

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 26th April, 1945

The Council met at 2 p.m., His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon Lethem, K.C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT

The President, His Excellency the Governor Sir Gordon Lethem, K.C.M.G.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. M. B. Laing, C.M.G., O.B.E.

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

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

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

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

The Hon. J. A. Luckhoo, K.C., (Nominated).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

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

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

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

The Hon. C. P. Ferreira (Berbice River).

The Clerk read prayers.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Friday, 20th April, 1945, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DISCUSSIONS IN BARBADOS

The PRESIDENT: With regard to business today Government is anxious to get through the Bills about loans, and I have spoken to the hon. mover of the motion which is the first item in the Order of the Day and secured his consent to proceed with the two Bills standing in the name of the Treasurer, on the expectation that they should go through without controversy, and I would proceed to take the first reading of the other two Bills, and then proceed to the motion, by which time the hon. Member for Western Essequibo may be in his place.

I should also report to Members in connection with my remarks when leaving the Chair on Friday last, and saying that I was proceeding to Barbados for the week-end, something of my discussions there. I took with me the hon. the Colonial Treasurer who discussed certain matters with the Controller of Supplies in Barbados touching rice exports, and I took with me also the Director of Education who had some useful discussions with the Comptroller's Educational Adviser, as I had also myself.

TOWN PLANNING BILL.

The Treasurer and myself also discussed the Town Planning Bill for the devastated area with the Comptroller's Adviser, securing his complete support. I should here state that the draft Bill is now with the Members of Executive Council, and I hope they will enable me to authorise publication to Legislative Council and the public early next week. Copies of the plans will also be available, though with our many printing difficulties it will not at the moment be practical to broadcast these.

My major discussions with the Comptroller himself were in regard to the action that is necessary under the new Development and Welfare Act which, as Members know, greatly extends the finances and period for assistance obtainable under the Act. Government has been asked to put forward to the Secretary of State a complete over-all picture of probable and possible requirements for the next twenty years. As you know, that has been done in regard to drainage and irrigation in my confidential despatch of over two years ago, but it is now desired that we submit some such over-all picture for every other need, educational, health services, etc., etc. I think that Members are aware that I had recently put forward a specific outline of requirements for the administration and development of the

Interior at £100,000 a year, allowing £50,000 for modest administrative and departmental framework and normal recurrent expenditure and £50,000 per annum for practical works—excluding of course such major projects as railways, trunk roads, river improvement, which would require to be taken each on its own merits.

I expressed the view that it was to be hoped that the prosecution of projects on which there is now complete agreement between the Comptroller and myself, would not be delayed while this overall picture was being studied. It is precisely those projects of importance to the great bulk of our people that are in question, such as the applications for funds for housing schemes, for building of schools, for drainage and irrigation in particular, which have been under discussion for so many months.

THE FRANCHISE BILL.

With regard to further business of Council I hope to bring forward the amendments to the Rice Tenure Security Bill next week. The Franchise Bill is proving an immense labour for the legal officers, particularly in the face of the added preoccupation of the fire, but once I can get it despatched by air mail to London, I shall ask for immediate approval for publication to the public. As regards procedure and regulation of elections, I brought down with me not a few documents from Jamaica which I have passed to the Chairman of the Committee, dealing with that matter, the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member.

DISTRIBUTION OF SUPPLIES.

There is one intimation I think I should take this opportunity to make. That is in regard to the effect on our local economics of the end of hostilities in Europe to which we are looking forward at an early date, I have received

an important advice from the Secretary of State as to the particular position touching supplies to the Colony more particularly from the United Kingdom and the sterling area. It is very likely that here, as elsewhere, many people will be looking forward to an immediate easing in the situation and hope for fairly speedy resumption of ordinary conditions. My advices are very far from optimistic. In fact, as regards certain kinds of supplies—those which will be particularly required in devastated and liberated areas—there may be a worsening of world supply and consequently continuing and, even in details, increasing shortage to countries such as ourselves who have throughout the war years been fairly well treated. The possibility of great shortage of shipping space is also emphasized, at least as long as war in the Pacific region continues. It is not necessary here to go into details. There is one detail in which prospects are a little brighter, that is touching supplies of iron and steel and machinery. That will, of course, be very welcome. Motor vehicles might become more available, but that again is limited by the continuing extreme shortage of tyres and tubes. I feel it will be very necessary for us in this Colony to maintain our philosophy and equanimity in facing up to some further period of stringency in supplies of things we would like to have. I have no doubt that the reasonable minimum of essentials will continue to be forthcoming, but it will be our duty also to maintain the policies we have been following in these years to ensure the fairest distribution amongst all people of the Colony.

PAPERS LAID.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Laing) laid on the table the following documents:—

Report on the Yellow Fever (Anti-Aedes Aegypti) Service of the Medical Department, British Guiana, for the year 1944.

Report on the accounts of the Patoir Fund for 1944.

Report of the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce for 1944.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

PUBLIC LOAN BILL, 1945.

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to make provision for raising in the Colony a loan not exceeding five million dollars."

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The Bill seeks to obtain statutory authority for the raising of a loan of five million dollars in terms of the resolution which was passed by the Council at the last meeting. It is a very short Bill which merely gives formal authority. The conditions under which the loan will be raised are already set out in another Ordinance, the General Local Loan Ordinance, of 1941. This Bill has a schedule in which is set out the purposes to which the loan will be applied. I do not think it is necessary for me to go into any further details. I formally move that the Bill be read a second time.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Mr. WOOLFORD: On the last occasion when the proposal to raise this loan was under discussion I made the suggestion that there should be some safeguard of the announced intention of several small investors to participate in the loan, and the Colonial Treasurer agreed with the suggestion. In answer to my interrogatories as to what the denominations of the bonds were going to be he gave the Council a list and said he hoped there would be a popular response to the loan. I had no opportunity to reply to that, but I wish again to express misgiving as to what this Bill may result in. In other words it does not matter what the denominations of the bonds are, because one person may

subscribe to the whole lot for two persons or a group of persons. What I do ask is that in the allotment of the bonds there should be set aside a certain sum to be allotted to those people whom we call the small investors. If that were done there would be no question of allotment not reaching the small investors. It is important that in the distribution or allotment of these bonds some safeguard of the small investors should be provided. There is the possibility of some being squeezed out. I remember in the case of one loan it was said: "Why should we print 1,000 bonds when we can give one person a \$1,000 bond?" I do ask that something be done to allot a certain portion of the bond issue to the small investors—people who cannot lend money on mortgages. There are certain people in this Colony who only know one class of investment—the Savings Banks, and in some cases Government loans. I suggest that such people be taken care of.

