

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 31st December, 1941.

The Council met at 12 noon. His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon Lethem, 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. Pretheroc, M.C., K.C.

The Hon. E. F. Mc David, 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 Unofficial Member).

The Hon. M. B. Laing, O.B.E., Commissioner of Labour and Local Government.

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

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

The Hon. F. Ogle, Director of Education, (Acting).

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

The Hon. J. Eleazar, (Berbice River).

The Hon. Peer Bacchus, (Western Berbice).

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

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

The Hon. J. W. Jackson, (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. F. A. Mackey, (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. T. Lee, (Essequibo River).

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

The Clerk read prayers.

MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Tuesday, 30th December, 1941,

were amended (a) by the deletion of the semi-colon after the word "tax" in the second line of the long title of the Excess Profits Tax (Amendment) Bill, 1941, on page 4, and by the substitution therefor of the word "and" and (b) by the deletion of all the words after the word "profits," in the third line of the said long title.

The minutes as amended were taken as read and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENT.

THE PRESIDENT: I have no announcement to make except to express the hope that this mid-day hour is agreeable to those Members who were not here yesterday.

PAPER LAID.

The Colonial Secretary (Mr. G. D. Owen, C.M.G.) laid on the table the following document:—

The Post Office Telegraph (Amendment) Regulations, 1941, (No. 31 of 1941).

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 31st December, 1942.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

THE CHAIRMAN: I would just like to say that I am not *au fait*, nor is the Director of Public Works, who has been such a short time in the Colony, responsible for the preparation of these estimates which was done before he came. I feel a good deal of responsibility on myself and the Colonial Secretary for the supervision of the Public Works Department. I have made some criticisms once or twice in this Council about the dilapidation of buildings, and I have that a great deal in mind, but I have also to remember that there is an Executive Council Committee sitting now as regards the re-organization of the Department for which the Director has put up proposals, and I have to await the report of that Committee. I am also turning over in my mind the setting up of some machinery which would be helpful as a *liaison* between myself and this Council in improving my knowledge of this Department and the work of the Re-organization Committee. I do not wish to

make any statement or take any decision on the matter.

Mr. LEE: I am glad that Your Excellency has made that pronouncement. It saves me a lot of unnecessary comment, but I would like to point out to you and the Government that comments made by Members of this Council are only made for the purpose of bringing to the notice of Government facts which have been brought to our notice. In making any strictures on any Department or any Head of a Department we are only carrying out our duties which are sometimes very unpleasant, but as public men we have to carry them out. Two cases were brought to the notice of the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) and myself of defalcations and the spending of money of the Public Works Department in the wrong way. We took those matters up with Government and actually suggested in an interview with Sir Wilfrid Jackson that if steps were taken immediately the people who were responsible for those irregularities would be brought to justice.

In our presence the Governor called in the then acting Colonial Secretary and made arrangements with us that the matter would be taken up immediately, but the partiality of the Police came in. Although those instructions were sent to the District Superintendent of Police most of the people who were to receive money on authority at the time did not turn up to receive that money. The hon. Member for North-Western District and I were informed that when the information reached the Police the people who were concerned in those irregularities were informed that the irregularities were carried out with the knowledge and consent of some of the servants of Government. It is a very startling statement to make, but those are the facts which were brought to our knowledge, and we as public men could not stand by and see the Police take no action whatever in the matter.

There is another instance of money misspent by the Public Works Department. We were informed at Golden Grove that money was paid for certain work above the value of the work, and that certain people who received money did not work at all. It is not pleasant for public men to have to go on Sundays to verify certain facts about work which the responsible officers of the Department should look after. I am inviting any Member of the Council to go and see for himself. I believe it is still existing. There was a little trash house 20 x 12 ft. and I counted

the number of posts that made it. The roof was made of coconut leaves, and we were told that \$15 was paid for a thing like that which would not take two men more than a day to erect. There were three drains 4x6 ins. to drain that roof and \$3 was paid for that work. We counted the number of bamboos used in making the stop-off and found that our informant was correct in regard to the number. When we asked the Department to show us the pay-sheets we were told that the matter had to be gone into, and when we did see them what could we do? The money had been paid and we can only complain to Government that certain servants of this Department are enriching themselves at the expense of Government. It is a scandalous affair.

