opprobrium has permeated right down through the entire body politics of Trinidad - so much so, that we have heard it said in this Chamber that Trinidad is at the bottom of the political ladder. Now, Sir, I say that the removal of the hon. junior member for St. Peter from the Speaker's Chair in 1956 hit the very lowest political depths and nowhere else in the West Indies has such depravity been seen. I regret that the hon. member for St. Peter has found it in his heart to accept the nomination today; he should have thrown it back in their faces. I want to warn him that his nomination by them to the Chair does not spring from any qualm of conscience or any desire to right the wrong of 1956. He is being used as a political tool; it is a matter of political expediency. They cannot afford to weaken their side; therefore they want to weaken this side; and his elevation to the Chair as Speaker, although he deserves it, means that they are playing politics to the full because they are having one more vote removed from the floor of the House. I also want to warn the hon. junior member for St. Peter that the day that they can do without him they will kick him in the pants again.

I am suggesting to him that the same spirit of justice, the same high impartiality which characterised his previous term of office will again inspire him now that he has been restored to the Chair. He may well feel that bygones should be bygones, but I want him to take note of the fact that the Government by neither the proposer nor the seconder of his nomination has tendered the slightest apology to him nor confessed that he was wronged when they so unceremoniously and scandalously removed the Speaker's Chair from under him in 1956 and left him to fall on his own devices. He, of course, may be inspired by the fact that regardless of the puny efforts of man, there is the Divinity that shapes all things, and he may well see in his restoration today the fact that the mills of God are grinding, and grinding slowly, and he may feel that what has happened today is an award of justice and an award by the Divinity in redress of the grievance which he suffered in 1956.

What the Hon. Premier said today? He merely said: "I beg to propose the hon. junior member for St. Peter as Speaker of this Hon. Assembly." Mr. Clerk, not in my time in this Chamber have I seen such an unparalleled example of shameless effrontery. It ranks as one of the most brazen of acts. I expected at least he would have said in the House and to the Speaker-elect: "in 1956 for reasons known to ourselves, we supplanted you and I was called on to be Speaker; now that I am supplanting somebody else as Premier, we feel that in justice to you that we should restore you to your rightful place." Not a single word like that was said! The implication is that "we want a Speaker, and we cannot afford to take one from among ourselves; therefore, we take you, and when we call on you, you come."

Mr. Clerk, you will recall that historical day in 1956 when we kept His Excellency the Governor waiting for hours through the dastardly deed of the Government and Her Majesty's Pro-Consul had to go home. In the evening, like some little school child, he came down from the Dais to be recalled next day to perform the act which he should have performed on the day before through the tremendous rows and discussions which we had in here over the nomination of the Speaker. What we did that day has not been done before in the history of any Colonial Parliament. It was the attitude of the Government on that day that caused us to meet today to do what we are doing. Mr. Clerk, you will recall that the wrangling on that day went on for five or six hours, and then through sheer force of numbers and with no regard for parliamentary tradition - not even the common moral accepted standards - the hon. junior member for St. Thomas was made Speaker. Well now, today we have another Speaker and as I have said, I am sorry that the hon. junior member for St. Peter has answered the call today because he can afford to wait. That Chair is his anytime he wants it in the future. But if he feels like taking it today, we are not in a position to tell him that he should not take it.
3.35 p.m.

I want to remind him finally that the eyes of both sides of this Chamber and the eyes of the entire public will be on him now even more so than they were on him in previous sessions. I have no fear at all of his continued impartiality, and I feel sure that in the same manner that the Government Party has lived to eat its words and to swallow them in the matter of the appointment of the Speaker of this House, so they will live to see their infamy come to an end, and a responsible Government take the place of the substitute which we now have.

Mr. WALCOTT: Mr. Clerk, at the beginning of this session I had the honour of seconding the nomination of the hon. junior member for St. Peter as Speaker of this House. On that occasion I said: "Cowards die many times before their death; the valiant only taste of death but once". I am glad to see that the public of St. John has made it possible for the Government to nominate the hon. junior member for St. Peter as the Speaker of this House. On the last occasion, I seconded the nomination of the hon. junior member for St. Peter as Speaker of this House, and I am supporting his nomination now, but not for the same reasons as those for which the Government has nominated him.

