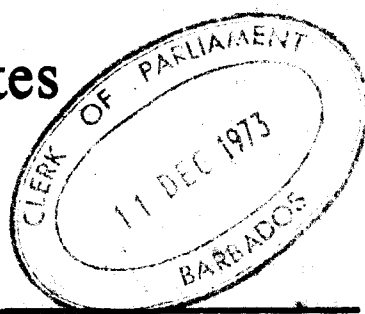


THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)



FIRST SESSION OF 1971 - 76

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 18th April, 1972

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 2.40 p.m. o'clock.

PRESENT

His Honour N. G. A. MAXWELL, LL.B., (Speaker); Hon. C. E. TALMA, (Leader of the House); Hon. G. G. FERGUSON, (Minister of Health and Welfare); Mr. R. St.C. WEEKES, J.P.; Mr. W. R. LOWE, J.P., (Chairman of Committees); Mr. L. S. CRAIG; Mr. J. B. SPRINGER; Mr. C. L. BOLDEN, LL.B.; Hon. F. G. SMITH, Q.C., S.C., B.A., (Minister of Communications and Works); Hon. P. G. MORGAN, C.B.E., (Minister of Tourism, Information and Public Relations); Dr. the Hon. R. B. CADDLE, (Minister of Home Affairs); Mr. A. MORRISON; Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD, B.A., M.A. (Econ.), (Minister of Education, Youth Affairs, Community Development and Sport) and Mr. E. E. GREAVES, B.A., Ed.M.

Prayers were read.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of the meetings of this Chamber for 14th December, 1971, 18th January, 1972, 29th February, 1972 and 7th March, 1972, are all before you for confirmation. There being no objections, these Minutes are confirmed.

Mr. MOTTLEY entered the Chamber and took his seat.

RESIGNATION OF MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND WORKS FROM THE STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

Hon C. E. TALMA: Mr. Speaker, before the business of the House is proceeded with, I have

received a copy of a letter which is addressed to Your Honour from the Hon. Minister of Communications and Works in connection with his resignation as a member of the Standing Orders Committee. In view of that, it may be appropriate at this time, provided of course the hon. member's resignation has been accepted, to nominate someone, subject to your ruling, in place of the Hon. Minister of Communications and Works who has intimated his desire to discontinue on that Committee. If I am in order therefore, Sir, I will proceed to nominate the Hon. Minister of Health and Social Welfare, the hon. member for St. Michael South West, to serve on the Standing Orders Committee in place of the Hon. Minister of Communications and Works, who has resigned. I beg to move that that hon. member be nominated to serve on that Committee.

Dr. The Hon. R. B. CADDLE: I beg to second that.

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

APPOINTMENT OF A COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES OF THE HOUSE

Hon. C. E. TALMA: Again, Sir, bearing in mind, the recent matter which was discussed with reference to a breach of privilege of the House, and bearing in mind that it may be appropriate that a Committee of the House should be appointed to deal with such matters, in that it would lead to better understanding and facilitate the better working of the House, and assist Your Honour in coming to certain conclusions. I have consulted with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, in the absence of the Leader of the Opposition who is not here yet, and subject to your ruling, I beg to move that the Hon. Minister of Housing, Lands, Labour and National Insurance, the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs and myself from the Government side, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member

for Christ Church West, together with yourself, be the members of the Privileges Committee. The nominations which I have made in respect of the Opposition members have been approved by the Opposition, so it may be appropriate for the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to second this nomination.

Mr. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, in seconding a nomination of this nature, I would still like a little clarification from the Leader of the House. In his remarks he said this Committee would assist you, Mr. Speaker, in arriving at certain decisions to be made. I do not know if the decisions which you are to arrive at are in any way connected with the breach of privilege which is now engaging the attention of this Honourable House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Not at all.

Hon. C. E. TALMA: On a point of explanation, I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, I meant that in so far as breaches of privileges are concerned, the Committee will consider, investigate and report to the Hon. the House of Assembly from time to time on all matters arising which involve the privilege of the House but not to deal with any matter which is now engaging the attention of His Honour the Speaker, but that his work will be made easier and he will be able to come to conclusions as a result of our revision of any rules, regulations or laws in connection with breaches of privileges of the House.