There is another instance I would like to bring to Your Excellency's attention. On the West Coast of Demerara the Police were informed that 11 or 12 barrels of cement were taken from the Public Works Department. The Police executed a search warrant, seized the cement and took it to the station. We were told that nothing would come out of it because certain chief executive officers of the Department were friendly towards certain subordinate officers. Nothing did come out of it because when I enquired of the Police Department I was told that the matter had been dealt with departmentally. I would like Your Excellency to see those papers and have the matter enquired into by an independent person.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I rise to a point of order. I do not know what the hon. Member is speaking on, and we are pressed for time.

THE CHAIRMAN: This is surely one opportunity for Members to raise certain things. I will have to allow the hon. Member to continue his general criticism.

Mr. LEE: I am bringing certain facts to the notice of Government in order to stop the irregularities carried on in the Department. I am not blaming Mr. Case or Mr. Boyce because whatever facts are brought to their notice they accept as gospel truth. I am suggesting that more attention be paid to subordinate officers. When there is a clear case of theft of cement and no action is taken—

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. Member keeps on saying that no action was taken. Will he wait and find out what action was taken?

Mr. LEE: The Police informed me that no action was being taken; the matter was dealt with departmentally. It is not a case for departmental action when there is misappropriation by servants of the Department. To cover up the theft of the cement three other persons were charged with removing timber from the seashore, for which permission had been given by senior officers of the Department. Because servants of the Department were interested parties in the theft of the cement the matter was hushed up.

It is not in every case that we can get members of the public to give us details in writing, but it has also been brought to my knowledge that on the West Coast a relative of one of the officers received payment for a fortnight's work and also a day's pay for driving one of the Department's lorries. How could he receive pay as a fortnightly servant and also payment as a lorry driver? If Your Excellency investigates that matter you will find that my information is correct.

I suggested some time ago that the remedy for these irregularities is the frequent removal of the senior and junior officers from one district to another so as to prevent them being so closely attached to the parties who encourage them. I made the suggestion when Sir Geoffrey Northcote was Governor of this Colony, and I noticed that junior officers were being removed every two years. I am suggesting that senior and junior officers should be removed as often as possible, and that no relatives of the officers or overseers should be employed under any of those officers. Your Excellency will find out that the person who received the payment I referred to is related to one of the overseers.

If Your Excellency would look into the expenditure on the Potaro road you would make some startling discoveries and you would perhaps ask some of the officers to refund that money. The road has not been looked after since September last, but money was spent and badly spent. There is graft between the overseer and the men, and I am told that money has been paid to the contractors for work which has not been done. Money has been allocated for the cutting of certain trails at Kaieteur, but while the money has been spent the lines have not been cut. I understand that the money was spent on pleasure trips. I have letters from people who travel on the road and they say that its condition is a disgrace. They say they have to lie in bed for a week to recover from the effects of travel-

ling on the road. I suggest that some Committee might be set up to check the expenditure on that road.

When the various items come up I shall call attention to one or two details. I think that a close scrutiny should be made of all expenditure by the Department. The Public Works Department gives the construction of certain buildings to contractors at certain rates of pay, but do the contractors pay their workmen those rates? They bring workmen from the country districts and pay them less than what they should. I am suggesting that in all future contracts of that kind it should be specifically laid down that the workmen employed by the contractors must be paid the rates allowed by Government. It has been brought to my notice that some contractors employ carpenters in the country districts at \$1.32 and \$1.44 per day instead of \$1.68 per day. Although it is a good thing to give certain work out to contract Government is not doing its duty to the workmen by seeing that they get fair wages.