The Government has taken the matter as a matter of expediency, because they have seen the handwriting on the wall. Some of the members of the Government are passing through their last days (Laughter.) I am giving hon. members on that side this assurance that if they attempt to do what they did on the last occasion, aiding people to come to St. Peter to see if they can run me out, they will find the situation just as it was on the last occasion. I give this assurance that as long as the hon. junior member for St. Peter remains the Speaker of this House - I have no intention of challenging any member whom this House would like to see as Speaker - and until such time as we have single member constituencies, well, I would not encourage anybody to challenge the seat of the Speaker. I say that, because I do not think the hon. junior member for St. Peter has any doubt as to the confidence which the people in St. Peter have placed in me. They have had a recent trial and we have seen the matter demonstrated.

I would like to say that the election of the hon. junior member for St. Peter as Speaker of this House is a lesson in patience for some of us to learn. I am not so patient. I quite agree with what the hon. senior member for St. Philip has said. It takes many of us to make up the world, good or bad as the world is, and I must congratulate the hon. junior member for St. Peter for his courage and his patience. The offer has come his way and he has accepted it; in my own case, if the offer had come my way I would not have accepted it, because we are different. I realise that in parliamentary or public life if you have the guts to fight and wait, your just reward will come. If the people of St. John had acted differently, the hon. junior member for St. Peter would not have been asked to become Speaker of this House. It is my only wish that the hon. member in returning to the Chair, returns there with the same sense of justice as he showed in the past to all members of the House, and not believe that the Chair of this House is the Chair of the Government. The Chair of this House is the Chair of Parliament, and all of us will have to receive his full share of impartiality and his full share of patience and tolerance. I feel sure that the election of the hon. junior member for St. Peter as Speaker of this House is the unanimous wish of all hon. members, and may I say that it is not only the unanimous wish of this House, but it is indicative of public opinion as to what was done to the hon. junior member for St. Peter at the beginning of this Session. It is also indicative of public opinion that he is going back to something which he should have had.

Mr. Clerk, it is for that reason that I support the nomination of the hon. member as Speaker of this House again; I am very pleased to see that in these circumstances the members on that side of the House have seen that there has been a change by the people of Barbados. I hope that those who sit on the other side of the House will regard the return of the hon. junior member for St. Peter as Speaker of this House as a clear understanding

that those of us who sit on this side of the Table did not roll in here just as you roll stones down a hill; they have to treat us with respect sooner or later.

Mr. MOTTLEY: Mr. Clerk, I hold in my hand a document, which is 25 pages of the debate which took place in this House on the occasion of the election of the Speaker a little more than sixteen months ago. I have seen quite a lot of things in my time - things which I have predicted come true; but I never expected to see what is taking place today happen so quickly. It was in December, 1956, that I had the temerity - I do not say the honour - to nominate the hon. junior member for St. Peter to continue as Speaker of this House and, as the hon. senior member for St. Peter has said, he seconded the nomination. I did that because I felt that what was done to the hon. junior member for St. Peter, was just a question of power politics as I considered it then. I have lived today to see that the stone which has been rejected from the building by the architects and scavengers on the other side of the House has now been loaded up and they are attempting to use it in the building.
3.45 p.m.

I did not realise then that I had made such a long speech, but looking through the debate I never worry to read them or ask the Reporters to put in anything for me - whatever I say, it is that - but what I know is that several of my friends came to see me and said that they thought it was disgraceful that I had contributed to keeping His Excellency the Governor waiting in the Other Place for such a long time. I just reminded them then that I was going to the dictates of my conscience and I thought that what was being done was wrong; it was contrary to convention and to all Parliamentary procedure. As I said then, nothing was told to us as to why the hon. junior member for St. Peter would be nominated.