Mr. CRAIG: I support the motion made by the Leader of the House, and of course I shall anxiously await the calling before the Bar of the House, the persons concerned whom I am told you had summoned to come before the Bar of the House today. Before the business of the House is proceeded with, I would like to see that done. I second the motion.

The question that the Hon. Minister of Housing, Lands, Labour and National Insurance, the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs, the Hon. Leader of the House, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Christ Church West, together with Mr. Speaker as Chairman, be the members of the Privileges Committee of the House was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.
2.50 p.m.

STATEMENT BY MR. SPEAKER re EDITORS
OF THE ADVOCATE & C.B.C.

Mr. SPEAKER: On the matter of a breach of privilege, I should like to make a statement to

this Honourable Chamber. There are a series of events in the motion summoning the Editor of the *Advocate-News* and the News Editor of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation to this Chamber. The motion was not formally put to the House at its last meeting when I gave my ruling. In view of this, I have decided to take the alternative step of reporting the breach of privileges of this Chamber to the Director of Public Prosecutions under Section 39(1)(a) Parliament (Privileges, Immunities and Powers) Act, 1963-6 as amended. On the granting of a certificate by the Director of Public Prosecutions, I shall inform hon. members so that the appropriate motion may be introduced authorising the matter to be brought before the Law Courts.

Mr. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, do not for one moment take it that I am challenging, questioning, or even attempting to say that I hope Your Honour is not side-stepping your duty. Please take what I say in the light in which I am speaking on this matter. I cannot understand....

Mr. SPEAKER: I have made a ruling, and that is the end of the matter. You are out of order.

Mr. CRAIG: I shall speak on this matter on the adjournment, anyhow, and I give notice of that at this stage.

Mr. SPEAKER: You are not giving any notice of a matter now to speak on the adjournment at this stage. If you want to speak on the adjournment on a matter, you must give notice in writing.

Mr. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I used that term about giving notice as a friendly gesture, but, on the adjournment, I am going to speak on that matter. I do not have to give this Honourable House any notice about what I shall speak on on the adjournment. I accept Your Honour's ruling, and I shall now take my seat.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you.

PAPERS LAID

Hon. C. E. TALMA: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Hon. Minister of Housing, Lands, Labour and National Insurance, I am commanded to lay The Factories (Amendment) Regulations, 1972.

On behalf of the Prime Minister, I am commanded to lay The Civil Establishment (Teachers) (Amendment) Order, 1972.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

(1) The Statement of Money Order Transactions through the Crown Agents for overseas Government and Administrations for the period August to December 1971.

(2) The Statement showing sums advanced to the Postmaster General for payment of Money Orders for the period August to December, 1971.

(3) The Report on Comprehensive Proposals for the Development and Distribution of Public Water Supplies of Barbados, Volumes I and II.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. C. E. TALMA: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Housing, Lands, Labour and National Insurance, I beg to give notice of the following:

(1) A Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of land situated at Baywoods, St. James, for provision of a site for construction of a Communal Bath and Latrine.

(2) A Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of land situated near the St. Thomas Infirmary to facilitate extension of the Infirmary.

On behalf of the Prime Minister, I beg to give notice of a Resolution to approve the Civil Establishment (Teachers) (Amendment) Order, 1972.

On behalf of the Minister of Housing, Lands, Labour and National Insurance, I beg to give notice of a Bill to amend the Sugar Factory Workers Severance Payments Act, 1965.

BILL READ A FIRST TIME

Hon. C. E. TALMA: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill to amend the Sugar Factory Workers Severance Payments Act, 1965, be now read a first time.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON: I beg to second that.

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

ORAL REPLIES

Hon. P. G. MORGAN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that Oral Reply to Parliamentary

Question No. 13 asked by the hon. member for St. Thomas is ready.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that Oral Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 18 asked by the hon. member for St. Lucy is ready.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. C. E. TALMA: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Standing Orders Nos. 5, 14, 16, 18, 19, 40 and 45 be suspended for the remainder of today's sitting, subject to any matter of urgency which the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues may think fit to pursue for which allotted time will be given at any stage.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON: I beg to second that.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. C. E. TALMA: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Government Business be now taken.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON: I beg to second that.

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

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, speaking on the motion, I heard that certain replies to certain questions were ready. Is the Government not bothering to give them today? I would have thought the Leader of the House would have moved that Question Time be now taken.

