

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

(Constituted under the British Guiana
(Constitution) (Temporary Provisions)
Order in Council, 1953)

TUESDAY, 15TH FEBRUARY, 1955

The Council met at 2 p.m., His Honour the Speaker, Sir Eustace Gordon Woolford, O.B.E., Q.C., in the Chair.

PRESENT:

His Honour the Speaker,—Sir Eustace Gordon Woolford, O.B.E., Q.C.

Ex-Officio Members

The Hon. the Chief Secretary,
Mr. F. D. Jakeway, O.B.E.

The Hon. the Attorney General,
Mr. F. W. Holder, C.M.G., Q.C.

The Hon. the Financial Secretary,
Mr. W. O. Fraser, O.B.E.

Nominated Members of Executive Council

The Hon. Sir Frank McDavid
C.M.G., C.B.E. (Member for Agriculture, Forests, Lands and Mines).

The Hon. P. A. Cummings (Member for Labour, Health and Housing).

The Hon. W. O. R. Kendall (Member for Communications and Works).

The Hon. G. A. C. Farnum, O.B.E. (Member for Local Government, Social Welfare and Co-operative Development).

The Hon. G. H. Smellie.

The Hon. R. B. Gajraj.

The Hon. R. C. Tello.

Deputy Speaker

Mr. W. J. Raatgever, C.B.E.

Nominated Officials

Mr. W. T. Lord, I.S.O.

Nominated Unofficials

Mr. W. A. Phang

Mr. L. A. Luckhoo, Q.C.

Mr. W. A. Macnie, C.M.G., O.B.E.

Mr. C. A. Carter

Mr. H. Rahaman

Miss Gertie H. Collins

Mrs. Esther E. Dey

Mr. R. B. Jailal

Clerk of the Legislature —

Mr. I. Crum Ewing

Assistant Clerk of the Legislature—

Mr. E. V. Viapree (Ag.)

Absent

Mr. J. I. Ramphal.

Mr. T. Lee—on leave.

Mr. E. F. Correia—on leave.

Rev. D. C. J. Bobb—on leave.

Dr. H. A. Fraser

Lt. Col. E. J. Haywood, M.B.E., T.D.
—on leave.

Mr. Sugrim Singh

The Speaker read prayers.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Friday, 11th February, 1955, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONGRATULATIONS TO CHIEF SECRETARY

Mr. Speaker: I must apologise for being partly instrumental for a grave omission which I could not help thinking about last evening, and that is to congratulate the hon. the Chief Secretary on his appointment to this Colony. I am sure it is the wish of us all to congratulate him on that appointment and to wish him success in the performance of the duties of his office, of which those that take place in this Council are not the least responsible. In my opinion the reputation of the holder of the office of Chief Secretary in this Colony in the past has been made or marred by the attitude adopted by him in the conduct of Government business and the opinions expressed by him in support thereof, and his opinion and criticism in this Council. I feel sure from what I know and have seen of him that he is a man of firm resolution, very ready in his decisions, agreeable in giving them and a very good mixer both in this Council and outside. I am sure you all join me in wishing him a happy term of office in this Colony. (*Applause*).

The Chief Secretary (Mr. Jake-way): May I thank you, Sir, for those gracious words. I can only say that I hope that during my time in this Colony I would be of service to the community and would never forget the words of the prayers you have just read. (*Applause*).

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. Speaker: I have been asked to give leave of absence to the hon. Member, Lt.-Col. Haywood from attend-

ance at this meeting and tomorrow's and for being absent from the 15th to the 18th inclusive to the hon. Member, Mr. Lee.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

INTRODUCTION OF BILL

The Financial Secretary (Mr. Fraser): I beg to give notice of the introduction and first reading of the following Bill intituled.

"An Ordinance further to amend the Tax Ordinance, 1939."

MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Mr. Speaker: Members will recall that the hon. Member, Mr. Carter, complained that apparently Members of the Government were having it all their own way in having their motions taken, and that no attention was being paid to the motions of private Members. Unfortunately there is no provision in the Rules, which have been laid on the table, for Members' Day, which has usually been observed on a Wednesday in the past. One day was then always set apart for Members' motions. Such provision has not been made in our present Rules.

I wish to announce that I have been going through the list of business which has been tabled and have been considering what should be done, having regard to the necessity of having one session of the Council completed. I have spoken to His Excellency the Governor who is prepared to prorogue the Council but may wish to say something to the Council before the session is over. I propose to allow Government business to be completed and possibly any other business which may be added to what we see on the Order Paper, and then take hon. Members' motions. There are one or two such motions. The hon. Member, Mr. Carter, has one, I know. I am having a list made and before the

next meeting I am going to see what can be done. It all depends upon when Government can finish all of its business before we may be able to close the session, and whether in a short interval of time we can also consider private Members' motions.

ORDER OF THE DAY

APPROPRIATION BILL

Council resolved itself into Committee to resume consideration of the Bill intituled

"An Ordinance to appropriate the Supplies granted in the current Session of the Legislative Council."

The Chairman: I think the hon. Member for Labour, Health and Housing (Mr. Cummings) would like the Head XXVA — Local Government — Social Welfare Organisation — recommended. He wishes to speak on it.

Question put, and agreed to.

Head XXVA recommitted.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT—SOCIAL WELFARE ORGANISATION

Mr. Cummings (Member for Labour Health and Housing): I propose to be very brief in this matter. I read in this morning's Press that two Members had said there was rivalry between Government departments and one Member deprecated such rivalry. This is actually a report on a meeting of the Finance Committee as I have found out. I agree that there a type of rivalry did exist and that is something to be deprecated, but when reference is made lower down to this, that the Member for Local Government and Social Welfare and the Member for Labour, Health and Housing should get together and discuss this common problem, I am bound to say that I am not aware of

any such rivalry which should call for any investigation. The Member for Local Government and myself had previously discussed the matter and, in fact the policy was set by the Executive Council. Hon. Members will remember that it was Mr. Hickenbotham who advised us on the Housing programme and the policy was agreed upon by Government.

On the question of the appointments of two persons who were transferred from the Social Welfare Department, these were made by the Public Service Commission. Advertisements were put out and Mr. Cameron, who, I must admit, had very thorough training in social welfare, applied. The Commissioner for Housing was asked to short-list the applicants and he recommended this man. The matter went to the Chief Secretary and the man was appointed. If there is rivalry, I think it is healthy rivalry where members of the Departments are concerned, and I think it is going a little too far to say that it is the sort of rivalry that should be deprecated. The Member for Local Government and myself must have our departments properly staffed so we can answer to this Council for anything we have been charged with, and since the public is likely to form the opinion that we are proceeding helter-skelter without any regard for each other's progress I will give hon. Members the assurance that the sort of rivalry referred to does not exist.

The Chief Secretary: I am sure the hon. Member will not mind my mentioning one small point: the appointment was made by Government and the advice of the Public Service Commission was sought; but the advice of the Public Service Commission was a confidential matter.

Mr. Cummings: I am grateful to the Chief Secretary for that correction. What I meant was that, it did not flow from any action of an individual

[Mr. Cummings]

Minister but went through the ordinary channels and co-ordination took place where it should have taken place.

