

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 10th May, 1946.

The Council met at 2 p.m., the Hon. E. G. Woolford, O.B.E., K.C., Deputy President, in the Chair.

PRESENT :

The Deputy President, the Hon. E. G. Woolford, O.B.E., K.C. (New Amsterdam).

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. W. L. Heape, C.M.G.

The Hon. the Attorney-General (Acting) Mr. F. W. Holder.

The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer, Mr. E. F. McDavid, C.B.E.

The Hon. C. V. Wight (Western Essequibo).

The Hon. J. I. de Aguiar (Central Demerara).

The Hon. H. N. Critchlow (Nominated).

The Hon. Dr. J. B. Singh, O.B.E. (Demerara-Essequibo).

The Hon. M. B. G. Austin, O.B.E. (Nominated).

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

The Hon. J. W. Jackson, O.B.E. (Nominated).

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River).

The Hon. A. M. Edun (Nominated).

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

The Hon. T. T. Thompson (Nominated).

The Clerk read prayers.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Thursday, the 9th of May, 1946, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENT

CO-OPERATIVE CREDIT BANKS BILL.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I see the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) here. I think he is anxious that the Co-operative Credit Banks Bill should be discussed. It will not be taken at this session.

ORDER OF THE DAY

THEFT OF PAINT FROM THE "TURRET CAPE."

Mr. ROTH asked, and the COLONIAL SECRETARY laid over replies to the following question:—

Q — With reference to the widely publicized case of theft of paint from the ship "Turret Cape" and the allegations made in the press against the Police of refusal to act in the said matter, will Government in order to restore public confidence in the Police Force, take immediate steps, either by way of a Commission of Enquiry or by other means, to have this matter thoroughly investigated and those responsible brought to account?

A. — The Police took action but a Constable detailed to make investigations was guilty of improper conduct in with-

holding information and failing to execute a search warrant. As the result of an enquiry, the Constable concerned has been dismissed.

LEAVE PASSAGES FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICERS

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. W. L. Heape): Sir, I beg leave to move the adoption of the recommendations contained in the report of the Committee appointed to consider how the draft Regulations, already before this Council, might be amended to provide for leave passages. The report is in narrative form and quite simple language, and I do not think I have many points to raise in connection with it. No attempt has been made in the report to draw up actual amended Regulations, but if this Council adopts the recommendations contained in the report the Regulations will be amended accordingly. It is proposed, subject to the approval of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, to bring the amended Regulations into effect as from the 1st June if they are approved by this Council.

I wish to invite particular attention to the proposal that an officer should only be granted the actual cost of the passage he desires. It was not very easy to put that in the report, therefore I will explain it a little further. The intention is that if an officer who under these proposals will be entitled to leave passage to the United Kingdom, wants to go to another destination, for example to the Bahamas, he would actually be given the cost of his passage to the Bahamas. He would not be given the equivalent of the cost of a passage to the United Kingdom and be allowed to put the balance into his pocket, but if under these proposals he was entitled to a first-class passage to the United Kingdom and he elected to travel in a lower class he could apply the difference towards the cost of taking his wife or children with him. He would not be allowed to put it into his pocket. I hope that is understood because, as hon.

Members will see, it has been decided not to make any provision for wives passages. If an officer desires to go to a destination further than the United Kingdom, say Australia or somewhere like that, he would only be given the cost of the passage to the United Kingdom. He would not get more than that. I hope I have explained it clearly. If the destination is shorter and cheaper the officer only gets the actual cost of the passage, but if the destination is further he gets up to the limit of the cost of a passage to the United Kingdom. If he travels in a class lower than what he is entitled to he can use the difference towards the cost of passages for his wife or children, but he cannot put the difference into his pocket under any consideration. The money must be used for passages.

Another point is that the Deputy President pointed out to me after I had circulated the report, that we had rather gone to sea as regards the question of second class passages, but I told him I did not think it mattered very much as it would be put right in the Regulations. I refer to the following provision under the heading "Other Conditions":—

- (i) Officers other than senior officers shall be required to travel second class whenever such accommodation is available.

That really means that when second-class accommodation is available officers will not be given more than the cost of a second class passage in the case of junior officers. It does not mean that they will be compelled to travel second class. If they are prepared to pay the difference so as to travel first class there would be no objection. I am afraid that the manner in which the condition was expressed may have caused some misunderstanding, and I hope I have put it right,

Another point is that officers can only qualify for this concession when they have completed a minimum tour, which is three years in the case of senior officers and four years for junior officers. It will be observed, however, that the proposal allows that an officer may be granted leave on the ground of urgent private affairs before he has completed a minimum tour, and granted a proportionate allowance towards the cost of his passage. If hon Members would refer back to the original draft Regulations they would see that that proportion is a very considerable reduction on what an officer would be entitled to if he did a minimum tour. There is no inducement to an officer to apply for leave before he has completed a minimum tour; he would lose very heavily financially thereby, but there are cases in which officers who have their homes in other countries may be compelled to ask for leave on urgent private affairs, and if their services can be spared and Government grants them leave it is felt that they should be granted something. Hon. Members will see from the Regulations that it would be greatly to the disadvantage of an officer. I will read the Regulation. It says:—

8. (ii) An officer who is granted leave on urgent private affairs before completing a minimum tour may be granted an allowance towards the cost of his passage from the Colony to the United Kingdom, bearing the same proportion to half the cost of a return passage by an approved normal route as the number of months of resident service which he has completed during his last four years bears to a minimum tour, and a similar allowance in respect of his wife if she accompanies or follows him.