Hon. C. E. TALMA: The questions will be dealt with in any case, but if the hon. member wishes to proceed with them first, that is all right. If the hon. member is anxious to take Question Time, built as I am and willing to concede to any reasonable request made, we can proceed with Question Time at this stage. I am therefore asking leave to withdraw my original motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: If there is no objection, leave will be granted.

There being no objection leave is granted.

QUESTION TIME

Hon. C. E. TALMA: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Question Time be now taken.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON: I beg to second that.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Question No. 13 stands in the name of the hon. member for St. Thomas.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, the question reads as follows:-

Is the Minister aware that of the persons he has recently appointed to serve on the Tourist Board only half are residents in or adjacent to his own constituency, and will he take steps to remedy this at once, so that he may rename the Board the Christ Church Central Tourist Board?

Hon. P. G. MORGAN: Mr. Speaker, the reply is as follows:-

"The members of the Tourist Board are not selected on the basis of a residence qualification, but are chosen from among persons involved in the Tourist Industry or other enterprises who are capable of making a contribution to the development of tourism in Barbados."

Mr. CRAIG: As a supplementary, I wonder if the Hon. Minister would be able to say if in making his selections to the Tourist Board he looked into St. James, St. Peter and St. Philip which are also hotel areas, or did he only consider the hotels in Christ Church?

Hon. P. G. MORGAN: Mr. Speaker, I believe the reply to that supplementary is already answered in the reply to the question. They are not selected on the basis of a residential qualification.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, would the Minister care to say what particular qualification for a contribution to the tourist industry is possessed by Mr. Carlton Brathwaite?

Hon. P. G. MORGAN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make it clear now that I am not prepared to discuss the qualifications of any member of that Statutory Board on the floor of this House. It has happened far too often within my knowledge that persons who have contributions to make to the welfare of this Island and who have the knowledge, experience and willingness to serve, have been deterred from doing so by other people having been reviled when they have given public service on the floor of this House by the Opposition. It is not my intention to discuss individual qualifications at this time.

Mr. ADAMS: Another supplementary. Does the Minister mean that if he had to discuss the qualifications of the members of the Tourist Board that he would necessarily have to revile them? I have asked the Minister for the qualifications and he says he is not going to say them because nobody should be reviled in here. Does he mean he would only discuss Mr. Brathwaite's qualifications in terms of reviling him?

Mr. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, would the Minister be able to tell this House how he arrives at the qualifications of someone to serve on the Tourist Board?

Mr. SPEAKER: Not a proper supplementary. The hon. member has already stated that they are appointed on the basis of their qualifications.

Mr. CRAIG: And therefore I am trying to find out...

Mr. SPEAKER: Not a proper supplementary.

Mr. CRAIG: Would the Minister say how he arrives at the qualifications of someone to serve on the Tourist Board of this Island?

Mr. SPEAKER: Not a proper supplementary.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, since the Minister has stated that he does not take residence into account in appointing members to the Tourist Board, can he state what he does take into account?

Hon. P. G. MORGAN: Mr. Speaker, I believe the answer is already given that they are chosen from among persons involved in the Tourist Industry or other enterprises, who are capable of making a contribution to the development of tourism in Barbados. We have tried to give a serious answer to a question which I am reluctant to consider as simply tomfoolery.

Mr. ADAMS: Will the Minister state in what enterprises Mr. Carlton Brathwaite is engaged in the Tourist Industry?

Mr. SPEAKER: Not a proper supplementary.

Mr. ADAMS: I will amend that, Mr. Carlton Brathwaite, a member of the Tourist Board appointed recently by him, is engaged in the Tourist Industry. This is supplementary to his comment that persons who are engaged in the

Tourist Industry or other enterprises with qualifications, and I am asking what enterprise Mr. Brathwaite is engaged in.

Mr. SPEAKER: Not a proper supplementary.

Parliamentary Question No. 18 stands in the name of the hon. member for St. Lucy.

Mr. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, the question reads as follows:-

1. Is the Minister aware that at the present people living in the rural areas of Barbados experience some difficulty in getting into Bridgetown to pay their water rates?

2. Is the Minister aware that moving the headquarters of the Water Works Department to the Pine will accentuate this difficulty?

3. Will the Minister consider alleviating this difficulty by making it possible for water rates to be paid at post offices throughout the island?