Mr. Luckhoo: May I be permitted, as one of the Members who made the observations concerned, to point out that the hon. Member was not present, but all the Members who were present can and would bear me out that we were given the very clearest of impressions that the departments were not working together harmoniously. Where the Social Welfare officers were concerned I called upon the hon. Member for Local Government to say whether it was not correct that he did take — and, we felt, with justification—a certain amount of resentment to the fact that officers were, so to speak, taken out of this department and he was deprived of their services. The observations made, came to my mind, quite properly from the facts presented to us in Finance Committee, but I am very happy to learn that we were evidently mistaken or that there is this harmonious relationship existing. However, the observations which I and the hon. Mr. Macnic made were well-founded and the discussion at that time lasted some half-an-hour. I made the suggestion that there should be a pool from which all departments should be able to draw officers without this 'fighting', and, further that if the hon. Members concerned did meet, we should be informed whether they had reached any form of agreement in respect of this disagreement. I say this now lest it be thought that the remarks and observations made in Finance Committee were made without proper foundation.

Mr. Cummings: I can quite appreciate another Minister's feeling if he opens some official file and finds evidence that some officer who had special training for work in his department had left that d e p a r t m e n t

but what I am saying is that it was not on account of rivalry or 'jockeying'. All that happened was that a post was advertised, a man applied for it and that man was appointed. Although, perhaps there might have been at some level or other more co-ordination, nevertheless, I do not think the Housing Department should be accused of undue rivalry in this matter. I am not saying that my friend had no basis, but I was not aware of any basis. I think that as far as my Ministry is concerned I should have my knowledge of it recorded in the proper way, since it is a matter that has reached hon. Members.

Mr. Farnum: (Member for Local Government, Social Welfare and Co-operative Development): In the discussion on the Social Welfare Organisation vote in Finance Committee it was pointed out that one of our very good officers had gone over to the Housing Department, and as a result of that it shortened our already short staff. Social Welfare has been very unfortunate because not only that officer left us, but another officer who not very long ago, went on a scholarship has also gone to another department. I don't think I should say anything further than that.

The Chairman: The hon. the Deputy Speaker has said that he would like to speak; I do not know if he would like to speak on the head Social Assistance now.

Mr. Raatgever: No, Sir; I propose to speak when we reach further.

MAGISTRATES

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this Head — XXVI — be carried out at the sum of \$260,364 as recommended by Finance Committee in its report tabled in Council on January 27.

Question put, and agreed to.

MEDICAL

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this Head—XXVII—be carried out at the sum of \$949,271 as recommended by Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

MEDICAL—BACTERIOLOGICAL
DEPARTMENT

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this Head—XXVIII—be carried out at the sum of \$91,422 as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

MEDICAL—X-RAY DEPARTMENT

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this Head—XXIX—be carried out at the sum of \$44,207 as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

MEDICAL—HOSPITALS AND
DISPENSARIES

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this Head—XXX—be carried out at the sum of \$3,408,080 as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

MISCELLANEOUS

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this Head—XXXI—be carried out at the sum of \$3,337,485 as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

MISCELLANEOUS—(A) SUBVENTIONS,
ETC., MUNICIPAL

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this Head—XXXII—be carried out at the sum of \$349,725 as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to

MISCELLANEOUS—(B) SUBVENTIONS,
ETC. OTHER THAN MUNICIPAL

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this Head—XXXIII—be carried out at the sum of \$807,722 as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to

OFFICIAL RECEIVER

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this Head—XXXIV—be carried out at the sum of \$14,854 as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to

PENSIONS AND GRATUITIES

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this Head—XXXV—be carried out at the sum of \$381,076 as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to

Mr. Raatgever: I should like to repeat what I said in Finance Committee under this Head. I think some consideration should be given to pensioners—similar to that being given to the officers in the Civil Service. The pensioners should be given some further consideration.

Miss Collins: I beg to support what the hon. Member, Mr. Raatgever, has said.

Mrs. Dey: I desire to do the same.

The Chairman: I think we ought to become fully aware of what has been done in England.

The Financial Secretary: I think it quite natural, Sir, in view of what has been already done, that something will be done for the pensioners.

POLICE

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this Head—XXXVI—be carried out at the sum of \$2,896,304 as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

POST OFFICE

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this Head—XXXVII—be carried out at the sum of \$1,143,199 as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

POST OFFICE—TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND ELECTRICAL INSPECTORS

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this Head—XXXVIII—be carried out at the sum of \$613,605 as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this Head—XXXIX—be carried out at the sum of \$45,901 as

recommended by the Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

PRISONS

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this Head—XL—be carried out at the sum of \$335,813 as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

PUBLIC DEBT

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this Head—XLI—be carried out at the sum of \$247,247 as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPT.

Mr. Raatgever: Under this Head—XLII—I asked in Finance Committee that the building of quarters for the Officers and men of the Forces now stationed in the Colony be expedited so that the Mariners' Club which they are using at present could be handed back to the Trustees. The Mariners' Club, as Members are aware, was built with public subscriptions and funds provided by this Colony for the purpose of entertaining seamen who came to this Colony during the war. In the House of Commons recently the matter was referred to—these seamen risked their lives in time of war in order to bring essential foodstuffs for the people in these parts—and it is not fair, now that the war is finished, that they should be thrown out of the building which was built specially for them. I hope that Government will regard this matter as urgent, as I feel it is unfair that the seamen should be kept out of the club all this time.

The Chief Secretary: I would like to repeat the assurance I have given to

the hon. Member—that this matter is receiving very urgent consideration and that we are endeavouring to provide alternative accommodation to the Mariners' Club for the Forces referred to. It is Government's intention to build an alternative structure and release the Mariners Club at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. Raatgever: Thank, you, Sir. I was given a similar assurance by the Chief Secretary last year but the matter is such an urgent one, I think some start should be made immediately to provide the relief.

COLONIAL EMERGENCY MEASURES

Mr. Luckhoo: I gave notice of a motion some time ago for the abolition of controls, but I did not move it in view of certain information that reached me subsequently. It has been pointed out to me that because of some exchange difficulties which still exist, it would not be possible to have this Department—the Commodities Control Department — completely removed. Nevertheless, I feel that if it is necessary to have a small office set up for the purpose of meeting the situation as it exists at the present time, that should be done. This Department, to my mind, has served its usefulness a long time ago. I think that the staff is not only redundant, but one of which the only pleasant feature may be said to be its policy. It served a particularly useful purpose during the war, when even if there were irksome practices, one necessarily had to endure them. Nevertheless, the time is long past when we should see the end of this particular Department. As I have said, Sir, it seems to me that there was some agreement for setting up this Department for the purpose of currency control and so on, but there is no need for a Department of this nature any longer and I therefore beg to move the deletion of this particular head.

Mr. Raatgever: I desire to support, wholeheartedly, the remarks made by Mr. Luckhoo. In Finance Committee I took the opportunity to make a similar statement to the one he has made, and it is recorded on page 3 of the minutes of the meeting held on January 13, at 2 p.m. I feel like Mr. Luckhoo—that the time has come when the Department should be scrapped. I am aware that there must be some measure of control owing to currency difficulties but, as I pointed out in Finance Committee, the functions of the Department should be taken over either by the Financial Secretariat or the Customs Department. If the Finance Department is hard pressed and short of officers, then it should be possible to second a few men there to do the work being done by the Commodity Control Department, but to continue a separate Department with such a large staff is, in my opinion, a waste of the taxpayers' money.