I daresay that some of the mathematically minded Members would work that out. It is a considerable reduction on the concession, and I do not think Members need fear that officers will abuse it by applying to go on leave unnecessarily on urgent private affairs. The crux of the matter is that they can only get permission to go by order of the Governor.

I have no other particular points to mention except that I would invite Members' particular attention to paragraph 2 of the report which states that the estimated cost of the scheme is now \$45,000 per annum. Members of the Committee will appreciate that my office has gone to a great deal of trouble to make an accurate estimate, but we cannot be absolutely certain. I do not think it would ever be accepted. In fact, if the cost of passages goes down, as it may do, then of course we shall not spend as much as \$45,000. The estimate has been based on passages to the United Kingdom and back at £90, and I think a return passage to Barbados is just under £20.

Finally I would like to say that I am very grateful indeed to the members of the Committee over which I presided. It was an extremely difficult question to consider. There were many different points of view but every member, I think, tried to meet the other's point of view, and we were successful in presenting a unanimous report. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Committee who worked with me on this particular subject. I formally move:

That, this Council approves of the adoption of the Report of the Leave Passages Committee.

The COLONIAL TREASURER seconded.

Mr. LEE: I would like to find out two things. On page 2 of the Committee's report reference is made to "Officers who are members of the Permanent and Pensionable Establishment in receipt of salary of \$960 per annum up to \$1,200 per annum." Is \$960 the commencing salary of the salary an officer is actually drawing?

I would also like to know whether employees of the Transport and Harbours Department will be eligible for leave passages? There are employees

of the Department who are in receipt of \$80 per month but not as a commencing salary.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am not quite sure whether I have got the hon. Member's question correctly. In my opinion the report states quite clearly that an officer who is actually in receipt of a salary of \$960 per annum will become eligible. He must also be on the permanent pensionable staff.

Mr. LEE: What I am thinking of is this: Some civil servants start at \$40 per month, but when they reach \$60 per month they become pensionable civil servants. They go further and reach a salary of \$80 per month. Are they entitled to leave passages?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is only when they reach the figure of \$960 per annum, and if they are on the permanent and pensionable staff they become eligible. The report makes it quite clear that passages to Barbados will be granted to officers in receipt of \$960 per annum who are on the pensionable staff, while officers in receipt of \$1,200 per annum and upwards on the pensionable staff will be entitled to return passages to the United Kingdom. I think the report is quite clear.

Mr. LEE: I would like an answer to the second part of my question.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The answer is "No." Leave passages are only applicable to officers on the permanent and pensionable staff.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Does Government consider that teachers are on the pensionable staff? If not a large number of persons would be excluded who are drawing over \$80 per month. I am not at all happy about the motion. There is no doubt that the cost of this scheme is going to go up. It might be all right while we have the money, but

I do not know if we are going to have it in another three or four years. I would be inclined to go as far as the Unified Service, but there is this difficulty, that all Departments are not within the Unified Service, and it would be anomalous to have certain officers in one Department entitled to leave passages while other officers in what may be termed a senior Department not being entitled to the same privileges. We have to get down to something, but in these proposals we have excluded a large body of public servants—the teachers—who should be considered, unless of course the teachers are going to be regarded as being on the permanent and pensionable staff. I hear the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. deAguiar) groaning. I do not know if he agrees with me. He was on the Teachers Salaries Committee and he knows the amount of trouble we had in the matter. Let us go ahead and say that only officers in the service drawing \$80 per month should be granted free leave passages to Barbados, but if they are teachers we should not bother about them.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Teachers are not public officers; they are not employees of the Government.

Mr. WIGHT: That is exactly what I wanted to hear from the Colonial Treasurer. Therefore, they are excluded from these passages to Barbados? I am not happy about the motion but at the same time I am not going to be the sole obstructionist.

Mr. LEE: I too am not happy about the motion and I cannot agree to it. I hold in my hand the Hansard report of the proceedings in the Legislative Council on August 21, 1940, when the Colonial Treasurer moved a motion for superannuation benefits to the employees of the Transport and Harbours Department. In moving the motion the Colonial Treasurer said:—

"This motion contemplates the acceptance by the Government and the Council of the proposition that the employees of the Transport and Harbours Department are servants of the Crown, and notwithstanding the fact that that Department has been established as a separate administrative entity, are therefore eligible and entitled to the same benefits with respect to superannuation as servants of the Crown in other branches of the public service."

