

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COLONIAL COUNCIL FOR ST. CROIX.

(Continued from yesterday's Avis.)

4th Appointed Member (*Blackwood*) remarked: Mr. Chairman. With regard to a remark made by the last Speaker I wish to impress on his mind that I am talking about what I consider the cheapest. I claim that we are not in a position financially to warrant the building of a concrete road across the island! With our funds we could rebuild our roads much cheaper with macadam. It is not considered necessary to build a concrete road, I deem it absurd. There is one thing I wish to impress on the minds of the Members of this Council, and that is, we are living and having our homes here, and therefore we must do all in our power to enhance the growth of and welfare of the island and its inhabitants. One can readily see that the northside of the island is growing in bush on account of lack of labor, and it is said that we cannot use our Immigration Fund to import laborers, for what reason, I do not know; we cannot use machinery alone, we must have hand labor as well. Mr. Chairman, you know as well as I know that Uncle Sam is very liberal, but if this island could become self-supporting it would be the happiest day of my life. I am talking for the economic welfare of every man, woman and child of this island. To ask for appropriations one after the other is alright, but somebody will have to pay for it, and the tax-payers will, no doubt, say that automobile tax is not sufficient to cover the expenditures.

3rd Member for Christiansted Country District (*Robt. W. Skeoch*) remarked: Mr. Chairman. I think the Honorable 4th Appointed Member is under a misapprehension as to what I said. I defended neither side; the cheapest side is not always the best side. Who can tell which will be the cheapest? I would like to hold on to the little money I made last year, because I may never make that much again for the balance of my life. I have no axe to grind, I have not been asked to speak on this matter here today. I ask that an expert be brought here as I consider he would give us valuable advice. If a macadamized road is the best I will support Member Blackwood, but who can tell which advice is the best.

4th Member for Frederiksted Country District (*Fleming*) remarked: Mr. Chairman. I recently had a conversation with a certain man concerning concrete roads and he remarked that we will find a concrete road a very expensive road; he also said he would not recommend it as he

felt it would create a good deal of tax, and he did not believe that the money asked for would be sufficient; he said he believed that we could have a first class macadamized road for that amount. He said that experience in America was that when the concrete roads start to get out of order it does not only sink into holes, but it slides off; he strongly recommended that we build a macadamized road and have it properly rolled. This is only an opinion he gave me. Couldn't we amend the bill by saying to macadamized or build with concrete, subject to the discretion of the Public Works Officer and the Road Commission? They may decide that instead of a concrete road we can build a macadamized road.

The Chairman remarked: The bill is under first Discussion and 4th Member for Frederiksted Country District can bring in an amendment if he desires when second Discussion is before the House. If the merits or demerits have been passed upon, I will put it to the vote whether first Discussion should be closed.

2nd Member for Frederiksted Country District (*M. M. Skeoch*) remarked: Mr. Chairman. I think what the Honorable 4th Member for Frederiksted Country District says is quite true, the first section reads in part "to build with concrete etc." I think that should remain until it is ascertained what is best to be done. I also feel that the Public Works Officer should be consulted so as to get the best opinion.

The Chairman remarked: According to the Rules of Business first discussion is for general discussion on the bill, and on second discussion only a particular part of the bill can be discussed and members can bring in amendments at second discussion. If no further discussion I will close first Discussion.

4th Appointed Member (*Blackwood*) proposed that first Discussion remain open until the type of road is decided upon.

1st Member for Frederiksted Town (*Coulter*) remarked: Mr. Chairman. I cannot see any objection to close first Discussion unless some member has some very definite proposal to make, and as the Chairman has stated, the amendment which 4th Member for Frederiksted Country District wishes to put in can come in under 2nd Discussion. I wish to say that I am of the same opinion as 3rd Member for Christiansted Country District on the matter. At the last meeting I did not participate in the debate as I had no special opinion to offer. I do not remember having driven over a concrete road, I have not seen a concrete road in the process of making I have not heard of the making of a concrete road; I have some practical experience of the making of a macadamized road, and that's in Scotland. I think first of all when the committee proposed a concrete road and said that it would

cost Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars, that statement is highly problematical because the committee has not furnished any data, they have not said what width the road would be or what depth the concrete would be laid; they have not furnished these statements, but they merely stated what it would cost; that leaves the idea that it would cost very much more. Is there any one here who has knowledge that there is any concrete road in Cuba, Porto Rico, Santo Domingo or south of us? If there is any and this information is furnished us, then we would be able to decide. I have expressed a belief but I am willing to be convinced that a concrete road would be better. I have been seeking information and I find that a large majority do not favour a concrete road, and I have heard the opinion expressed for years passed that we in this island have roads which can be compared with the best in any of the other islands. Take the question of automobile and truck traffic, we have on this island. When you take the motor truck and trailer traffic into consideration they only work about four months in the year, the rest of the year is automobile traffic. If the concrete road is to be in vogue, I believe it is going to be a very expensive road. I wish to be convinced in this matter, and I am open to information as regards width, depth etc., and if I am convinced that a concrete road is the best I will vote for the bill.

1st Member for Frederiksted Country District (*Andersen*) remarked: Mr. Chairman. I wish to advise the Speaker and other Members of the House that the Highway Commission has looked at the recommendation the Public Works Officer has submitted, and it is on that recommendation this bill is put forward to rebuild the center line with concrete, because he considers it the cheapest to maintain. We have this year the money to build the road, and if Government can see the way to give us twice the amount they may do so. I am not a road builder, I have no direct experience; it is only the question of maintenance that makes me favor a concrete road. We will have to rip up the road to make new macadamized road. The Public Works Officer has arrived at the conclusion that a concrete road will suit our condition better. As there are so many differences of opinion, I am willing to discuss other roads, but I favor a road cheap to maintain, I feel as we have the money to build the road we should go ahead and avoid trouble with maintenance in the future. As far as I understand, the Public Works Officer's plans and specifications call for 14 or 15 feet concrete in the road. Whether it is today or whenever it is decided what kind of road we are to have I would be willing to leave it to the discretion of the Public Works Officer in consultation with the Road Commission and if they can convince me