

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.*Tuesday, 23rd December, 1941.*

The Council met at 11 a.m., His Excellency the Governor, Sir GORDON LETHBRIDGE, K.C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. G. D. Owen, C.M.G.

The Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr. E. O. Pretheroe, M.C., K.C.

The Hon. F. Dias, O.B.E., (Nominated).

The Hon. E. G. Woolford, K.C., (New Amsterdam).

The Hon. E. A. Luckhoo, O.B.E., (Eastern Berbice).

The Hon. E. F. McDavid, M.B.E., Colonial Treasurer.

The Hon. F. J. Seaford, O.B.E., (Georgetown North).

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

The Hon. W. A. D'Andrade, O.B.E., Comptroller of Customs.

The Hon. N. M. MacLennan, Director of Medical Services.

The Hon. G. O. Case, Consulting Engineer.

The Hon. B. R. Wood, Conservator of Forests.

The Hon. J. Eleazar (Berbice River).

The Hon. J. Gonsalves, O.B.E., (Georgetown South).

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

The Hon. Percy C. Wight, O.B.E., (Georgetown Central).

The Hon. Jung Bahadur Singh (Demerara-Essequibo).

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

The Hon. E. M. Walcott (Nominated).

The Hon. C. R. Jacob (North Western District).

The Hon. J. W. Jackson (Nominated).

The Hon. F. A. Mackey (Nominated).

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

MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 19th December, 1941, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.**DEATH OF MR. S. H. BAYLEY.**

THE PRESIDENT: I have to record that we have heard this morning of the death of a former Member of this Council, Mr. S. H. Bayley. I am sure that Members will agree with me and Government in expressing our very great regret and our sincere sympathy with his widow and family. I think it is unnecessary for me to say more than those formal words, and that Government will take the necessary action. The question has been raised that Members would like to attend the funeral, and that the Council should adjourn at half past three this afternoon instead of at 5 o'clock. I am, of course, entirely agreeable to that and I propose to do so.

BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL.

As our business period will be limited to an hour and a half this morning and this afternoon, I propose that we proceed with the Estimates from the point at which we reached—Miscellaneous—with Customs and Forests to follow. In the afternoon I shall call on the Conservator of Forests to move a motion to provide machinery and organization for regulating and stabilizing, if we can, the cost of living. Thereafter we will proceed with certain Bills, and I hope it may be possible to get through our resolution with regard to the cost of living in an hour and a half. In any case I wish somehow that we will be able to get on with the succeeding business as soon as possible tomorrow.

EDUCATION.

I have another intimation to make. During the week-end I found time to begin reading the memorandum on Education as I had undertaken to do in the debate last week. I found the papers very voluminous—memoranda by the Comptroller and his Adviser on Education, a despatch from the Secretary of State and other incidental papers. I found it considerably convenient to myself to deal with the matter subject by subject and see what action had been taken or was intended. I followed that in issuing to Members, perhaps in tabloid form, the minutes of the Comptroller and his Adviser on a particular aspect of education, with my own comment as to action taken or any comments of my own of a general kind. I trust that procedure will be useful to Members of the Council who asked for further information as to what was said on the controversial subjects during the debate.

COLONY'S BUDGET POSITION.

There is one other matter I have a good deal in mind and that is the question of the budget in general. It has been prepared a good many months ago, in most details before my arrival in the Colony, and I apologized at my initial meeting that I had no detailed knowledge of it. I said that I considered it not a bad budget, but I have been a great deal concerned to see the increased expenditure that has fallen on us in the last two months of 1941, on things very urgent and essential in themselves or connected in one way or another with our war obligations, and I can see that further expenditure of that kind is going to face us in 1942, such as the cost of living survey and the setting up of the organization to attempt to stabilize the rise in the cost of living. Therefore I do feel that where our present budget shows an increase in new appointments, or an increase in votes or new activities taken on, I have to think very seriously before I authorize that increased expenditure being undertaken next year. What I propose to do is to hold it up until I have had an opportunity to review more carefully the out-turn of the year 1941 and see what our surplus will be.

As you know, the procedure is that once a budget is passed the formal approval of the Secretary of State is necessary. If the Colony is under Treasury control,

which I am not quite sure it is, then of course the further approval of the Imperial Exchequer is necessary. I do not think that is being applied at the moment, but the concurrence of the Secretary of State is necessary. In spite of that the Governor has authority to act on the expenditure authorized by the Council by the issue of special warrants. I do that on the 1st of January, but I propose to exclude not only items of extraordinary expenditure this year but also new expenditure authorized. In particular I propose to hold up new appointments, including those in the Education Department which have come in for a great deal of criticism, and although we have passed them I propose to take that step until I am perfectly sure of our financial position and the absolute necessity for those appointments. I have to exclude from that new appointments relating to the Department of Agriculture, firstly because I feel that the development of agriculture is the whole basis of our future, and secondly it is particularly recommended by the Comptroller and his Adviser who are visiting us in March, and I feel that we have to meet our obligations. New items will come forward to-day or on future days, and even if we pass them I shall follow that principle as a matter of practice from the 1st January next. I propose that we proceed now with the business before the Council.

SURTAX ON TONNAGE AND LIGHT DUES.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. G. D. Owen, C.M.G.) communicated the following Message:—

MESSAGE No. 2.

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council,

I have the honour to invite the Council to approve of the continuance during 1942 of the surtax of fifteen per centum levied during the year 1941 on the amount of tonnage and light dues collected under section eighteen of the Transport and Harbours Ordinance, 1931. This surtax is not levied in respect of any vessel which lands and takes away cargo not exceeding in the aggregate 500 tons, or in respect of any sailing vessel of not more than 300 tons register.

2. Honourable Members will recall the enactment of the Transport and Harbours (Temporary Surtax) Ordinance, 1932 (No. 1 of 1932) which provided for the collection of the surtax for the first time in the year 1932

and the passing of the Transport and Harbours Ordinance, 1931, under the provisions of section 18 of which Resolutions have since been passed to enable the levying of the temporary surtax.

3. The reason for the subsequent continuation of this surtax is that it is still impossible to dispense with the additional revenue. The financial position is not such as will allow of any taxation imposed during 1941 being reduced, and I accordingly invite the Council to approve of the collection of this surtax being continued during 1942, after which the position can again be reviewed.

GORDON LETHEM,
Governor.

16th December, 1941.

PAPER LAID.

The Colonial Secretary laid on the table the following document :—

The Third Schedule of Additional Provision for the period 1st July to 30th September, 1941, required to meet expenditure in excess of the provision made in the estimates for the year 1941, and not included in the First or Second Schedules of Additional Provision for 1941.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES.

SURTAX ON TONNAGE AND LIGHT DUES.

The Colonial Secretary gave notice of the following motions :—

THAT, with reference to Governor's Message No. 2, dated 16th December, 1941, this Council approves of the surtax of fifteen *per centum* being levied on the amount of tonnage and light dues which shall be collected during the year 1942, under section eighteen of the Transport and Harbours Ordinance, 1931.

THIRD SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1941.

THAT, this Council approves of the Third Schedule of Additional Provision for the period 1st July to 30th September, 1941, required to meet expenditure in excess of the provision made in the estimates for the year 1941, and not included in the First or Second Schedules of Additional Provision for 1941, which has been laid on the table.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS.

The Attorney-General (Mr. E. O. Pretheroe, M.C., K.C.) gave notice of the introduction and first reading of the following Bill :—

A Bill intituled an Ordinance further to amend the Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) Ordinance, Chapter 13.

Mr. Mc DAVID (Colonial Treasurer) gave notice of the introduction and first reading of the following Bill :—

A Bill intituled an Ordinance to amend the Excess Profits Tax Ordinance, 1941, by increasing the rate of tax; by making certain alterations in the method of computing excess profits and by repealing the provisions relating to relief in respect of deficiency of profits.

COST OF LIVING CONTROL ORGANISATION.

Mr. WOOD (Conservator of Forests) gave notice of the following motion :—

THAT, with reference to the Statement made to the Council on the 19th December, 1941, by the Chairman of the Supplies Control Board on the subject of the cost of living and price control, this Council recommends that Government take immediate steps to provide the additional machinery and organisation for the Control Board with a view to improving and widening the scope of control and controlling as far as may be possible the rising cost of living; the necessary charges to be met from the provision for Colonial Emergency Measures.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

ESTIMATES, 1942.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and resumed consideration of the estimates of expenditure to be defrayed from revenue for the year ending the 31st day of December, 1942.

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

Item 64—Subsidy to British Guiana United Broadcasting Co., Ltd., \$3,000.

Mr. MACKEY: When we adjourned last week the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee), who I am sorry to see is not in his seat, raised one or two points. When the hon. Member rose from his seat under item 64 I thought I was going to hear some useful criticism. First of all I thought he might have read the remarks I had made over the air as Chairman of the Broadcasting Company inviting criticisms from the general public, because any suggestions he made about the programmes in his official capacity would naturally carry a good deal of weight. Unfortunately that did not materialize. Secondly, I thought he might possibly congratulate the company on what they have done in view of the very

difficult conditions under which we operate. I refer, of course, to the great difficulty that we have in getting orders executed for very essential parts for the transmitter, but there again no reference was made to that. Surely I thought that perhaps he might make a suggestion that the subsidy to the company might be increased, and what I did have in mind was that we might add to our activities television broadcasting. On that subject, of course, I could speak for hours. There are enormous possibilities of television of which I am sure Members of the Council would like to avail themselves, but of course that also was not brought forward.