If possible some method should be adopted whereby complaints against the Department might be made without the knowledge of the senior officers and the risk of victimization. In that way Government would get information in respect of many of the irregularities that are being carried on, but employees are afraid to give information which might result in their losing jobs. Some employees do no work for the money they receive.

Mr. JACOB: I was hoping to hear the honourable Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) but I think he is too busily engaged. Instead of offering constructive criticisms or listening to them he prefers to object. I think the honourable Member has detained this Council on many occasions with less important matters. I do not intend to speak at length on this subject. I am tired, definitely tired, calling the attention of Government to irregularities in this Department. I can speak for an hour or two and give specific details, but I am not prepared to do that. I know the Colonial Secretary will say that all these matters have been investigated and have not been proved. I wish to say that the methods adopted by Government in carrying out investigations are entirely wrong, in my opinion. I give certain information but I am not consulted at all during the investigation. The parties involved are the people who are heard. I am finished with that. I know that there are certain things under consideration and I hope something will be done.

I am prepared to suggest now that a Committee should be appointed, and I was glad to hear Your Excellency give a hint as to some Committee being set up.

I have had considerable experience in regard to pay-sheets and the payment of money. I know what is being done and what can be done. When certain suggestions were made by the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) and myself they were not carried out. If a Committee is appointed and it would take matters up at the right time I think a good deal of money could be saved and a good deal of benefit would accrue to the Colony. I wish to suggest further that the Audit Department should be called in immediately irregularities are brought to the notice of Government. The Department concerned should not investigate such reports of irregularities. I am not saying that the Head of the Department should not be advised as regards certain things and should not be consulted, but not the subordinate officers involved. I wish to suggest further that a proper accounting check be made of certain charges in this Department. I have information that specifications are not adhered to. Estimates are not carefully followed and charges are put against various heads in order to cover up irregularities and other minor details. Your Excellency is aware of what the hon. Member for Essequibo River and I are speaking about. I think that is sufficient.

I am not prepared to take up any more time, but I am hoping that as to-morrow will begin a new year something will be done to safeguard the taxpayers' money. When I made the remark some time ago that half the money voted for this Department was being wasted it was taken up by the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford). I reduced it to 5 per cent. and that was also challenged. I know of schemes on which not 50 per cent. but 100 per cent. of the money was wasted. There are other schemes going on in respect of which more than half of the money is being wasted. No useful purpose will be served by debating the matter in this Council. Other action must be taken and, I hope, very shortly. I understand there is a gentleman employed at Potaro, Mr. Aldie, who is nearly 70 years. I have been looking through the Civil Service List but I do not see his name there. Perhaps some explanation will be given about him.

Mr. SEAFORD: This Department always comes in for criticism in this Council. I am not going into the details mentioned by the two hon. Members, but

I will say that I have been in fairly close touch with the Department for some time, and I would suggest that in the case of the Public Works Department the best way of saving money would be to spend more money on supervision. In my opinion the Department is understaffed and underpaid. Up to a short time ago the staff of the Accounting Department was absolutely incapable of attempting to carry out the work that is being done at the present time, and I am glad to say that on a recommendation made to Government that staff was increased, but to this day it is not large enough. It is impossible to keep accounts up-to-date and to get figures from day to day unless the staff is increased to a fairly large extent. It is also impossible for any member of the Committee or anyone in the Department to keep a check on what is taking place unless there is proper accountancy.

I have before me a draft which has been prepared showing how the expenditure on Public Works has grown from year to year, and I would like to point out that instead of an increase in technical staff it has decreased from \$27,000 to about \$17,000. That is my reason for saying that the Department is understaffed. There are officers, highly trained men with B.Sc., and engineering degrees, who are getting perhaps half the salaries of other engineers in the Colony who have less ability than they have. I know two officers in that Department who have asked for transfers, but owing to requests made to them by the Head of the Department, to whom they are very loyal, they have decided to stay here and help him. Due recognition should be given of that fact.