From what I have read it is clear that Government accepted the principle that the employees of the Transport and Harbours Department were servants of the Crown. That being so I cannot see how they can be denied the privilege of leave passages. The decision to grant leave passages to Barbados to civil servants drawing \$80 per month is simply an effort to draw a red herring across the trail in order to get the motion through. I may be wrong but that is my opinion. A civil servant drawing \$80 per month, who goes to Barbados on holiday, would have to pay at least \$2 per day at the cheapest hotel or boarding house, which would work out at \$60 per month. Could he maintain his family on the remaining \$20? Therefore I say this is merely a camouflage.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I would like the hon. Member to say whether he is implying that the Committee was wrong in recommending the granting of this concession to officers drawing \$80 per month—whether we should not grant leave passages to officers in receipt of salaries below \$120 per month?

Mr. LEE: No, I am saying that we should not grant leave passages to anybody. I am suggesting to hon. Members that this is only the thin edge of the wedge to get the original proposal through. Government knows very well that officers drawing \$80 per month cannot afford to go to Barbados on holiday. It is impossible, and the Committee should have realized that.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: In order to allow the rank and file of the Civil Service to take advantage of leave passages what does the hon. Member suggest the Committee should have done?

Mr. LEE: The Committee should have recommended first class passages for all officers, in which case an officer would be able to economize by travelling second class and so be able to take his wife on holiday. An officer drawing \$80 per month is not able to save money in view of the high cost of living.

Mr. JACKSON: I support the motion before Council. I do not understand what the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) means when he says that a man who goes on leave has nothing to depend on. If a man has no funds with which to go out of the Colony on leave he should spend his leave at home.

It is proposed that Leave Passages should be given to certain peoples—free passages to certain Civil Servants who are going on leave. If they were compelled to go on leave and accept the free passages or assisted passages, as the case may be, then they would have a case, but no one compels anyone to go on leave at all. I think it is a concession granted, and it is the person's funeral if he cannot take advantage of that concession. It is rather peculiar that hon. Members should take up the position that it is unfair to assist those who are getting large salaries and not assist those who are getting small salaries. I think that was the principal reason why this matter was not settled before, and I am inclined to think, now that it is suggested that Civil Servants receiving a certain amount of salary can be granted these free passages, that the Council would be well advised to accept these conditions. A remark was made respecting teachers, and so

far as that is concerned for numbers of years Teachers have been questioning whether they are Civil Servants or not. At certain times when it suits Government they are regarded as Civil Servants and at other times they are not.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: May I ask the hon. Member to state the converse which is also true—sometimes Teachers do things that Civil Servants cannot do. (laughter).

Mr. JACKSON: It would be a very good thing if the Regulation would provide for those people who labour in and out of season to mould the character of the country and, I believe, if we would think for a moment of the tremendous difficulties under which teachers labour, if we would consider that they live for others and not for themselves, we would take a very different view of this matter on the question of the probable cost which has given the hon. Member for Western Essequibo some concern. I do not think for the moment we should go into that. He said we may be able to afford the money now but three years hence we may not. When we get to the time when we cannot afford the money, when we can turn back on the Regulations. But I am satisfied that the motion as put before Council should be accepted. I make a plea for the Teachers and, if not successful today, it might be successful at some other time, and when Government accepts them as Civil Servants performing very great duties they will come in then. I support the motion as put before Council.

Mr. de AGUIAR: Sir, as a Member of the Committee I really have very little to say because all I wish to say is more or less embodied in this report. I must, however, express a certain amount of disappointment at the remarks made so far, particularly in connection with the report itself, for

the reason that I understood when this matter came before the Council on the last occasion the question of Leave Passages was accepted in principle and the work that fell on the Committee was to see how far that principle could be applied.

Mr. LEE: To a point of correction! I do not think I agreed with that at the time. The proposals of Government were that only Senior Officers and Officers of the Unified Service should get them, and mention was then made of the people here under contract. It was never intended to apply them to the lower ranks of the Service. As you know there were protests against Leave Passages being granted at all, and I was one of those in favour of that.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I think the hon. Member for Central Demerara is quite right.

Mr. de AGUIAR: As the Deputy President has said I am right, I do not propose to deal with the remarks of the hon. Member for Essequibo River. It is unfortunate, perhaps, that he was not here for the entire debate, and I do not propose to say anything more on that score. As I said, the task set the Committee was to see how far the principle could be applied and, although I am in some way responsible for this report, I would like to say that I think the work was very well done indeed. It may not have gone as far as some hon. Members would wish, as it has not included the employees of the Transport and Harbours Department and the Teachers, but there are arguments on both sides as to why they should be included and why they should not be included. That is, however, another matter. What I wish to say is this: In view of how the matter is now set out in the report, I was hoping that Members instead of merely saying the cost is high and all that sort of thing would have been able to say what

portion of this report should be accepted if not all of it, as in the case of the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Jackson, who, as far as I understood him, seems to accept the whole report as it stands and is in agreement with the estimate of \$45,000. Here you have what it is expected to cost fully set out—

“(1) Passages to the United Kingdom—

- (a) Officers appointed to special posts on contract—\$3,000;
- (b) Officers who are Members of the Unified Service—\$8,000;
- (c) Officers who are Members of the Permanent and Pensionable Establishment in receipt of salary in excess of \$1,200 per annum upwards—\$32,000;

(2) Passages to Barbados—

Officers who are Members of the Permanent and Pensionable Establishment in receipt of a salary of \$960 per annum up to \$1,200 per annum—\$2,000.”