In this Colony instructions received by this Department from the Colonial Office within recent years have generally been misinterpreted. Apparently the officer in charge is not able to understand the instructions received. I have had the privilege of attending every Control Conference held in this part of the world since 1946 when these Conferences started, and I am aware of all the instructions that have been given to this Colony. I know that merchants have had to experience a lot of unnecessary suffering and inconvenience as a result of their misinterpretation. The time has come for the whole of this Department to be scrapped, but I would like some alternative employment to be found for the people who are to be retrenched. I am aware that one officer who was seconded to the Department when Mr. Macnie was Comptroller has been retrenched and that others are being retrenched also, but I shall be glad if some alternative employment is found for them. I was told in Finance Committee

[Mr. Raatgever]

that that was a matter purely for the Chief Secretary, and I am asking the Chief Secretary to see that alternative employment is provided for those employees who are to be retrenched.

I am also asking my colleagues to reduce the item to one quarter—\$27,000,—because notice would have to be given to the employees, and money must be provided to pay them up to a certain date. I would ask the hon. Mr. Luckhoo to amend his motion to allow the item to be carried out at \$27,000. Perhaps I should have recorded in *Hansard* some of what I said in Finance Committee on the 13th January. It is recorded in the Minutes of that meeting that I said:

“The Comptroller seemed incapable of exercising any discretion... Many of the restrictions still imposed locally were not in force elsewhere.”

It is recorded in the Minutes that I went on to say :

“In the United Kingdom most goods from Europe were on Open General Licence, and it was unjust to restrict imports from the same source locally.”

What I meant was that we should be allowed to import more goods from the Continent. In this Colony imports from Europe are on a quota basis, and if goods arrived on the day after an importer's licence expired and he had not got his licence renewed previously, the goods were seized and the importer was put to the trouble to appeal to the Governor in Council to have the goods released. That resulted in increased cost of the goods to the people who bought them, so that instead of reducing the cost of living we are increasing it as a result of the action of the Controller of Supplies and Prices.

In Trinidad the system of Open General Licence is still in force with respect to imports from Europe, and imports of that kind have increased over the 1952-53 figures. In Barbados

import licences are not issued against quotas or fixed allocations. In this Colony everything is done by quota. Importers are restricted by Regulations which were made in 1939 for a different purpose altogether—for defence purposes and to prevent trading with the enemy. We are still handicapped by war-time Regulations, which is ridiculous. It is providing unnecessary work for some people to do. Quoting again from the Minutes of the meeting of Finance Committee on the 13th January, I said :

“It was a waste of the taxpayers' money to continue to provide over \$100,000 annually to maintain the Organisation, and if it was felt that some form of control should remain on account of hard currency restrictions, the work could be done by officers of the Exchange Control Branch or the Customs Department.”

I repeat that, and I would ask the hon. the Chief Secretary to see that alternative employment is found for those members of the staff of the Organisation who will be retrenched, because the time has come for the Organisation to go. There is, no longer a necessity to employ 38 persons to control imports into the Colony, as the Open General Licence is largely in force. In Jamaica motor cars have been allowed to be imported from the U.S.A. since 1953. In this Colony we are prohibited from doing so. In Trinidad, I understand that the restrictions were removed this year. I read that in a newspaper sent to me by a friend in Trinidad. They are being allowed hard currency for imports of motor cars into Trinidad from the U.S.A., but there is a limit to the number to be imported. I also read in a newspaper sent to me from Jamaica that last year that Colony spent \$2 million more in hard currency than they earned. They earned \$22 million and spent \$24 million. In this Colony we were allowed to spend about \$5 million while we earned about \$20 million last year.

Goods imported from the U.S.A. are cheaper even when 70 per cent. ex-

change is added to the cost. We could also import goods from Europe and Japan at about half the cost of similar goods from the U.K., but we are restricted—for what reason I do not know. If local consumers want to buy cheap goods from Japan, whether they last 6 or 12 months, we should be allowed to import those goods, because it would help to reduce the cost of living, and we would not be faced with the demand for tremendous increases of salaries by civil servants and other people which the Colony cannot afford. The people would benefit by low prices, which is the answer to the rising cost of living. If we continue to increase salaries the cost of goods will be increased, and the cost of living spiral will continue. We have to take alternative measures to reduce the cost of living, and we can do it by allowing free importation from Japan, the U.S.A. and the Continent. The policy in this country is all wrong, and I have tried to no avail to have it amended. It is absolutely useless. I move that the item be reduced to \$27,000.

Mr. Luckhoo: I accept that amendment.

Mr. Macnie: With some trepidation I would like to make a few remarks, but I do not wish to challenge the authority of any expert in this matter. I had the doubtful honour of being associated with this Commodity Control Organisation—in fact it may be said that I helped to build it, although I did not do so myself, during the war years—from the beginning until just after V.E. Day, when I was fortunate enough to find myself in my proper field after quite a difficult time, but I must say that I got assistance from many friends. I cannot support a drastic reduction of the vote or even a reduction of \$27,000. Whether the organisation continues to be called the Commodity Control Organisation or it is attached to another Department there will be necessity for some staff to carry on the work.

My own view, which is recorded in the Minutes of Finance Committee where the matter came up for discussion last month, is well known. As long ago as 1945, when I was being transferred away from the Colony, I advised that the staff of the Commodity Control Organisation should be reduced as rapidly as possible; that everything should be done to allow trade to return to normal conditions as quickly as possible, and that such staff as it was necessary to retain might well be attached to the Customs Department, thereby avoiding a considerable amount of running between the two Departments. There was an enormous amount of inconvenience to the mercantile community in having to go backwards and forwards when goods arrived, but that was unavoidable during the war because accommodation was difficult to obtain. Members know that the office was accommodated in an attic in which stores were formerly kept. It had never before been used as an office, but I believe that a high rental is being paid for the accommodation. I feel that those premises should be given up as early as possible, and that positive action should be taken to simplify the procedure with respect to the arrival of goods, and especially in relation to the obtaining of currency involved with imports from hard currency sources.

It has always been said that the British Guiana Commodity Control people interpret the instructions wrongly. That is nothing new. Why do we not interpret them the same way as they do elsewhere? As far as my knowledge goes, the difference is this: in British Guiana the instructions are interpreted strictly and literally as written, and they are not in complicated language, particularly in relation to hard currency imports which I am speaking about. I know as a fact that during the war years lots of other places, which I will not name, interpreted the instructions not with strictness but with a marked degree of liberality,

[Mr. Macnie]

and in fact sometimes they found it convenient to forget the instructions or they turned a blind eye upon them.

It must also be recognised here that in regard to dollars—this is my experience—British Guiana suffers from comparison with certain of the other Caribbean Colonies in this way. Through no fault of the activities of our Tourist Board or Committee but through the fault of the mud on our foreshore, the absence of blue water and the lack of any sand on our beaches,—through these natural defects and through no fault of those responsible for encouraging tourists—we do not attract visitors from the hard currency areas of North America to the same extent as Jamaica, especially having regard to Jamaica's close proximity to North America. That is one of the reasons why dollar imports into Jamaica is so much higher than here.

It is because it is recognised by the Competent Authority in the United Kingdom as well as in Jamaica that those visitors from the dollar countries bring dollars — it is very difficult to assess how much they bring—and spend them, and that they will not do that unless they are able to buy some of the dollar goods to which they are accustomed in their own country. At the same time they also make heavy purchases of goods from the United Kingdom in the way of clothing, especially the men. Some stores, I know, in Barbados and Jamaica import men's clothing from the United Kingdom in large quantities especially to satisfy the demands of these visitors. So I do not think the comparison should be made. That is my view.