I do not say for one moment that there are not irregularities going on, not only in the Government service, but in commercial firms, on a very large scale, and I do not think they will ever be stopped. I maintain that if there was more supervision in this Department those irregularities, if they do go on to-day, would be checked to a very large extent. It is supervision that is wanted more than anything else. I hope that when the Committee is appointed hon. Members will not refuse to give an increased staff and what I consider proper emoluments to the officers of the Department. I am sure that the money would be well invested.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: With regard to the suggestion of the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) that a Committee should be appointed, I think that would be, to some extent, a solution or, at

any rate, a bulwark against future criticisms of the Department. Irregularities will go on and the Department will continue to be assailed. Any Department which executes public works will be assailed and I would point out that the Committee comprises three members of the Executive Council. I may be wrong, but I do not think that the members of that Committee would necessarily obtain all the information which would be obtained by a general Committee or a Committee with an enlarged personnel. It often happens that a new Head of a Department has to bear the burden of criticisms of the administration of his Department which are really not applicable to his administration but a legacy of several years. The appointment of a Committee of that kind would give the present Director an opportunity to start with a clean sheet and without this interminable criticism of small matters which should not engage his attention. From my observation the new Director seems to be young, energetic and full of enthusiasm, and should be able to pull his Department out of the crisis through which it is passing.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I have no desire to disappoint the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) and I rise to say that if he had my experience he would not like to hear me reply to vague generalities about things which, in fact, are not worth an enquiry. I have had to do with public bodies and I have known men, whom I had to respect, telling me things in confidence, but on the slightest investigation the whole story vanished into thin air. If my friend had experience he would not listen to tales of disgruntled workmen. That was my reason for remaining silent when the hon. Member was making his remarks.

I have something else to talk about. I would like to know why Government will not conserve what it has by extending the abandoned strip of 25 miles of road from New Amsterdam to Mara? By abandoning that road Government is putting a number of people to great inconvenience, and is closing down a district which has been very prosperous. At one time the road was almost abandoned, and when Your Excellency's predecessor came he had it opened up. Only about eight miles of that road from New Amsterdam has been made up; the balance has been allowed to go. This is not the time when we can afford to abandon roads in populous districts. I am asking Government to find out why the road has not

been kept open, and if no reason can be assigned except monetary considerations, then some money should be found somewhere to keep the road open from Mara. If Government says that the cost is too high then the Department should cut its coat according to the cloth. I am asking Government to provide the new Director with straw so that he can make bricks.

There can be no doubt that the Department has well earned the name of "Public Waste Department." I support the suggestion of the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford) that the supervision should be better. So long as the present supervision obtains so long will we have these laches from time to time. Sometimes people skulk over their job. The Department has a single Paymaster who has to travel from the Corentyne to the Potaro district. He is on his heels every day, Sundays included. Fancy one man having to pay some five million dollars every day of his life! There should be three Paymasters, one in each County. Perhaps the Department has not asked for more Paymasters, and if that is so it is its own fault. When defalcations occur everybody will be called a rogue and vagabond.

The Department has always been charged with underestimating most things. Its true estimate is rejected and it makes shifts to suit the occasion and fails. I strongly deprecate the whole Department being charged with so much fraud, at the instance of the sort of people we know.

Mr. JACOB: To a point of correction. If the hon. Member is talking about something that he knows nothing about I would advise him not to speak on that matter. We have sufficient evidence to charge the whole Department.

Mr. ELEAZAR: That is your business. I should be allowed to say what I am saying. I am saying that the charge is not proven. You can charge a man as much as you like, but to come here and make a statement against the whole Department is certainly not allowed. The hon. Member would not say one of those words outside. He is abusing the privilege of this Council.

Mr. LEE: When my friend says that we abuse the privilege of this Council I would like to say that I can prove to him the facts which have been put before me. Some of those facts are in black and white and I am prepared to hand over those documents to Government.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I cannot teach people all

the time. I made a statement; where is the correction? Hon. Members will not even learn procedure. They waste too much time in chasing things that do not exist. For Members to make charges on the testimony of witnesses of that sort is beneath the dignity of this Council. Complaints of that kind should be made to the Head of the Department or Government outside the Council, and Government would take the precaution to make investigation. This is not the place to make investigation.