If hon. Members feel that the cost is too high, then it seems to me they can easily pick out from this report how much it should be, how little it should be, and in that way arrive at some agreement. Speaking for myself, I think that even although the amount of \$45,000 is probably high, we should give it a trial. It is that spirit that has prompted me to agree to the figure. When it first came to the Council, Government's proposal was for \$24,000 to \$30,000, but as the result of representations made by certain Members of the Council the Committee went about it to see how far it could be extended, and that is what has produced this result. I do not think we can go further than this at this stage. My hope is that we will be able to maintain it for some time. I do not know how long we can carry it on, but at any rate we now have something to go upon and from this we can hope to build if our economic condition improves. My complaint in the past with respect to Leave Passages was the difficulty of having

Regulations to restrict them, and every time a Member rose to put an end to the restriction of the Regulations he was always faced with the question of cost and the difficulty of operating a dividing-line. The Committee in my opinion has succeeded to some extent in introducing a dividing-line. If it is too low, then hon. Members could say whether it should be something else.

The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Jackson, has dealt with the general question of Leave which was referred to by the hon. Member for Essequibo River, but I was surprised to hear the hon. Member for Essequibo River say that before a person goes on leave he has to rely on the salary he is earning in order to maintain himself abroad and his family here. No one attempts a thing like that. If anyone does that it would be better for him to stay at home, as the hon. Nominated Member has said. Usually when one contemplates going on leave one always endeavours to put by a little money to assist one in the expenses of one's trip abroad. I speak that with a little more knowledge of the subject than, perhaps, the hon. Member himself. No salaried man is able to go away on leave, whether he goes to Barbados or to Timbuctoo, depending on the salary he is earning at the time. I wish the hon. Member would agree with me. He must prepare beforehand to meet the expenses to be incurred, whether his entire family is going with him or not. He cannot possibly do otherwise. Therefore the remark that the hon. Member made that this has been put in merely as a “red herring” in order to get the thing through is wrong—

Mr. LEE: May I rise, Mr. Deputy President, to a point of correction to ask the hon. Member if he knows that Civil Servants borrow money from Government to go on leave?

Mr. de AGUIAR: That is done in certain cases. The hon. Member is right, but that is a facility or con-

cession granted to them in order to assist them to go on leave. But that does not dispose of the fact that the money will have to be paid back, and it can only be paid back by compulsory saving, unless the hon. Member thinks the money is not paid back. If an officer borrows money to go on leave and pays it back, the only difference is that it is a backward saving instead of a forward one.

Mr. LEE: Why should he be allowed to borrow at all?

Mr. deAGUIAR: I do not think I can conveniently answer that. I do not think it is proper to take much notice of remarks of the hon. Member especially when those remarks show little merit in them. The hon. Member has asked why should an officer be allowed to borrow at all. He himself preaches freedom. If a man wants to get money and he can get it, why should he not borrow? The only time he finds himself in difficulty is when he wants to borrow money and cannot get it. The hon. Member suggests that Officers of the Government should not borrow money from the Government. I hesitate to think that is what he means. I can cite him a number of instances where the necessity arose for Public Officers to borrow money from Government to tide them over their difficulties. Does he suggest that such officers should not be granted a loan? I cannot believe he means what he said just now.

As I said before, I would like hon. Members to consider the financial implications of the proposal. I think that is what we are particularly concerned about to-day. Speaking for myself, I am prepared to give this proposal a trial. It is going to cost \$45,000 a year, provided the total number of officers stated in the report is on leave during that time. It is hoped that amount will provide for the maximum number of officers on leave in a year. That is how the esti-

mated cost is arrived at. The exigencies of the Service may preclude certain officers going on leave in a particular year, in which case the cost in that year may be less. At the same time on the assumption that the number of officers referred to in the report will be on leave, the estimate is \$45,000. The question is: Is this Council in agreement that the proposal as it stands should be given a trial so as to see how it works? Alternately Members are within their right to say that \$45,000 is too high and to delete this or that appearing in the report. For the reasons I have given I am prepared to support the report so that we can see how the whole thing works out in the end.

Mr. EDUN: I did not agree in principle with Leave Passages, but when we discussed it in Committee and the various aspects of the question were put before us they changed my whole idea about it. As I saw it then, it was more a matter for administrative convenience and conditions of employment of officers and taking the question in all its aspects I think it is in the interest of this Colony to have those conditions made applicable to officers within those categories. For that reason I agree with the Committee on the general question. I was a bit perturbed about the cost, but I think that within two years we will not spend as much as \$25,000 a year and even then, if it is a question of administrative convenience and conditions of employment, I think this Council ought to favour the Committee's report, give it a trial and let us see what it will cost. I am supporting it, and I ask Members to give it a trial.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I am in agreement with the proposals of the Committee, but I would like to make one or two remarks about certain references made and are constantly being repeated with reference to the position in the Civil Service. The expression "Servant of the Crown"

includes His Excellency the Governor, the Colonial Secretary, Officers and even janitors—the people who render service to the Crown—but it is not everybody who renders service to the Crown is considered a public officer or a civil servant. Throughout the world there is a distinction when it comes to privileges of this kind.