The hon. Member raised one or two points. I think he said there should be a Government representative on the Board. The hon. Member, I know, is fully aware of the fact that if he paid one shilling at the Registrar's Office he would get full information in answer to his question. I think he also referred to the question of shares and wanted to know if the general public had an opportunity to acquire shares in the company. There again, if he paid another shilling—or one shilling might cover both—he would be able to read the Articles of Association, and I can assure the hon. Member that provided those Articles are complied with there would be no difficulty whatever in his getting shares. In fact I would like to see him own shares, and I would help him in every respect. There are some shares available which he can have if he wants to.

The hon. Member also referred to the question of management. I think, as most Members know, this is not the place to discuss the affairs of any company, public or private. If the hon. Member acquires shares in the company he can attend the general meeting and criticize the management if he chooses to do so. I, as Chairman of the company, am not prepared to go into the why's and wherefore of changes in the management, etc.

Item put, and agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of a new item, 70—Contribution to the Salvation Army, \$1,000. Government's proposal is to make this donation to the Salvation Army to assist towards the extension of its

Sailors' Home. The Army is doing considerably more work now than it did in peace time. When sailors come ashore they go to the Home and make considerable use of it, and Government feels that, having regard to what seamen are going through for us, we might help by making this contribution of \$1,000 which will not be an annual contribution but a donation towards the Salvation Army's Sailors Home Extension Scheme.

Item put, and agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of a new item 70—Grants to Missions, \$19,000. Hon. Members have before them the report of the Committee appointed some time ago to consider the question of restoring grants to Missions in the Colony, and with the view of carrying out the recommendations in that report Government proposes to insert this sum of \$19,000 in the estimate. This expenditure will be in connection with religious work as well as educational work among Aboriginal Indians. If the amount is voted no payment will be made until the revision of the proposals submitted by the various denominations has been carried out by Government. I think the Council was informed some time ago that Government had in mind the resuscitation of these grants, and this sum it is proposed to spend subject to what Your Excellency said at the opening of the meeting. The amount will be put on the Estimates but will not be spent until Your Excellency is satisfied that it should be spent, and how best it could be spent.

THE CHAIRMAN: My action will be as I said. Here is new or restoration of old expenditure. I cannot regard it as urgent in terms of the war effort, but I have seen constructive criticisms of the work that is being done.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I would like to remind you, sir, that there is at present sitting a Committee which is investigating the position of the Aboriginal Indians in general. Many of the recommendations made in this report may be affected by the decision of that Committee. The present Chairman is absent on leave and his place has not been filled. One member has just returned from the Rupununi and those persons serving on the Committee all feel

that action should be delayed until that report has been received. We hope to submit our report in the very near future. It touches on the religious aspect, and all those who are interested in Indians would like Mr. Orella and another person to give evidence. It is likely that some of the recommendations in this report might have to be abolished.

THE CHAIRMAN: Would you suggest holding it over?

Mr. WOOLFORD: Do not give effect to the vote until this Committee has had an opportunity to make its recommendations. I do not think any denomination was represented on the Committee for the restoration of grants to Missions. The two Bishops are members of the other Committee. It would be desirable to suspend action for a little while in putting into force the recommendations of that Committee.

Mr. McDAVID (Col. Treasurer): I feel that this matter has been reconsidered for quite a long time and I know that the late Governor had given something of an undertaking to the religious bodies concerned that some item would be put on the Estimate. I think it would be sufficient if we put the item on the Estimate and postpone any action on it until the various factors relating to the distribution and allocation have been determined, quite apart from our own financial consideration which, as Your Excellency said, will have to be the main factor. I think the amount ought to be voted.

Mr. DEAGUIAR: I think the Council is being asked to do something which is not quite right. I would not have said anything on the subject but for what the Colonial Treasurer has said. Here we have an item of \$19,000 arrived at as the result of a report submitted by a Committee to Government, and I notice that it was addressed to Sir John Waddington who left this Colony early in 1940. We are now at the end of 1941, and as far as I can make out it seems that the report has either not been considered or some papers in connection with it have not been considered. At any rate the Council is being asked to allocate a sum of money, but we are told that there is going to be some consideration of the redistribution or reallocation of the amount. I do not

think we should be asked to do anything of the kind.

The Council knows from the report how the amount is going to be distributed, and if the Council is being asked to vote a sum of money which is mentioned in the report with suggestions as to how it should be distributed, to find later on that the amount has been cut up again in four or five different parts, I do not think that is the correct thing to do. Much as I would like to see the item appearing on the Estimate I am not at all satisfied with what has come from the Government side in this matter. There must be something more behind it than we have been told. It seems to me that it would be better to remove the item altogether, much as I hate doing so, because this matter has been mentioned on more than one occasion. We know that the need exists for missionary work among the Indians and in other remote parts of the Colony, and I take it that it is Government's policy to assist Missions in that work.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am not aware of anything lying behind it. What I said was that I am worried about taking on new commitments. The Treasurer has said that Government is committed to show its readiness to give the grant. Personally I would put an item of \$1 on the Estimate.

Mr. DEAGUIAR: I accept Your Excellency's statement and I would have said nothing but for the remark made by the Colonial Treasurer that Government would have to reconsider the matter to see whether there should be a redistribution. The Committee's report is very exhaustive, yet we hear the Colonial Treasurer speaking about redistribution.

Mr. McDAVID: The hon. Member is unduly suspicious. If he had read the report carefully he would have seen that a process of distribution is indicated. What Government is concerned with is to know that these Missions are entirely devoting their time to Aboriginal Indians, and also that there is no overlapping and things of that kind. I do not think the hon. Member should be unduly apprehensive. Government must be satisfied that the money is going to be devoted particu-

larly and wholly to work among Aboriginal Indians.

Mr. DeAGUIAR: If there is going to be a reallocation of the amount or any material alternation in the distribution of the money this Council should be informed.

THE CHAIRMAN: I entirely agree.

Mr. ELEAZAR: This matter has been long overdue. These missions have been in existence for many years but for one reason or another—shortage of men and money—they have been allowed to lie dormant, and in some cases to go into extinction. The Committee went very carefully into the matter and recommended certain grants to the various Bodies. What is to be gained by holding up the money I cannot understand. Supposing to-morrow the Anglican Body decided that they would not carry on their Missions? It is the proper thing to put a sum on the Estimate and pay it out as the occasion arises. When Members sit on Committees and arrive at certain conclusions their recommendations should not be criticised by other Members who have not the evidence on which those conclusions are based. The Committee went thoroughly into all these Missions. Some Members do not even know that Missions exist, and one asked me if the Indians could be civilized. It is not fair to neglect them. Their children are very apt, and it is high time that Government take a hand in carrying on what it has neglected so long.

The Indians can teach us a lesson which we have not observed. We have taken over their country so to speak. It is a reflection on this Council that we had to wait until the Royal Commission came here to tell us that we have been neglecting those people. When an attempt is made to remedy that some Members suggest that we should defer it. The amount should be placed on the Estimate, and when Your Excellency has an opportunity you will go into the question yourself. The money will not be paid to any Mission until it is carrying out its obligation.

THE CHAIRMAN: The motion is that \$19,000 be inserted in the Estimate. Does any Member desire to move its reduction or deletion?

Mr. JACOB: I do not know whether the opinions expressed have been very favourable to the expenditure of this sum of money. So far as I am concerned I think the money should be spent and arrangements made that it should be spent as early as possible. In my own constituency I know that the denominational Bodies are doing excellent work, and I should be the last to think that this Council would do anything to prevent them continuing that good work.

There are one or two things about the distribution of these grants that seem a little bit irregular, if I may say so. In 1919 the Church of England received \$7,344, the Methodists \$1,700, the Roman Catholic Church \$1,632, and the Church of Scotland \$612. The proposal now is that the Church of England and the Church of Rome should receive \$8,000 each, and that \$1,000 should be given to the Church of Scotland, the Congregational Poly, and Methodist Body respectively. The distribution seems a bit irregular in view of what has been done in the past. Whether there is going to be a new policy in the future I do not know, but I think the money should be given and given as early as possible.

I was a little concerned, Your Excellency, when you made the announcement this morning that certain moneys voted by this Council may not be spent. I think this is useful expenditure which should have been made in the past. As regards education we have had the report and the personal explanation of the Director of Education, and I think the majority of the Council was satisfied that unless additional supervision is granted the amounts being spent on primary education will not be profitably spent. I would urge on Your Excellency to consider very carefully the question of not authorizing the expenditure of money that has been passed in this Council in open vote. In the past certain things have happened with the result that there is a large percentage of illiteracy in the Colony. I would like to draw Your Excellency's attention to that fact and to express the hope that in the immediate future you will not make the mistake that was made in the not too distant past.

Mr. WOOLFORD: In case there is

any misapprehension, my reason for suggesting that effect be not given to the expenditure is this: This vote concerns Missions and it was intended that it should reach the Aboriginal Indians only. The Committee to which I referred, whose investigations are now proceeding, is placed in the difficulty of determining who are Aboriginal Indians. There is quite a considerable conflict of opinion as to who should be included under this vote owing to the number of half-caste Indians in the Colony, but it is desirable that those for whose benefit this vote is being asked should receive it and not other members of the community. There is the question of Poor Law relief and sanitary improvements in villages where only Aboriginal Indians are. I think I may mention that the Attorney-General is anxious to give evidence before the Committee, and it is just that kind of evidence that the Committee is looking for. It is largely a legal matter.