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, the reply is as follows:-

"1. Yes, Sir.

2. No, Sir.

3. A Bill to enable the payment of water rates at places other than the headquarters of the Waterworks Department has been introduced into Parliament. When this Bill is passed into law water rates will be payable to the Collector of Rates and Taxes at the Oistins and Folkestone Centres in addition to Waterworks Offices at the Pine and in Bridgetown. The cramped conditions at the Post Offices make it impossible for the collection of rates there at present but this will be borne in mind when new Post Offices are being built."

Mr. ADAMS: As a supplementary, will the Minister say on what day he invited the hon. member for St. Lucy to put this question?

Mr. SPEAKER: Not a proper supplementary.

Mr. ADAMS: A supplementary, is the Minister aware that a question or very similar form was asked by Mr. Lloyd Ethelbert Smith since the year 1968 when he was a member of the Opposition?

Mr. SPEAKER: Hardly a supplementary.

Mr. ADAMS: To ask if the same question has been asked?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. Not a proper supplementary.

Hon. C. E. TALMA: On a point of order, this is the first time this question has been asked in this session; so the hon. member is in order.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is not a proper supplementary.

Question Time is now closed.
3.10 p.m.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. C. E. TALMA: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Government Business be now taken.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON: I beg to second that.

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

Hon. C. E. TALMA: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Item 1 standing in the name of the Hon. Minister of Health and Welfare be the first Order of the Day. It is to move the second reading of a Bill to amend the Health Services Act, 1969.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON: I beg to second that.

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

THE HEALTH SERVICES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1972

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON: Mr. Speaker, this is quite a simple amendment. It has been discovered since this Bill was passed that certain amendments will be required to facilitate the working of the Act. The amendments are clearly set out here, Mr. Speaker, under the Objects and Reasons and they are as follows:

- (a) to empower the Minister to make regulations providing for the notification of the births of children and the form and manner of such notifications and to annex to the contravention of or failure to comply with any regulation made under section 10 of that Act a punishment in excess of that permitted by section 19(10) of

the Interpretation Act, 1966 (Act 1966-10) as amended by Act 1970-32;

- (b) to provide that the carrying out of works by or on behalf of the Minister under section 11 of that Act should be permissive rather than obligatory; and
- (c) to provide that a notice relating to works to be executed under section 11 of that Act should indicate the nature of the works rather than specify them.

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

Hon. C. E. TALMA: I beg to second that.

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

On the motion of Hon. C. E. TALMA, seconded by Hon. G. G. FERGUSON, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. LOWE in the Chair.

The Clauses of the Bill were read and passed.

On the motion of Hon. G. G. FERGUSON, seconded by Hon. C. E. TALMA, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee. Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. C. E. TALMA, seconded by Hon. G. G. FERGUSON, the Bill was read a third time and passed. Its title was read and agreed to.

Hon. C. E. TALMA: The next Item is Item No. 2 which stands in the name of the Hon. Minister of Communications and Works, a Bill to amend the Waterworks Act, 1895. I beg to move that this be the next Order of the Day.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: I beg to second that.

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

THE WATERWORKS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1972

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, prior to my assuming responsibility as Minister of Communications and Works, my predecessors in office, especially the Hon. Neville Boxill as he then was, were fully aware of the congestion and inconvenience which was being caused to persons

who had to pay their water rates at the Waterworks Office on Coleridge Street, and in May 1969 he initiated, through his officers, various investigations with a view to relieving the hardships and congestion and this inconvenience. Since that time, a great deal of water has flown under the bridge, discussions have been held with the banks with a view to having water rates paid at commercial banks in Bridgetown, but after discussions with the banks and taking into consideration the rates which they were charging, Government felt that in view of the smallness of some of the rates, the expenditure which the banks were charging for the payment of these rates did not justify using that method of payment, because the Waterworks Act itself insists that the water rates should be paid at the headquarters of the Waterworks Department. We are fully conscious of the inconveniences and in order to alleviate these inconveniences and the hardships we initiated discussions with the Postmaster General with a view to the payment of water rates at the Post Offices. After inspecting the Post Offices and going into great detail, we discovered that the Post Offices were inadequate for the payment of these rates situated as they are. Consequently, what we have endeavoured to do in this Bill is to allow the water rates to be paid mainly in the first place at Folkestone and Oistin's, where the operations will be mechanised, and the Ministry will keep under constant review, the question of paying these rates at other places.