I am hoping that the Public Works Department will look after those roads which are lying derelict. I plead especially for the road on the East Bank of the Berbice River which was a very good road and would cost very much less to put it in order than to make a new road eventually. When the time arrives for Government to increase the supervision in the Department I will be among the first to support it. I would not say that the supervision is lax, but that it is too limited. Members cannot justify the charge made against the Department, and that Government and the Colonial Secretary are condoning all those frauds.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think it is only fair to the Council and to the Department that I should make a few remarks in view of what has been said by certain Members. First of all with regard to the Mara road, I would like to remind the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) that the estate was closed down about four years ago and Government then decided that the road should only be maintained over a distance of about eight miles for motor traffic, and from the eighth mile-post onwards merely for the use of pedestrians. The Public Works Department is not to blame; it was Government's decision when the estate closed down. I understand that there is not sufficient traffic to justify continuing the motor road right through to Mara. No doubt if the hon. member can furnish information, which I can put before Your Excellency, to justify the continuation of the motor road due consideration would be given to representation made by him.

With regard to the remarks made about the Paymaster, certain recommendations have been submitted by the Director of Public Works to the Committee, to which Your Excellency referred a little while ago, and his recommendations will naturally receive the careful consideration of the Committee.

The salary of the officer in charge of the

Potaro Road, the Maintenance Superintendent, is paid from an open vote—the Potaro Road Maintenance vote—and that is why his name is not shown in the Civil Service List.

The hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) referred to irregularities on the Potaro road in connection with payments to contractors. I should be interested if he would let me have the names of the contractors, because no contractors are engaged on the Potaro road that Government knows of.

MR. LEE: I will supply the name, confidentially.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: With regard to the 11 barrels of cement, the Attorney-General will have a word or two to say on the matter. The hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) referred to the vague generalities made from time to time in this Council, very frequently by certain hon. Members. I think he said he was getting rather tired of them; I can assure him he is not the only Member who is. They are nothing but vague generalities, and we have heard so much from those two hon. Members about the Department that I think it is only fair that Members of the Council should have some indication of the picture on the other side. Sir, I shall ask you presently to allow me to read two short letters to show what assistance Government gets from those hon. Members when we really get down to try to prove the irregularities to which they refer—letters which are seldom signed, and when they are signed, we are asked that the names should not be divulged. The hon. Member said that the method by which I make enquiries has been wrong and still is wrong. He has chosen to blame everybody up to the Colonial Secretary, and he has now blamed Your Excellency. The latest enquiry was carried out only a short time ago.

MR. JACOB: I have not blamed His Excellency.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am going to prove that the hon. Member has done so. He said that a different method had been adopted. Instructions have been issued to me by Your Excellency and they are being carried out.

MR. JACOB: Has that been communicated to me yet? I am not prepared to sit here and listen to incorrect remarks by the Colonial Secretary.

THE CHAIRMAN: Your remarks are unnecessary.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am telling the Council that instructions issued by the Governor are being carried out. The hon. Member suggests that the Audit Office should be brought in. The Audit Office has been brought in.

Mr. JACOB: I am very pleased to hear that.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: After weeks of enquiry and careful investigation by the Auditor himself he has furnished me with his own report in his own handwriting stating that he could trace nothing. The investigation is still proceeding, but the Audit Office cannot trace one single irregularity in connection with the particular case which was brought to Government's notice.

Mr. LEE: May I be permitted to mention a particular case?

THE CHAIRMAN: I wish the Colonial Secretary to proceed with his remarks.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I stated at the October session, certainly within the last three months, that the Director of Public Works was naturally anxious to get to the bottom of these reports and had decided to enquire himself into one of them. He granted the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) an interview and asked him to furnish certain information. Not getting it after two or three weeks he wrote the hon. Member—

Mr. JACOB: I wish to correct that statement.