On the question of the rise in the cost of living I would say this. It is indeed fortunate that we are allowed to import as much as we do especially in foodstuffs, because I shudder to think—I am not referring to hard currency imports—what would happen to the cost of living if we were not importing potatoes. It is a terrible in-

dictment, and I take this opportunity to say this, without attacking anyone. When it comes to price comparison relating to the food we get on the table—rice, sweet potatoes, yams, cassava, eddoes and even good old plantains—were it not for the imported potatoes we would have to pay a great deal more. It is a terrible indictment on this country that such a state of affairs should exist, because we cannot grow enough of these things. I know that I may be told by some of my friends in the country that you cannot get to grow these things because of floods and because of this and that, but first I would say that there are lots of areas which are productive and drained, such as the Canals Polder, which suffered not at all from flooding during last year when we had heavy rains, but are lying vacant. There are village lands which are also reasonably drained and are not being farmed.

At an earlier stage in this debate one hon. Member, I think it was the Rev. Mr. Bobb—I am not quite sure and may be subjected to correction—spoke of the difficulty farmers have in getting labour. I think we have come down to this. In a great many of our agricultural activities when it comes to labour, there is a danger—I do not say it has happened—of those who demand high wages in the agricultural field in the course of time pricing themselves out of the market, and we would find that the cost of production would so far exceed the cost of goods that can be imported as to make their produce so uneconomical that they would not be able to compete and their produce might find itself under. It has not happened as yet, but I see the danger. As I say, if any liberalization of imports can help to reduce the cost of living or to keep it down, by all means it should be done. I support the hon. Member, Mr. Raatgever, on that.

Referring particularly to the question of clothing, it is an advantage to be able to buy cheaper clothing, even

though it may not last as long as the dearer one. It lasts sufficiently long as to justify the purchasing of it, and the purchaser benefits from getting a new garment now and then rather than wearing a suit until it wears out which can have a depressing effect. Your Honour may have found, like myself and others, that it becomes quite depressing to look at one's evening suit which one had purchased some 20 years ago, if one's figure has not changed during those years. You and I may be fortunate in that respect.

The Chairman: I have had all my clothes altered.

Mr. Macnie: Sometimes it is depressing. It is an advantage to others, not like myself, to have some variety and to get it cheap though it may not last as long. Sir, my hon. friend, Mr. Raatgever, spoke about motor cars. I do think the time has come when we should face facts and the Authorities responsible should do their utmost to allow to come into this country even a limited number of cars from North America. We have recently seen a large number of cars which originated from North America come to this country and sold at prices far in excess—in terms of our money—of what would have been, had dollars been expended on them. They would have been sold here cheaper. I understand the reason for that is that those cars are imported either as units or in pieces, and assembled in Belgium or other European countries. They are being sold quite a lot and at enormous prices in relation to what is paid for them in Canada or the U.S.A., and what is more serious is that our roads are now getting an increasing number of left-hand-drive cars.

Anyone who is accustomed to driving, as I am, must know that to drive a left-hand-drive car, which is built for a country where the rules of the road are not like ours, is in fact a very peril-

ous undertaking, and the more perilous it is when you are overtaking another vehicle, because you cannot see around the rear end of the vehicle you are overtaking unless you have another person sitting beside you to tell you whether the road is clear, and it is not always advisable to have too many in a car giving advice to the driver. I have driven left-hand-drive cars in places where the rules of the road are like ours, and I have attempted it once where the rules of the road are the other way and I had to give it up.

I do feel that to allow these vehicles to come in here in large numbers is inviting trouble and accidents on our roads. It would be very much simpler and very much cheaper in the long run to allow cars from North America, where they can be built to drive on the side to suit our rules, to come in even in limited numbers. I shudder to think what is going to happen when some of these vehicles that come in—I do not blame the garage for importing them or using a device to get them—get loose on our roads, especially in Berbice. When travelling quickly there is going to be the danger of very serious accidents, and we have enough of serious accidents already. It is quite a different matter to allow a left-hand-drive car for use by a visitor who has come to the country and who is going to take it away when he leaves. Apparently it is to be a permanent feature, as I am told more are coming.

The Chairman: By special permission.

Mr. Macnie: I am told that under the law you cannot stop a left-hand-drive car from coming into the country. I take this opportunity to make my personal observations on it. As I said, I cannot support the reduction of the vote to \$27,000, but I would urge that Government should consider taking positive action forthwith to simplify the procedure by which the Department works

[Mr. Macnie]

and for reduction to the staff of this Department which, as the hon. Member, Mr. Luckhoo has said, has served its useful purpose and has become more of an irritation.

The Financial Secretary: This matter was considered in Finance Committee at great length. My hon. friend, Mr. Luckhoo was not there on the day it was considered, and I make bold to say that if he were there he would have been converted to the belief that we could not just scrap the department. My friend, the hon. Member, Mr. Raatgever, was of that opinion, but he might have changed it. I did not think this matter would have arisen today. I am grateful to the hon. Member, Mr. Macnie, for his very fair statement of the position. The policy as regards import control is laid down in the United Kingdom. In other parts of the British Commonwealth there are controls of one kind or another. This Colony is merely carrying out the instructions which come to us from the Secretary of State since we are one of the Scheduled territories. When the hon. Member, Mr. Raatgever, says these instructions are not being carried out here and are being misinterpreted in relation to what is happening elsewhere—of course, I am not in a position to say whether Trinidad, or Jamaica are carrying out their instructions—I have to assure him that we have to carry out the instructions here, and where there is difficulty, we ask that they be clarified. But I am sure we are carrying out the policy adumbrated by her Majesty's Government.

I do not think the hon. Member (Mr. Raatgever) realizes that we are acting not under any instrument that has been used to bring into being the Commodity Control. We are actually working under the laws of this Colony, and the first Ordinance that was en-

acted in this connection was the Import, Export and Customs (Defence) Ordinance, 1939. This Ordinance provides that if any goods arrive in this Colony without a licence they should be deemed prohibited goods, and it goes on to say that the penalty those responsible should be liable to is, I think, \$2,500. Since then the Customs (Consolidation) Ordinance has been enacted and in it was repeated some of what was in the 1939 Ordinance, so that the law under which we are acting is quite modern, and there is no ground whatever for saying that we are acting under Defence Regulations. If the hon. Member would read Section 216 of the Customs (Consolidation) Ordinance, 1952, then he would see where our powers are derived from. Prohibited goods are forfeited and the Governor can authorize their release, and that is what has been happening in most cases. I make bold to say that for such a procedure merchants are themselves responsible. They know what the requirements are and they have failed to carry them out. They have said that they have no time to observe what is required of them. That certainly is no excuse.

The criticism of the Commodity Control Organisation stems from conditions which were imposed on merchants on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on imports who applied for additional quotas. The conditions required merchants granted these quotas within one month after the issue of a licence, to produce confirmation of the placing of orders. If orders were not confirmed within the period stated under the conditions, the licence lapsed and had no further effect. But it was possible under the conditions to revive a licence which had lapsed by merely producing the confirmation of an order any time before the arrival of the goods in the Colony. If this were not done and goods arrived

in the Colony, then under the law they were regarded as prohibited imports and were liable to forfeiture. This provision is not a war-time restriction either, it is a provision which is enshrined in the Customs Consolidation Ordinance passed in 1952. Because some merchants feel aggrieved by the law it is quite wrong to suggest that the organization should be wiped out, and I am therefore not prepared, for this reason, to accept the motion. The organisation has its duties and functions to carry out and must do so without fear or favour.