With reference to the remarks made about Teachers by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Jackson, a former Governor, occupying the Chair in this Council, invited the Teachers to become Civil Servants. They were not up to that moment given pension. I am referring to a publication edited by a retired teacher who was also advocating the claims of the Teachers. The publication had “To Arms! To Arms! !” His Excellency the Governor, Sir Wilfred Collet, said:

“You are going to take up arms. I do not mind what weapons you use. If you want pension join the Government and become Civil Servants so that I can dismiss you when I want.”

They never answered him. It was not long after that they got pension rights, but they did not want to become Civil Servants. The status of Teachers has much improved now. They are governed by a special and definite Ordinance. They do not come under the ordinary provisions of the Pensions Ordinance. I am not saying they are not entitled to pension rights, but they do not come within the orbit of those provisions.

With regard to the claims of the lower rank and file of the Service, if I may use the term, I know of no class which would more gladly welcome this proposal than those to whom the hon. Member for Essequibo River seems to take exception. I think I can claim a very large representation of them, and I think the Members of the Committee without undue pressure recognize their claims, but the only objection is whether the Colony can afford it. I am glad the

hon. the Colonial Secretary has pointed out that under better conditions Government will very gladly and willingly yield to the rights of those Junior Officers and extend the privilege to them. I hope that they will be able to take advantage of it. They felt very sorely that the Senior Officers were being given a privilege which would be denied them. I think it will do the Service a lot of good.

Motion put, and the Council divided and voted:—

For:—Messrs. Thompson, Roth, Edun, Jackson, Peer Bacchus, Austin, Dr. Singh, Critchlow, deAguiar, the Colonial Treasurer, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary—12.

Against:—Messrs. Lee and C. V. Wight—2.

Motion adopted.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I would like to say something about the procedure in this Council. Both hon. Members who voted against the motion seem to think that it should be extended to employees of the Transport and Harbours Department in one case and to Teachers in the other case, but neither moved an amendment. You cannot get the feelings of the Council in that way. They appear to be in favour of the Committee's recommendations, but they want them extended. It would have been far better to move an amendment.

Mr. LEE: If I am permitted to make an explanation, certain people in the Transport and Harbours Department approached me with the view of my asking the question. In principle I am against any Leave Passages at the moment on account of the financial circumstances of the Colony.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Thanks for your suggestion as to when we should move an amendment. I am fully aware

of that, but when that amendment is impossible I do not try to barge into a wall. It was obvious from the beginning that it was no use moving an amendment. I know to use my discretion and pull back a punch. It was obvious that any amendment here was only a waste of time.

EXTENSION OF GOVERNOR'S TERM.

Mr. EDUN: I beg to move:—

"WHEREAS it is within the knowledge of this Honourable Legislative Council of British Guiana that His Excellency the Governor Sir Gordon Lethem will soon be taking his departure from the Colony aforesaid:"

"AND WHEREAS the general community are loud in their sincere expressions of deep appreciation of the sterling value of the services which, as Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Colony aforesaid, His Excellency has very unflinchingly rendered its people in multiple ways:"

"AND WHEREAS it is felt that desirable plans for the steady growth and proper developmental promotion, progress and security of the aforesaid Colony could only be best achieved by retention of Sir Gordon's practical and influential services to that end, for another such term:"

"BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable Legislative Council be pleased to put on record its similar expression of public appreciation and, having proper regard to what is set out in Colonial Regulation 3A, Chapter 11 anent the appointment of Governors to Colonial Possessions, this Honourable Legislative Council be also pleased to request of His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies that Sir Gordon be permitted to continue another such term in the said and such capacity."

"AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy and/or the text of this Resolution be transmitted with the least possible delay to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies for his early and favourable attention."

The motion standing in my name before the Council is indeed a comprehensive one. The preamble and the

resolve clauses are definite and conclusive, and I do not think it will be difficult on the part of hon. Members to understand the motion. In moving this motion I am actuated by no other motive than that of a profound sense of duty which I owe as a legislator and a representative of thousands of sugar workers, to pay tribute to an administrator who has imbued us with faith, hope and confidence in ourselves. The simple purpose of this motion is to record deep appreciation of the services rendered to this country by Sir Gordon James Lethem, K.C.M.G., during his regime as Governor of this Colony.

It is common knowledge that His Excellency will be leaving these shores very shortly to spend a well deserved furlough with his loved ones. Every working man in this Colony is in expectation of his return; and he goes on holiday with the blessing of the people.