Mr. JACOB: I can quite see, in view of what the last speaker has said, that there may be a scramble for these bonds, and I would not be surprised if within a few hours the whole amount of the loan is oversubscribed. Speaking as one who in this Council is charged with the obligation to safeguard public funds, I feel that it would not be out of place for me to repeat some of the things I said when the motion to raise this loan was under consideration in this Council. I stated then that the proposal was premature, it was unbusinesslike and, indeed, unstatesmanlike too. The more I think about the matter, and after discussing it with several people of all shades of opinion, the more I am satisfied that the interest and sinking fund to be provided annually will be a waste of money at the present time.

It has been stated that a Customs House, a new Queen's College, a Post Office, and roads will be built. The question of roads is a hardy annual.

Funds have been provided year after year for roads but not used. In several instances funds have been provided for buildings during the last three or four years, but never used. I could name several instances. Part of the loan is quite in order—the raising of two million dollars to redeem 4% bonds. I am confident that with the amount of money in the Colony today, if this loan was raised at 2½% it would be over subscribed within a short time, but that is not the major point to be considered by this Council at the present time, so far as I can see. The major point is to find investments for those people who have been able to save money and make huge profits. I wish to say most emphatically that as a Member of this Council that is not my consideration. My job is to see that public funds are not wasted, and to see that the majority of the people are given a square deal and an opportunity to live decent lives.

I suggested on the last occasion that the amount of the loan should be two million dollars instead of five million dollars. For the purpose of record I say that clause 2 of the Bill should be amended to provide for a loan of two million dollars instead of five million dollars, and that clause 4 should be amended to provide for 2½ per cent. interest instead of 3½ per cent. In clause 4 also, the term of the loan should be 10 years instead of 30 years. The schedule of the Bill should also be amended. It will not be necessary for me to move those amendments when the Bill is in Committee, because I think it would be a waste of time, but I do wish to emphasize that this Colony is paying roughly one million dollars in interest and sinking fund, and as I said before, most of the money in respect of the Colony's public debt of 15 million dollars has been squandered, and the public has not had the benefit of that expenditure. Perhaps it will be stated that the money having been spent, it has gone into circulation

and some benefit has accrued to the community. I am not against raising a loan of five million dollars or 50 million dollars if the money is going to be spent on productive works. If we were going to open the country, start new industries, and bring in new revenue that would be a laudable purpose, but not to raise a loan of five million dollars to build a Customs House or repair Queen's College. I think such things can be provided for in the ordinary expenditure. If money was properly spent on the reconstruction of our roads over a number of years (the Town Council has made some decent roads in the City) I think we would have had better roads, and there would have been no necessity to raise a loan for that purpose.

The more I think about the matter the more concerned I am that posterity will be burdened with this increased expenditure, and what is more, the money will not be utilized at the present time. We have a reserve of at least six million dollars, two million dollars of which has been lent to the Imperial Government, with between two and three million dollars divided between the Commodity Control and other public organizations. Another two or three million dollars is just scattered about, with some in the Banks. Why Government should want to pay interest on this loan before the money is really required? As a businessman I know some of the principles of business. No businessman would borrow money, pay interest on it, pay salaries, and do ordinary maintenance work. He would be a madman. I am sure the Secretary of State for the Colonies had all the information before him. Perhaps he did not even see it; some clerk might have rubber-stamped the papers and sent them back. I have been to the Colonial Office two or three times and I have seen what goes on. They are too pre-occupied with other business.

It is this Legislature that should decide, and not the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the paid officials there, but this Legislature seems to think the Secretary of State's decision is final; that whatever he says is quite in order, and that we are bound by it. If I am to take a new road and to do justice to my conscience I am not going to accept the rubber-stamped papers and these unbusinesslike and unstatesmanlike proposals. I feel that I have discharged my duty in opposing this Bill, and I wish my dissent recorded.

Mr. EDUN: My only regret is that Government did not wait until the new Constitution is put into operation when it would have found itself hitting its head against a stone wall of opposition. If the Elected Members of this Council were organized into a party, with the support of two of the Nominated Members we could have thrown this Bill right out. I see absolutely no sense in it at all, except that it will create a kind of parasitical anticipation among people who have money to invest. If I had a business and I had money on the Bank and a surplus, would I be so foolish as to borrow more money? I consider every Member who votes for this Bill will be committing the same folly. We should do business in a rational way. If I could get the support of Members I could speak on this Bill for two weeks.

In the course of 40 years those who invest five million dollars will receive nine million dollars, thus living off the substance and purchasing unit of British Guiana. Is that business or commonsense? Why should we encourage this sort of parasitical industry in British Guiana? Is it to suit the caprices of certain people? My great regret is that I cannot throw this Bill out. When an iniquitous proposal like this is brought before the Council there is nothing else a Member can do but feel frustrated. Government can do

anything it likes, but perhaps it will continue until the General Election takes place. It will be another story then.

I am pleading with this Council to postpone consideration of this Bill. Why burden this Colony with \$225,000 on its already heavy commitment? It is unbusinesslike and, I think, sir, you cannot expect me as a man imbued with some socialistic principle to vote for a Bill of this kind. I shall oppose it, and my only regret is that it cannot be thrown out.

Mr. AUSTIN: I am going to support the Bill entirely, and I endorse the remarks made by the hon. Member for New Amsterdam. The remarks are very strong that a number of local millionaires are trying to secure the lion's share of this loan which will be sold at a premium later on. I think the hon. the Colonial Treasurer should be very careful in allocating these shares. Instead of the shares being of a minimum value of \$100 it should be \$50 which was the amount the previous loan started at. I do sincerely hope that the vast sums which some people have will not be allowed to monopolize the situation and that they will not be allowed to get more than a reasonable share, and that the general public will share in a small way in the loan generally.