THE CHAIRMAN: Will you please sit down. I have given those hon. Members on this side of the table considerable latitude, and I must ask them to remain still while other Members are speaking.

Mr. JACOB: But I rose to a point of order!

THE CHAIRMAN: I must ask you to sit down!

Mr. JACOB: On a point of order, Your Excellency? All right, I will sit.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: This is a sample of the assistance which the hon. Member is prepared to give to the Director of Public Works. This is a letter

written by Mr. Boyce, on December 3, to the hon. Member:—

I have received a copy of a letter sent to you by the Colonial Secretary and I am anxious to know whether you have been able to secure the information concerning the authenticity of the letter which you received from Hopetown village.

I may say that in the meantime I have had further enquiries instituted and have also made a personal visit to Fort Wellington to make enquiries on my own behalf, but so far I have not been able to confirm any of the allegations in the letter and I am therefore anxious that the person who wrote you should give me further evidence to work on.

I may add that arrangements have been made for the Paymaster to let this road gang know what time he will reach Fort Wellington so that the length of time they have to wait on him will in future be reduced to a minimum.

I expect you are busy but I should be glad if you will telephone and let me have any further information that you can.

The hon. Member replied on the 4th December, as follows:—

Referring to your letter of yesterday's date just to hand, no useful purpose will be served by my giving you further information on the Hopetown letter of 25th August, 1941. I am satisfied from enquiries that I have made that the majority of the irregularities complained of are substantially correct.

If you will permit me I may state that the matter was not properly handled from the beginning.

You have several other matters to look into that will not involve any member of the public against his wish. I therefore advise that you look into the East Bank and the East Coast irregularities to satisfy yourself that they are also substantially correct.

I think another matter will be placed before you soon. In regard to this I would like to help you to look into it carefully.

The hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) made this statement: "Certain officers are enriching themselves at the expense of the Government." I think probably it is one of the statements to which the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) has taken exception. Now I wish to take exception to it. I should like proof of it, and I hope that when certain enquiries which are now being instituted are completed and it is found that there is no truth in the statement the parties concerned who have made those charges will not squeal when a libel action is brought against them.

Mr. LEE: I will not squeal. I wish to say that. I lay the charge now.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are you raising a point of order? What is the point of order?

Mr. LEE: The Colonial Secretary cannot in this Council say that a libel action may be brought against a Member when the Council is sitting.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I say that a libel action may be brought against the persons who make those charges if they cannot prove them. There is another side to it. Government officers cannot be called thieves day after day; they must be allowed to defend themselves. If the cap fits it is not my fault. Persons who bring charges which cannot be proved must not squeal if libel proceedings are brought against them.

Mr. LEE: May I reply and inform Government of the charges?

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you wish to say something at once or to have some other opportunity?

Mr. LEE: I know of a particular case in which Government funds were used by a certain officer. I do not like to bring it up in public. I can let Your Excellency have it privately.

THE CHAIRMAN: You can bring it to me. Certainly I will look into it.

Mr. LEE: I have the charges and they can be proved.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) has generated considerable heat over eleven barrels of cement. He said he reported the facts to Government and at a later date he went to the Police Department where he was told that the file was endorsed "Departmental action."

Mr. LEE: I did not say that I reported it to Government.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I beg the hon. Member's pardon. Anyhow, it was reported to Government and as a result he went to the Police Department and was told that the file was endorsed "Departmental action." Steps were taken immediately both by the Department and the Police, and shortly afterwards by the Law Officers. Every available piece of documentary evidence was secured. Every person named in the report was interviewed and statements taken in the usual way and signed. All this, of course, was the basis for possible criminal action to be taken later. As a result of the most exhaustive enquiries, I sent the papers back twice for small details to be cleared up.