As I review the trend of affairs in British Guiana, I sense a parting of the ways. There shall be either greater responsibility given to us or we shall be embroiled in greater servility if we are not vigilant now. Servility to predominant financial and Imperial interests—and it stands, as good reason, therefore, that we should have a man at the head of the Administration of British Guiana who is an ardent believer in the destiny of the coloured peoples in the Commonwealth of the British Empire. Sir Gordon Lethem believes in the destiny of the coloured man, and for that reason I think this Council ought to take this opportunity to request the powers-that-be to grant the wish of the inhabitants of this country. This Colony is passing through a period of years which will, be critical indeed, and for that reason it would be wise on the part of the inhabitants to see to it that the Head of the Administration is a man who will share with them the fruits of his own labour. His Excellency having

“marked work” — if I may use a colloquialism of the sugar estate worker—made plans and designed a policy of years, it would be a great error of judgment if at this juncture of his regime a disruption of that policy should occur. For that reason I am asking hon. Members in this motion to agree with me that we should make a move to see that there is no disruption of policy.

Some people think that perhaps I have adopted a servile attitude in bringing a motion of this kind, but hon. Members know that as a Member of this Council I have never spared criticism of the Administration at times when I felt that its policy was inimical to the interests of my own people and the Colony in general. If anyone should think that this motion is being moved for some selfish purpose I would ask that person to examine his own mind. I have had the privilege, if I may mention it, of examining from behind the scene documents from which I was able to test the sincerity of this great Administrator. Although at times I have felt that the meanderings of the Administration were against the interests of my own people of the Colony, I wish to state that whatever the action was I saw in it sincerity and honesty of purpose—something that was wholesome to the mind and edifying to the soul. I wish that the previous Governors of this Colony had the same sincerity to offer the natives of this Colony. Nobody is able to tell me that there is a streak of insincerity or dishonesty in this great man. I have seen for myself and I am satisfied, and it is my duty to come here at this critical time to tell the whole world what my people think about this great Administrator. His Excellency the Governor, imbued with strength of mind and honesty of purpose, blazed the trail and encouraged us in the darkest days of the war. He commended us and even condemned us, but in each case his words had a ring

of sincerity and honesty of purpose, although I had to agree to disagree with him on many occasions.

With those observations, sir, I feel it is the duty of this Council to record this motion. I have not been long enough in this Council, or perhaps I did not take sufficient note of such things to know whether such a motion has ever been recorded in this Legislature. Perhaps you, sir, will tell us something about that. I have been actuated to bring this motion because I know from personal knowledge what is being done behind the scenes. I am not privileged to say any more on that score. The time has come when the voice and the will of the producing masses of this Colony must be heard from this Legislative Council, and as one of the leaders and representatives of the producing masses I am taking this opportunity to request the powers-that-be in the Colonial Office to take heed of what the coloured natives are thinking. This is no time to play with our lives. This is no time for any predominant interest or Imperial interest to endeavour to go against our will even in the appointment of an Administrator. Those are the motives which have given me the strength of mind to come forward, as perhaps one of the youngest Members of this Council, with a motion of this kind. When all these things are taken into consideration is it any wonder that Sir Gordon Lethem is so immensely popular in this country? His popularity is vast because of the simple test of sincerity and honesty of purpose, and the common mind always finds affinity to greater minds. As a representative of the common man I beg leave of this Council to move this motion, and I ask every hon. Member to agree with me that we should adopt it and record it in the proceedings of this Council as a grateful people should do. With these few words I formally beg to move the motion.

Mr. LEE: I welcome very much the privilege of seconding the motion. I can assure this Council that it is appreciated by the people in my constituency and of the Colony that His Excellency has rendered valuable service to this country, and that there are schemes to be carried out from which the Colony will benefit not only financially but culturally. I feel, therefore, that it is but fitting that this Council should express its appreciation of His Excellency's services, and its desire that he should return to the Colony to complete the job he has commenced.

Sir Gordon Lethem came here at a time when the Imperial Government thought it fit that the Colonies should be developed. He worked hard and took every available opportunity to advance the claims of British Guiana in the eyes of the Imperial Government, and in the eyes of financiers in America, Canada and England. It is therefore fitting that this Council should record this token of our esteem for him.

I do not wish it to be said that the Governor is still in the Colony and that this motion is a *faux pas*. I agree with the mover that when a person has rendered good service to the country we should tell him he has done so and that we are grateful for that service. In that light I have the greatest pleasure in seconding the motion, and I hope that when the text of it is transmitted to the Secretary of State for the Colonies he will regard us as British subjects needing help, immediate help, and that we have sent to England for assistance. I commend the motion to the Council.

Dr. SINGH: Some hon. Members feel very much embarrassed in discussing a motion of this nature, especially when the Governor is in the Colony. Some think that the same object could be achieved through some other avenue quite as expeditiously. However, the motion is before us and I am supporting it. We all know that Sir Gordon Lethem

is a very hard-working Governor. Those members of the community who have been accorded interviews with him speak appreciatively of the ease and comfort in which he listened to them with great patience and tolerance, unlike, they say, some other Departments in which discussions frequently take place in an atmosphere of haughtiness and discomfort.

I know as a fact that during the war our Governor was very alert, because certain dissatisfied sections of the community threatened to cause a little trouble, but through his initiative and quick action many uprisings were averted. That, however, is by the way. The important thing is that we would like Sir Gordon Lethem to return to this country for another term of office, because of the fact that certain important projects have been initiated by him and we would like him to see them put on a sound footing. I refer particularly to the development of the interior, and we would like Sir Gordon to be here to see that development initiated. In conclusion I assure the Council that the masses of the community support this motion.