Mr. DIAS: I am of the same opinion. I have been endeavouring to hold up as much as possible the debate in connection with this matter, but having been informed in the report as to what has happened there is no need for me to make reference to what I have read and the opinion I have formed in connection with it. Government suggests borrowing money. I am glad for one thing and that is, this Colony has suffered quite a lot in the past because these loans when issued were never extended to the people in this Colony to make investments. They were invariably raised in London and not here in

spite of requests of Members of the Executive Council including myself made to Government in connection with the matter. This, is an opportunity afforded people here to invest their money, but I share the views of the hon. Member for New Amsterdam that a certain sum should be set aside or earmarked for the small people. By small people I do not only mean people who own \$500 or \$50 but persons who have \$1,000 or \$2,000. Those are small sums when you think of \$5,000,000 to be contributed. It is not a mere request that Government should bear in mind that these people be given an opportunity to invest. A certain fixed sum should be set aside for that purpose so as to make sure that people here, who are earning a little on what they have and in some instances are earning nothing, may be given this opportunity to invest their few pennies in Government Bonds. I do hope that will be borne in mind because it has been a burning shame on this Colony that for years and years in the past people here were not allowed to invest their money in loans raised in this Colony. It was always London, and London got the benefit while this Colony got precious little of those opportunities. I do ask that a departure be made now with the setting aside of a small sum, as the hon. Member for New Amsterdam suggested, to permit these people with small sums of money, who would like to earn something on them and who get precious little on them today and in some instances practically nothing, to share in this loan.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Sir, with regard to the remarks by the hon. Member for New Amsterdam and the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Edun, I can only say that the object of introducing a financial resolution as a preliminary to the introduction of legislation on such financial matters is to bring the matter before the Council for it to be debated and to clear the

air. Once the Council has passed the resolution authorizing the introduction of legislation it is scarcely appropriate that the whole matter should come up again on the introduction of the Bill. If the two hon. Members had raised any new point I would certainly have replied in some detail but they have not raised a single new point. They spoke exactly in the same terms and same strain as they did in opposing the motion. Consequently I do not think it is necessary to answer their remarks today.

As regards the remarks by the hon. Member for New Amsterdam, I repeat that I am completely in agreement with him. In fact in the Message and in my own speech on the motion I said that Government and I personally desired this loan should have popular response. I want it to be open to all classes of the community, and that in providing the machinery for raising the loan and for the distribution of the prospectus and so on we should make every attempt to circulate the loan as widely as possible so as to bring it to the notice of all classes in the hope that all small people—by small people I really mean small people and not necessarily people who have money to lend on mortgages, but small people with small sums on the Savings Bank—would take advantage of the opportunity. Those are the people I would like to see interested in this loan.

As regards the minimum amount of the Bond I have fixed, as I said, \$100 not because I do not realize \$50 has been the denomination in this Colony before but because the war rate of interest is $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The half-yearly interest therefore becomes an odd figure and it is somewhat difficult to arrange the coupons in equal sums, so I consider \$100 the lowest figure which should be used. I think \$100 is really low enough. I myself feel that the loan is going to be successful, but I do not think it is going to be closed in

a few hours as some people suggest. The Treasury has had considerable experience some years ago in raising loans in this Colony, but unfortunately we have never had the great pleasure of opening a list and closing it on the same day. Some Members may remember when we were building the Sea Defences in 1916 that we had to issue a loan in this Colony at as high a rate of interest as 6 per cent. and we kept that list open for months. We never had the experience of a scramble for investment in a loan. Nevertheless, I am quite prepared to take advantage of the suggestion of Members of this Council who seem to know and to expect that there will be a rush. If that is so, then I with the advice of the Law Officers will have to make some preliminary arrangements as regards that. At the present time we have taken no step to that effect. If we are to look for a complete subscription list on one day then some arrangement will have to be made. I promise that I will discuss it with those who ought to know and will take advice as to what should be done in case the subscription list is over-subscribed the same day. I can only repeat what I said before that Government wants to have the loan widely circulated as possible and wants all small people to subscribe to it.

There is one comment made by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Dias, about the failure of Government during past years to provide loans in this Colony but instead raises the money on the London market. There is reason for that. Some years ago we tried it in this Colony. We made an attempt by approaching financial interests concerned about raising a loan here. I think some Members sitting around this table will remember that. But we got no further with it. In those days people expected a high rate of interest and we were informed that we could not raise the loan in this Colony at the rate of interest which Government was

prepared to pay and at which Government could borrow on the London market. We had to go to London to raise such loans. It was sincerely believed that people would not put money in a loan at the rate of interest offered. Now, however, we feel the time has come when we ought to go on the local market, and we feel that the rate of interest now offering is reasonable and will be accepted.

There is only one comment I will make on the general principle. It seems to be considered a foolish thing and an unfortunate thing for a Colony to borrow money when it has surplus funds. In the Colony of Trinidad they have a surplus of \$13,000,000 and during last year they put on the market a loan for \$5,000,000. That loan was offered at 3 per cent. and was not entirely successful. There is an instance of a rich Colony with a genuine revenue balance and all prospects of success going on the market to borrow a loan for appropriate schemes, and there are many others. I merely mention that in order to show proper financial procedure.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

Mr. JACOB asked that his dissent be recorded.

COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE.

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

Clause 5 — *Commencement of contribution to sinking fund.*

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that a small "c" be substituted for the capital "C" in the word "Contributions."

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill passed as amended.

The Council resumed.

The PRESIDENT: With the consent of Members we will proceed with the third reading.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I beg to move that the Public Loan Bill, 1945, be read a third time and passed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time and passed.

CHURCHES (FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE) BILL, 1945.

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to vary the manner of redeeming the Bonds issued under the Churches (Financial Assistance) Ordinance: to authorize the issue of Debentures to certain religious bodies and for matters connected therewith."