If you will recall, Sir, before I spoke, I enquired from the hon. member whether he was willing to stand and he assured me that he was. I have much pleasure today in supporting the nomination, but I want to say a few things before I support him. I am going to support what the hon. senior member for St. Philip has said; let him not think that the Government Party is supporting him from their hearts; let him not think that if the electorate of St. John had elected Mr. Chenery that he would have had an opportunity; let him realise that the ex-Premier had done every possible thing he could to canvass everybody from letting the hon. junior member for St. Peter become Speaker. Let me say here and now that I was not going to vote for the hon. junior member for St. Joseph, I always intended to vote the hon. junior member for St. Peter; but let him realise that the ex-Premier and his Cabinet did everything to prevent this nomination. The hon. senior member for St. Joseph had the temerity to oppose him from being Speaker, but it was always my intention to vote for the hon. junior member for St. Peter. We are not hypocrites nor do we belong to the class of people which comprises the Government. I am sorry for one thing and it is that the Ananias of the Party is not in the House. I say that for the simple reason that the Minister, in order to get around this, said that the hon. junior member for St. Peter would have been made Speaker if I had not journeyed to St. Peter the night before the nomination and spoken to him, but I hope he will categorically deny it. Ananias said that I had journeyed to St. Peter and told the hon. member not to accept any promises, but to allow himself to be nominated. I hope that the hon. member will get up today and categorically deny it, because the first time I knew that he was not going to be made Speaker was when I came into this House and listened to the Premier who did not nominate the hon. junior member for St. Thomas. I was the most shocked person, and I said then that had it been my greatest political enemy, my attitude would have been the same, to say the least of a man who had been among the first to make any real sacrifice for politics. Indeed, I think most of us can remember that the hon. junior member for St. Peter shortly after he left Harrison College associated himself with the Dr. Duncan O'neale's Party, when to do that in those days you became a marked man, unlike the hypocrites who joined the band-waggon of the Barbados Labour Party,

some for the reason of getting invitations to Parties, some for reasons best known to themselves, some merely to get the money that is being paid in the House, and some to get the salary being offered to a Minister. Unlike those people, the hon. junior member for St. Peter was associated with the Dr. O'neale's Movement before he even got a job as an elementary school teacher, and I suppose that most of us are acquainted with the balance.

I do feel, Sir, that whatever difference we may have had with him as Speaker during his eight years in this Chamber, we all feel that even if he made mistakes, he made them in the best way and we all feel, too, that he has attempted to balance the scales. There were occasions when he did give the Opposition greater latitude and apparently members of the Government took umbrage, but I urge them to read what is the custom and practice in all Parliamentary Governments; the Speaker has always given the Opposition greater latitude in debates because he realises that they do not have the numbers to carry a motion. For those reasons I know that it has been argued in Government circles that he has been leaning towards the Opposition. There is no greater untruth than that. There were occasions in this House, Mr. Clerk, when he had to rule and we in the Opposition only followed the 'good' manners of the ex-Premier whom we thought should have had great experience. We followed the good manners of that member, if it can be so described, who on several occasions questioned his ruling and on more than one occasion threw his papers down and walked out, not only with him but with the last Speaker the new Premier.

I am making these points because I am not going to allow this occasion to pass without arresting those stupid remarks I read in the Press which were made by the Premier of the West Indies, Sir Grantley Adams, about the appeal over behaviour in this House. I am saying now what I said at the dinner given for him in 1954. There are those of us in this House who have never had the opportunity of any kind of education, but whose pennies and cents and whose grandfathers' and grandmothers' pennies and cents were put together to send people like him to Oxford. To be nurtured at so great a University and to come back and exhibit such manners for us to follow is hardly what we would expect. If his behaviour is such to the Speaker, what else would you expect from those of us who did not have his opportunity? I am one of those who strongly object to the Premier of the West Indies saying that the behaviour of this House is degenerating. There are a lot of us who used to sit in the Gallery of this House when there were people of a different political outlook and of a different complexion, but who actually had no interest more than sitting and warming a seat, and therefore there would be no acrimony and no real debating of any question; but that is what you find with all dictators.

3.55 p.m.

I have lived to see. I am among those who object. I am going to make this quite clear: This House of Assembly is no Sunday School. If because we disagree with an hon. member and if because you have to use tactics of any sort in your debating, you are to be accused by one who has now ridden this horse and ridden it past the winning pole, who proclaims to the world that the behaviour of the Barbados House of Assembly is so bad that he hopes he will get proper people to bring it back to the position which it wants held, and because of that, he brought forward that candidate for St. John - Mr. Clerk, we have always described St. John as a City on a hill and we believe that parish has the most intelligent electorate and indeed on this occasion they have shown that they do not accept the change which the Prime Minister of the West Indies wanted to put on them to bring back what he calls the standard of this House. Do hon. members realise this? Is the Prime Minister of the West Indies suggesting that the standard of this House has lowered because of the colour of people's skins? It seems to me that there is an attempt in this Country to remove the power out of the hands of people who at one time it was easy to fight on the basis of the question of colour and they want to put it back into the hands of a number of intellectual snobs; but there are those of us who have got the guts and the courage and who work for a living independently who do not accept things just like that, and who are always prepared to fight those sorts of people or anybody else.