THE CHAIRMAN: I propose to put the question that an item of \$19,000 be inserted in the Estimate. Has anybody any amendment to that?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think it would be better if the item read: "Grants to Aboriginal Missions, \$19,000."

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

CUSTOMS.

The Committee reverted to Head VII.—Customs.

Item 1 (a)—Comptroller of Customs, \$1,080.

Mr. MACKAY: What I am going to say has, I think, been mentioned on more than one occasion. I think it is the general opinion of the Council that the salary of the Comptroller of Customs is very inadequate indeed for the work which he does. All of us who know him realize that especially at this time he has more work than he can get through. I have known him personally since I came to this Colony about 33 years ago, and it is hard to find many other officers who carry out their duties as conscientiously and fearlessly as he does. I am therefore asking Government to give the question of his salary its consideration.

Mr. WALCOTT: I would like to support every word the hon. Member has said.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: It appears to us around this table, or to anybody who takes any active interest in the community, that here is a Head of a Department who is called upon to sit on nearly every Committee that Government sets up, but Government has not thought fit to relieve him of some of his duties though it relieves the Heads of other Departments, some of whom are not fully occupied.

Mr. ELEAZAR: The Comptroller of Customs is a very able, willing and hard-working officer, but I would not put a premium on the laziness of others by suggesting that when a man does his work for the pay he gets Government should give him more pay. I think we should rather take away some of the money of the others if they would not work. I notice that the Comptroller is getting a personal allowance. It is a small allowance because, at the time, we were reducing salaries. I think we should say "Let him go on working as hard as he is doing; he will get his reward some day." His personal allowance of £50 is small, but if Government begins now to give personal allowances to every Head of a Department who is working hard it would be making very invidious distinctions. I do not want to name them but we have some officers around this table with nothing to do for their big salaries while others are up to their collars with work but are not being considered. I think if the Council expressed its goodwill and appreciation of the Comptroller of Customs at this time that ought to be sufficient for him.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I would not have risen at all but for the fact that the matter was brought up in Council before. I have really risen to express regret that when it was raised adequate consideration was not given the matter, because whatever might have been given the officer would have been more useful to him than if we were to do anything to-day. The proposal at the time, which I think came from the Council, was that the personal allowance to the officer should be £100, but for one reason or another it was felt that the Colony could not afford it at the time and the sum of £50 was voted. I

mention that just to remind the hon. Member on my left (Mr. Eleazar), who seems to think that the request made has some bearing on the additional work of the officer. The question of the officer's ability never arose, because not only the Government and the Council realized the value of the officer's services but members of the public as well.

On the general question it must be remembered that the post of Comptroller of Customs in this Colony is a very important one, and if we examined the emoluments of the post I venture to submit that they would not bear any comparison with those of some other officers in the Service. The substantive salary of the post is £850 per annum, and we know that it carries with it a great deal of responsibility in so far as revenue is concerned, and taking it altogether it is a very large Department. I do not think the question of any additional work that has been imposed on the officer since the war began has any bearing on the matter at all. If Government favourably considers the proposal put forward that this officer might receive consideration I repeat that my regret is that it would not be as useful to him now as if it had been done at the time. I think that proposal was made some five or six years ago. I will not bother to explain the reason why, but I am sure that Government appreciates the point I make that it would not be as useful to him now as it might have been then, unless of course some method is devised so as to enable Government to mete out justice to the cause I have in mind.

Mr. JACOB: I am not opposed to the speeches of the two or three hon. Members who have spoken advocating that the Comptroller of Customs should be granted an increase of salary, but I am afraid I cannot support the application. If we are going to put a premium on hard work what about a discount in respect of those who do not work so hard? If we are going to increase the salary of one Head of a Department what about the others? While it is true that this particular officer works hard I think this Legislature expects every officer to work hard, especially when there is work, and so I am afraid I cannot support the application for an increase of his salary. As a matter of fact when the Budget statement was made I made the

general remark that some of the larger salaries should be reduced. If we are going to endeavour to have a better and more even distribution of salaries and wealth in this Colony, and indeed the whole world, then the question of increasing salaries cannot find its way into my way of looking at the matter. I think there is too much of an uneven distribution of everything in the world, resulting in the chaos we are in to day.

I would like to take this opportunity to refer to a matter which has been raised before. I am not certain whether all precautions are taken by the Customs Department to safeguard the revenue of the Colony in respect of a particular industry which I am not prepared to name at the moment. I wrote Government a few letters on the point in 1938 and 1939, but I regret to say that the replies have not been very satisfactory. In fact the replies were not in relation to the questions asked. In addition I asked one or two questions in this Legislature about the quantity exported, the tonnage of the ships, and what steps were being taken to see that the exact tonnage was exported so that the revenue would be safeguarded. The replies to those questions are to be found in the debates of 1938—39. If Your Excellency would take the trouble to see the replies to those questions I am sure you would agree that the questions were not properly answered. I am most anxious to have the revenues of the Colony safeguarded.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I would like to know whether the hon. Member is voting against the Comptroller's salary being increased because he did not get replies that he wanted?

THE CHAIRMAN: I take it that the hon. Member is speaking on the whole of item 1. Proceed.

Mr. JACOB: I am speaking on the general head after having spoken on the particular point raised. My object is to safeguard the revenues of the Colony, and this is a Department to safeguard Customs revenues. I think it will be generally acknowledged that there is some suggestion (I say some suggestion advisedly) that the particular industry is not paying its fair share of taxation. I share that view too. While some industries are paying far

too much I should certainly like to be advised that all industries are paying their fair share of taxation, and that one or two industries are not in any way evading the legitimate taxes that should be paid into the revenue of the Colony.

Mr. WALCOTT: I cannot understand how the Member who has just spoken can expect to investigate the question he has brought up unless he says what it is he wants investigated. He does not mention the industry to which he has made reference. I can only presume that he means the bauxite industry, but that is left in the air. To-morrow he might say "I never meant that; I meant rice, or something else."

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: It is difficult to appreciate the argument of the hon. Member who has always stood up in this Council for locally born residents. Whether the salary of the Comptroller of Customs should be increased or the salaries of other Heads of Departments should be reduced we are left in the dark. Are we not attempting to improve the standard of living generally, and are we to start by bringing down salaries from the top or to raise the salaries of those below to those above? It has been said in this Council that a considerable amount of the salaries of Heads of Departments has been reduced because the posts are held by locally born individuals. It is invidious to mention the offices of persons present, but I am thinking at the moment of the Treasurer, the Comptroller of Customs, the Magistrates, and several other Heads of Departments. I submit that it is a logical conclusion that if the standard of living is to be increased an effort should be made to climb rather than to descend. I do not know if the hon. Member's outlook is that everything should be reduced or brought down, but I would say that the general tendency is to go upwards rather than downwards.

THE CHAIRMAN: The point is that we are dealing with the Customs Department. I have heard what has been said about putting salaries up and down, but that is not immediately relevant. I have also heard what has been said about the Comptroller. I will now put the item.

Item put and agreed to.

FOREST DEPARTMENT.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I see what looks like a new item, but on account of the way in which these estimates are manipulated I do not understand them.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is no increase in expenditure.

Mr. ELEAZAR: As I cannot get the whole estimates of the Department knocked out, as I wanted to from the beginning, I must complain that the whole staff of the Department is living in Georgetown. I should like to see the activities of the staff in the interior increased so as to bring increased revenue. At the beginning of the war this Council put a prohibitive tax on imported lumber, but I do not know that the country has benefited very much by it.

THE CHAIRMAN: We will take a note of what the Honourable Member has said.

Item 12—Temporary War Bonus, \$520.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be increased by \$200. Since the estimate was prepared the Head of the Department has found that it will be necessary to have a larger number of men working next year, and therefore the war bonus will naturally be increased.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

Item 13—Timber Seasoning Suspense Account, (a) Timber purchases, \$26,460; (b) Wages \$2,250; (c) Temporary War Bonus \$400; (d) Power and Miscellaneous \$890—\$30,000 Less issues to Government Departments and works—\$1,000.

Dr. SINGH: There was a sum of \$30,000 voted by this Council as a revolving fund. I would like to know what is the position in respect of that money.

Mr. WOOD (Conservator of Forests): Before the war began this Colony imported a large quantity of foreign lumber when it could perfectly well have used its own lumber manufactured here. Experiments have been carried out by the Department on a large scale for a number of years to find out whether local lumber was suitable and whether it could be sufficiently seasoned or cured for local purposes. As a result it was decided to

initiate a scheme by which the Public Works and other public Departments of the Colony would give up the use of foreign lumber and would use local lumber which had been seasoned by the Forest Department. As a result of that the timber yard which is near the Fort, and where I would welcome the hon. Member or any other Member, was initiated under a grant from the Colonial Development Fund, and this sum of \$30,000 is in the nature of a token vote. It is the sum which is required to fill the stacks of timber down there up to the point where the timber will be sufficiently dry for the Public Works Department to use it, and while that is going on to cover the necessary wages and so on for the work.