The COLONIAL TREASURER: This Bill is in terms of the resolution which was debated by the Council at the last meeting and, therefore, it is unnecessary for me to explain it in any detail. It carries out the terms of that resolution. It provides that the Churches be given assistance in the form of debentures issued under the new loan and also the surplus on the sinking fund to be paid out to the Churches in proportion to the Bonds they hold.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Dr. SINGH: I am asking Government to consider the other religious bodies like the Hindoo and Muslim religious bodies for the issue of debentures. A few years ago I approached Government on this matter for a grant

for the Hindoo and Muslim religious bodies and I was told that in another few years the whole matter will come up for review. Now that it is time, I am asking Government to consider this matter. The issue of grants to Hindoo and Muslim religious bodies is nothing new. There are other Colonies which have given grants to Hindoo and Muslim religious bodies, and lately in Trinidad a Bill was passed in which grants were made to Hindoo and Muslim religious bodies from public funds. I do hope Government will consider the application for grants to Hindoo and Muslim religious bodies in this Colony.

Mr. JACKSON: It does not appear to me that the Bill before us permits of any application for relief to any religious bodies that are not concerned with the Bill and the objects of the Bill. I take it, sir, the Churches that receive help as the established Churches of the Colony are all those who accepted help some years back. By virtue of the Disestablishment Ordinance a sum of money has accumulated at the present time which would have been paid to them. This Bill, however, attempts to vary the manner of payment to those Churches. The general question of applying for assistance in my opinion does not come up at the moment. It should not be understood that I am opposed to any relief being given to the Churches that do not come under this Ordinance at all, but on principle I think no application for assistance can be entertained on the Bill before us. It may be regarded as a past request from the hon. Member who has spoken, but I do say and think with a degree of certainty that no other Churches can expect to have relief under the Bill before us. The Bill is to vary the manner of payment of money already due to certain Churches and as such, I think, it should be passed.

Mr. EDUN: Sir, I see in clause 1 of the Bill it is stated "This Ordi-

nance may be cited as the Churches (Financial Assistance) Ordinance, 1945." Those two words "financial assistance" may have influenced the hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo. But some time in the history of the Churches this Government did assist them, and in the course of events it has reached the stage when another Ordinance has had to reach this Council. What, I think, actuated the hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo is this: Established throughout the length and breadth of British Guiana will be found Hindoo temples and Muslim mosques, and those temples and mosques were built by the common effort of the Hindoos and Muslims. That was a commendable thing for them to do. If this Government is endeavouring to establish certain financial assistance for Christian Churches I respectfully submit that this Government has a duty to the Hindoos and Muslims to see to it that a certain measure of assistance be given to their temples and mosques. Is it not its duty therefore to say to those people "Why don't you also come together and form an organization to hold in trust all these temples on the part of the Hindoos, all these mosques on the part of the Muslims with Government assistance?" That is what, I think, has been actuating the mind of the hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo. Is it not the duty of this Government also to give assistance to these Indians who form a large section of the non-Christian people of this Colony? Therefore I feel, sir, that in due course certain propositions will be submitted to this Government in the interest of these two religious bodies. That is why, I think, the hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo has sounded a note of warning, and when that time shall have come, I am sure, and Your Excellency is here, you will give it all support and assistance.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I would just like to emphasize that this Bill, if passed, is really the comple-

tion of an act of disestablishment of our Churches. It really is not providing in any sense a new form of financial assistance for the religious bodies to which it applies at all. As I said when moving the motion, 25 years ago we disestablished the Churches and provided an Endowment Fund for doing so. This Bill is to vary the method by which that fund is to be applied. Notwithstanding that, I have no doubt that the hon. Members who have spoken were right in taking the opportunity to raise the points they have. The short title of the Bill certainly led them to think so. But what I would say is, if they wish to press that, quite another form of attack should be taken.

The PRESIDENT : Would you like to amend the title?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The title follows that of the original Ordinance of 1920 — "The Churches (Financial Assistance) Ordinance." This is merely continuing the fact of that title.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE.

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

Clause 1—Short title.

The CHAIRMAN: The words "financial assistance" may be misleading, but there is no expenditure of Government funds involved at all. It merely affects a certain fund accumulated to the benefit of the Churches. As the hon. the Colonial Treasurer explained, it hangs on a previous Ordinance and there is not sufficient reason to amend that title as long as that is

clearly understood. Is that your point of view?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes, sir, but subject to the approval of the hon. the Attorney-General.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I do not know what the trouble over the title is. No one can suggest that we are generously giving financial assistance to the Churches concerned. It is how you look at it. I do not mind a scrap about the title. Anyone who cares to put in some spare time may try to change it. In this case the wording right through will have to be changed. The original Ordinance will have to be changed. For the sake of precision we should leave it.

The Council resumed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I move that the Bill be now read a third time and passed.

Mr. SEAFORD seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time and passed.

POST AND TELEGRAPH (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1945.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that the following Bill be read the first time:—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance further to amend the Post and Telegraph Ordinance, (Chapter 185), by providing that the Governor in Council may fix rates of duties of postage and other sums to be charged under the Ordinance; by providing for the issue of a Post Office Guide; and by providing that the Post Office Fine Fund shall cease to be appropriated for the benefit of the families of deceased officers of the Post Office

Mr. WOOLFORD seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the first time.

Notice was given that at a later stage, or at a subsequent meeting, it would be moved that the Bill be read a second time.

(TAX AMENDMENT) BILL, 1945.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that the following Bill be read the first time:—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance further to amend the Tax Ordinance, 1939, by increasing the duties payable in respect of Cinematograph entertainment."

Mr. WOOLFORD seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the first time.

Notice was given that at a later stage, or at a subsequent meeting, it would be moved that the Bill be read a second time.

COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY INTO P.W.D.

The Council resumed the debate on the following motion by Mr. EDUN:—

WHEREAS the recent Public Works Conspiracy Case that was heard and concluded in the Supreme Criminal Courts of British Guiana having very clearly disclosed that grave irregularities in the general administration and in the expenditure of Public Funds by that Department are being committed.