As regards costs, in 1953 expenditure on the Commodity Control was around \$148,000.00. After a very careful examination of what retrenchments could be made, the staff has been reduced from 48 to 30 and the total cost of the organisation this year, it is estimated, will be in the vicinity of \$108,000.00. The figure includes salaries which must be paid until officers' services can be legally terminated under their agreements which provide that they should be granted all the leave earned on service up to I think, eighty-four days, and that is the best that can be done.

Mr. Raatgever: I do appreciate the reason given by my hon. friend, the Financial Secretary, why the work of this Department should not come directly under his control. I desire, however, to make it clear that I want the Department wiped out eventually. I have suggested that the functions being carried out by the Department should be transferred to and exercised by either the Exchange Control Branch or the Customs Department. I asked that the vote be reduced to one quarter so that three months' notice could be given to the officers concerned — those who would be retrenched. I am a businessman and would not suggest the closing down of a Department like that.

My friend, the Financial Secretary attempted to correct me, but I am going to correct him instead because I am sure of my ground. I do say that I have as much knowledge as anyone else of the instructions sent out from time to time to the Control Department. As I said previously, I have attended every conference held in connection with Controls, since 1946 when Mr. Macnie left the organisation. Mr. Macnie was — and I have said this in Finance Committee—one of the best Controllers we have had.

In 1948 the Central Imports Committee was set up and Col. Spencer appointed Chairman. Mr. Fletcher succeeded Col. Spencer, and Mr. Messervy was appointed Chairman last year when the Interim Government came into the picture, and the trouble started then. Since 1948 I was a member of the Central Imports Advisory Committee, and that Committee advised the Control Department. I know what I am saying, because I was connected with the Department since 1940.

The Financial Secretary: As regards the Control Department, it is quite true to say that the Committee is advisory to the Controller of Supplies and Prices.

Mr. Raatgever: The Committee recommended the policy to be carried out by the Controller, and the previous Controllers carried out the policy as agreed upon. I will give hon. Members an example of the annoyance and inconvenience suffered by merchants. I have in my hand a letter from Mr. Messervy, the Controller, to my firm with regard to some goods which arrived after the licence had expired, and this is what he says in the third paragraph :

"The position is that having been imported without a licence, the goods are deemed to be prohibited goods under section 5 (1) of the Import, Export and

[Mr. Raatgever]

Customs Powers (Defence) Ordinance, 1939."

Now, Sir, prior to this the licence was extended to the date of arrival of the ship, whether application was made before or after. This is a new procedure. One does not know when the ship is going to arrive, and to get a letter like this when application is made, after the goods arrive is, in my opinion, ridiculous. In all the war years when Commodity Control was in existence nothing like this happened, and I don't see why it should happen now.

The Financial Secretary: What the Controller referred to is a Regulation, and if the Hon. Member had asked me I would have given him a copy. The Regulation specifically states that the Controller may fix the terms and conditions under which goods may be imported. The Controller is compelled under the law to regard goods arriving in the Colony without a licence as a prohibited import. At least I was advised by the Attorney General to this effect and would explain that after a ship has entered the territorial waters of the Colony the Controller is not empowered to issue a licence. I sympathised with the merchants and went out of my way to try and assist them, but could only act in accordance with the law which provides that such goods shall be forfeited.

Mr. Raatgever: My hon. friend is making heavy weather out of the matter, but before the goods are imported the merchant in question must have a licence. What the Controller says in this letter is that the goods have been imported without a licence.

The Chairman: That statement is wrong, it should have read "after the time for the licence had expired",

Mr. Raatgever: Then it went on to say:

"The goods will be forfeited by the Comptroller of Customs and Excise to whom you may apply for the release of the shipment."

The war ended since 1945; that is a restriction on the liberty of the subject.

The Chairman: What I suggest is that the Financial Secretary should send a letter embodying the Regulations in question.

Mr. Raatgever: The point is that the Controller does not exercise any discretion. It is strange that in 1954—nine years after the war has ended—he should have tried to exercise something that was never done previously. An officer who is incapable of using his discretion is useless. This officer is on pension and should be allowed to enjoy the pension for which he has worked; and somebody capable of interpreting the Regulations should be put in his place. The Financial Secretary said that the Committee made the stipulation about confirmation within one month, but I corrected that in Finance Committee and I am going to correct it again. This is what I said:

"The decision that orders placed on allocations from the extra amount made available to quota holders and non-quota holders should be confirmed within one month of the issue of the licence was made by the Comptroller of Customs without the advice of the Committee, and it was only when merchants complained that the Committee was consulted."

I have it here in black and white—in my copy of the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting. It was he—the Controller—who made the trouble and then went to the Committee who backed him up. It is not correct to say that the Committee made these conditions; he made them without consulting the Committee,

The Attorney General: I think the debate on this motion has wandered far away from its original purpose. I think also it is not hard to see—and it is very undesirable—that a matter which, possibly, was of a private nature between the Controller and the hon. Member (Mr. Raatgever) — a matter of commercial business—should have been introduced into this Council and should have become the subject of such a lengthy discussion. I take it that my hon. friend, on reflection, would not wish to pursue the matter any longer, because he would realise that it is particularly undesirable and improper.

The Chairman: I think the hon. Member, Mr. Raatgever, had better take the advice of the Financial Secretary and be supplied with the necessary legal authority for action. Is the hon. Member withdrawing his amendment for the reduction of the item to \$27,000?

Mr. Raatgever: No, I am not withdrawing; there is nothing improper in what I said. I do not mind if my vote is the only one against. I have the courage of my convictions. I again move that the item be reduced to \$27,000.

Sir Frank McDavid: I wanted to speak, but in view of the trend which the discussions took I thought I should refrain. I have only risen to make one observation. We all know of the territories which belong to the Sterling Area and of the burdens which control places upon us, but we are part of the Sterling Area, and so long as we enjoy the advantages which membership brings to us we must of course accept the obligations. My colleague, the Financial Secretary, spoke of instructions from the Secretary of State. Those instructions flow from a general policy formulated in the United Kingdom for the Sterling Area as a whole, and one thing we are hoping for is the eventual convertibility

of sterling, but one way to make convertibility further away is to resist those instructions based on policy formulated in England by Her Majesty's Government and the Bank of England. We are all looking forward to the day when exchange, in so far as ordinary business transactions are concerned, will go, and when there shall be freedom of trade. Let us hope that that day is not too far distant, but until it comes we must accept the general obligations which affect the members of the Sterling Area, even though they are irksome, and I for one think that some kind of control organisation must remain.

It has been suggested that a better course would be to abandon the separate organisation and transfer its functions to the Financial Secretary or the Comptroller of Customs. In the course of my remarks on the Budget I pointed out how very short-staffed the Financial Secretariat is. That Department just cannot take it on unless it is furnished with probably the same staff that now exists in the Commodity Control Organisation. Similarly, the Customs Department. We had a very long discussion in Finance Committee on increased functions and permanent staff.

One last word. I do not think for one moment that the application of the Secretary of State's instructions would be any less irksome to the mercantile community if they were observed by the Customs or the Finance Secretariat. Indeed I feel sure that although they may have a larger discretion they would be even more careful in applying the instructions received.

