

St. Croix Avis.

75TH YEAR.

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE COLONIAL COUNCIL FOR ST. CROIX.

Continued from yesterday's Avis

1st Member for Frederiksted Country District (Andersen) remarked: Mr. Chairman. I have listened carefully to the remarks of the Despatching Secretary and I understand from what he says that it is the intention to bring in another Food Commission Bill; I think that would be a wrong step. It would be better to bring in the bill which is to be proposed before the present Food Commission Law is repealed. Let us not throw away the dirty water before we have the clean water.

4th Member for Christiansted Country District [Ramsay] remarked: Mr. Chairman. It seems to me that a good many mistakes are made as regards the Food Commission. The Secretary says that raw sugar is sold here in St. Croix at 16c. per pound, that is not correct, raw sugar is sold here today for 26c. per pound. It would be interesting to know how a poor man will get along with such high prices.

I am glad to know that Government intends to bring in a new ordinance to replace the one now in existence, but unless Government gets the correct information there never will be a Food Commission that will work effectively in this island.

1st Member for Christiansted Country

District [Stakemann] remarked: Mr. Chairman. In regard to the question raised about sugar there is a reason why St. Thomas can, at present, sell cheaper than St. Croix, it is because St. Thomas was more far seeing and bought sugar when the price was low. There is no question that sugar cannot be bought today for what it was bought three months ago. Of course, St. Thomas bought, not to make any profit, naturally they can sell at a much cheaper rate.

When you come to the producer no one can be deprived of his property without recompense; what I think would be reasonable is, that the producers should be made to sell their sugar at the same price here as what it would net them if shipped to the United States. The United States Constitution says—"a man's property cannot be taken away from him without due process of law." If the Colonial Council wishes to make a law that it would pay the price, it is then left to the community to take the chance and sell the sugar at a lower figure. I do not see any use for us to try to force a thing that we cannot carry through; let us have a law which would prevent profiteering, let us have a law which would allow the manufacturer to receive the same price that he would receive if his sugar were shipped to the United States. I do not consider it unfair in any way to allow the manufacturer the same price here that he would get if his sugar were shipped.

4th Member for Christiansted Country District (Ramsay) remarked: Mr. Chairman. The last Honorable Speaker seems to forget that we are talking about sugar that is consumed here on the island. We all have heard of what Mr. Hoover is doing in the United States. The Honorable Member says that the manufacturers should have what their sugar would net them in the United States, does that mean if Japan is willing to pay them one dollar per pound for their sugar they must have the same dollar here? We all know from what Dr. Longfield Smith has said that the Factories will make over one million and a half dollars this year, if that is not profiteering then I don't know what is profiteering.

1st Member for Christiansted Country District [Stakemann] remarked: Mr. Chairman. I think every man in a free country is entitled to make what he can. I am quite certain that Mr. Hoover in New York did not go to the merchants and say: you must sell your sugar for what I want you to sell it. It is the merchants that are doing it—they are hold-

ing their stock and causing the price to go up. Some members here in the Council have good stock and yet trying to get more but did not succeed, so let us not go too far into this matter I still maintain that a man having sugar has the right to get here what he would get if his sugar were shipped, and I also maintain that the merchants must have a profit.

2nd Member for Frederiksted Country District (M. M. Skeoch) remarked: Mr. Chairman. We hear, on several occasions, what the people would say and what the people would think. It would be interesting to me, at this time, to know what the people wish. Some time ago the "St. Croix Avis" criticised the Food Commission in every shape and form and the moment it learned of the likelihood of the Food Commission ceasing to exist it spoke of the good it might be to the public if it remains in existence; that seems to be a case of let well alone. I think if we have a Food Commission that is not drastic it would be very beneficial, but there was such diversity as to how it should be worked that we had no mutual agreement on it.

It is true that sugar is king today, but there is such a thing called dry weather and that might make a very big difference next year. The cattle owners here depend on shipping their cattle to Porto Rico, and if we have a long drought we may lose our cattle also. I believe if Government introduce a new bill and call a meeting and have several of the merchants present at that meeting and get their honest opinion a food commission could be put into effect which, I believe, will be satisfactory to all concerned.

1st Member for Christiansted Country District [Stakemann] remarked: Mr. Chairman I advocate that the present Food Commission remain in effect until the new bill is introduced. I believe it would be dangerous to have any space of time between the repealing of the present Ordinance and the introduction of the other, because prices will soar high above the means of the poor people.

4th Member for Christiansted Country District [Ramsay] remarked: Mr. Chairman. If I am not mistaken this makes the fourth time the last speaker has spoken on the Food Commission; he made elaborate defenses in his first three remarks, but he is going back on them. I want to know who authorized the Factories to raise the price of their sugar to \$51.00 per bag which is higher than the price fixed by the Food Commission.