Mr. CRITCHLOW: Sir, I rise to support the motion. I can assure this Council that the workers of this Colony regard His Excellency as a very hard-working Governor and a gentleman. In 1942, when there were labour disputes in this Colony, His Excellency asked the workers to return to work and promised to see that whatever increase of wages was decided upon would be retrospective. The workers were stubborn because on previous occasions when they took the advice of other Governors and returned to work they got nothing. We therefore asked His Excellency if he would have handbills printed giving instructions that if the workers returned to work whatever increases were granted would take effect as from the time they returned to work. His Excellency did so and handbills were issued on his behalf by Mr. G. D. Owen, then Colonial

Secretary. The workers returned to work but the employers refused to grant increased rates from the time they returned to work. We appealed to the Governor who said that he must stand by his word, and he insisted that we should get the increased rates from the time we returned to work. We realized from that time that His Excellency was a gentleman in whom the workers could place confidence.

I do not agree with some of the speakers that we should not discuss this motion now, but should wait until His Excellency has left the Colony. I do not believe that after a man has gone away, or is dead, we should say he was a good man. I think we should praise him while he is present or is alive, so that he might hear what we think of his work. Reference has been made to the motive behind this motion. I have a motive and it is that I would like to see His Excellency return to this Colony to carry out the plans he has initiated. The workers of this Colony had been asking for social and industrial legislation since 1925, and it is only during Sir Gordon Lethem's regime that we have got certain labour, social and industrial legislation, for which we are very grateful. During the recent May Day celebrations the workers passed a similar resolution. I do not know whether a copy of that resolution has reached the Colonial Secretary yet.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes.

Mr. CRITCHLOW: It shows that the people's minds were moving in exactly the same way as that of the hon. Nominated Member who has moved this motion. During the mass meeting on the Parade Ground a woman was so enthusiastic in her support of the resolution asking that His Excellency should return to the Colony, that she threw her baby in the air. I heartily support the motion and I do hope that His Excellency will return to us to carry out some of his plans.

Mr. THOMPSON: It is an ill wind that blows nobody good, and in supporting the motion I desire to say how heartily I appreciate His Excellency's honesty of purpose. If there is any set of people in this Colony who would welcome his return to this country it is the folks in the rural areas. We are not in the City and we have been able to appreciate to the fullest extent His Excellency's efforts to relieve us of the effects of frequent floods followed by droughts. The position of the people in the country districts has always been an unfortunate one, but since his arrival in this Colony His Excellency has realized our difficulties and has set himself assiduously to the task of improving those conditions. The people in the rural areas are therefore loud in their praise of the work Sir Gordon is doing, and we are satisfied that only a continuity of his policy will bring us the prosperity which we so much need. Should His Excellency not return to this Colony we fear that the work he has begun would go the other way. We hope, therefore, that when the text of this motion is transmitted to the Secretary of State for the Colonies he will see fit to give His Excellency a second term of office in order that he might see the results of his labour, and that the people in the rural areas might benefit thereby.

I have been commissioned to move a similar motion in another place at another time, and I hope that we shall be able to send forward a resolution on the same lines as this motion. I support the motion and I sincerely hope that His Excellency will have a very happy time at home, and that he will return to us fully rejuvenated to carry on the good work he has started.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I do not propose to say very much, but as one who was born, has resided, and probably will die in this Colony I heartily endorse what has been said by the previous speakers, and I heartily support the motion. His Excellency has undoubtedly gained the confidence of the community—the community born and bred in

this Colony—which I consider counts here. I unhesitatingly say that this is the request of the overwhelming majority of the people of this Colony. His Excellency has throughout his regime here proved himself to be a hard worker, and has taken the greatest interest in the Colony and the community. I say that he is one of the hardest workers in this Colony. I would add that he is one of the most travelled men in the Colony, and knows more of its problems than most of us.

He has had a small minority in opposition—a minority that does not count as far as this Colony is concerned, a minority who are only here to pick what they can get out of this Colony and leave it and its inhabitants. They do not count; they are too few and they are of little concern in this community. In His His Excellency we have a man who has been sent to us, a man who has come here to show what honesty of purpose can do. I say that any man of character who desires to say to another "We wish you well; we think well of you," and says it to his face has nothing to fear. If you have not the desire to say so to him and to say it to his face, then keep away. I say unhesitatingly that I feel I am doing my duty as one born in the Colony when I support this motion.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I feel certain, sir, that a motion of this kind will not only have the unanimous vote of this Council but nearly the unanimous vote of the entire Colony. I use the word "nearly" advisedly. I feel certain that by debating this motion in this Council there is no intention to do harm to His Excellency. What I am thinking is, if His Excellency is listed for promotion his return to this Colony should cause him no loss at all. I do not know if it can be done, that he can be appointed on promotion elsewhere and seconded to this Colony. In that case this Colony will benefit by his services and he will suffer no loss, because I think that any-