AND WHEREAS the very nature of the such and said existing irregularities is absolutely inimical to the best interests of the tax-paying element of the Colony, aforesaid, and that the said tax-paying element continue to experience and exhibit a very deep feeling of uneasiness;

AND WHEREAS not having since or subsequent to the determination of the said case made, in fact, any public announcement or otherwise given any information, knowledge and/or intelligence to the said tax-paying element of any course of action which it may consider desirable to prosecute, with the view to restore the people's confidence in the aforesaid Department of Public Works;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable Council recommends to His Excellency the Governor the desirability of setting up a Competent Committee of Inquiry to investigate and report on the broad and detailed functioning of the Public Works Department, aforesaid, in relation to all works of a public nature undertaken and carried on by the Department; aforesaid; e.g., the Drainage and Irrigation Board, the Pure Water Supply, the Transport and Harbours Board and other Boards connected and entrusted with Schemes within the Colony of British Guiana; aforesaid;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Honourable Council recommends to His Excellency the Governor the appointment of a vigilance committee comprising of Members of the Legislative Council to act as watch and ward on the expenditure of Public Funds by the Departments, aforesaid.

Dr. SINGH: The Public Works Department is a very important and a very large Department of Government. Increasingly large sums of money are being spent by the Department from year to year in order to maintain sea defences, roads, bridges and Government buildings. With the exception of some of the Executive Engineers the Department is staffed by local men of the Civil Service, local artisans and local labourers. Those people are part of the inhabitants of this country, and the general public looks to those employees to work with honesty of purpose. But what do we find? We find irregularities occurring over and over again, which are causing the public grave concern. The State, the Church and the parents have to remodel the young men and women of to-day in order to place them in positions of trust because those at present employed in the public service have let us down. With the co-operation of the Head of the Department the members of the Public Works Advisory Committee, of which I am one, are doing their best to improve matters, but that will take some time. Something must be done. We must endeavour to employ honest people in that Department.

The motion calls for the appointment of a Vigilance Committee. What purpose would such a Committee serve when people have made up their minds to be dishonest? I do not think such a Committee would serve any useful purpose. What we have to do is to train our people for positions of responsibility, and then there would be some future for British Guiana.

Mr. FERREIRA: Unfortunately I was not present when the motion was introduced but I have been able to follow it. I do not think it is proper that a motion of this type should have been introduced so shortly after the appointment of the Public Works Advisory Committee. Nevertheless, it will clear the air. We will have discussions, and Members will have an opportunity of hearing the defence of the Public Works Department. If the mover of the motion had read carefully the Annual Report of the Advisory Committee, which was circulated to Members of this Council, I do not think he would have thought it necessary to introduce a motion of this type. I think that the Public Works Advisory Committee is doing what the hon. Member attempts to set out in his motion. If the Advisory Committee is not carrying out its functions properly then it is in Your Excellency's hands to change it and appoint more vigilant members who would properly carry out the work of the Department.

This motion has been introduced as a result of unfortunate incidents which occurred in the past, and it is not surprising that certain things have happened in the past, because the Advisory Committee has drawn attention to them in its Annual Report. Only at the meeting before the last I was speaking on the staffing of the Department, and I had hardly finished speaking when another unfortunate incident was reported. As a matter of fact, the Chairman asked that a note be made of that fact. We have ourselves to blame to a large extent. At the last

Estimates meeting I drew attention to the fact that officers holding responsible positions—in fact virtually running the accounting branch of the offices—were being paid salaries ranging from \$35 to \$50 per month and handling thousands of dollars. That point has been drawn to Government's attention on more than one occasion. The Department is badly under-staffed, and our men in certain districts are miserably underpaid. If they are to hold responsible positions, handling thousands of dollars, we must pay them salaries commensurate with the responsibilities they carry. There are District Engineers whose offices are so badly understaffed that they are tied to their offices and are unable to supervise public works properly. That is a state of affairs that should be put an end to. We can do that by employing a better type of persons.

It was stated by the seconder of the motion that the district between Western Berbice and the East Coast, Demerara, is being run by one Engineer. That is perfectly true, and it is unfortunate, but it is well that Members should be informed that members of the Public Works Advisory Committee went so far as to inspect a certain property on the West Coast of Berbice with a view to suggesting to Government to purchase it for the Engineer, but when the time came the Engineer was not available. That is no fault of the Government or the Committee. We appreciate the fact that the district is too large. It is impossible for an Engineer resident at Triumph to be responsible for works on the West Coast of Berbice. This Colony will soon be able to obtain trained Engineers who could undertake the supervision of the works being carried out. Members know that large schemes on the Corentyne Coast have been held up merely because it has not been possible to get reliable men. It is unfair to suggest that efforts have not been made to that end.

Members can help to put a period to these unfortunate incidents by voting money to pay people who are available. In the meantime I ask them to be patient until we can get competent people to supervise the works. If any Member of this Council has any suggestions or criticisms to make I for one would be only too glad to hear them, and I am surprised to hear that the Chairman of our Committee would refuse to listen to any suggestions, or would consider himself too big to take any advice from any Member. The Advisory Committee functions harmoniously, and I do not think any Member can point a finger at the Director of Public Works, whose integrity is above reproach and who has done everything in his power to put his Department on a sound footing.

Mr. JACOB: I was waiting to hear members of the Advisory Committee speak before I said the few things I wish to say. I am afraid I cannot support the motion, worded as it is. It is not that I am not satisfied that something should be done. I am certain that something should be done to put the Public Works Department on a better footing and to safeguard public funds, but this motion, as worded, is not one that I can support. Let us examine the first resolution. It says:—

“Be it resolved that this Honourable Council recommends to His Excellency the Governor the desirability of setting up a competent Committee of Inquiry to investigate and report on the broad and detailed functioning of the Public Works Department, aforesaid, in relation to all works of a public nature undertaken and carried on by the Department, aforesaid: e.g. the Drainage and Irrigation Board, the Pure Water Supply, the Transport and Harbours Board, and other Boards connected and entrusted with schemes within the Colony of British Guiana, aforesaid;”

That clause is very confusing. I do not think the Transport and Harbours Board is within the purview of the Public Works Department; it is an entirely separate Department. I notice that the Sea Defence Board is not

included, but the words “and other Boards” may be intended to include the Sea Defence Board. The Rice Marketing Board is also not included, but that too may be covered by those words. I cannot support the first resolution as worded.

