

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 1976 - 81

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 12th June, 1979.

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 12.20 p.m. o'clock.

PRESENT

His Honour W. C. B. HINDS, J.P. (Speaker); Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW, LL.D., (Leader of the Opposition); Mr. R. St.C. WEEKES, J.P.; Hon. L. S. CRAIG, (Minister of Housing, Lands and the Environment); Hon. C. L. BOLDEN, LL.B., (Minister of Communications and Works); Dr. R. B. CADDLE, M.D., Ch.B.; Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS, LL.M.; Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER (Minister of Health and National Insurance); Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs); Mr. J. G. ODLE, B.Sc., (Chairman of Committees); Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, Q.C., LL.B., (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Trade, Tourism and Industry) (Leader of the House); Mr. V. L. JOHNSON, M.A.; Hon. L. R. TULL, M.A., (Minister of Education and Culture); Mr. L. L. SISNETT; Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, M.Sc. (Econ.); His Honour E. E. ALLEYNE, LL.M., (Deputy Speaker).

Prayers were read.

Mr. SANDIFORD and Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS entered the Chamber and took their seats.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday, 15th May, 1979.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, these Minutes have been circulated and subject to any observations of any hon. member as to the correctness thereof, I beg to move that they be confirmed.

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no observations

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Leader of the House when were these Minutes circulated because members of this House have not received them, (Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I have not received them either.)

I heard a *sotto voce* remark from the Hon. Prime Minister that he has not received them either. In those circumstances, the Leader of the House said they were circulated, the circulation appears to have been rather selective when they could exclude the Prime Minister from the circulation as well.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, my information is that they have been circulated. If hon. members have not received them and my information is incorrect, I beg to move that these Minutes be postponed.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is moving that consideration of confirmation of these Minutes be deferred.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

STATEMENT BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER 12th JUNE, 1979

On Tuesday the 29th of May 1979, during debate on a Government motion to acquire lands at Lower Estate in the parish of Saint George for the provision of a playing field thereat, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central was directed by the Chair to withdraw certain remarks which the Chair considered were offensive and to apologise to the House for his remarks and his conduct in the course of the said debate.

The Honourable Member withdrew the remarks but gathered his documents and left the Chamber showing disregard for the authority of the Chair by failing to apologise.

The Chair ruled that the Honourable Member would not take his seat again in Parliament until he had apologised. No Member of this House is above the law and custom of Parliament.

When sitting was suspended for luncheon, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, standing in the foyer in the company of the Honourable Member for Saint Philip North and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, approached me and said, "Mr. Speaker, you did not hear what I was saying, you misunderstood me."

I told the Honourable Member that it was not proper to accost the Speaker in the foyer but I invited him to see me in my office. Thereupon, he accompanied me into my office and, on entering, he said: "Mr. Speaker, I am sorry for this whole affair here today, but I got the impression that you might not have heard distinctly what I had said."

I assured the Honourable Member that I was not in any doubt whatsoever and he again expressed his regrets that "Mr. Speaker had taken the matter in that light" as he would "never disrespect the Chair, never! never! but that man Craig (meaning the Honourable Member for St. James) — I don't know what he is trying to prove."

The Honourable Member then tried to re-open discussion with me on the debate, and disclaimed any knowledge of an association with a Mr. Power whose name had been mentioned in the debate. I told him, "this is not now time for debate" but I took "his expressed disregard for the authority of the Chair very seriously and I would have to give his outburst and fulminations in Parliament very serious consideration." 12.30 p.m.

The Honourable Member again expressed his regret that I seemed to have misinterpreted his actions in the whole matter and again, gesticulating with his right hand, he said, "I fail to see what that man Craig got to gain." Again he was obviously referring to the Honourable Member for St. James.

In the light of the foregoing, I consider that the Honourable Member, not yet matured in the procedural niceties of Parliament, had become carried away in the course of the debate but, as soon as the heat had died down, he had shown some contrition and so I decided to let the matter rest.

I paid due regard to the fact that the Honourable Member had at least appeared big enough to apologise to me.

