

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1981 – 86

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, May 17, 1983

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 12.20 p.m. o'clock on Tuesday, May 17, 1983.

PRESENT

His Honour C. L. Bolden, LL.B., (Deputy Speaker)
Hon. L. S. Craig, (Minister of Parliamentary Affairs
and Leader of the House)

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. Adams, Q.C., M.A., (Prime
Minister and Minister of Finance and Planning)

Mr. L. E. Sandiford, M.A. (Econ.)

Hon. Miss B. A. Miller, (Minister of Education)

Hon. L. B. Brathwaite, (Minister of Housing and
Lands)

Mr. J. G. Odle, B.Sc., (Chairman of Committees)

Hon. V. L. Johnson, M.A., (Minister of Transport
and Works)

Mr. B. M. Taitt, B.A., (Hons.) M.A., LL.B. (Hons.)

Hon. L. R. Tull, Q.C., M.A., (Attorney General and
Minister of Legal Affairs and Minister of Foreign Affairs)

Hon. DeL. O. Bradshaw, (Minister of Labour, Social
Security and Sport)

Mr. L. L. Sisnett

Hon. Dr. R. L. Cheltenham, M.A., M.Sc., (Econ.),
(Minister of Agriculture, Food & Consumer Affairs)

Mr. R. E. Brathwaite

Hon. Dr. D. G. Blackman, B.A., M.A., PhD., (Minis-
ter of Health and Community Services)

Mr. W. O. Franklin, A.I.A.S., J.P.

Mr. A. Truss.

Prayers were read by Archdeacon F. A. Cayless.

MINUTES

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minutes of the Meet-
ing of Tuesday, April 26, 1983.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to
move that the minutes of the Meeting of Tuesday, April
26, 1983 be taken as read.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to second that.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If there are no objections
or observations, let the Minutes stand confirmed.

PAPERS LAID

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker,
I am commanded to lay:

The Annual Report and Statement of Accounts of
the Barbados National Bank for the year 1981.

A Guarantee dated 14th April 1983 regarding the
future taxing of the Royal Bank of Canada (B'dos) Ltd.
as a Licensee under the Offshore Banking Act.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to
give notice of the following:

A Resolution to approve of the lease to AHI
(CARIBBEAN LIMITED) of a parcel of land at Lodge
Hill, St. Michael.

A Resolution to approve the Guarantee dated 14th
April, 1983 regarding the future taxing of the Royal Bank
of Canada (B'dos) Ltd. as a Licensee under the Offshore
Banking Act.

X A Bill to provide for the imposition of a tax on
certain remittances from Barbados and for related
purposes.

A Bill to amend the Property Transfer Tax Act.

A Bill to amend the Cinematograph Film Censorship Act.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

On separate motions of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. L. R. TULL, the following Bills were read a first time:

A Bill to provide for the imposition of a tax on certain remittances from Barbados and for related purposes.

A Bill to amend the Property Transfer Tax Act.

A Bill to amend the Cinematograph Film Censorship Act.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS (Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Planning): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir:

Members of the House will recall that on 5th January, 1983 the Government of Jamaica announced a programme which involved the immediate establishment of a two-tiered exchange rate system for the Jamaica dollar, i.e. the official rate of JA\$1.78 to the U.S. dollar, and a parallel rate to be determined daily by the forces of supply and demand. It was the stated expectation of the Jamaica Government that the parallel rate would level off at between JA\$2.50 to JA\$2.70 to the U.S. dollar.

It was announced that, under the new foreign exchange system, certain basic goods and raw materials for the purpose of manufacture for export, and those items deemed vital for domestic consumption, would be imported at the official rate of exchange; while the purchase of foreign exchange for the importation of all other goods or items would be done at the parallel rate which commercial banks would be allowed to set on a daily basis.

The operation of the measures proposed by Jamaica would have had the effect of increasing the price of Barbadian products on the Jamaica market and, thus, of discouraging the importation of goods from Barbados, while, at the same time, conferring advantages to the Jamaica manufacturer in respect of those competing finished goods where the raw material input consisted of a basic item which could be imported at the official rate of exchange. In other words, the Jamaica Government was seeking the benefit of devaluation without incurring the costs and would effectively have been giving its manufacturers a massive export subsidy to compete in other CARICOM countries.

With a view to protecting Barbadian exporters, the Government of Barbados decided that the Barbados dollar should float against the Jamaica dollar with effect from 21st February, 1983, and that settlement of trade debts could not be made in a third currency or through the CARICOM Multilateral Clearing Facility. This would have the effect of equalising trade between the two countries.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago later took its own steps and imposed the system of import licensing on those CARICOM goods that were already on the Negative List for goods from extra-regional resources with effect from 25th March 1983. Despite initial assurances to the contrary, licenses were held up or refused to Barbadian exporters over a wide range of traditional exports to Trinidad.