The hon. the Fourth Nominated Member (Mr. J. A. Luckhoo) suggested that some members of the Advisory Committee should be appointed as a Committee to inquire into the working of the Department, or to investigate the recent irregularities on the East Coast of Demerara. I cannot see the object of splitting up the Advisory Committee and selecting some of its members to investigate something which I think has come within its purview already. As a matter of fact it has been stated during the debate that the Committee is purely advisory, and as a member of another Advisory Committee I can quite appreciate the fact that the Public Works Advisory Committee can do little or nothing to check those irregularities which have taken place, which are taking place now, and which will take place in the future. The Committee must have executive power before it can do anything to check irregularities.

I have had the unfortunate experience of referring various matters to the Heads of the Administration, the Colonial Secretaries, Directors of Public Works, and other Executive Officers, and I regret to say that I have had little or no redress or satisfaction from all those parties. Very probably they are too much engaged with other matters and question why should an Elected Member criticize or probe into something which would ultimately reflect on their characters and probity? Perhaps the Heads of the Administration believe, or believed in the past, that any reflection on executive officers of Government would be a reflection on them personally. I am inclined to think that at least one Head of the Administration thought so. Perhaps the

Colonial Secretaries think the same way too. Unless there is a complete change of policy these irregularities and frauds at the Public Works Department will continue forever. I have in mind certain things that can be done, but I am sure this Government, constituted as it is, will pay no heed to those things, as the majority of Government officers believe they know better and can do these things themselves. The hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) and I have been to several officers and written several complaints, but we failed completely to even interest those to whom the complaints were addressed. So that any investigation of something that has happened already would be a scandalous waste of time.

I am prepared to forget the past but I am not prepared to let the present state of affairs continue. Unless there is a General Election in this Colony, the money of the Colony will be continually squandered, and I am sorry to note from the announcement Your Excellency made just now, that it is not proposed to hold a General Election until the end of next year. With the set-up we have, and the methods being employed, I can quite see that the longer the General Election is postponed the better for the present Administration.

The PRESIDENT: I take complete exception to that remark. Hon. Members are perfectly well aware of the extreme burden of work that lies, on this Administration. As far as it has been in my power, that matter is being forwarded as quickly as possible. I take profound exception to the remark which has just been made.

Mr. JACOB: The fact remains the same—that there will be no General Election until next year.

The PRESIDENT: Will you proceed to the object of the motion?

Mr. JACOB: I am proceeding. I say that unless there is a complete

change of the set-up in this Council, the set-up of the Executive Government, we can hope to see very little of the irregularities and frauds being minimized. The Advisory Committee is composed of the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight), Chairman, the hon. Member for Georgetown Central (Mr. Percy C. Wight), the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Dias, the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Critchlow, the hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo (Dr. Singh), and the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Ferreira). It is quite clear that at least some of those Members will retire from public life, either compulsorily, or as a result of a change of the Constitution they will not be in this Council again. That is quite clear. No reflection is made on the Members concerned, but from the provisions of the Order in Council it is quite clear that some of them must retire as soon as this Council is prorogued. This Council has been in existence for nearly 10 years and, as I have said, I have no doubt that events of the future will show that there will be no—

The PRESIDENT: I must again ask you to keep to the object of the motion. If you do not I shall rule you out of order.

Mr. JACOB: I am just making my point. If Your Excellency had been present here you would have been able to follow my speech. The question of the General Election was raised by the hon. mover.

The PRESIDENT: We have had quite enough about it. Will you please proceed?

Mr. JACOB: If Your Excellency wishes me to sit I will do so.

The PRESIDENT: I will allow you to speak if you keep to the subject of the motion.

Mr. JACOB: I maintain that it is quite relevant to the matter raised in the debate. If you rule me out of order I will take my seat. I have gone to immense trouble to point out to Government what should be done, but it does not suit Government to do what not only I, but other hon. Members have stated. We have pointed out grave irregularities that have taken place in the reconstruction of this building—this Council Chamber—, the Brickdam Police Station, the Alberttown Police Station, the Public Hospital, Georgetown, and several other buildings. We have gone and inspected those works and submitted reports which have been thrown away, and nothing has been done to bring those culprits to justice. The recent trial took 66 days, and what happened? A few subordinates, a few unfortunate people who were the tools of others, have gone to jail, but those who were able to manipulate and arrange those things and to do them in a thorough manner, some of them have in fact been promoted. I know what I am talking about, and if I speak strongly it is because I feel strongly, and it is because public funds are involved.

I am sorry Your Excellency takes exception to some of my remarks. They were not personal. If the Chair does not wish to hear anything that is true and correct, and if the Chair does not wish to take notice of suggestions which would bring about a clean Administration, I regret that I cannot co-operate with the Chair. I have been in this Council 10 years and I have shown how work can be done. I have pointed out to one or two officers what should have been done, and I am glad to say that one officer at least took certain advice, with the result that certain things were done. I am not prepared to mention them here, but I was thoroughly satisfied. But with regard to the Public Works Department and people who should have been brought to justice, the present Chairman of the Advisory Committee did not do as he

should have done, with the result that certain culprits were not brought to justice when certain things happened quite recently. I think the Chairman of the Committee shielded certain persons who knew that something had gone seriously wrong. I made references to it at the last Annual Session, and although several explanations were given, the fact remains that a basin which was bought and paid for was not installed.

The hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr Lee), suggested that a one-man Commission should be appointed to inquire into such things. I can hardly see the object of such an appointment. I think that a Committee of Inquiry consisting of no less than three persons should be appointed. That brings me to the second resolution of the motion which reads:—

“And be it further resolved—that this Honourable Council recommends to His Excellency the Governor the appointment of a Vigilance Committee, comprising of Members of the Legislative Council to act as watch and ward on the expenditure of public funds by the Departments aforesaid.”

If that means that all public works should be supervised by a Vigilance Committee, I am inclined to agree that such a Committee would serve the purpose, but I would prefer to call it an Accounts Committee because every member of a Committee must be vigilant. Why should a person be on a Committee who is not prepared to be vigilant?