The fund is a revolving fund. The Department purchases timber from local sawmills, seasons it and sells it again to the Public Works Department, the difference in cost between the purchase price and the selling price being, as near as can be calculated, the actual cost of seasoning the timber in that yard. Secondly, timber is purchased from the local mills, stacked and seasoned in that yard and then sold to Government Departments. On the sale to Government Departments the money realized goes back into the fund which revolves. The scheme has been going on since just before the war broke out. It was not brought in on account of the war but has proved of very great value during the war, because on the point of imports of foreign lumber the scheme has enabled the Public Works Department to be supplied with timber which is seasoned, and it has, I submit, set an example to show what can be done in the way of seasoning local timber, an example which has not been followed so far by the local sawmills to any great extent. I think the reason for that is that the work which is going on here largely on account of the war—the building boom in Georgetown which has coincided with the war—has created such a demand for local lumber that the output of the sawmills has been strained almost beyond their capacity, with the result that they have never had an opportunity to build up seasoned stocks. Where the strain has not been so great, as in Berbice, for instance, very definitely those stocks of seasoned timber are being built up.

This sum of money was voted as a

revolving fund. If the scheme were cut out it would mean that the Department would cease buying lumber locally, but would continue selling lumber to the Public Works Department until its stocks were exhausted, and when that point arose the whole of that \$30,000 would have been received back. So far as we can ascertain at present from checking our stocks, there will be no loss, and the original \$30,000 will be found intact.

Mr. MACKEY: I would like to say one word in reply to the Conservator of Forests who made the remark that the output of the sawmills was strained to the utmost capacity. I think he would have been more correct if he said that the main difficulty is to get the wood down to the saw-mills. Most of the mills are willing to work day and night and could turn out very much more provided they could get the timber. I think it is well that that wrong impression was corrected.

Mr. WOOD: The hon. Member is absolutely correct in what he says. When I said that the output of the mills was strained I meant to the capacity of the material they could obtain. It would be clearer to put it as he has done. The mills are working overtime and they could and want to run longer hours overtime, but the great transportation bottle-necks in the Essequibo river are holding them up. There are only a certain number of timber punts, but if we could increase our means of transportation in the Essequibo the mills could run two or three hours longer a day than they are doing. At present they work until 10 o'clock at night and most of them would gladly run until midnight if they could get the material. Timber punts cost a lot of money to build and they take a long time building. The result is that it is unlikely that people, except speculators, would go in for building a large number of timber punts which might not be fully employed as soon as the war is over. I can assure the hon. Member that we realize very fully the effect of that bottle-neck on the logs supplied to the mills.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I would like to ask the Conservator of Forests if he could say how much of the \$30,000 has been used, or whether the entire sum has been used,

Mr. McDAVID: I do not think the accounting procedure is any longer intricate. It is an attempt to place the position before the Council. Hitherto these suspense items never came into the Budget at all, but it is the desire of the Colonial Office that all transactions should come before the Council. If a token vote is exceeded Government does come back to the Council for an additional appropriation. That has happened already on supplementary estimate.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I cannot conceive how Government could put an item of this description on the Estimate for 1942. In my opinion it is a little bit of window-dressing. I cannot see how Government would be expending a further sum of \$29,000 next year in purchasing timber from this Department.

Mr. WOOD: All I can do is to repeat my invitation to the hon. Member, who says that the timber is not there, to come down and see it.

THE CHAIRMAN: How many visits have you had?

Mr. WOOD: I think I would like to have notice of that question, sir. (laughter).

Mr. WIGHT: I have had the pleasure of getting lumber there and I had to pay an additional cost. I sent an order not long ago and I was told by the Conservator that he could not supply the wood.

Mr. SEAFORD: I thought it was there for the use of Government. The sawmills are allowed to stack their own wood. Government does not keep this wood for the benefit of the public.

Mr. WOOD: That is perfectly correct; but occasions arise when we find ourselves over-stocked in some particular size, and in cases like that we are willing to let the public have it. I admit that we charge them a small premium over what we charge the Public Works Department. If we had resources to carry stocks double the requirements of the Public Works Department we would sell to the public in order to advertise the fact, which many people here refuse to believe, that Colony wood is just as good if

not better than the imported article. What fills me with grief and sorrow is that whenever I want to persuade people that a local product is better it is the local man who fights me every time.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will now put the item. Window dressing or otherwise it comes before the Council.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item 14—Passage of Mr. J. H. Hughes, Assistant Conservator of Forests to England, \$240.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I take it that these officers who are being paid quite fair salaries are not merely brought to the Colony to be trained. I would also like to know whether we are training anybody locally, or whether it is possible to do so. I would also like to know whether the Conservator considers that the officers in his Department have enough work to do, and if their hours of work are 5 or 6 per day. I know from personal observation that one high officer does not do more than two or three hours' work a day.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member's enquiries are not quite relevant to item 14, but I would let the Conservator answer them.

Mr. JACOB: I did not quite follow the remarks of the last speaker; he has made no constructive suggestion. Under the previous vote the hon. Member suggested an increase of salary. Is he suggesting a decrease now or the deletion of the item?

Mr. WOOD: As regards the passage, the system of recruitment for the Colonial Forest Service was altered a few years ago and the system adopted was that after a man had done his forest training in England he did the post-graduate course of a year at the Imperial Forestry Institute which is prescribed for people who are regarded as eligible for colonial forest service. But before he got that year's training at the Imperial Forestry Institute he had to do an apprentice tour of 22 months in the Colony in which he was going to serve so that he would be in a far better position, after his post-graduate training, to specialize in whatever line he was required and for which he was best suited. This recruit is

the first one who has come out under those conditions. This particular officer will shortly complete his apprentice tour, but it will be found that his salary has been carried out for the whole of 1942 while his passage is also shown. When these officers come here their passages are paid to and from the Colony. We do not know yet whether the course of training at Oxford will be carried on next year or not in view of the war, and for that reason we have carried out the officer's salary for the whole of next year.

The suggestion that officers in my Department do not work ordinary hours is perfectly true; they work much more. The suggestion that a senior officer of mine only works two or three hours a day is not the case at all. I do not know whether the hon. Member has had that officer under such close observation that he can submit a list of the places he visits. (Mr. Wight: Yes, Water Street). I would be very glad if the hon. Member would submit that list to me.

Mr. WIGHT: I move the deletion of the item. It seems to me that we are in a nebulous state. What will happen if the officer is transferred?

THE CHAIRMAN: My general comment will be this: The Imperial Government has, during the last five or six years, come to the conclusion that the assets of the forests throughout the Colonial Empire are very valuable indeed and should be properly conserved and exploited for the benefit of future generations. It is a very long view to take, and one of the ways of carrying it out is by getting a Unified Forestry Service available for conservation throughout the various units of the Colonial Empire. That is beyond question a most admirable object. If there is a Unified Service there must be fairly uniform conditions of pay and of getting to and from the Colonies for the men who are going to serve. These men must have security; they are putting their whole life into it, and it is only fair that they should be given proper conditions of service. The question is: does this Colony wish to take advantage of that machinery or not? If it does then it should accept the terms and arrangements for the service as a whole. If we take up the attitude that we will make our own

arrangements then goodbye to the Unified Services. I think myself that with the enormous potential value of its forest this Colony should come into the common pool and undertake the same obligations as other Colonies in employing these officers of the Unified Service. That is the way I look at it, and therefore it is not worth bothering about an occasional passage of this kind. What we lose on the swings we gain on the roundabouts.

Item put, and agreed to.

The Council resumed and adjourned for the luncheon recess until 2 p.m.

2 p.m. —

Messrs. LEE and HUMPHRYS present.

ANNOUNCEMENT.

THE PRESIDENT: Before proceeding with the day's business I think it is generally agreed to take this opportunity to discuss the motion of the Conservator of Forests on the Cost of Living. What I would like to say is that in view of pressure of business and the fact that we are approaching the end of the year, I hope we will get through the discussion on the motion this afternoon. If that proves impossible I shall limit it on the resumption to-morrow to one and a half hours. What we are faced with is a strictly practical matter — whether we consider and agree that the machinery for the control of the cost of living be stabilized and as far as possible improved and widened. That is the practical point. On the other hand I shall adopt nothing which will prevent hon. Members, who have a general point to raise for consideration, doing so. I hope we will be able to complete that within a reasonable time. I therefore propose, if there is no objection, to call upon the Conservator of Forests to proceed with his motion.

Mr. ELEAZAR: At this stage I am asking that you be pleased to allow the Standing Orders to be suspended while I make a suggestion to this Council.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

SITTING OF COUNCIL.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Your Excellency, I think some of the Members of the Council, I have not spoken to everyone, are agreed

that if we come in to-morrow at 10 o'clock instead of at 10.30 o'clock and go up to 1 p.m. Your Excellency would be able to see your way to adjourn the Council until after the holidays. It seems to me that we cannot finish the whole of our labours here by the end of the year, and if that be the case it would be necessary to trespass on what is a very busy time to most hon. Members. At this period men with families have some responsibility to them which does not end nor begin there. In view of the approaching holidays, as I am in Georgetown already, I am quite willing to come in at 10 o'clock to-morrow morning and do the business of the Council.

THE PRESIDENT: We will take that up at the adjournment.

With the consent of the Council consideration of items I. (consideration in the Committee of the 1942 Draft Estimates) and II. (First Reading of The Income Tax (Amendment No. 3) Bill, 1941) on the Order of the Day were deferred.