As far as the hon. junior member for St. Peter is concerned, his election as Speaker of this House is correct. I know that there are a number of University graduates and people like them who hate to see people of a certain type go beyond a certain height. That has been demonstrated quite recently in the changes made in this country; but to my way of thinking, sometimes these things are rightly demonstrated because when you get around them at all costs so as to get up to a certain position, these things must happen to them.

I hope that the hon. junior member for St. Peter will exercise the same caution and the same care that he exercised when he was in the Chair and I hope that he will not be moved by the fact today that they are now wallowing in their own vomit. I hope he will realise, as the hon. senior member for St. Philip said, that had the St. John electorate had done differently, he would have remained sitting in the position he is in now throughout the whole Session. As a matter of fact, hon. members on that side of the Table usually tell me that I have a Gestapo. I want to tell the hon. member that some of the hon. members on that side are known to have taken up their jackets and to have decided that they will leave that party rather than have him being made Speaker again. It is known that the Prime Minister of the West Indies was fighting to have the hon. member back as Speaker and members of that Party took their coats up to leave the party - some of them who have recently jumped on the band wagon. I want the hon. junior member for St. Peter to know that it was a question of Hobson's choice. They knew the combined strength of the voting Opposition and even some of the members over there were prepared to vote for the hon. junior member for St. Peter as Speaker. We of this party intended to vote for that hon. member, the members of the Democratic Labour Party and some members of the party over there; therefore, it was a question of Hobson's choice. Mr. Clerk, there was a great deal of talk among them over there when it was decided by some of them to push for the hon. junior member for St. Peter as Speaker and I want you to know that there was nothing unanimous in their decision over there although after what was said by the proposer, the Hon. Minister of Social Services was very quick on his feet to second the nomination. I am suggesting that that hon. member was among those who were opposed to the nomination.

As you know, Mr. Clerk, it is contrary to custom for a member of the Government in the nomination of a Speaker to second the motion because it is customary after the nomination of the Speaker that he should be removed from the Government's Bench and because of that his nomination is seconded by a member of the Opposition as a demonstration of loyalty. Although the nomination was moved and seconded by the same Government Party, that does not necessarily mean that they did it from their consciences and that it was a matter which was accepted by them all; it was the mother of invention which knows absolutely no law. They had no other choice. If I remember rightly, when I was speaking here in December, 1956, on the nomination of the Speaker, I remember my trying to feel out every hon. member over there. I made speeches to them individually and I could only find that vibration coming from the Chairman of Committees who was man enough on that occasion to leave the House rather than to vote against the hon. junior member for St. Peter as Speaker. He was the only member of the Government Party who had the courage of his conviction and he has demonstrated that courage quite recently. I hope the hon. junior member for St. Peter takes all these things into consideration.

There is some feeling in this House that when you become Speaker that you are Speaker of the Government Party; but you are Speaker of the House of Assembly.

4.05 p.m.

That has been brought home quite forcibly to the hon. junior member for St. Thomas, the now Premier, who, on several occasions, because he had ruled against his Government, was demonstratively insulted in this House by the then Premier in his attitude. I feel, Sir, that what has happened is a good lesson for the hon. junior member for St. Peter and that he will go to the Chair more fortified and more strengthened in the fact that if he displays his impartiality and his firmness at all times, he will have the support and he will demand respect not

only from Government members but also from members of the Opposition. It is a very bad thing for any Speaker to be sitting in a Chair, knowing that he has only the respect of the Government members and not the respect of the members of the Opposition. I hope, Sir, that when the hon. member takes the Chair, he will bear in mind that he is the Speaker of the Assembly of this Island and not the Speaker of the Barbados Labour Party; therefore, it is his common duty to be as impartial as he has always been during his eight years in the Chair of this House. (Cheers)