I think that an Accounts Committee to investigate the works that are going on, to investigate the payments that are made at the proper time and to investigate complaints that are made will be of immense benefit to the Colony as a whole. I am glad that I have had training in preparing pay-sheets, certifying them and writing up the records from those paysheets. I claim to know something about pay-sheets, the

framing of accounts and the keeping of accounts. I am sorry to say the Public Works Department knows very little about those things. Reference has been made in this Council from time to time as to how pay-sheets were being falsified, how accounts were being added to and payments made with the result that no one was the wiser, but the taxpayer had to pay those accounts. I understand the present Accountant of the Public Works Department is a Cost Accountant. I questioned his capabilities and the rambling statement was made that he did this and the other, but from my investigation extending over a period of years I know that a Cost Accountant must be hopelessly inefficient and incapable, if he is a Cost Accountant at all, not to see that the whole accounting system of the Public Works Department is wrong to the core. It was given out in the course of the proceedings in the Supreme Court, from what I saw in the newspaper and from what I heard, that the funds were manipulated. Funds under one vote were spent under another vote, and so on. Cost Accounting should show where the amounts should be put and how they should be utilized. Government says it has a Cost Accountant, and yet all these things are being done and Government believes everything is in order.

I feel that a Committee should be appointed, and that Committee must be able at a moment's notice to inspect pay-sheets and hold up the payment of amounts. Then and only then leakages will cease. Such a Committee with such powers will have a psychological effect on the majority of people who believe they can do anything, manipulate any pay-sheet or any account and draw the money. If it is known that there are three or four men who can go at any time and inspect the work, see actually what is done, what the money is being paid for and who is drawing the money, I think, most of the irregularities would stop. But that does not suit this Government. I am satisfied about that. You must have men with a knowledge of those

things who are prepared to put themselves to inconvenience, men who will go and see and check up the records of the Department, the estimates, plans, specifications and so on, and see that things are properly carried on. But that will mean interfering with the Head of the Department, with the Executive Engineer, and this Council must be subordinated to everyone of these people. I say that unless there is a change, unless executive powers are given to certain executive committees of Members of this Council, we can never stop those things. Therefore I conclude by saying that this motion, well-intentioned as it may be, is not going to serve the purpose, and with the present set-up of the Government I can hardly see any use pursuing this matter. Unless there is a complete change of policy and a complete change of the set-up, we can expect all those irregularities and frauds to go on.

I have noticed that something has happened at the Bishops' High School. These things occur in this Department with increasing regularity. If a building does not fall down costing two or three times the amount to re-erect it, an amount over and above the legitimate cost is entered on the pay-sheets. As one of the guardians of public funds in this Colony I am objecting most strongly to the system of purchase with all the strength I can command, and I do urge on Government to change its policy.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: This motion before the Council will not have my support as I do not believe that there were irregularities in the administration of the Public Works Department shown during the investigation, and I doubt very much whether the Committee suggested by this motion will gain its objective. The Advisory Committee is doing what is sought by this motion and, I think, it was the intention of you, sir, when you appointed such committees that they should perform the duties which are

being asked for in this motion. I think this motion will serve a good purpose so far as Members of the Advisory Committee of the Department is concerned, if Members of this Council throw out suggestions that will assist the Committee in the performance of its duties and minimize what is complained of. I am not hoping that any Committee or any Head of such a large Department functioning from one end of the Colony to the other can ever succeed in stopping fraud and irregularities altogether, but they can minimize them to such an extent that the taxpayer will not feel what is being wasted. We find that even in our own concerns. It does not matter how well we look we will have frauds and irregularities being committed day by day.

I anticipate that one of the replies we are going to get from the Chairman of the Advisory Committee is the question of staff and, maybe, the question of staff will relate to technical officers who are Executive Engineers. I do not believe that we are going to stop these frauds and irregularities by Technical Officers. We can make a start right now before waiting indefinitely to have the Public Works Department fully staffed with Technical Officers, so as to prevent frauds and irregularities. The Department, I believe, really needs recasting. The present method if continued would always give rise to confusion, perhaps, in every part of the Colony. I am going to ask Members of the Advisory Committee to make a little sacrifice, so far as time is concerned, to give as much time to the matter. It will require, perhaps, the whole time of some of the Members to remedy the irregular system that has been going on for ages. To rectify and remedy that within the short period of time in which the Committee has been functioning, I feel sure the Members of the Committee realize too, is an uphill task they have before them. They have my sympathy, except they continue to look at that Department and change the system alto-

gether I am afraid they will never succeed. We need not wait to have Technical Officers before we start to reorganize the Department. We can reorganize it with local men, but if we are going to reorganize it we must have a better type of Officers, and if we are going to have a better type of Officers we must be prepared to pay salaries adequate to their responsibilities.

So far as staffing of the Department is concerned, let us just turn our minds and ask ourselves "What are the salaries of the Overseers in the country districts?" "What are their responsibilities?" We will see at a flash, sir, that the responsibilities they carry are far above the salaries they receive. I am not saying, sir, that because an officer happens to be paid inadequately for his responsibilities he must abuse such responsibilities. But we are all human and we know how the human mind travels. We know the situation and how easily it can be abused. Therefore those in a responsible position should be just towards their subordinate officers by paying them adequately and exacting from them their just responsibilities. As I have said, I am afraid until there has been a complete recast of the system in vogue in the Public Works Department we will continue to have these irregularities. I do not know if some Members think that by reason of the appointment some years ago of a Paymaster that would have assisted in any way to check any irregularities. I say not. That was just to relieve the Technical Officer of clerical work, and the appointment of a Paymaster is justifiable. The Paymaster is just to pay the money out to someone and to be certain he is doing so to the right persons after the pay-sheets have been made out, approved and passed for payment. The Paymaster is stationed in Georgetown and pays throughout the country. He goes from one end of the country to the other paying to hundreds of people whom he has never seen nor known before in his life.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: To a point of information! I would like to point out in order to save time that is one of the things the Advisory Committee did do. The members took the opportunity of going out to a district in which payments were being made in order to investigate how the payments were made and should be made. That is a matter under consideration. We will be willing to listen to any suggestions along those lines.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: The Paymaster has justified his appointment by relieving the Technical Officers of doing a clerical job, but it does not in any way assist in checking irregularities because he does not know the people whom he is paying. I make this one suggestion here, one which has been made before to the Head of the Department: If the Paymaster of the Public Works Department would adopt the same principle as that adopted on the sugar estates at their pay-table it might minimize a whole lot of these frauds. The Paymaster pays from his car, and I do not see why that cannot be done at a Police Station and the name of the worker and the amount to be paid from The Paymaster pays from his car, and I who will gather there will surely know if those called had worked that fortnight and whether they had worked for the amounts which were being paid them. We do not find that system adopted in the Department. We want a system where the workers sign the pay-sheets and receive their money and the Foreman or Driver of the gang signs the pay-sheets also as a witness. The people do not know how much he will draw and for what work he is being paid. Those are things that should be gone into by the Public Works Advisory Committee and so remedy the defects one by one.