In some countries, water rates are paid in supermarkets, but I do not think we have reached that stage yet. I shall see to it that all new Post Offices are built in such a manner that not only water rates but other Government dues and licences can be paid at these new institutions. Like the roads in Barbados, very few things were built with a long term view, and consequently congestion easily takes over and makes obsolete what looked quite up to date a few years ago. We will see to it that the new Post Offices which are being built are built in such a way as to accommodate this type of payment, and the Ministry has not completely given up the idea of seeing if the banks would lower the charges which they are at present putting to us, we will even see if there is a possibility of paying rates at the Police Stations, but all these are matters which will be discussed.

3.20 p.m.

We are conscious of the inconvenience, and, it is my intention to see as far as is humanly possible that as little inconvenience as possible, is caused to the water-rate payers of this country. Accordingly, I beg to suggest to this Honourable

House that this is a step in the right direction. The matter does not rest here, but it will be pursued constantly with a view to alleviating the position.

Even although the Waterworks Department has been moved to the Pine, you can pay your water rates at the Pine and we are still maintaining an office in Coleridge Street where water rates can still be paid. We are also toying with the idea of seeing whether it will be possible, when the new adjustments are made to this whole Parliamentary enclave, if we can get some cubicles again when and if the Post Office and the Savings Bank move out. I think the Ministry responsible for accommodation is agreeable to having paying booths in this compound. Everything is being done, Mr. Speaker, to make it possible for the people to pay their rates. I know the inconvenience that is being caused especially to the country rate payers, and my Ministry will see to it that everything is done to make things as easy as possible.

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

Hon. P. G. MORGAN: I beg to second that.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, some years ago, after the late Lord Attlee's autobiography was published, and Lord Attlee described how, being one of the last in the British Army to leave the beaches of Gallipoli, with the Turks running across the beaches towards him - his only comment on it was that it was very interesting. There was a competition in the *New Statesman* calling for entries as to how Mr. Winston Churchill in his autobiography would have described the erection of a new waterworks in Stepney, and this came to mind as the hon. member moved the introduction of this Bill, because his prose and his speech was very nearly Churchillian when dealing with the problems of the payment of the water rates in Barbados.

For several years now, members of the Opposition have been calling for decentralisation of the payment of water rates. We are all thoroughly familiar with the problem, even if the Hon. Minister was not until a few weeks or, perhaps, months ago. We cannot take particular credit for it, because any man of common sense will see that in this day and age, when there are many more water rate payers than formerly the payment of water rates is going to be a more difficult matter if concentrated at one centre in Coleridge Street.

In this context, I would congratulate the hon. member for St. Lucy for coming to the late problem but yet arriving, with whatever assistance we do not know, at the same solution as other hon. members have been canvassing for some time. But it does not, in my respectful submission, call for any great ado. We have all been saying that the water rates should be paid at the Post Offices or somewhere else to facilitate people and, after three years and, perhaps, a bit more, the Government has got around to it in a full-length speech by the Minister of Communications and Works. What I should like the Minister of Communications and Works to devote his oratory to, is collecting the waterworks arrears, and getting the waterworks accounts which, I believe, have not been fully audited or passed by the Auditor General since 1967. He must look after getting the Waterworks accounts brought up to date. He should make sure that his Permanent Secretary in addition to speaking to the Postmaster General about the decentralisation of payment, also sees to it that the departmental accountants can manage to balance the books and not have the constant criticisms by the Auditor General in his Annual Reports on the Department over which the hon. member for St. Michael South Central now presides has so liberally, merited, earned and received in the last few Auditor General's Reports.

Let the Minister instead of spending ten or fifteen minutes outlining the obvious in a dozen phrases where one would have done, apply a little penetration and depth to the true problems of the Waterworks Department's Accounts, if he wants to earn the approbation of hon. members of this House, not only on this side, but on both sides. There are as many people on his own side amused by the grandiosity of his speech a few months ago as there are on this side. Mr. Speaker, we do not only support this Bill, but we welcome it. Since it was our initiative initially, it is only our regret that one of us is not the person whom the people saw fit to allow to introduce it.

Mr. CRAIG: Sir,... (Mr. WALCOTT: "What are you going to say?")