On a motion by Mr. Wood (Conservator of Forests) seconded by Mr. D'Andrade (Comptroller of Customs) the Standing Rules and Orders were suspended to enable a motion on the cost of living and price control to be taken.

COST OF LIVING AND PRICE CONTROL.

MR. WOOD (Conservator of Forests): I beg to move—

THAT, with reference to the Statement made to the Council on 19th December, 1941, by the Chairman of the Supplies Control Board on the subject of cost of living and price control, this Council recommends that Government take immediate steps to provide the additional machinery and organisation for the Control Board with a view to improving and widening the scope of control and controlling as far as may be possible the rising cost of living; the necessary charges to be met from the provision for Colonial Emergency Measures.

I spoke at length on Friday last on the broad principles of this subject and as, I think, there are several Members who wish to speak on it I do not propose to detain the Council very long. The only thing, perhaps, I did not mention last Friday was what I might have done in the way of safeguards. One safeguard adopted in Great Britain and which may conceivably be adopted here is to make it an offence

under the Regulations to attempt to obtain a licence by giving false information. That is not a big point one way or another.

On Saturday morning the Control Board met five Unofficial Members of the Council and the question of the maximum staff necessary for undertaking stronger measures of control was discussed. I had explained to the Council what staff I considered necessary to effect this purpose, but it was decided at that meeting on the suggestion of the hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Wolford) who, I think, might have explained it had he been here, that in addition to the four Inspectors—two for dry goods and two for hardware—there should be two Assistant Inspectors. The hon. Member for New Amsterdam gave rather cogent reason for that, one being his experience with such cases in Court. One of the difficulties is that an Inspector will be there as a single unit and it will be a question of his word against the word of the shop-keeper. Instances have occurred where a package had fallen down and was broken by mistake or a label had fallen off by mistake, and the Magistrate had to ascertain of both sides as to if there was any. If there is an Assistant Inspector who can bring corroborative evidence to bear it would be considerably helpful. The staff that we are asking for is—four Inspectors, two Assistant Inspectors and one Stenographer-typist; and for the Supplies Branch—four Junior Clerks, one Secretary and two Assistant Secretaries. As I explained before there will be a system of revenue rewards. I mention that because it may raise some discussion and it will be better that it be raised now that the motion is being taken. The total cost is estimated at \$14,000. That arrangement was unanimously agreed upon by the five Unofficial Members who attended that discussion, and I would prefer to leave any elaboration of it, if such is desired, to those Members.

I am endeavouring now to answer certain questions which, I think, may be raised or which I have heard raised as the result of what I stated last Friday. I explained then that the difficulties were that we have thought of every way of doing this that we could and have been driven back to the conclusion that the only method we

could adopt, which we thought would be most effective, would be the marginal system. It was effective in Great Britain but not so successful in smaller places. Its success or failure, will hinge on the calibre of the Inspectors we are able to appoint. I need hardly inform the Council that already we have had many suggestions as to a suitable personnel. One man who desires to be a Dry Goods Inspector and bears an excellent character was a letter-carrier from 1909 to 1920. We have received a great many applications for the posts of Inspectors, some with excellent testimonials, and in consequence I do wish to stress that the Control Board feels that the success or failure of the marginal system here hinges so very largely on the calibre of the Inspectors appointed that the Board may very well be left entirely to make the appointments of those Inspectors.

A point raised is this: One or two persons have asked: "If you adopt a marginal system, is that based on replacement cost?" The answer is, it is not. It is a fact that where very perishable goods are concerned the marginal system, which is working now in the control of provisions, does approach the replacement cost for the reason that the interval between the time of ordering the goods or the landing and the time of consumption is so small that perhaps you do not have an opportunity for a rise in prices. In the case of durable goods like dry goods and hardware it can fairly be said that there is no relation between the replacement cost and the marginal system. A bolt of cloth which I bought in 1938 before the war began at sixpence per square yard has now gone up in price to 1s. 8d. per square yard. I can mark up the old stock at 1s. 8d. plus a certain percentage of profit I would like to get. That is really replacement cost. That is not the case with the marginal system. When the goods are landed in the Colony a percentage, considered reasonable as profit, is added to the landed cost of those goods, but under the marginal system it is not possible to evade that by ordering down a few cases at the new prices and then marking up the whole of the old stock at the new prices. That is a safeguard under the marginal system. The new goods at the high prices are not allowed to be put on the market until the old goods are very nearly sold out. I wish to make that very clear. I also said

on Friday that we had told the dry goods people that we are willing to consider any suggestion except the suggestion of basing the prices on replacement values. I repeat that to-day, and I am now stating it as a policy of Government and not only as a policy of the Control Board.

It may be that certain arguments will be raised this afternoon, which have been raised outside and which I may as well answer in advance. There is a certain amount of force in some of them, but there are arguments against them too. One is this, that a reduction in existing prices will mean that the retailers will return their stocks to the wholesalers and the wholesalers will suffer a loss. I dispute that. It is quite true that the way trade works here, the inter-relation between the retailer and the wholesaler, if there were an ordered form, a compulsory form in wholesale prices, the retailer could return the stock to the wholesaler and say "Take them back and let me have them at the new price." There is a definite fear among the wholesalers of what would happen, but they are also of the opinion that there are very large stocks, much above normal pre-war level, of dry goods in retailers' hands. We have not had a great deal of time to investigate that, but our investigations as far as they go - and they go into nearly every shop between Georgetown and Mahaica—reveal that is not the case, maybe on the Corentyne Coast but we had not much time to go down there. The stocks in the hands of retailers are below pre-war level, although there are instances where they are not. I challenge the statement that the return of stocks to wholesalers will result in loss to the wholesalers. I will use purely fictitious figures bearing no relation to facts at all. If a wholesaler has the good fortune to sell a large stock of goods to a retailer at a profit of 100 per cent. and if the community come down on him and make him reduce his prices and the retailer returns that stock and he has to refund the retailer his price of the stock on which he made 100 per cent. profit and the retailer then buys it back at a price which gives him only 50 per cent. profit, the wholesaler does not lose any money. He has merely been compelled to disgorge unreasonable excess profit and nothing more. That is the answer I would give to that argument.

There is also the argument that if prices are reduced it would cause a run on stocks by the public. That is the argument of the trader. We are considering this matter from the point of view of the population; that there will be a run on the trader's stock is quite possible, but it must be remembered that is not going to diminish the stock of dry goods in the Colony. It is going to be removed from the hands of the trader to the consumer. There is only this drawback. The stock does not necessarily move into the hands of all consumers but largely into the hands of the consumer who has got the money to hoard and not into the hands of the poor consumer. That is a consideration we have to take into account.

There is another point which has been used to us quite a lot. "If we do this sort of thing it is going to reduce the who'esalers' profit to such an extent that they will have to reduce their staff right and left and it will create unemployment." That is an arguable point both ways. It is true that may occur, but on the other hand the quantity of business which is going to be transacted is going to depend on the amount of dry goods which we are able to obtain and import into the Colony. The fact that prices are compulsorily reduced is not going to put less work on the wholesalers' hands. Therefore, if it were to cause a certain amount of unemployment we have bear this consideration in mind: "Is it better that a few people compulsorily should go out of employment than the whole population should suffer from high prices, or is it better that the whole population should be relieved to as great an extent as possible of high prices at the expense of a few people having to go out of employment, a few people it may be possible to take care of?" There is that point, and my answer as far as it goes—that is as far as it becomes necessary to reduce stock—is, where it becomes an argument to leave us alone and where the argument is used as a bluff then I say call the bluff at once.

An argument was made to me by two people who have to do with the trade, that if they could only get the whole trade to combine and only open shops on three days a week instead of six as they ordinarily do now they would manage to keep their staff and despatch their

stocks quickly. I know it is not always easy to get all to agree.

Those are the questions to be considered and, if one may divide my motion into more or less two stages, those are the points which arise. Really we are asking for the authority of the Council to employ the additional staff which we have explained and do consider as necessary. I would like the Council to give some indication to-day as to whether it would agree to that or not, as it would put us in a position to start working on that to-morrow. I would suggest, if the Council could give an indication on that very point—that they would agree that we should have that staff—we should know that this afternoon, because we can then start to-morrow morning and save a few days and not go over the holidays.

The other part of the motion is really the controlling as far as possible of the rising cost of living. That raises all the various questions which were discussed on Friday and which, I am sure, other hon. Members may like to discuss. Therefore I shall detain the Council no longer except to say that so far as we can help by giving figures or anything of the sort we will do so. The Competent Authority for Price Control has got his little bible and if, anyone wants the price of anything and wishes to see how prices have changed since the War began, he hopes to be in a position to answer more or less any question asked.