Mr. TUDOR: Mr. Clerk, within a very few minutes from now, the Speaker-Elect will be escorted from the place where he now sits to the Chair which he has to occupy for the remainder of this Session. I hope that proper emphasis will be given to the occasion when he is about to be escorted there and that he will be accompanied from his seat not only by the persons who moved and seconded his nomination respectively, but also by the Leaders of the other two Parties in this House. I emphasise that for this reason; the public at large outside of this Chamber might possibly get the impression that the Government Party wishes to rehabilitate itself with the Speaker-Elect and have consequently made themselves responsible for his nomination and the seconding of it. It falls to me as the most disreputable and troublesome member of this House to offer my unqualified allegiance to His Honour the Speaker-Elect, providing that at the same time no sacrilegious hands, least of all mine, should attach themselves to the symbol of his authority and that matters henceforth will be sacrosanct as far as I am concerned. I give that assurance because His Honour the Speaker-Elect is now, for the first time to be the Speaker of the whole House. (Cheers). That is what we always wanted to see in the occupant of the Chair, I claim this to be a victory for the Opposition (Cheers) because I know the hon. member will forgive me for saying that he was fortified in his decision to accept the honour by the fact that he previously knew that the Opposition would support him and the Government would, for different reasons, wish to give him that honour. While it may be true from a certain point of view, that there were grave doubts as to whether he would have accepted the honour coming from them, yet the consolation of knowing that the rest of us on this side of the House unanimously unite in giving him the honour, makes it possible for him to accept it with a clear conscience. Therefore, the position is that they have offered the Speakership to him through expediency, he has accepted it, and we unite in offering righting a great wrong.

December 18th 1956, so far as the annals of this House are concerned, was a day of infamy and villainy; and the author of that particular piece of villainy is thankfully no longer a member of this House. That is a great relief, and I am glad today that the members on that side of the House have sat through what should be for them a most uncomfortable period in undoing a great wrong which they as co-adjutors have committed.

I think that His Honour the Speaker-elect will pardon me if I, at this moment, offer some advice to him. He has been in the wilderness for seventeen months and it is possible that having sat for those few months on this side of the House, he has caught a little of the temper and mood of the Opposition. When he goes to the Chair I do not think that he should be biased by any association which he may have had with us during these seventeen months. I feel that the experience has been for his good, but I do not think that he should allow himself to be influenced by the fact that he has been on friendly terms with us. I think that we want him to stand far above Party and I would advise him to carve a different path from that which has been marked out by his immediate predecessor. Consultation not only with the Premier but with the Leader of the Opposition is in order if the Speaker is to avoid the clashes and uncertainties which have fallen to the lot of his immediate predecessor.

There is one tradition especially with which I would like him to agree and it is a tradition the breach which makes me a very sad and embittered man to-

day. The immediate holder of the office of Speaker has ceased to be Speaker and members of this House only

knew of it by listening to it over Rediffusion Service and reading it in the newspaper. I think that that is the greatest insult which has ever been meted out to this House. We were not informed that the Chair would be vacant and it is a great breach of manners to hear outside of this House that we no longer have a Speaker. The point is an important one. While we were relieved, at the same time the Speaker of this Assembly was a member when we selected - by a majority vote, it is true, but we selected him nevertheless - and he was presented to the Governor of the colony before whom the privileges which belong to ordinary members of this House were asked for and obtained. If the Governor of the colony recognised our choice, then it is fitting for the object of our choice to let us know beforehand that he is no longer the Speaker of our choice. A great breach of manners has been committed, I repeat, and I find it difficult to forgive that breach of manners. If it falls to the lot of the Speaker to cease being Speaker, let him see that the House knows of it beforehand and that Parliamentary courtesy be observed on such occasions. There is no excuse for such a shocking breach of manners.

4.15 p.m.

In conclusion, I would like to say that we wish His Honour the Speaker - elect all the best for the future and that we have very much pleasure in sitting once more under his very able jurisdiction.

Mr. T. W. MILLER: Mr. Clerk, I observe that a rather unusual incident has taken place in this House today. Maybe you might be able to enlighten me on it. It is unusual because the Chaplain is present and at every meeting of this House we have always had the blessings of prayer from the Chaplain who asks for guidance in our deliberations. I do not think that it can be argued that this is not a meeting of the House, and that it is therefore not necessary to have prayers, because it is the House that elects the Speaker. Anyhow, be that as it may, I suppose at the conclusion we will have the prayers.