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Please do not interrupt. Will the hon. member kindly continue.

Mr. CRAIG: We have to put you in Glendairy...

Mr. SPEAKER: Ignore asides, please.

Mr. CRAIG: Sir, I should like to ask the Minister, while he is replying, whether he can

make a statement to the House in connection with water meters which the Government had promised to introduce.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member for St. James that the question he has posed has no relevance to the Bill before the House, and I have no intention of answering it. I have no intention of volunteering any information. Again, this is another case of where the hon. Leader of the Opposition cannot even get up without making sarcastic remarks. I am always accused of lowering the tone of this House, but he can never get up and pay tribute or acknowledge something when it is said. He is not more conscious than I am of the need to collect the water rates. The water rates have not now suddenly become in arrears since I have assumed the Ministry...

Mr. WALCOTT: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Other members want to speak. (*Asides.*) As soon as the Minister replies, Mr. Speaker will say that the debate is over.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister has not replied, I take it.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Judging from what the hon. member for St. Michael West was telling the hon. member for St. James to sit down and not speak, I assumed that no other member wanted to speak.

Mr. E. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I do not think that I could allow this Bill to go through without making a couple of comments on it. I think that the first comment which I should like to make is one of congratulation to the Hon. Minister of Communications and Works for having acted so swiftly in this matter to ensure that some measure of decentralisation in the payment of waterworks rates has taken place.

Now I note he has indicated that the matter is under constant review, and that further steps at decentralisation will be taken. I sincerely hope that this will be done in the not too distant future, because the two places which he mentioned where provision has been made for the payment of water rates to be paid, even although this is a concession, I do not think that this has gone the full distance. I can assure you that a certain measure of inconvenience will still be experienced by the people who live in the rural areas.

3.30 p.m.

For example, for a person having to pay water rates to travel as far as Folkestone, in St.

James, imposes a certain amount of difficulty and inconvenience having to travel this distance. If one were to take into consideration the bus fares which one would have to pay travelling from the farthest point in St. Lucy to Folkestone, one will find that it would come to probably half of what one would have to pay as a quarterly rate for water. I hope that the decentralisation would move even further north and further south which I am sure you would appreciate, Mr. Speaker, particularly on behalf of your constituents. I do not have to reply to any back-hand statement that any hon. member might make, like the statement which the Hon. Leader of the Opposition made when he indicated that he does not know what kind of assistance I have been given in this matter. Suffice it to say that I would like to say how glad I am that the Minister has acted on this matter as expeditiously as he has done.

Mr. WALCOTT: Mr. Speaker, I said earlier in a *sotto voce* remark that the Hon. Leader of the Opposition had spoken, and where there is unity and Party discipline it would not be necessary for the Deputy to speak also on a non-controversial matter. I saw that I was wrong and that there is not that discipline existing.

I rise because I want to speak and I hope the Minister of Communications and Works will take what I say in good faith, that is, he must not allow the Leader of the Opposition to be regarded as the only person to speak, because it looks to me that when he has spoken the Minister feels he should reply promptly.

Now I do not share all of the views of even my colleague about this glorious decentralisation. The older I get, it seems the bigger Barbados is becoming. I understand that members who represent rural constituencies would feel that everything must be located in those areas, but Barbados is still 166 square miles, and it is smaller than it was because better communication exists today than in 1895 when this Waterworks Act was first passed. One of the reasons for agreeing with this Bill was that in 1895 the pipes did not run any further than the parish of St. Michael; so nobody had pipes in St. Lucy or St. Andrew. You had a well and a windmill and you did not pay rates for these things; so it is understandable that people are paying rates today.

In 1895 there was a rate which was paid quarterly. My view is that the amount of money that is collected from the various people as water rates can be added on in some instances, and you can get people to advise you. Since you do not

pay the Collector of Taxes every week or every month, but yearly, there is a method which you can have. The time has come when there should be a complete review of the system of collecting money that is part of your total system. Now water rates are part of the Central Government system, and there should be a method in which your water rates are included so that when you pay your taxes you pay your water rates and the whole matter is settled. Do you know the amount of unnecessary bookkeeping that is involved? Do you know the amount of money that is stolen, embezzled or not being accounted for because you are carrying on this poke in the whole business of collecting five shilling quarterly? People are not paying and when they pay they are not sure. You have a jungle at which these water rates are being paid and you cannot pay these things in a jungle. The Electric Company has expanded and the Banks are collecting their rates. There are no District Post Offices where you pay electric rates. You have to discipline a nation. You get this bogus talk that people cannot find time to pay their bills, somewhere is too far to go and so on. Where in Barbados is too far to do anything?