On Friday I gave an approximation as to what it would cost to subsidize certain articles if the prices are put back to the pre-war level. Another point taken is the waste of time in sticking the prices. It is admitted that it will cost a little bit less at the moment, and not as much as it seems, to subsidize prices to the pre-war level. Once we take the prices at any particular point—the 1940 or mid-1941 peg—we know where we start, but we do not know where we are going to finish as prices are always rising. All we can say is that we can fix our starting-point. We have not worked out the cost of subsidizing at the various points, as we did not have sufficient time and it takes a little time to work it out. I am a little nervous when giving figures which the Council would like to be close to

exactness, but this is not possible as prices fluctuate quickly and I may give a wrong indication above or below. Take potatoes, one week it would be 5 cents and a fortnight later it would be 8 or 9 cents and a fortnight later it would be back to 5 cents. What we have done in order to give the Council some idea is to take the average prices for 1940. One may say the end of June, 1940. I gave the cost of taking back flour to pre-war price as \$480,000. If we take it back to the average price of 1940 it is \$369,000. Therefore, the difference is not as great as one would have expected. With condensed milk it is \$208,000 to take it back to its 1930 pre-war level and \$169,000 to take it back to the average price in 1940. On the other hand there are other considerations which come in as when War broke out there was a milk war on and milk was being sold very much below the cost price. That affected the calculation in two ways in taking it back to reasonable pre-war price. Also it may reasonably be said, and quite fairly held, that while the milk war was on the consumption was definitely greater than the normal consumption, and we are not entitled to assume that the consumption of milk now is as great as it would be if we took it back to the normal pre-war price and not to the abnormal low price. These are the only points I have to make at the moment. If questions arise during the course of the debate I would try my best to answer them when I reply. I have already taken up nearly one-third of this afternoon's time and I know hon. Members would like to give their views.

Mr. D'ANDRADE (Comptroller of Customs) concurred.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: In rising to make a contribution to this debate I am mindful of the necessity which exists to expedite the business of the Council, but in case it appears that I am unduly long I feel sure that I will be excused in view of the importance of the subject which is under discussion. Last week we were treated to a very interesting speech in this Council on this question, and to-day, if I may put it that way, the Council has been burdened with some details arising out of control generally. In my opinion, and I speak very feelingly on the subject, this debate is somewhat belated having regard to the

importance of ensuring that there is a sufficient supply of essential commodities in the Colony generally and at prices which will be within the reach of all. I make that statement, sir, because it must be realized that apart from our own production of such things as sugar, rice and ground provisions, we in this Colony are dependent a great deal upon the importation of a large number of essential commodities for the life of this community. I think, sir, that is where the importance of the question has come in and, although I stated a short while ago that in my opinion the debate is somewhat belated, I really would not like it to appear as though I am in any way criticizing destructively local Government's policy in the past when I say I mean since the war began, because I am aware that the line of policy in regard to imports into this country is linked with Imperial and Allied policies. That is to say, in deciding as to what this Colony should be allowed to import and in what quantities those goods should be imported due regard must be paid to the requirements of other parts of the Empire. That is, as it should be. That is the policy, I know, this Government is endeavouring to follow. Government had to as a matter of fact, because it was a policy on which their instructions were based.

Some errors have been made, it is true, and I am not one of those who will charge those who are responsible for carrying out those duties. I am not one of those who will criticize those errors, but where I think a certain amount of criticism is justified is where one sees, and I speak from personal experience as a commercial man, those errors are being committed over and over again. It is true that the man outside is not aware of all that is going on inside, and it is also true that perhaps the Control Board—I speak of the Board and not of its personnel—may be somewhat suspicious of the commercial community and of the public. As a matter of fact, in the speech made by the hon. Conservator of Forests he asked for the co-operation of nearly every person in this Colony, the commercial community, the public and even the Police, so it is reasonable for one to assume that the Control Board evidently looks upon everyone with a certain amount of suspicion. Perhaps there may be some reasonable ground

for this suspicion, but I say that the co-operation that this Board is expecting from the various classes of the community which I have named can never be hoped for unless those grounds for suspicion are removed. And here I am going to make a request that the Board should pay some attention to these remarks, because so long as this suspicion remains in the mind of the Board they cannot hope to receive—and I do not think any reasonable person can hope to so receive—the co-operation of the community that is being asked for.

This debate should really be divided into two parts. The hon. Conservator of Forests has divided it into two parts, it is true, but the parts he has selected are linked up with the terms of the motion before the Council. For myself I would have preferred to hear him on the parts which, I think, are exceedingly important and those are (a) the question of ensuring sufficient supplies of essential commodities for the use of the community, and (b) the question of efficient control of the prices of those commodities. Those are the two points on which personally I would have sat down with a great deal of interest to hear him. At the present moment whilst it is true—I cannot even remember the name—you have a purchases and prices control in a Competent Authority as an individual, and then a Supplies Control branch, what is the true position? If we want co-ordination of policies, it is my opinion—and I am sure I am right—it must begin from within. It is true, sir, that these different organizations—Supplies Control, Prices Control—meet together and discuss things together, but what they do not do together is to work together and that, I think, is the weak link in the chain of control generally. I am perfectly satisfied in my own mind from the errors that have occurred in the past that that is the weak link in the chain, and the sooner something is done to remedy that weakness—I regret having to say so—is the better, if not the whole system of control is going to fall to the ground. To give an instance, here you have the Price Control functioning on the one hand and determining the prices to be fixed and the Supplies Control on the other hand deciding what licences should be issued. There is bound to be confusion, and there has been confusion. There can be no doubt about that. There has been confu-

sion in the respective branches since these organizations have been set up, and my regret is that no attempt has been made to strike at the root of all this confusion. What has been the result? The result has been that you have got the price of an article but the article is not in the Colony to be sold. No attempt has ever been made by these organizations—and it is a charge I lay and accept full responsibility for making—to ensure sufficiency of supplies in respect of certain essential commodities and the even distribution of those commodities.

To those persons who are engaged in trade, it is not an uncommon experience in these days to walk the length and breadth of our trading centre, Water Street, and to find nearly every dealer is out of stock of three or four essential commodities, and sometimes that shortage existed for at least a week or more. Well, sir, I would hesitate to say that the reason for some of these errors is the lack of experience in the several branches of this control organization. When I say that, I do not mean to cast any reflection on any of the persons who are engaged in this work because undoubtedly I know quite a few of them. I have been before them on several occasions, I have argued with them on several occasions and they have tried to do their best. There is no doubt about that, but experience in matters of this kind cannot be obtained overnight and that has been one of the errors. It must be remembered that when one is endeavouring to ensure a sufficient supply of goods there must be experience in buying. There is seasonal buying and, it is known, there is another time to buy in order to obtain the best prices.

What happens if an application is made for a licence to import a certain commodity, say, from Canada or any country, for the purpose of making an illustration? The suspicion that exists in the mind of the Board at once arises. Why must these goods be obtained from Canada? Currency is an essential article for the successful prosecution of the War, but what you cannot get from Canada you must get from another source, and no explanation that may be offered is ever considered by this Board. They have been so wedded to that policy—you will

not be allowed to import an item from this source because the necessity exists for controlling the supply of currency. As I said just now, points were put up and if they were considered—I presume they were—nevertheless they were not acted upon and the result has always been, if I want to be modest, eight times out of ten the representation made in the first instance has been found to be correct, and we find that it leaks out a month or so afterwards and the restriction is removed and the importation allowed from that source. That has resulted in two evils—a disruption of the distribution of that particular article and an immediate rise in the price of that article—because it is obvious, if it was decided in the first instance to purchase that article at \$x, as a result of the delay, that price no longer exists. Incidentally, I may mention for the benefit of those hon. Members not having the experience, that in ordinary circumstances a price offered is hardly open for a longer time than 24 hours. To-day the price is ever hardly open at all. Every fluctuation given out is always subject to confirmation and again nine times out of ten when you hope to obtain that price so many things happen that it is absolutely impossible for the price to maintain the original fluctuation. To return to the result of the delay that has occurred, the opportunity was lost to obtain that article and in some cases a sufficient quantity to carry us on for some months, and that supply had to be purchased subsequently at a higher figure. That is where sometimes idle tongues refer to profiteering. The average man in the street never seems to understand why it is an article sold to-day at 10 cents should not be compelled to remain six months afterwards at the same price. There are many controlling factors to the price of any article.

In so far as the creation of unemployment is concerned, I want to say what I said before in another place on another occasion. There can be no doubt about it that unless trade is able to maintain its business at a reasonable level there is bound—and there is nothing to stop it—to be some unemployment in that direction. I do not think there can be two minds on that point because, obviously, if you have not got the goods to sell you would not need clerks to sell, men to take goods out,

and I do not think anyone can say there is not much in that point.

On this question that is before the Council, I do not think there can be any serious objection, or any objection at all for that matter, if this Government is permitted to set up an organization that would properly ensure supplies of essential commodities and would control prices within reason. There is a lot to be said in favour of the marginal system. It has its good points and its weak points. It is the application of the marginal system that may lead to confusion, that may lead to shortage of supplies, because whilst it is true—and I accept the dictum—that in fixing prices, whether on the marginal system or otherwise, too much regard is not paid to replacement values, nevertheless due regard must be paid to the importance of the replacement value of a particular article. I have heard hon. Members who know more and probably have more experience than I and the hon. Member who says “No” and “Yes” as it suits him, but I know that when no attention is paid to the replacement value of an article there is bound to be a shortage of supplies and the Control Board knows it. I have been asked how. I think I much prefer the reply to come from the hon. mover of the motion, because it has happened here more than once, and it will happen again, that by not giving some attention to-day opportunities are lost to purchase, and that is where the question of experience comes in. Here again when you mix experience with suspicion you can readily see at a glance what the result will be. I am not concerned with which system will be introduced at all. As I say the marginal system has much in its favour, but the *pros* and *cons* of the whole matter should be carefully considered, and it may be found after close examination that the marginal system will be the best. I know certain instances where it can certainly be the best, but that is a matter for the Board to consider. I am not concerned so much with the details.