As a result of these measures, regional trade was severely reduced, and in Barbados, manufacturers in certain sectors were forced to close their plants and lay off their employees.

The Government of Barbados, in consultation with the Governments of the other Member States involved, made extensive efforts to find a solution to this trade impasse. A fact-finding team of Barbadian officials was sent to Jamaica from 23rd to 27th January to obtain details of the implementation of the two-tiered system and to assess its likely effect on Barbados. The Minister of Trade met with his counterpart in Jamaica on April 13 – 17 and trade and finance officials met in Trinidad on April 25th and 26th and again in Barbados on 6th May.

On 7th May, the Heads of Government of Barbados, Jamaica and St. Lucia and delegations from Trinidad and Tobago, St. Kitts-Nevis (representing the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States) and Dominica met in Barbados under my chairmanship. After extensive negotiation, agreement on resolution of the problem was reached and Heads of Agreement were signed.

The Heads of Agreement include provision for:

- (i) the terms and conditions under which import licences for CARICOM goods will be issued;
- (ii) the nature of the transaction to be settled at the Jamaica dollar official rate;
- (iii) the establishment of a special CARICOM rate, which will come into effect from 18th May, has been set at JA \$2.25 to US \$1.00 and will be in force for six months at the end of which it will be subject to review;

- (iv) the adoption of certain safeguards for the working of the system.

12.30 p.m.

As a result of this agreement, the Barbados dollar will cease to float against Jamaican currency with effect from the 18th May.

As Members of the House are aware, this Government has always attached a high degree of importance to our CARICOM relations and will continue to do every thing within its power to maintain and expand levels of trade within the region, and to assist our exporters without placing barriers in the way of manufacturers in other CARICOM countries who wish to export to Barbados.

We believe in free and fair trade within CARICOM and will work towards the system which will maintain this principle without the interruptions and difficulties of the last three months.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Reply to the question asked by the honourable Member for St. Michael South (Mr. L. E. Sandiford) is ready.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I beg to move that Standing Orders 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 be suspended for the remainder of the day, Sir.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I beg to second that.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to move that Government Business is the instant Order of the day.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Government Business is the instant Order of the day.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Order No. 1.

RESOLUTION APPROVING THE INITIATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENT

Order No. 1 was called – To move the passing of the Resolution approving the initiatives of the Government and supporting its economic and monetary strategy for dealing with the international economic recession.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS (St. Thomas): Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Resolution was subsumed in the Budget Resolution and its substance has already been given approval *nem con* by the House. Therefore, I ask for leave from the House to withdraw this Resolution.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I beg to second that.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If there are no objections.....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I have no objections that it be withdrawn, except that the Minister in his making the statement, suggested that the contents of this Resolution were approved by this House, and he said "*nem con*" Sir.

To the uninitiated, there would be a suggestion in that statement that the honourable Members on this side approved the statements made by the honourable Member in his Budgetary Proposals.

I just wish to record that the honourable Members on this side have no such feelings concerning the honourable Member's submission on his handling of the economy in this country Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If there are no objections.....

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: In reply to the debate on the matter, I would merely say that if you are not present, you cannot be heard to be saying, "No".

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If there are no objections and no further debate in the matter, leave is therefore granted.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Order No. 2 Sir.

BILL TO AMEND THE LAND TAX ACT, CAP. 78A.

Order No. 2 was called – To move the Second Reading of a Bill to amend the Land Tax Act, Cap. 78A.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS (St. Thomas): Sir, in rising to move this Second Reading, I am going to move that further consideration be now postponed.

The substance of the Bill before the House will require some debate, but an amendment will further be necessary to incorporate the rates of taxation on idle lands. We would wish the debate to cover both points and, therefore, Sir, I will be circulating further amendments to the Land Tax Act dealing with increases on taxation on idle lands.

So, at this stage, I beg to move that further consideration of this Bill be postponed.

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

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

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Order No. 3 Sir.

RESOLUTION TO PROVIDE, INTER ALIA, FOR THE
TEMPORARY DESIGNATION OF THE
DEPUTY SPEAKER

Order No. 3 was called – To move the passing of a Resolution to provide, inter alia, for the temporary designation of the Deputy Speaker as Acting Speaker and for the consequential election of an Acting Deputy Speaker.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): Sir, the Resolution which stands in my name deals with the appointment of an Acting Speaker in the absence of Mr. Speaker, Sir, whom we all wish well and hope to see very soon adorning the high office of Parliament, and it is also for the allocation of an Acting Deputy Speaker. However, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have been informed and advised that it is not necessary to have this Resolution in the light of duties which you are now performing.