Mr. ADAMS: On a point of order, has the hon. member so long left St. Peter that he has forgotten that there are Banks in Speightstown where people pay their bills?

Mr. WALCOTT: How could that be a point of order? That is a point of foolishness. I said that people are paying their electric rates at Banks. There is no Bank in St. Andrew. Wherever there are Banks you are allowed to pay your electric rates, and it does not mean that where a Bank does not exist that people who have electricity do not pay their rates. I am not opposed to the idea of putting paying stations in every district, but all I am talking about is that the multiplication of Civil Service bureaucracy is going to cost you a lot of money, and in the end it costs you \$5 to collect five shillings or ten shillings a quarter as water rates. You could as well make up your mind to investigate the system and put it into your collection of rates. People have to pay their Income Tax once a year and it may become a convenient way of collecting the money from people, and it would serve both purposes.

Mr. Speaker, all I am saying is that the time has come when you can look at this in the light of a small community from which you want to collect money for a service that people are using. Do not wait until Sir Arthur Lewis or somebody comes from outside to tell you something that Frank Walcott has said. Do you mean I must go

away and come back to tell you that this is a simplicity, that there can be a system for collecting water rates, gas rates, land taxes and so on? You have one Collector of Taxes and the time will come when you can include this in your Income Tax. You must have a revision. It does not matter how the water rates work out, they can be added somewhere. Whatever you have to pay you can pay to the Collector of Taxes once a year and you would save a lot of bogus administrative expense, because there is one thing to be said for Barbados, and it is that the water rates are cheaper; they are cheaper than the electric rates. (*Asides.*) The hon. member for St. James who made a *sotto voce* remark would not understand these things. He is still peddling with these little cheap ideas,

3.40 p.m.

this is five years and he has not grown, he is still at nought.

Mr. SPEAKER: Will you stick to the subject please?

Mr. WALCOTT: I think the hon. member's voice was loud enough to reach me, although they say that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points, but it seems sometimes my voice can be heard, but I believe mine drowned his, but I like the partiality in the House. One of these days I am going to speak very vigorously on this. Members of the Opposition make a lot of noise and I want to hear them being called upon to let me speak in silence in here, the same way it is done on this side. We want equality of rights. When I have something to contribute I do so.

I am conceited enough to say that this is a brilliant idea, if I may say so, that these rates should be incorporated in your total taxation to save the country money. We cannot afford to waste money, we cannot afford to waste water and we cannot afford to waste human potential on non-essential petty jobs. Taking pupils from the schools and asking them to write up a lot of receipts and all that foolishness wastes a lot of time, because you want somebody with five 'O' Levels to write a receipt for five shillings. It is a waste of manpower which could be greater utilised for the improvement of this country.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about the arrears of water rates, I am very worried about it, and I made an appeal when I opened the Providence Reservoir to all people that they must pay their rates. We have now mechanised the system, we have more comfortable quarters at the Pine and I hope we

will be able to collect more arrears. This is of concern to me because I know the Government needs money for social and other benefits, and I hope that with the mechanisation of the system more arrears will be collected in due course. I am worried, and I can assure the Hon. Leader of the Opposition that I am not an Accountant, but I have drawn it to the attention of the Chief Engineer, Waterworks Department that I am most dissatisfied with the amount of arrears and the complaints that people are making about not receiving bills or of paying bills twice because there is no record of their paying their bills. To me it is a source of annoyance because people ring me about this same matter, and I think he is trying to do his best. I can promise the public amelioration in those conditions probably within another six to nine months, not before. There will always be mistakes, people will get bills when they have already paid, people will not get bills, I cannot promise that it will not continue for a period of time until we are in a position to get the new accounting system operating quite well.

I share the view of the hon. member for St. Michael West that people cannot work in cramped conditions, but the Government Departments have grown so fast within recent times that 90% of the Civil Servants and Ministers work under conditions in which efficiency and production must be at a low ebb. To mention a few, the Customs, Waterworks, the Ministry of External Affairs, the Attorney General's Chambers, in all these offices you will find officers on top of each other which must in the long run affect efficiency, and the Waterworks Department is no exception, the collection of rates has suffered, but I shall promise the House, Mr. Speaker, that there will be some improvement as long as I hold the portfolio for that Ministry.