I am a little dissatisfied at the line this debate has taken. I had hoped we would have heard a little more about Government's intention to ensure a sufficiency of supplies. Apparently the policy is to allow that to go on and hope for the best.

The answer to that is this : The situation is not improving and, having regard to the fact that this country depends to a great extent on a large number of essential commodities to come from outside it seems a wise policy to adopt is to obtain what you can get when you can get it, provided you are not taking goods away from any part of the Empire that may be in urgent need of those goods. That is where, I think, our machinery broke down at the beginning of the War. This country ought to be in a favourable position in regard to several items which I can name at random, such a policy is in the minds of those who exercise control. I cannot blame them as they have no experience in it. The only experience they had in exercising control was the instructions they got from time to time from the Colonial Office. That has been the experience of the members of this Board who have to carry out this work. It is true that on occasions they try to apply local conditions, but how far they have succeeded with that is another matter.

I am in favour of this motion, but I am not going to say now whether we need four Inspectors or ten. What I will say is that 50 Inspectors will not be able to supply the people with essential commodities if there is none in the Colony, and I do urge on this Government to co-ordinate these services. I know there is a lot of work. I know they have sleepless nights. No man can go on like that ; it is absolutely impossible. It is a gigantic task and there must be co-ordination from within, if any success we are hoping for is to materialize.

Mr. SEAFORD : The hon. Conservator of Forests in his opening remarks pointed out, I think, that the only practical system would be the marginal system. I am not an authority on that and I do not propose to express an opinion on it. I understand the marginal system has not proved a great success in Trinidad. I have been told that is probably due to the fact that they have not the right Inspectors. I believe that the marginal system has been a success in the United Kingdom. Whether that is due to war prices on certain commodities I do not know. If however, it is the only system that is considered can be worked, then by all means let us adopt it here, as I think we ought to adopt any known system or method by which it is considered pos-

sible that the prices of commodities can be kept at a reasonable figure. After all it is the majority of the workers of this Colony whom we have got to try and help. I do not say that what is proposed to be done to-day by the motion will be successful, but I propose to vote for it because I am prepared to adopt anything that has a reasonable chance of success.

The hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) pointed out the fact that we are out of essential commodities and the question of securing sufficient supplies. I am afraid we are going to be a good deal out of essential commodities before we are through with the War. Up to the present in this Colony, I think, we have been extraordinarily fortunate in our experience in that respect, and great credit is due to those carrying on a very onerous task without past experience. We are also indebted to the Mother Country for the very great consideration shown in the way in which our exports are handled and the manner in which we have been allowed to get things into the Colony which I for one do not consider essential. As regards securing a sufficiency of supplies as mentioned, we have got to consider this : We are not the only place in the world. Production has been cut down throughout the world. Everything is being reduced now in a great effort to win the War. We have got to face it cheerfully. As regards foodstuffs, I do maintain except those in the Bush we in this Colony can support ourselves without importing anything from abroad, though to a certain extent it will cause hardship amongst the people in the shops. In this Colony we can never starve. It is true that due to physical difficulties and the higher cost of labour it is sometimes found cheaper to import than to grow. It is often the case that we have to pay more for local foodstuffs than for the imported stuff, but if it has come to the point of stopping importation. We have to produce the goods, and it is up to Government to see that those goods are put on the market at a reasonable price.

I happen to be a member of one of these Control Boards, and there is no doubt that one is blamed a lot for not allowing the importation of that or the other, but there is one thing I will tell the Council from my experience on that Board, that the

working of these Boards would be very much simpler if importers as a rule did not try to fool them (Voices: Hear! Hear!) We have had requests for the importation of articles based on absolutely absurd figures—some on low figures and some on nothing at all, some 10 times the amount imported by those firms within the last two or three years. We have had others in one month they had an order, the next week a duplicate and the next week another, and excuses were put up which were rather futile. Another thing one is blamed for and I agree with the hon. Member when he said we should get all we can when we can. We have worked on that system as far as we are allowed certainly not only by the Colonial Office but by those who have the controlling word. I am referring to the mills. Within a month conditions may change and you are told to get supplies from there and not here. That is due to supplies for this part of the world being restricted through shipping. To-day shipping is available and within the next few weeks it is not available. It is easy for us to criticize but it is very difficult for us in this Colony, although we are trying to help in what way we are able, to express an opinion on the advisability as to where these supplies should be got from. I know it is difficult for the importers. I have felt it myself in various ways, but I think it is the duty of all of us to try and help those who have been put in a responsible position by Government to do their best to get things in. I have lately been in Trinidad and I should like hon. Members to hear what I heard about the Trinidad Board. From my experience there I would like to see firms here having to fill in some of the requirements necessary in Trinidad—voluminous questions to be answered, voluminous figures to be given, sheets and sheets of it. I do feel that those who have been put in charge of it had no experience before and, I think, great credit is due to them for the effort they have made. I think Government's thanks are due to certain firms who allowed experienced members to leave their staffs to give what assistance they can to these Boards. They have done so at great inconvenience to themselves and to the members of their staffs also.

I feel, sir, as I have said before, we are making a move in the right direction,

though I do not say successfully. We should do everything we can to try and keep prices down, and whatever criticism we do make here not only in the Council but in the street or on the Boards themselves should be constructive. I have been on the Board in respect of certain matters and I am quite satisfied that they will give every assistance they possibly can. The firm with which I am connected and in which I have an interest realize as much as anything else that it means essential commodities. At the present moment we are unable to get fertilizers for our chief industry in this Colony, but we do recognize the fact that we have to make the best of it as it is necessary for the war effort and, therefore, we have to bow to the inevitable. I think the controllers have done everything possible, and it must be realized in the circumstances that we have to face facts and say: "This is our bit towards the war effort, and we hope for the best". I do feel that we will be doing a wrong in not passing this motion before the Council to-day.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I would like to say in a few words what I have said here before and to assure you, sir, that when I hear of the dishonesty of merchants in the street I feel it very keenly because the position, as outlined very carefully by the hon. Member for Central Demerara, is the true position. It is the first time I have heard him come to a decision and say what he really thinks. I would like to know from Government why the Prices Control Committee has been dispensed with. I happened to have been a member of that Board. We had a very able Chairman who no doubt expressed his views very correctly and went into things very much in the same way—thoroughly. The hon. Member for Central Demerara was also on that Board and we had merchants on it who were very much opposed to each other on items in the different trades, and I can assure you it worked admirably. I would like Your Excellency to ascertain for yourself the reason for dispensing with that Prices Control Board. You have heard such a lot about the merchants being dishonest—

Mr. SEAFORD: To a point of order! For the benefit of hon. Members I desire to state that I am not insinuating for one moment that all merchants are dishonest.

I am stating certain things came before the Board which were dishonest.

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. Member said if certain importers did not try to fool the Board how much better it would be.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I made no reference to the hon. Member's remarks generally. What you have said leads nowhere else but to dishonesty. I say respectfully that is my interpretation. If there is anything like Prices Control, an average rate of profit allowed to the merchants is the only proper system. I am not a merchant in the Street though I run a furniture warehouse, but I happen to be a Director of several companies. I know and say without hesitation that for accuracy that is the only way it can be done. There is always a method of getting around the position. We all profess to be clever. We make investments and want to make money. You want the Excess Profits Tax increased. What on earth can I say when it comes to this. You are taking away 60 per cent. of the profits from the merchants, though for years some of them have not been paying dividends to their shareholders. At this particular firm I am referring to—and you have heard the accusation made—the percentage of profits made, I had always heard, was 33 1/3 gross. If that is adhered to or it is even less it would solve the situation. There is always a loop-hole to get through. What on earth is the good of making 100 per cent. profit when 100 per cent. of it will go to Government. It is better to give a person an opportunity to pay his debt to the merchants through being able to make a small profit.

I would like to ascertain why that Prices Control Committee was got rid of. I speak as a member of that Board and as a Merchant-Director, and I have my own view as to why it was got rid of. I am in a position to say that things have occurred there that never came out. Government had appointed to the Board, to my mind, all specialists in their own business line without any commercial knowledge of trading or shopkeeping in this world, and that is what we are suffering from. I am here to tell you this afternoon a simple truth. One merchant ordered buckets in galore and he applied for permission and

was refused; another had applied for pails and he got permission to bring buckets as pails. That is the kind of thing in which you want experience and commercial knowledge of trade in the Street. You have one of the cleverest men in British Guiana in his particular line in charge of the Board, but he does not know the tricks of the trade and will not be able to solve the problem although he may go through all the books. I have heard Government is not in a position to prove the accuracy of the statements and the merchants are getting around the Excess Profits Tax. What are they doing? They are giving their staffs three months' salary as bonus. The staff is getting it. One man got a cheque for \$4,000 as his share of that bonus. What about the poor unfortunate trader or shopkeeper who cannot do that. If he makes \$4,000 for a whole year he is thoroughly satisfied. But the staffs of these merchants get 12 months' salary and on the top of that 3 months' salary as bonus and an extra War bonus.