one would hesitate to advocate any measures by which only the Colony can be benefited, His Excellency suffering thereby. We all know that His Excellency is not afraid to make mistakes. "Nothing attempted, nothing done" is his guiding principle, and if he is satisfied that something should be pursued he is unmindful of the mistakes that may occur when he pursues it. I feel certain that we cannot adequately give expression in words to the valuable services rendered by His Excellency to this Colony. He has justly captured the confidence of the masses, a factor which is very important to the good government of any Colony, and I hope that this motion will receive from His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies the consideration it deserves and that the wishes of the community will be granted.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: If no other Member wishes to address the Council I may be permitted just to make a few observations. The hon. Mover has invited me to say whether in moving this motion he has adopted—shall I say—an unusual course (if that is his meaning) or an improper one. I should not myself have made such a motion, but I think I am right in saying that it is without precedent for reasons, I am sure, the hon. Member will in reflection be, perhaps, in agreement with. When the term of an administrator who is present in the Colony is about to expire and personal reference of this kind is made in the Legislature in which he sits, hon. Members will appreciate how embarrassing it would be if the motion itself when carried forces him to express his appreciation of it. It cannot be expected that he would like to do that. If he were absent that necessity would not arise, and I can quite understand the Governor of a Colony would prefer to think and to know that it cannot be either inferred or suggested that he is in any way responsible for such a motion being moved. I am sure that all of us, knowing His Excellency as we do, would resent any suggestion that he was in

any way responsible for this motion, which I regard as a spontaneous expression of appreciation of his services to the Colony and a tribute which hon. Members of this Council desire to record.

But it is right that Members should know what has actually been the case in respect of a motion made in this Council for increasing the emoluments of a Governor who, I think, was present in this room when it was being discussed. Those were not the days when a Deputy President sometimes presided in the Council. The motion which had been unanimously passed was rejected by the Colonial Office, and it was not denied that one of the reasons why the Colonial Office had so acted was that His Excellency's presence in the Colony made it possible for persons to suggest that there had been some "lobbying" in the matter. I would suggest therefore that the motion which we have been discussing should not be taken as a precedent.

I would like to give my full support to the motion, not for all the reasons I have listened to but for very many other reasons. I have myself been privileged to enjoy His Excellency's confidence, which has been shared by a good many Members of this Council and other members of the community, and I have gained a great deal of knowledge and experience by coming into contact with him very frequently. His Excellency was undoubtedly a man of very unusual gifts. No one can deny that. His personal charm, his very wide reading and his general knowledge displayed themselves quite evidently and under all circumstances. He does not ever seem to forget anything he has ever seen, read or listened to. He has an extraordinary memory—an accomplishment, I can imagine, that is of very great service to an administrator in a Colony like this with a cosmopolitan population so widely scattered.

I should welcome His Excellency's return to this Colony for very many reasons among them being—I think,

it will be generally acknowledged—that his knowledge of the Colony and of its problems, are perhaps, unsurpassed and unequalled not only by members of the present community but by those who have ever lived in this Colony. I understand that even before his departure he proposes to take yet another trip into the interior. One would have thought he had enough of that. His advocacy of the good neighbour policy which he initiated in this Colony and his belief in this Colony's destiny are such that he considers it right and proper before his departure to pay a visit to a neighbouring State. Aristotle once said that it was better for a country to be governed by a good man than by good laws and, although the quality of our legislation is very often criticized by members of the community, I do not think it would be denied that however excellent or otherwise may be the result of our efforts in this Council we have been governed by a good man.

My recollection is that the Governor assumed office here in November and, I presume, his term of office expires then although the date of announcement of his appointment to the office preceded that by some months. I do not know what the Colonial Regulation or policy prescribes in such a case, but I suppose that His Excellency's term of office expires in November next and not before. I would wish myself that the motion itself will be transmitted to the Secretary of State for the Colonies as early as possible with such other representations of a like character that are being made throughout the Colony. It is essential that whatever representations are being made in favour of the continuance of His Excellency's regime, they should be received in London whilst he is there. Maybe there is some regulation that may prevent his return for a period of five years. But there are two precedents that have been brought to my knowledge. I heard of them myself quite recently over the radio.

There were the two cases in West Africa where the terms of two Governors—in one case, that of Sir Arthur Richards—had been extended for a period of eighteen months. There may have been special reasons for that, but I cannot see that any better reasons could exist than the community affected would like to see His Excellency return to the Colony. He enjoys moreover the public confidence in the fullest measure and stands unrivalled in this respect by any Administrator during my connection with public affairs which now extends over thirty-five years. He has moreover gained, notwithstanding his candour in addressing some Members, so great a personal ascendancy in this Council that even so

ardent a critic of Government as the hon. Mover has moved the motion he has. It is a very great pleasure to me to have to put this motion, and I hope it will meet with the unanimous approval of the Council.

Motion put, and carried unanimously.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Members of Council are aware that this is the last meeting of the Session, as by proclamation which appears in the *Official Gazette* the Council will be prorogued to take effect from the 14th May.

The Council was adjourned *sine die*.