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

On the motion of Hon. C. E. TALMA, seconded by Dr. the Hon. R. B. CADDLE, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill. Mr. LOWE took the Chair.

The Clauses of the Bill were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. F. G. SMITH, seconded by Dr. the Hon. R. B. CADDLE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee. Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. C. E. TALMA, seconded by Hon. G. G. FERGUSON, the Bill was read a third time and passed. Its title was read and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. C. E. TALMA: This concludes Government Business for today's sitting. I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday next, 25th April, 1972, at 2.30 p.m.

Hon. G. G. FERGUSON: I beg to second that.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, before the House proceeds on the adjournment, on behalf of the Opposition I would like to offer the condolences of the members on this side to the Marshal of this House whom I understand has recently lost his mother, and I would like to add a personal note to it, because I was not made aware until it was too late for me to make arrangements to attend the internment. The Marshal has been in this House of Assembly for over 20 years I believe, and I am sure that all hon. members would wish to join me in expressing our sorrow for him at this present time..

Hon. C. E. TALMA: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to join with the sentiments expressed by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition. I am afraid this matter was not drawn to my attention officially although I did hear it, and I apologise for not having made the necessary motion at the outset of today's sitting. I would suggest that in future a matter like this should be drawn to my attention in order to deal with it in a manner in which it should be dealt with. The Marshal has served in this Chamber for many long years and has given very efficient service and is a very loyal and proper person. I can well understand the loss which he has sustained, because when you lose your mother it is an entirely different thing from the loss of any other member of the family.
3.50 p.m.

I think that I have expressed the wish of members on this side of the House, when I say that we wish to join with the Leader of the Opposition in tendering our sincere condolence at this grave loss which the Marshal has sustained.

Mr. ADAMS: On a point of privilege, Sir. I was not present in the House at an earlier stage...

Mr. SPEAKER: Before you speak on a matter of privilege, I should just like to say that this is not a matter of putting the cart before the horse. The Clerk of Parliament had a wreath sent

to the funeral of the Marshal's mother from all members of Parliament and from the staff of Parliament. The Clerk of Parliament and the Administrative Officer attended the funeral also, so Parliament was represented.

The Marshal has just asked me to thank all hon. members for the sentiments expressed.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, on a point of privilege, as it touches the privileges of the House. I was not present when Your Honour made a statement about the non-appearance of the Editors. Can we take it, Sir, that the Editors are not going to be summoned to the House again?

Mr. SPEAKER: If, in fact, you were not present when I made a statement touching the privileges of this House, it does not necessarily mean that I should repeat what I have said.

Mr. ADAMS: I am not asking for a repetition. I am just asking to be assured that the action which Your Honour then outlined is the only action which is contemplated.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think you are out of order to ask for such an assurance.

Mr. ADAMS: Very good, Sir. There are many people who think you were wrong to have summoned them at all. That is all I am saying.

Mr. SPEAKER: Are you questioning my ruling?

Mr. ADAMS: There are certain rulings of His Honour the Speaker which can never be questioned, but there are one or two which can be questioned in the Courts. When they can be

questioned in the Courts, they can be questioned by anybody, and it is open to me, I would respectfully submit, to say that since we have purported to summon two Editors to the House and they have not appeared, then it is open to me to ask what is going to be done about it.

Mr. SPEAKER: I repeat that you were not here at the beginning, and it is therefore highly out of order for me to be asked to repeat what I have said. I do not have to give any explanation about what I have said. It is highly irregular for me to go over the proceedings, or some aspect of the proceedings, for the benefit of a late comer. This is highly improper.

Mr. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I am not asking for any proceedings...

Mr. SPEAKER: The matter is closed.

Hon. C. E. TALMA: Mr. Speaker, before closing the matter, I wish to state that the hon. member is under a misapprehension. As far as I know, no Editors...

Mr. SPEAKER: The matter is closed.

Mr. CRAIG: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You said just now that the matter is closed. I think it is closed to all members on both sides.

ADJOURNMENT

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, 25th April, 1972, at 2.30 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.
3.55 p.m.