My solution is to give the people the money. If Government Servants are entitled to bonus give it to them during the duration of the war. You can never stop profiteering in the world. It is a hopeless task watching it. I am laying this charge against Government. I have not said it outside nor discussed it with anybody. You will find the selection of a dry goods clerk of the biggest firm in the Street for appointment as Government Officer to go there and watch the trade of the other people. To my mind, that is a hopeless task. It is not a creditable act on the part of the person who makes such an appointment, as that man at the end of the war will know every commercial firm's cost price and mark, and when he returns to his firm he will naturally be regarded as a kind of "tin god" to be looked up to by everybody. Is that what we are going to be asked to sanction here? I am entirely against the system, and the only proper one is to go and say to the merchants: "You are to make no more than 20 per cent. profit, which is a handsome profit." I can boldly say without fear of contradiction, that what the hon. Member for Central Demerara said, is correct. There are no essential things obtainable in the Street.

I have had a little difficulty with the the Competent Authority over the removal

of an old house which I was taking down and some zinc. The matter was submitted to the Attorney-General and I was told that the zinc is material of the nature I could not get to paint my house. I am referring to an order made under Regulation 40 of the Defence Regulations, 1939. If the cost price of new materials it is proposed to use exceeds \$300 you cannot get a licence. I ask permission to read this last portion of the letter from the Board:

I have been directed to tell you if the cost of new materials as defined in the 1941 Order, a copy of which is attached for your information, exceeds \$300 a permit cannot be granted.

I am not spending \$300 on imported materials because I am using second-hand materials. The trouble is I want to buy nails and cannot do so. The absurdity of it is you hear them telling you that the cost price means the current selling price in the open market in Georgetown, and you cannot obtain zinc for any price in the whole Colony. I have long before this secured my paint at \$18 and \$22 per cwt, and this wonderful Board of experts is telling me I must calculate it at the price at which it is selling in Water Street when there is no such thing as Hubbuck zinc to be obtained. People have offered \$40 and \$45 per cwt but it cannot be obtained. We are given all kinds of substitutes, and that is what we have complained about. Government has the ablest brains in the hon. Member on my right (Mr. WOOD). He is the best man in his profession, but when it comes to Water Street that is a different matter.

Mr. WOOD: To a point of correction! I do not want to contradict the hon. Member as to what he says about zinc, but I want to inform him that a consignment arrived about three or four days ago.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: That is within the hon. Member's knowledge because the Comptroller of Customs is on that Competent Authority. It is a question of disclosing the merchants' secrets as it were. That is my accusation against that statement. If that is so, however, I am glad to bear it. I would have been ready to paint the house before that paint came and they would have charged me \$40. I challenge the statement made here that there is Hubbuck zinc available at \$22 per cwt. or at any price like that. I challenge

the hon. Conservator of Forests to say that is possible. The whole thing has been gone about in the wrong way. This is a small community and there are only two big firms in the Street, and they can run things as they like. They are particular whom they employ. You cannot get in unless you get somebody to push you in. They do not consider the question of worth in getting the man who can serve them, and if they can get hold of a man who has gone through the whole thing and knows everybody's cost prices it is detrimental to the other merchants in the Street.

The hon. Conservator of Forests, who has got letters behind his name, made a brilliant speech here but he has not, to my mind, told us of a proper solution. I admit, I am a very mediocre person and, I suppose, most people who read that brilliant speech—one of those things which count if you want to get an "M.A." or a "D.C.L."—will be impressed, but it does not count with me. I want him to come down to "tin tacks" and say what is the solution. I say that the solution is to let everybody get an increase on their wages or the duration of the war. Get the money in Excess Profits and Income taxes and spend it. We waste a lot of time in this Council with cheap talk. Give the people money. No man is going to buy a silk suit if he cannot afford to wear a cotton garment. We have heard about rice and potatoes. As far as I am concerned you can give me plantains, roasted or boiled, with fish caught in this country. I would not starve if a pound of flour did not come to this country, as I eat very little flour. Perhaps I may do so in biscuits with jam. We have got guavas here with which we can make jelly and so we do not want the imported article. My honest opinion is that all you have to do in the situation which has arisen is to scatter the money which is collected in Income Tax or Excess Profits Tax. Give the Government Servants an increase of salary; it is a necessity. Raise the money and let them have it. Let those who can afford give it. Nobody knows it better than you that in England the man whose income is £20,000 gets for himself about £4,000. Apply that here. That is what you should do.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I feel almost inclined

to say "Ditto," after the hon. Member, who has just taken his seat. I can hardly understand why in this Colony when emergency is from Dan to Beersheba we should only think of the Mother Country. Go to Trinidad and such places and see what they are doing. But when it comes to penalizing the people go to England, get the procedure there and alter it to the detriment of the people here. I think Government is about a month too late in bringing this motion before the Council, because the merchants have been bleeding the people thoroughly all the time. Had they offered to drop prices of their own accord we would not have to compel them. I think the idea is to keep prices at a reasonable level, and if that is the idea, Government has got to take every penny of this Excess Profits Tax. Why should there be excess profits? You have the goods and you put a reasonable margin of profit on the cost, insurance and freight when there is peace, but when a war is on you put on a tremendous amount and call it excess profits. That is fleecing the poor man, there can be no doubt about it. That is well enough if in doing this thing you have a proper standard. It is no good controlling prices unless you have a proper standard. The standard of living in this Colony is very low and, but for the Americans coming in, I do not know what would have happened to the people here. It is not so in Great Britain. Every man and every woman who wants work gets it 24 hours a day and 7 days a week at the highest possible price. Here you get the people living from hand to mouth with unemployment. The Americans have come here and given the people employment and are giving the people also a reasonable rate of wages. What is the use of talking about controlling and lowering prices? That is only for those who have money to buy. The man who is getting next to nothing, however you control prices, does not come in. You are taking away from him that which he seems to have. It seems to me Government is lacking in one respect, and that is in bringing forward the Labour Bill, which should have been put into operation, giving a guaranteed amount of wages. I understand that at the request of the industries here the Americans were asked not to pay the prices, which they were able and willing to pay but to keep within local bounds—that is 13 cents per hour for an able-bodied unskilled

labourer. But Your Excellency will be surprised to know that in the other industries an able-bodied unskilled labourer is paid 5 to 6 cents per hour, and when he goes to buy he gets the goods at six times the cost price. What man is there if he gets nothing by it would profiteer only to pay it out as excess profits?

In spite of Government's restrictions and attempts to cut down prices, these merchants are still making excess profits and paying them to Government. Take away every penny they get as excess profits and you will be nearer the margin. They must not have excess profits at all. When you control the prices, whatever commodity a man cannot get he will have the money. In England distribution is the same all around, and a man has money because he is paid for his labour. A commodity is not there and he keeps his money. What happens here? He has not the money and you take money from him and give him a bonus at the end of the time. Three months' salary is given as a bonus and a swimming pool costing thousands of dollars is constructed, while the man in the field only gets 5 cents per hour. In this country where you have the big sea and big rivers and perpetual summer, men are spending thousands of dollars in war-time to make a swimming-pool and sun-bath because they do not want to give the people more money. Give the man the money who is working for it and then control prices so that profiteering will not be. One reason why there is so much trouble in Water Street is because the goods are there and the small trader and the people who also purchase from Water Street cannot obtain them. You go this week and see articles in a show-window and next week you return and do not see them. Where have they gone? They have been put in boxes and hidden away. The following week you may see them again though no vessel has come in, and you have to pay 300 per cent. more for those goods. That is robbery. That should not be countenanced. You want 400 Inspectors to check this kind of trickery. If you are going to get these inspectors, get men who are not experts. An expert is a man who reads books and has no practice. You want men who know the job. Let them go to these places and see how many things are hidden away and are brought back a week later and sold at

300 per cent. profit. It is a little late now but still you are not too late, because between now and the 31st January or the end of the first week in January prices will automatically go down as the merchants have got all they want. They give their staffs bonus, some three months' salary and all the rest smaller sums.

At this stage further discussion was deferred to the next sitting of the Council.

SITTING OF COUNCIL.

THE PRESIDENT: The question has been raised as to the hours we should sit to-morrow morning in order to expedite the business. The hon. Colonial Secretary proposes that he and the hon. Colonial Treasurer meet the Unofficial Members particularly to deal with two Public Works items under the Estimates, and for that they will meet at 8.30 o'clock on Saturday morning (27th December, 1941). If hon. Members are agreeable to that I would ask the hon. Colonial Secretary to make provisional arrangements here to-morrow.

As to the hours of sitting to-morrow. I personally look forward to the Council sitting up to 5 o'clock to-morrow afternoon and the whole of Christmas Day. I am quite prepared to do so. The proposal is to go from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., as I understand we will not sit in the afternoon. We will, therefore, cut down to-

morrow's sitting from 5 hours to 3. I am quite prepared to be guided by the wishes of hon. Members, but I do want to point out that when we come back we must be strictly relevant in our discussion. What is the feeling of hon. Members? If you wish to avoid sitting to-morrow afternoon and to sit on Christmas Day, I am quite prepared to sit on Christmas Day. It is not a holiday in Great Britain this year.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I know that is the case in England and they have very good reasons for it, but we are little better off here in that respect than in England.

THE PRESIDENT: Very well, we will not sit on Christmas Day. What about to-morrow afternoon?

Mr. LEE: I suggest the Council should sit from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 2 to 4 p.m. to-morrow.

Mr. WALCOTT: I am quite prepared to sit from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. but not from 2 to 4 p.m.

Mr. JACKSON: I agree to 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 2 to 4 p.m.

Mr. SEAFORD: 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

THE PRESIDENT: The Council will then sit from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The Council adjourned until the following day at 8 a.m.