Mr. Luckhoo: May I be permitted to make an observation. The ramifications of the business world are not within my province, but the reason why I took the step I did was this: I feel that instructions are given from abroad and they necessarily must be obeyed, but the germane point is: do we need the present

[Mr. Luckhoo]

machinery to carry out those compulsory obligations? I feel that the Commodity Control Organisation is too large, too cumbersome for the mere carrying out of those instructions from abroad. I may be entirely wrong but that is the view I take.

The Chairman: I propose to put the amendment that the total vote be reduced to \$27,000.

The Committee divided and voted.

<i>For</i>	<i>Against</i>
Mr. Carter	Mr. Jailal
Mr. Luckhoo	Mrs. Dey
Mr. Raatgever—3.	Miss Collins
	Mr. Rahaman
	Mr. Macnie
	Mr. Phang
	Mr. Lord
	Mr. Tello
	Mr. Gajraj
	Mr. Smellie
	Mr. Farnum
	Mr. Kendall
	Mr. Cummings
	Sir Frank McDavid
	The Financial Secretary
	The Attorney General
	The Chief Secretary—17.

Amendment lost.

Total of head carried out at \$987,760, as recommended by Finance Committee.

DEVELOPMENT BUDGET

Head LIII.—Development Budget—passed as printed at \$1,100,000.

Total of Schedule passed at \$34,507,376.

Mr. Carter: For the purpose of information, Sir, I would like to ask a

question under Miscellaneous at page 66 of the Estimates. I have been making some research which has only just come to an end.

The Financial Secretary: We have just passed the item.

The Chairman: Let the item be re-committed. What is it, Mr. Carter?

Mr. Carter: I recall that some time last year a gentleman came to this Colony from Trinidad to investigate the possibilities of the establishment of a Government printery, but we have not seen the report of that gentleman. Under Miscellaneous, items 2 and 3 (Public Printing regulated by Contract, and Additional Printing not under Contract) we have passed an estimated expenditure of \$275,000 for this year. I have found that Government spends \$22,916 per month for printing, and that the Georgetown Town Council and the New Amsterdam Town Council spend about \$750 each per month. My investigation has disclosed that if Government operated its own printery and did the printing for the central as well as the local Government it would save about \$100,000 annually. I would certainly ask that the report of the gentleman from Trinidad be laid on the table.

The Chairman: I may tell the hon. Member that many years ago I made a similar suggestion to Government. There was a Commission which went into the matter, and it was found that a Government printery would not be an economical undertaking. The matter has been investigated since, and I know that it has been found that it would be much more expensive than the present arrangement.

Sir Frank McDavid: I have not seen the report of the printer from Trinidad who made an investigation into the local situation, but previous investigation disclosed that it would cost about twice as much to establish and run a Government printery. There may be reasons which may make

it desirable to do so but I can assure the hon. Member that the cost would be greater than that shown in the Estimate.

The Chief Secretary: The report of the printer from Trinidad has been received but I have not seen it myself. I think I am right in saying that it is a document which was compiled after a very short visit here, and is in no sense an analysis of the economics of establishing a Government printery, for or against. The matter is in fact under consideration and will require a great deal of study. I think it would be better to make a report to this Legislature after Government has completed its consideration of the matter, rather than to lay on the table a document which is in the nature of a practical investigation as to how to do it rather than whether it would be cheaper to have a Government printery.

The Chairman: I think the general feeling is that it would be desirable if Government could afford it. Is the hon. Member satisfied with the explanation?

Mr. Carter: I am alarmed to hear that Government printing costs \$22,916 per month. It seems that we in this country have no initiative or originality I know that the Trinidad Government operate their own Printery, and I do not know that they do so at a loss.

Sir Frank McDavid: I suggest that the hon. Member examine the Estimates of Trinidad. He would be astonished and alarmed at the high cost of running the Government Printery there. The cost of establishing one, starting from scratch, would be formidable.

The Chairman: I have allowed the recommittal of the item. Is the hon. Member satisfied?

Mr. Carter ; Yes, Your Honour.

PREAMBLE

The Financial Secretary: I move that the words "thirty-seven million, four hundred and thirty-seven thousand, seven hundred and eighty-two dollars" be substituted for the words "thirty-seven million, five hundred and eighty-three thousand, four hundred and twelve dollars" printed in the first and second lines of the preamble.

Question put, and agreed to.

Preamble amended accordingly.

I move that the words "three million, nine hundred and thirty thousand, four hundred and six dollars" be substituted for the words "three million, twenty-two thousand and sixteen dollars." printed in the fifth and sixth lines of the preamble.

Question put, and agreed to.

Preamble amended accordingly.

The Financial Secretary: I move that the words "thirty-four million, five hundred and seven thousand, three hundred and seventy-six dollars" be substituted for the words "thirty-four million, five hundred and sixty-one thousand, three hundred and ninety-six dollars," printed in the fifth and sixth lines of the preamble.

Question put, and agreed to.

Preamble amended accordingly.

The Financial Secretary: We have to make an amendment to clause 2 and I therefore ask that the clause be re-committed.

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause 2 recommitted.

The Financial Secretary: I move that the words "thirty-four million,

[The Financial Secretary]

five hundred and seven thousand, three hundred and seventy-six dollars" be substituted for the words "thirty-four million, five hundred and sixty-one thousand, three hundred and ninety-six dollars" printed in the fourth, fifth and sixth lines of clause 2.

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause as amended passed.

The Chairman: With these amendments I think we have disposed of the Bill in Committee.

Council resumed.

The Financial Secretary: May I ask that the third reading of this Bill be deferred until after I have completed the passage of the other Bills?

Question put, and agreed to.

Further consideration of the Bill deferred.

DEVELOPMENT ESTIMATES.

The Financial Secretary: Arising out of the Report of Finance Committee in respect of which we have debated the Recurrent Estimates in connection with the Appropriation Bill, we have the Development Estimates also to be approved by this Council. On the last occasion that we met I gave notice of a motion relative to those Estimates. I am now asking this Council to allow me to withdraw that motion and to substitute therefor the printed motion, copies of which have been handed to Members. It is more comprehensive in that it gives the Schedule.

Mr. Speaker: The motion is listed as item 5 on the Order Paper.

The Financial Secretary: I am sorry. I did not actually know it is there. I prefer to take it now, if Members would allow me.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Financial Secretary has asked that item 5 be taken now, and he is asking for an amendment of the motion as it appears on the Order Paper by substituting a resolution which he will now read.

The Financial Secretary: The resolution which I would like hon. Members to accept now reads as follows:

RESOLVED, That this Council approves of the Development Estimates of Expenditure for the year 1955 totalling NINETEEN MILLION FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SIX THOUSAND, NINE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-SEVEN DOLLARS as detailed in the Schedule below and which have been laid on the table and of the projects therein being financed from the annual revenue of the year and other resources of the Colony and from loan funds.

SCHEDULE

Head No.	Head of Estimate	Estimate 1955
I.	Agriculture ..	\$ 945,993
II.	Civil Aviation ..	27,850
III.	Drainage and Irrigation ..	3,046,290
IV.	Education ..	250,000
V.	Finance ..	4,525,000
VI.	Forests ..	364,134
VII.	Geological Department ..	209,428
VIII.	Health ..	456,000
IX.	Housing ..	1,382,178
X.	Lands and Mines ..	22,000
XI.	Land Settlement ..	—
XII.	Postal Department ..	670,235
XIII.	Public Works ..	5,179,218
XIV.	Rural Self Help ..	250,000
XV.	Social Welfare ..	20,000
XVI.	Transport & Harbours ..	2,108,661
		\$19,456,987

Mr. Speaker: May I suggest for the purpose of sequence that the resolution be made to read "and which have been laid on the table and of the projects therein being financed from the annual revenue of the year, from loan funds and other resources of the Colony.