If the occasion arises where we have to appoint an Acting Deputy Speaker for some reason during your absence – on more than one occasion it has been done on the Floor of the House where we appointed an Acting Chairman of Committees – I believe, Sir, with the concurrence of the House, that such a matter can be handled on the floor of the House. It is because of this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I propose to withdraw this Resolution immediately, with the leave of the House.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If there are no objections, leave is granted.
12.40 p.m.

QUESTION TIME

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this concludes Government Business for today. I know it is probably one of the shortest sittings of the House, but I have no doubt that Members are going to be back here shortly since we have given a number of notices here today to do work next week.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, at this point I would move that Question Time be taken.

Mr. L. L. SISNETT: I beg to second that.

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

QUESTION NO. 26 re INADEQUATE STREET
LIGHTING FOR BULLENS AVENUE,
DALKEITH ROAD,
ST. MICHAEL

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Question No. 26, standing in the name of the honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, to ask.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would like to remind the honourable Member of the method of asking questions.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am going on to call the number, Sir. To ask the Minister of Transport and works Question No. 26.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON (St. Michael West Central)
Mr. Deputy Speaker, the answer to Question No. 26:

“There are already two street lamps at Bullens Avenue, but the Ministry will take note of the honourable Member’s submission on the matter.”

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary No. 1.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Supplementary No. 1, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Minister has said there are already two street lamps on Bullens Avenue.....

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Since 1955.)

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Is the Minister aware that only one of those lamps has been functioning for a very long time, and that it is a mere incandescent bulb and not in accordance with the other standards for street lighting as prevail on the streets of Bridgetown and other parts of the country?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): Sir, this is a very, very simple exercise.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the honourable Member for St. James North answering the supplementary?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I would be grateful, Sir, if I could just answer it.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the honourable Member for St. James North replying to the supplementary?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: You telephone the Light and Power Company. Anybody can do that. What cheap thing is this?

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the honourable Member is now seeking to draw additional information to my attention.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: The answer is, "No." You do not know).

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: I do not believe the honourable member expects me to go around monitoring street lights.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Well, you have to do something).

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: I have done something, as the honourable Member for St. Michael West would know.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the information coming to me is that the two street lights on Bullens Avenue have been functioning satisfactorily, and if one of the bulbs has since gone out, I can promise the honourable Member that we will put in a new bulb for him.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the Minister actually saying that a 25 watt incandescent bulb is the kind of illumination that the people of Bullens Avenue should have to put up with under his enlightened administration?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, a supplementary to the Minister. Is the Minister aware that the average citizen or public spirited person, furthermore a representative. . . .

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the honourable Member for St. James North asking.....

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I am asking the Minister a question.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Well, you will have to allow the Minister to answer the first supplementary and then you will have an opportunity to ask your supplementary.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we on this side are not going to allow the people of Bullens Avenue any less facilities than they received under the Democratic Labour Party.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, a supplementary.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary No. 1.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Is the Minister aware that any Barbadian or visitor to the island, recognising that there is a problem with a bulb, or a street light, can call the Light and Power and draw it to their attention by mentioning to them the number of the pole? Any public spirited person can do that, furthermore a representative of that constituency. Is the Minister aware that the M.P. himself can do that rather than bring a supplementary here?

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: The Minister is aware, because when the Minister was a member of the back bench, on several occasions he had to call Light and Power and give the Light and Power the number himself, and I am sure the honourable Member for St. Michael South probably has already done it.

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): A supplementary, Sir. Will the Minister state to this House whether the policies which he intends for Bullens Avenue in the constituency of St. Michael South can be looked forward to by other members of the public living in other constituencies?

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to see all of Barbados illuminated in the most modern fluorescent style, but obviously we have to work this programme within the confines of our resources.

The streets that have already been lit by conventional methods will eventually, as resources permit, be able to sport the fancy lights that you will see on the Spring Garden Highway. But as the honourable Member fully realises, Sir, we cannot just throw out incandescent lighting because we now have more modern technology. We will have to continue to use what we have until we are able to provide a more pretty, softer kind of light.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If there are no more supplementaries, that brings us to the end of Question Time.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, this brings us to the end of today's sitting. I beg to move that this House be now adjourned until May 24, 1983 at 12 o'clock noon.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.
12.50 p.m.

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