

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION OF 1976 – 81

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 12th July, 1977.

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 12.10 p.m. o'clock.

PRESENT

His Honour W. C. B. HINDS, J.P., (Speaker); Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW, B.Sc., LL.D.; Mr. R. StC. WEEKES, J.P.; Hon. L. S. CRAIG, (Minister of Labour and Community Services); Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS, M.A., (Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Planning); Hon. C. L. BOLDEN, LL.B., (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs); Hon. F. G. SMITH, Q.C., S.C., B.A., (Leader of the Opposition); Dr. R. B. CADDLE; Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD, M.A.; Mr. E. E. GREAVES, B.A., Ed.M; Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS, LL.M.; Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, (Minister of Health and National Insurance); Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, (Minister of Communications and Works); Mr. J. G. ODLE, B.Sc., (Chairman of Committees); Mr. M. C. C. WARD; Hon. H. B. ST. JOHN, Q.C., LL.B., (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Caribbean Affairs, External Trade, Industry and Tourism and Leader of the House); Mr. V. L. JOHNSON, M.A.; Mr. B. M. TAITT, M.A.; Hon. L. R. TULL, M.A., (Minister of Education and Culture); Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW; Mr. L. L. SISNETT; Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, M.Sc. and His Honour E. E. ALLEYNE, LL.M., (Deputy Speaker).

Prayers were read.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE entered the Chamber and took his seat.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I understand that we have technical problems

today and that efforts are being made to resolve them. As a result of that, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended until 1 p.m. The Government Electrical Engineer is trying to solve the problems, otherwise we will have to carry on without the use of the amplifier.

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly.

On resumption –

His Hon. E. E. ALLEYNE, Hon. F. G. SMITH, Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD and Mr. E. E. GREAVES entered the Chamber and took their seats.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, with your permission and with the concurrence of the Leader of the Opposition, in view of the fact that the technical fault will take some time to be corrected, I would propose that we lay the documents dealing with the First Readings of Bills and so on and then adjourn. The equipment is not functioning. I understand that there is a certain procedure to be carried out. The equipment should be tested the day before there is a meeting of the House to ensure that it is functioning properly, but, unfortunately, on this occasion that necessary precaution did not take place. We will adjourn until Tuesday next week. *(Asides.)*

Mr. Speaker, the Central Bank Act is very important. We will lay the documents so that we can have them circulated to hon. members.

PAPERS LAID

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Finance and Planning, I beg to lay a Statement showing Net Customs and

Excise Receipts for one month ended 30th April, 1977.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Finance and Planning, I beg to give notice of a Resolution to approve amendments to the notes relating to certain votes in the Estimates 1977-78.

Also on behalf of the Minister of Finance and Planning I beg to give notice of a Resolution to grant the sum of \$918,750 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1977-78, Part I - Current, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1977-78, No. 5, which form the First Schedule to the Resolution, for payment of a Duty Allowance to members of the Royal Barbados Police Force and the Fire Service.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of a Bill to amend the Electric Light and Power Act.

I also beg to give notice of a Bill to amend the Central Bank of Barbados Act.

BILLS READ A FIRST TIME

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill to amend the Electric Light and Power Act be read a first time.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I beg to second that.

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

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill to amend the Central Bank of Barbados Act be read a first time.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I beg to second that.

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

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, as I have said earlier, it is impossible for us to carry on.

Hon. F. G. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I thought at one time that the Clerk was following the Order of Business. My colleague, the member for St. Michael South, wanted to ask some questions and he is entitled to do so. We have skipped from (g) Government Notices to (k) First readings of

Bills, and I think it would be good for the Government at this meeting to give the hon. member an opportunity to ask his questions.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have been discussing the questions with the Clerk, and time is still on the side of the hon. member in respect of the asking of the questions. The questions can stand over for the time being.
1.05 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, apparently it is a major fault and I do not think it would serve any useful purpose to adjourn for another hour.

In view of the situation, I beg to move that this sitting do now adjourn until Tuesday, 19th July, 1977 at 12 o'clock noon.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I beg to second that.

Mr. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, speaking on the adjournment, I would merely like to say that in the interest of conducting the business of this House of Assembly the fact that our equipment is out of order should not really hold up the business of Government and the business of the House to this extent. It is my view that if there is a failing in the electronic equipment, this country is equipped with enough electronic ingenuity or engineering ingenuity to organise some type of standby arrangements so that the business of the Government and the business of the House could be conducted, and I do hope that if this particular happening occurs again that the Government would be imaginative enough to use some of the equipment which they may have or which may be acceptable in order to carry on the business of Government.

I merely put forward that position. It is no problem with me because as far as I am concerned I can carry on from the Opposition benches on this matter. I do not have any problem of being heard, and I believe that we can continue because there was a time when electronic equipment was not available in the Assembly, but I do put forward this constructive point that any future occasion that there is a failing in the electronic equipment, some type of standby arrangement could be considered if feasible so that the business of this country can be carried on.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I take the suggestion made by the hon. member. It is obvious that it is a source of embarrassment to

all of us, because had the procedures which have been laid down been carried out, we would not be in this position today, and on behalf of the House as a whole I will certainly be writing to you, Sir, and to the relevant Government Department to let them know in no uncertain terms that we feel it is an unsatisfactory situation and that we would not like to see a recurrence. Of course, we accept the suggestion made by the hon. member.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, if I may just be brief on this. For the hon. member for St. Michael South looking to leadership of his party, this is no opportunity to make a point, and I want to make a point in reply to make it quite clear that I am assured that no Government Department is at fault and that therefore if blame is being attributed to Government, it must not so be attributed. I am making the point because I do not want the press to be under the impression that there is lax running of Government business, because each Minister, each backbencher and each member of the Opposition came here today to do

the people's business, and I would like to underscore the point that I am glad that members on the other side, now that they are in Opposition, have seen that they ought to have made standby arrangements when the equipment was put in. It has happened in this House before; it has happened when they were leading the Government, and therefore I want to make the point, regardless of whether it is a point for the hon. member for Christ Church East or not, it is a point I will make. If he does not agree he can get up and say what he wants, but when he has been here long enough he will understand what politics is all about. I want to say in no uncertain terms that it is no fault of the Government. We have complained about it and I want to make the point on this.

The question that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, 19th July, 1977 at 12 o'clock noon, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

1.13 p.m.