The Financial Secretary: Thank you, Sir.

Amendment put, and agreed to.

The Financial Secretary: In this Schedule to the motion the development heads under which the money would be required have been inserted. Hon. Members have been into the details of this expenditure in Finance Committee. It is required to complete our Two-year Development Plan. I do not think there is very much more I should say on the subject. I hope hon. Members would be able to approve of it either Head by Head or *en bloc*, if they have no objection to that. If they desire to speak on any Head, they may suggest what Heads they would like to speak on. I move that the motion as amended be approved.

Sir Frank McDavid (Member for Agriculture, Forests, Lands and Mines): I beg to second the motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion, as amended, adopted.

INCOME TAX (AMENDMENT NO. 2) BILL

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move the second reading of a Bill intitled—

“An Ordinance further to amend the Income Tax Ordinance.”

The proposal is one I made in my Budget Statement, and it will be seen from the Objects and Reasons of the Bill that it seeks to remove the limit which is placed on the five years in which losses can be written off. The idea is to remove the limit entirely and also to provide for the ascertaining of the amounts which may be made tax-free in so far as income tax is concerned and insurance as well. I dealt with the matter in my Budget Statement and I think, more or less, hon. Members are quite familiar with the facts.

Mr. Cummings seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

Council resolved itself into committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

Clause 1—*Short title*—passed as printed.

Clause 2—*Amendment of Section 13 of the Principal Ordinance. Order in Council No. 15 of 1954. No. 26 of 1949 No. 7 of 1953.*

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that Clause 2 as printed be deleted and the Clause as set out on the sheet given to Members be substituted therefor. It is the same thing but it is phrased differently.

Mr. Raatgever: May I ask that Members be allowed to read the proposed amendment? It has just been sent around.

The Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Macnie: I will support that. I do not wish to delay the business of this Council but, like the hon. Member, Mr. Raatgever I think we should be given an opportunity to read it. It is not just an amendment but a long amendment.

The Chairman: If I had known it was proposed to amend the clause, I would have suggested the same course. I would suggest that it be deferred for consideration.

The Financial Secretary: I have no objection.

Agreed to.

Council resumed.

Further consideration of the Bill deferred.

TAX (AMENDMENT NO. 3) BILL

Mr. Speaker: We will go back to Item 3. Are there any amendments to it?

The Financial Secretary: There are amendments, but they amount only to withdrawals. If hon. Members have no difficulties with the proposed amendments, I have no objection to proceeding with the second reading.

I beg to move the second reading of the Bill intituled:

"An Ordinance further to amend the Tax Ordinance, 1939."

This, like the other Bill the further consideration of which we have just deferred also arises out of my Budget Statement and seeks to make law the increase which I have recommended for the rates of excise duty on rum and the adjustment of the entertainment tax. This matter was gone into in Finance Committee and there is little more I can add to it.

Mr. Cummings seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

Council resolved itself into committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

Clauses 1, 2 and 3 passed as printed.

Clause 4—Repeal and re-enactment of section 50 of the Principal Ordinance No. 45 of 1951.

The Financial Secretary: It is stated in subclause (a) in respect of entertainment duty —

"in the city of Georgetown or in the town of New Amsterdam or within one mile of the municipal boundaries of the said city or town 17½%.

I beg to move that "17½%" be deleted and "16⅓%" be inserted. It is a much fairer percentage. As I said in my Budget Statement the purpose of

this amendment is not to raise revenue, but merely to remove the tax from a fixed, graduated tax to a percentage tax on receipts. Sixteen and two-thirds per cent. is a more correct rate than seventeen and a half per cent.

The Chairman: Is that the only amendment?

The Financial Secretary: That is the only amendment, Sir.

Mr. Raatgever: There seems to be little reason for this except that it makes for easier calculation.

The Financial Secretary: Not quite that. I think it means \$13,000 or \$14,000 more on cinemas in Georgetown. Up to the time we were in Finance Committee there was no protest against the 17½ per cent., but it was subsequently pointed out by figures produced and which I have been able to verify, that it would mean \$13,000 or \$14,000 more a year, and I felt that in fairness to what I said in the Budget Statement that this change should be made.

Mr. Raatgever: I am not opposing it.

Mr. Macnie: I am not opposing it. This is just for information. Clauses 2 and 3 are already in effect by Order in Council as from the date the Budget Statement was made. When does this Clause come into effect?

The Financial Secretary: As soon as this Council accepts it.

Mr. Macnie: The reason why I asked that is because there is no statement saying it comes into effect on any date. I agree that the Ordinance on enactment becomes operative, but I am wondering whether, from the administration angle, some date should not be published. I am suggesting, with due respect to my friend, the hon.

the Financial Secretary that it would facilitate the administration of the collection of taxes if he would state in the Bill very briefly "Clause 4 of this Bill will come into effect on" whatever date of the year, or month it may be.

The Financial Secretary: It is not in the Order in Council.

Mr. Macnie: It is not. I started off by saying that. I may not have made myself clear.

The Chairman: Does the hon. Member (Mr. Macnie) want something inserted in the Bill?

Mr. Macnie: I am only suggesting that it would be an advantage from the point of view of both sides to have a known date.

Mr. Cummings: Is it not a rule that a Bill becomes law on the date of assent, save and except where there is something in the Bill to the contrary?

The Financial Secretary: If the hon. Member is in doubt I would leave the Bill in committee and when the Attorney General is here we might deal with it.

The Chairman: The hon. Member has suggested that a fixed date should be inserted in the Bill itself. Does the Financial Secretary have any objection?

The Financial Secretary: No, Sir, I have no objection, but I would like to be guided by what is right. The Attorney General is not here and I suggest we leave the matter in committee.

The Chairman: Wait until the end of the Bill. The Attorney General may come in or he may not.

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause 4 as amended passed.

Title and enacting clause passed as printed.

Council resumed.

CUSTOMS (CONSOLIDATION)
(AMENDMENT NO. 2) BILL

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move the second reading of the Bill intituled:

"An Ordinance further to amend the Customs (Consolidation) Ordinance, 1952."

This is another Bill that comes under the Budget proposals. Its purpose is merely to impose increased duty on the items listed in the Schedule, and when we reach the Committee stage I propose to withdraw certain clauses relating to gasoline concessions, so that only clause 3, as printed here, will be passed together with the Schedule.

Sir Frank McDavid: I beg to second the motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

Council resolved itself into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

Clause 2—*Amendment of section 2 of the Principal Ordinance No. 12 of 1954.*

The Financial Secretary: I move that this clause be deleted from the Bill. It deals with gasoline.

Amendment put, and agreed to.

Clause 2 deleted.

Clause 3—*Amendment of Part I of the first Schedule of the Principal*

Ordinance, No. 20 of 1953

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this clause be renumbered clause 2 and amended to read as follows:

"2. PART I of the first Schedule to the Principal Ordinance as substituted by subsection (1) of section four of the Customs Duties Ordinance, 1953, (which substituted the first Schedule thereof for Part I of the first Schedule to the Principal Ordinance) and as amended from time to time is being further amended by increasing the import duties of customs specified therein on the articles set out in the Schedule hereto to the extent indicated therein."