So far as the Head of that Department is concerned, I have profound confidence in him. We all know that so far as the Director of Public Works is

concerned he can scarcely get his desk cleared so as to get into the country and see that his own method is being carried out. The Engineers stick to their desks and the responsibility of seeing the work done falls on just the Overseer and the Drivers or Foremen in the various districts. I admit that they are being paid inadequately. There is no doubt that so far as the demands of the Department are concerned and as far as my experience goes, for the past 10 or 12 years the vote of the Public Works Department has not been reduced by a half-penny. But what do we find so far as the roads are concerned? The public roads throughout the Colony are in such a state that the Department cannot be proud of them. Many times when questioned they claimed that owing to very adverse weather conditions they could not burn any earth so as to carry on work on the roads, and in the latter part of the year they could not do anything because the vote was exhausted.

Mr. FERREIRA: I should remind the hon. Member that on the West Coast Berbice there are adequate supplies of burnt earth which is not put on the road. That is another matter.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I thank the hon. Member for Berbice River, for his information as regards adequate supplies of burnt earth. He must have no doubt gained that from reports sent to the Public Works Department. But I would give him this information. My personal observation is that they have not sufficient burnt earth on the West Coast Berbice. I do not think they have sufficient nails to keep the boards on the bridges together. I am afraid every time I cross a bridge with my car that I will pick up a puncture. The boards are scattered for want of a few dozen nails. The road is in such a condition that the hon. Member broke a spring of his car yesterday and experienced much difficulty in getting it replaced.

I do not agree with the hon. Member for North-Western District that because there is no executive power much cannot be expected from an Advisory Committee. From my experience I find that an Advisory Committee with the co-operation of the Head of the Department works in the same way as if it has executive powers, and, I think, working in that way it can give the same results as one with executive powers. Except, perhaps, the members may give an order and as there is difference of opinion it is not carried out. In such a case members will be unhappy on such an Advisory Committee. As I say, I think it is the duty of every Member of this Council to make suggestions to the Head of a Department or to the Advisory Committee about anything to be done for the improvement of the Department or to minimize or check any irregularities which may come under their observation. I think thereby we will obtain far more results than appointing a Committee as suggested by this motion.

Mr. GONSALVES: I was not aware that before the close of the life of this Council it would have finished up with a prophet among its Members, because I was a little surprised today in discovering that we have such a prophet in the person of the hon. Member for North-Western District. He has prophesied that at the new elections practically none of the present Councilors will be returned. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Edun, is also in the same position. He did not actually say that, but he certainly did prophesy that as regards a fair percentage of the Members of this Council. We will see how far this prophesy will materialize. I observe, however, that the hon. Member was very keen and careful not to say anything in regard to himself personally.

With regard to the Public Works Department, for the years I have been on this Council I have always listened to criticisms about the working of it

Not only during the course of this administration but that of your predecessors in office the criticism employed is that there is no confidence in the working of the Public Works Department. Having that in mind it strikes me as peculiar that in this motion it is suggested that what was said in the past about the Department was not quite correct; there was confidence and it was lost, and by this motion it is suggested that it may be restored. As I understand, if we are going to restore confidence there must be a renewal of the Department and not one branded with the character as during the years past. That, I believe, is the purpose of this motion.

With regard to the appointment of a competent committee of enquiry as suggested, it does exist in this Advisory Committee which has been appointed by Your Excellency. If it is intended or thought that the powers given to that Committee are not sufficient to enable it to probe deeply into the administration and working of that Department, it seems what is required is to enlarge the powers of that Committee in order that the enquiry may be pursued much more carefully and better than at the present time. A Vigilance Committee to be composed of Members of this Legislative Council is suggested. When I look at the names of the personnel of the Advisory Committee I find there are four Elected Members and two Nominated Members, so that there the Elected Members are in the majority. The appointment of a Vigilance Committee will be replacing that Committee as constituted. It must be definitely stated in the motion that is the purpose. All that is needed, if it is felt that the powers of the present committee are not sufficient, is to give it more power in regard to the proper administration of that Department.

As regards the question of the staff, it seems to me that if there are irregularities or things happening in

regard to the selection of employees or foremen and if there has been danger in giving to the Executive Officers authority to employ these people, then that right may be one of the things this Committee may have to assume and make such appointments. If the appointments are made in that manner without giving consideration to the opinions of those conducting the work, that would lead to wrong selections. I take it that the Vigilance Committee is intended to give as full powers as possible and not to have its powers limited. The present Advisory Committee should continue to function with more power given to it for proper administration.

The PRESIDENT: We have passed our time for adjournment, but I would

suggest to Members that we finish the debate on the motion this afternoon.

Mr. GONSALVES: Will the mover of the motion not have the right to reply?

The PRESIDENT: Yes.

Mr. GONSALVES: Is there any assurance that he will finish to-day?

Mr. CRITCHLOW: I also wish to speak on the motion.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I believe that the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Dias, also wishes to speak on the motion.

The PRESIDENT: As there are so many candidates for hearing we will adjourn until 2 o'clock to-morrow.