Subsequently, I received from the same Honourable Member, a request for a copy of the speech he had made

on the 29th of May on this matter. The Clerk was instructed to make it available to him and, on the 31st of May 1979, I received a letter acknowledging receipt of the transcript and requesting further copies of all the comments he had made in the House of Assembly on that day (29th May, 1979).

On June 5th, I received a further letter from the Honourable Member which, in the innocence of the said Honourable Member, sought to make up for the omissions on his part in this Honourable House on the 29th of May. That is to say, his failure, when called upon to withdraw, to request an indication of the Standing Order which he had offended during the debate.

I asked the Clerk to acknowledge receipt of the two letters and to assure the Honourable Member that they were receiving my attention.

On the 6th of June 1979, I received a communication from the Leader of the Opposition requesting certain information relative to the Honourable Member. At paragraph 2 thereof he wrote of "the survival of Parliamentary Democracy in this country." These words weighed heavily on me.

I directed the Clerk to reply to the letter of the Leader of the Opposition. I must regretfully observe that the contents of the letter from the Leader of the Opposition, in my judgment, were not in support of the lofty ideals and canons of Parliamentary Democracy or its furtherance in this country.

I have very deep sympathy for the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central because during my Parliamentary career I have seen almost every Honourable Member in those years carried away by the heat of a debate.

I have borne in mind the expressions of regret which the Honourable Member communicated to me minutes after the incident on May 29th. I regard the apology made to me as an apology made to the House and, accordingly, I am treating this matter as at an end.

In conclusion, I must make an appeal to all Honourable Members to pay due regard and respect to the Chair and the authority vested in it. It is the cornerstone of the very Parliamentary Democracy about which we often speak glibly and which we should all seek to maintain.

Disrespect for authority by the representatives of the people in this the highest court in this land can only engender disrespect by the people themselves for authority in the wider community in which we all live. (Cheers).

I consider this matter at an end.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of a Resolution to amend the note to Item 8 — Postal Services and Communications, under Head 114 Ministry of Communications and Works.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' NOTICES

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Mr. Speaker,.....

Mr. SPEAKER: I take it that the hon. member will rise when called.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: I was called in 1948 to the Bar.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please take your seat. If the Hon. Leader of the Opposition has come here today to insult the Chair as he is now attempting to do, I will have no hesitation whatever in putting him in his place in this Honourable House.

The Hon. Leader of the Opposition his Motion of no confidence.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following information:

"Whereas from the outset of his tenure of office His Honour The Speaker has without warrant or justification curtailed and inhibited the rights of members of the official Opposition in debate.

And Whereas His Honour The Speaker has made unbecoming references from the Chair in respect of former and existing members of the Official Opposition.

And Whereas His Honour the Speaker has frequently failed to conduct the proceedings of this House in accordance with the provisions of the Standing Orders and has exercised his authority in a whimsical and partial manner and is therefore deserving of the greatest possible censure.

Be it therefore resolved that this House has no confidence in His Honour The Speaker."
12.40 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: I merely want to say this, that in giving permission for the Hon. Leader of the Opposition to move this motion it does not mean that anything contained therein is true or that it bears any relation to the function of the Chair in this Hon. House. But I am to

ask the Hon. Leader of the House to see to it, make it convenient, that this Resolution be debated in its fullest with all dispatch.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition has given notice of very grave import. We on this side have decided that this is a matter that should be given the most urgent priority. Accordingly, we seek to inform the House at this stage that we will reserve Monday coming for the debate, and I will accordingly later in the day move that this House be adjourned till Monday, June 18, at 10 o'clock in the morning for a full ventilation of this grave and serious motion.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Christ Church East, his question about the Alleyne Mercantile Bank Limited.