Amendment put, and agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, passed.

Clause 4—*Amendment of Part III of the first Schedule of the Principal Ordinance No. 20 of 1953.*

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that this clause be deleted.

Amendment put, and agreed to.

Clause 4 deleted.

Schedule.

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that "(Section 3)" in the printed Schedule be amended to read "(Section 2)".

Amendment put, and agreed to.

Schedule, as amended, passed.

Council resumed.

The Financial Secretary: With the consent of Council, I beg to move that this Bill be read a third time and passed.

Sir Frank Mc David: I beg to second the motion.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

The Financial Secretary: That concludes the Budget proposals. I am not prepared to go through with the general debate this afternoon, but I do not know whether the Member for Local Government (Mr. Farnum) desires to do so.

Mr. Speaker: Is the hon. Member for Local Government prepared to go on with item 6—the Georgetown Town Council (Amendment) Bill?

Mr. Farnum: Yes, Sir. It is not contentious and I do not think it would take very long.

Mr. Speaker: Very well.

GEORGETOWN TOWN COUNCIL
(AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr. Farnum: I beg to move the second reading of the Bill intituled:

"An Ordinance further to amend the Georgetown Town Council Ordinance by making provision for Town Constables to be appointed to bear the titles of Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Sergeant and Corporal."

Under the provisions of the Georgetown Town Council Ordinance, the Council is only empowered to appoint town constables, but there are at present in the Constabulary the posts of Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Sergeant and Corporal. These officers have been challenged by certain Magistrates as to their authority to lay informations, make complaints for offences against the Principal Ordinance and the By-laws in force thereunder and to conduct proceedings in such matters. This Bill seeks to make provision for Town Constables to bear the titles referred to and to empower such officers to lay information, make complaints and perform other duties in the same manner as town constables are at present authorised to do. These facts are out-

lined in the Objects and Reasons of the Bill and I commend it to this Council.

Mr. Gajraj: I beg to second the motion.

Mr. Luckhoo: I rise to take this opportunity of expressing the hope that it will not be long or far-distant before we have the Municipal Constabulary being taken in by the Police Force. I feel that this Constabulary has served a useful purpose during the years of its existence, and with the extension of the City by the early implementation of the Greater Georgetown Plan, which I will respectfully ask the hon. Mover to do everything in his power to bring about in the course of this year, I look forward to the Police Force to provide services in the form of police constables, for which the Corporation would be willing to pay over such funds as they are now spending for the running of the Town Constabulary. That is necessary because of the fact that we would require a higher sense of responsibility and discipline, and also more personnel to be trained along the lines now being adopted for men and women also. The Municipality cannot undertake to do this at present. The Town Constabulary, I believe, is a relic of the old days when there used to be a Mayor's Court and you had the constables of the Corporation acting as policemen, bringing cases before the Mayor for adjudication. One must have changes, and I think it is time that we leave it to the Police Force to train our officers and provide us with the services we enjoyed in that respect.

Mr. Speaker: including the markets?

Mr. Luckhoo: Yes, Sir. At the moment you have a considerable number of constables serving as policemen and sometimes police assistance has to be asked by the Town Council. I feel

that we might have these very constables serving around in the markets.

Mr. Macnie: I am very glad that the hon. Mr. Luckhoo, who is Mayor of the City, has referred to this proposed change, because I intended to do so. I think I read recently that the intention is to have the Police Force taking over the Town Constabulary, and, having read that, I am wondering whether there is any need for this Bill. Without casting any reflection on the Town Constabulary, I should like to point out that the hon. Member (Mr. Luckhoo) has said that there is need for better training in that body. If that is so, I am wondering why should we enact legislation at this time to give the power of the law to men who are, admittedly, in need of better training. The implication is that there has not been sufficient training. My question is: is it wise to attach ranks by law to men who have been inadequately trained, especially if in the near future the proposal to incorporate the Town Constabulary into the Police Force should become an accomplished fact? Is it therefore necessary or wise to enact this legislation when in a few months such an amalgamation may be made?

Mr. Speaker: Speaking as an individual I do not think there is any likelihood of the Town Constabulary being absorbed by the Police. They could not, for instance, take over the personnel of the Constabulary for many reasons. There is the question of training which would take some time.

Mr. Macnie: I would like to remind the Council that the New Amsterdam Fire Brigade has been taken over by the Police.

Mr. Speaker: A fire brigade is a different thing.

Mr. Raatgever: The two things are not parallel at all.

Mr. Macnie: From the point of view of discipline and control the members of the Fire Brigade are members of the Police Force.

Mr. Speaker: What the hon. Mr. Luckhoo has referred to is something for the future; it does not affect this Bill. I think the Bill is necessary, but the other question, I am afraid, can only remain a hope. The Town Constabulary has a good training officer, an ex-member of the Police Force, who is also a very good prosecutor.

Mr. Luckhoo: We have had some unofficial talks with the acting Commissioner of Police and I do not think those difficulties are insurmountable. I would like to mention that these titles are at present being held by the officers concerned. This Bill really does not create the titles but merely seeks to give sanction to them and to permit those officers to make complaints and prosecute in such matters.

Mr. Speaker: This legislation is absolutely necessary for the present. I do not think we need go any further than that.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Council resolved itself into Committee and approved of the Bill as printed.

Council resumed.

Mr. Farnum: I beg to move that the Bill be now read a third time and passed.

Mr. Kendall: I beg to second the motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

PUBLIC HEALTH (AMENDMENT)
BILL

Mr. Cummings (Member for Labour, Health and Housing): I beg to move the second reading of the Bill intitled:

"An Ordinance further to amend the Public Health Ordinance, 1934."

The Public Health Ordinance, 1934, does not provide for the granting of leave of absence to any member of the Central Board of Health, or the appointment of another person to act in the place of a member who has been granted leave. It appears that the granting of leave and the making of acting appointments has been done in the past in spite of this omission in the Ordinance, and the Bill seeks to empower the Governor to grant leave of absence to any member of the Board and to appoint another person to act in the place of a member who has been granted leave. Provision is also sought to be made whereby any defect in the appointment of any member of the Board shall not affect the validity of any proceeding of the Board. I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

The Financial Secretary: I beg to second the motion.

Council resolved itself into Committee and approved of the Bill as printed.

Council resumed.

Mr. Cummings: I beg to move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed.

The Financial Secretary: I beg to second the motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

ANTIBIOTICS (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr. Cummings: I beg to move the second reading of the Bill intituled :

"An Ordinance to amend the Antibiotics Ordinance, 1951, to make provision for the sale of antibiotics to Captains of ocean-going vessels."

There is at present no provision in the Antibiotics Ordinance, No. 40 of 1951, under which Captains of ocean-going vessels may obtain supplies of antibiotics. The position is that an importer is prohibited from selling or transferring antibiotics to any person other than a medical practitioner, a dentist, a veterinary surgeon, or the holder of a licence to store antibiotics. In order to overcome this difficulty the Medical Board, after careful consideration of the matter, submitted a draft amending Bill for consideration. I move that the Bill be read a second time.

The Financial Secretary: I beg to second the motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Council resolved itself into Committee and approved of the Bill as printed.

Council resumed.

Mr. Cummings: I beg to move that the Bill be now read a third time and passed.

The Financial Secretary: I beg to second the motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

Mr. Speaker: It is now 5 o'clock. Council is adjourned until Thursday, 17th February, at 2 o'clock.