Mr. Clerk, as regards the hon. junior member for St. Peter who has today been elected or re-elected to the position of Speaker of this House, it is an acknowledged fact that the mills of the good God grind slowly, but they grind surely. Whatever may have been said two years ago relative to removing him from that exalted position - one which he held with as much dignity as any previous Speaker of this House - and for whatever reason, holy or otherwise, he might have been removed from that office, today whether it is done through some act of fate or by God - I would not say by the people of St. John, even though the voice of the people is the voice of God - he has been elected. What is right is right, and no Party is greater than an individual, because a Party is made up of a group of individuals, so that if there is any wrong that might or might not have been committed by any individual or by any group, when the time comes there can be no nobler act than to correct and make right that wrong. If we at some time or other do not do it by kneeling or by humbling in some form, we pray to Almighty God to take away our sins.

On the first day I entered this House I was morally expected by my Party, and rightly so, to vote for the person whom they nominated then, and, I repeat, I did that then from the point of view of party politics even though it was against my conscience. Party politics is not always understood by the general public, but whether or not you agree, you are obligated to vote. You have one or two alternatives, either to come to the House and vote, or be absent, because the Rules do not permit you to come to the House and abstain from voting. It matters not to me even though what I say here today might be misunderstood, but whatever my Party agrees on and I do not agree with, I will absent myself from the House. If for some other reason I feel to take the chance and be present in the House, I will do it. I voted then against the will, wish and desire of my conscience. Today I am

the happiest man to live and see that two years have not passed and the very individual, to whom many might feel a wrong was committed is being replaced in his rightful place; (*Cheers from the Opposition.*) and I am going to suggest to him as other members have done - some members have expressed the opinion that he should throw it back into the face of the Government rather than to accept it - that at times it is not necessary to allow false and silly pride to make you do what at times others might do. He must accept it with that full sense of responsibility, because I regard the Speaker of any Chamber in the capacity of a Judge, and I am one of those who would never like to see the Speaker take a side wrongly or against the other side of the House merely because of his allegiance to any Party.

There is very little more than I can add, but I hope that the Speaker will be long spared to carry out those duties which he has carried out in such an able way in this House during previous years.

Mr. DOWDING: Mr. Clerk, I did not intend to take part in this debate, but the trend of the debate makes it imperative to my conscience that I speak. Recriminations like these at a stage when we are unanimous are unwise, and the Speaker-elect, due to past circumstances, has within his hands an opportunity of showing to the world what we in this island can make of proper, dignified, able Parliamentary procedure. (VOICES: Hear, hear!) 4.25 p.m.

It is not going to be an easy job for him because all human beings are only human and they must err. The past will be bitter for him to swallow, but my advice to him is to swallow the past in the interest of Barbados. Recriminations at this time can only exaggerate our feelings and can only cause us in the future to act in a biased manner.

Sir, I have supported the Speaker-elect from the very beginning and I intend to support him from now on. But should he attempt to show any bias to one side or the other - either to the Government Party, the other parties, or private individuals, that would strike at the very fundamental rights of democracy, and I will have nothing to do with it.

Sir, I rise mainly on that point. The office of Speaker is far above party strife and I thank God for the circumstances that have brought the hon. junior member for St. Peter back to the Chair. Regardless of party strife, party indiscretions or whatever you call them - I call them circumstances - the hon. junior member for St. Peter is brought back as Speaker and it is up to him to prove not only to the public of this Island but the people of this world that he is capable of rising above our petty jealousies and party strife and is capable of holding on to what I call the backbone of democracy which is the Speakership of an elected Assembly. As you know, Sir, an Assembly working on Party lines is a most difficult thing to control and handle, and it can only be controlled by a Speaker who is fearless, dignified, impartial and capable of rising above party issues. I strongly advise the Speaker-elect to let bygones be bygones and to look to the future. The past cannot help us; it is gone. This island needs to be strong at this time. We know the Government's Party position in this island. The Speaker-elect can give this House of Assembly his strength by his impartiality and dignity. Let us sincerely hope that he will bring it back up the hill. I believe he will be able to do so. I have watched him go through the mill. He has been drowned, disappointed and insulted; but with all that, he has again been called upon to take the Chair, by the same people who tried to drown him. Let him now rise and fill that office with the dignity which circumstances have called him back to fill again.