Dr. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following oral Questions:

To ask the Hon. Minister of Finance and Planning:

1. On what date if any was the Alleyne Mercantile Bank Limited granted a licence under section 4 of the Banking Act 1963 to operate as a banking institution in Barbados?
2. Who signed the banking licence, if any, granted to the bank?
3. Was any amount stated and if so how much was the amount of subscribed capital paid up in cash at the time of the application for the said banking licence?
4. Was any proof produced to the Government that the said bank had any capital whether as stated or at all?
5. Was any investigation of the character or characters of any of the Directors of the bank carried out by the Ministry of Finance before the said bank was licenced?
6. Was any request made to the bank under the provisions of section 4 of Banking Act 1963 to furnish audited financial statements as a means of substantiating any statements made in the bank's applications relating to subscribed capital or to the minimum capital requirements laid down by section 7 of the aforesaid Act?
7. Were any fees paid pursuant to section 21(1) of the Banking Act 1963—45 and the schedule to the fees

and Penalties Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1974—49 before the banking licence was issued to the aforesaid bank and if so when were the said fees paid?

Mr. SPEAKER: The said hon. member, his question re a Press Release from the Prime Minister's Office on the 2nd October, 1976.

Dr. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Speaker, to ask the Minister of Finance and Planning:

1. Is the Minister aware that on the second of October, 1975 the Prime Minister's Office issued a press release in which it was stated that "on 20th February, 1975 Principal Crown Counsel advised that there was no evidence that the company was being operated as a bank" the said reference to the said company being a reference to the Alleyne Mercantile Bank Limited?
2. Is it a fact that such advice was given by the Principal Crown Counsel?
3. By whom was the said press release signed?

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 25 is ready.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 27 is ready.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 31 is now ready.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the suspension of Standing Orders 6, 16, 18 and 20. This is for the purpose of re-arranging the time table and we anticipate that there will not be a long debate on any Government matters, so we would like to be able to accelerate Question Time.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to second that.

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

THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT, 1979

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I am asking the leave of the House to deal with this in the

absence of the Attorney General. I do not believe the Acting Attorney General was dealing with this matter.

This, having passed the House, went to the Other Place and amendments were offered in the Other Place. 12.50 p.m.

It has also received further consideration since its transmission to the Other Place and the Government has considered the matter. I am advised that the amendments may be supported by the Hon. House of Assembly and I therefore beg to move that the amendments of the Other Place be accepted.

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

The question that the amendments be accepted was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

QUESTION TIME

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Question Time be now taken for a period of five minutes.

Mr. SPEAKER: Question Time is the instant Order of the Day. Question No. 25 asked by the hon. member for St. Michael North Central. I do not see the hon. member in his place and I direct that the Reply be laid.

Question No. 27 asked by the hon. member for St. Michael South. I do not see the hon. member in his place and I direct that the Reply be laid.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay the Reply to Question No. 27.

Mr. SPEAKER: Question No. 31 asked by the hon. member for St. Lucy. I do not see the hon. member in his place and I direct that the Reply to Question No. 31 be laid.

Hon. L. R. TULL: Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay the Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 31.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, that concludes Government Business for the day and, I understand, the Business on the Order Paper. I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Monday 18th June, 1979 at 10.00 a.m.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, in rising to second the motion I would like with all due humility and respect to congratulate Your Honour on your wisdom and perspicacity in the matter which has been given such publicity in the last few days outside of

this House. This country cannot survive unless we have responsibility in Opposition. Without waiting to enquire from Your Honour what was Your Honour's attitude towards the apology offered in Your Honour's Chamber last Tuesday, certain members of the Opposition launched into a public campaign to make confidence in the Government of the country fall into disrepute. Most of what I could say will no doubt be said next Monday in the no-confidence motion; but I would ask all members of the public to take notice of the campaign whipped up to disturb the tenor and tranquility of this country during the past seven days when there was absolutely no need to do so. We have been subject to vilification and the

Government has been subjected to — to use a word not very popular with me — destabilisation — all over a matter which was not even a storm in a teacup. If this country is to maintain the progress shown in the last two years, progress which has been abundantly recognised by eminent sources within and without the country.

The question that the House adjourn until Monday 18th June, 1979 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.
1.00 p.m.