Mr. TALMA: Mr. Clerk, I did not intend to make any speech on this occasion because I consider, on an issue such as this when we are unanimous that speeches need not come necessarily from all members of the Opposition: but I will say this without attempting to prolong this

debate or indulge in recriminations, that it should certainly come home to the Government Party that victimisation, especially victimisation based on bad grounds does not pay, because under the dictatorial rule assumed by the then Leader of the Government Party which caused the hon. junior member for St. Peter to be kicked out of the Chair, now today the Party under the now Premier finds itself in a position whereby the vote is precarious, the majority is doubtful; so that if they have to exist as a Government, and the Premier is to continue as Premier - at least for a little longer - then they have to call on the hon. junior member for St. Peter to act as Speaker again. Although we have had the present Premier in office for only one month, and although we have had a lot of elections and bye-elections and things of that sort, yet the public at large is not being satisfied with the work that is being done under the present set-up. The present set-up is such that salaries are only being paid out to Ministers, and promises are only being made, but nothing has been achieved; so, like that, under the new tenure of office of the present Speaker-elect, we hope that he will be able to continue to maintain the dignity of the Chair and to command the respect which the Chair calls for, and with the co-operation of all hon. members of all parties of this Chamber, we hope that he will be able to set about not only to raise the standard of debates of this hon. Chamber, but to maintain the traditions of the past and to see that work is being done not only to satisfy the petty desires of certain members, but to satisfy the needs of the --- people who sent us here.

Mr. Clerk, it is known that for the past seventeen months this present Government has only been idling. There has been a continuation of promises, but not even one new communal bath has been constructed by the present Labour Government. The Minister of Social Services - I do not mean the present one - has \$450,000 lying down idling, and it is time that he should have been able to set up some communal baths and latrines for which Resolutions and Addresses have been moved from time to time. It is time that we get public telephones in all the parishes, and it is time that I get a playing field in Christ Church which was anticipated long ago, and which we have not yet got. We hope under the new Speakership that the standard of debates will be raised, and more work will be done for the working classes of this country. I hope the Government, as is presently constituted, will not follow the old-time dictatorship, but will continue under more democratic lines, and will understand that that party is a democratic institution. I am hoping that the present Premier will be able to set all these wrong things right, even in the short time which he has at his disposal as Premier. (*Laughter.*) 4.35 p.m.

Mr. HUSBANDS: Sir, I must sincerely thank the hon. members who have proposed and seconded my nomination, and the hon. members on both sides who have not only given me a vote of confidence, but even ventured to give me advice. I must tell hon. members of this House that I have responded to this call in a spirit of humility and, as the hon. senior member for St. George has said, within my breast there are no recriminations.

I do not think that there is any other member of this Chamber who venerates the office of the Chair more than I do. I do not think that there is any other member of this Assembly who looks with more admiration and respect upon the traditions of this Chamber than I do. I pledge this day - incidentally, it is on the eve of my birthday - (VOICES: Hear! hear!), that I will try my best to live up to what is being expected of me, and I hope that if at any time I make any ruling or come to any decisions, whether in the House or in private, which do not meet with the approval of some hon. members, or which do not go down well with them, in case of any such errors on my part, I should like hon. members to believe that what has been done has been done with the best will. I am only a human being, as an hon. member has said, and being a human being, I am likely to make mistakes. However, I am always mindful of the veneration which I hold towards the Chair and I declare to hon. members of this Assembly that I shall do my best.

Lady and Gentlemen, I thank you. (*Cheers.*)

Mr. SPEAKER-ELECT was then conducted to the Chair by the Hon. Premier, the hon. junior member for Christ Church, and the Leader of the Opposition and robed.

Standing on the steps of the dias amidst cheers,

Mr. SPEAKER-ELECT: Lady and Gentlemen, I realise what a great honour you have this day conferred upon me. I shall maintain the dignity of this Chair and the rights and privileges of this ancient and most honourable Assembly; and I crave your support at all times.

Lady and gentlemen, I thank you (*Cheers*)

Mr. SPEAKER-ELECT then took the Chair.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Dr. H. G. CUMMINS: Mr. Speaker-Elect, I am commanded to inform this House that His Excellency the Governor will attend in the Other Place tomorrow afternoon at 3 o'clock to receive the Speaker-Elect. In

view of that taking place, I think I will move the adjournment of the House.

Inasmuch as His Excellency the Governor will be arriving in the Other Place at 3 o'clock, I think that this House should meet at 2.30 o'clock.

I therefore beg to move that this House do now adjourn until tomorrow at 2.30 o'clock p.m.

Hon. F. E. MILLER: I beg to second that.

The question that this House do now adjourn until tomorrow at 2.30 o'clock p.m., 28th May, 1958, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER-ELECT adjourned the House accordingly.

4.50 p.m.