Those enquiries lasted a considerable time. I have the statements now in my chambers, and having received those I was bound to advise Government that criminal action was quite out of the question. There was not the slightest chance of even the defence being called upon, and I therefore advised, as I was bound to do, that no criminal action should be instituted; but I pointed out that there were two departmental irregularities disclosed on the evidence. I forwarded the evidence to the Colonial Secretary and I have reason to suppose that proper action was taken, although I have no knowledge what it was. In so far as the hon. Member suggests that that particular case of eleven barrels of cement provided ground for criminal prosecution, I say that is entirely unjustified. There is not sufficient evidence of any sort to consider instituting proceedings, and no proceedings will be instituted, though I have reasons to believe that departmental proceedings were taken.

Mr. LEE: I accept the explanation of the Attorney-General.

Item 1 (38)—Drainage and Irrigation—Administration Expenses—\$1,500.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I ask leave to move an increase of this amount by \$2,160 to \$3,660. This increase is required to cover the salaries of three assistant drainage overseers which were previously paid from the vote for reconditioning drainage under Head XLVI.

Mr. JACOB: I would like to have one point made clear. In reply to the debate the Colonial Secretary said that the Audit Department was asked to go into the several payments and had reported that there was no irregularity. If I am correct I should like to have that statement recorded quite clearly. The hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) and I advised Government that certain payments should not be made. Steps were taken to see that the payments were not made on a certain day, but the following week or a fortnight after the payments were made. We suggested in the interim that the persons receiving the money should sign the pay-sheet or some authorization so that those authorizations or receipts could be verified later on. We did everything possible to get verification of the signatures, etc. We went to the Director's office where we met the Deputy Director, and up to to-day I am definitely satisfied that certain of those signatures on those pay-sheets were not those of the persons who received the money. In fact, the persons who received

the money did not sign those pay-sheets. We were blocked in that way and I would say that the person who made up the pay-sheets should be asked to accompany the Auditor. When the Colonial Secretary says that the Auditors were satisfied merely by looking at the document, I do not know what to think of a Government Department which maintains that view, and maintains that it is correct.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. Member is talking about a totally different case. I said that enquiries are being made now in a different way; and, on instructions, the Audit Office is investigating a particular case. There are so many cases. It has nothing to do with the case referred to by the hon. Member, but to something which occurred when I was not here. I do not wish it to go on record that I said that the Audit Office has made enquiries about the case the hon. Member is referring to.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

Item 9—Travelling Expenses—(a) Travelling Allowances, \$2,100; (b) Subsistence Allowances, \$400.—\$2,500.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that sub-item (a) Travelling allowances, be increased to \$2,520; and (b) Subsistence allowances, be increased to \$480, and that the total provision be carried out at \$3,000. The increase is necessary because quite recently the Engineering Draughtsman has been required to do a considerable amount of travelling in connection with his work, and this is to enable him to be paid the usual travelling and subsistence allowances.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

Item 11—Engineering Surveys, \$17,000.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: Some time ago we had not sufficient reliable data. Now we have sufficient data in respect of certain areas and I am asking that Government give serious consideration to those areas in which surveys have been completed and plans and specifications submitted to Government. I am referring particularly to the area between Mahai-cony and Abary, and I am asking that those plans and specifications be submitted to the Comptroller for Development and Welfare in the West Indies with a request for some assistance for that scheme.

Mr. JACOB: I would like to support the hon. Member's suggestion. I believe

that something is being done. A pronouncement from Your Excellency would give us some idea as to when this work will be done. If Your Excellency tells us that it will be done very shortly we will feel very pleased. There is a great deal of anxiety, particularly in certain districts, in regard to planting on properly drained and irrigated lands, and for years these surveys have been going on, but except to a small extent in Essequibo, I have not seen anything practical done throughout the Colony. I would like to be advised when something will be done.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the Consulting Engineer can tell us in a few words what the action now proceeding actually is.

Mr. CASE (Consulting Engineer): The report referred to by the hon. Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Peer Bacchus) has been sent to the Comptroller and it has come back from him with a request for certain information which is now being prepared. As regards the other schemes, specifications are now being printed for the drainage of the Crabwood creek area and the irrigation of the East Coast.

THE CHAIRMAN: The position as I know it is that one scheme has gone forward and we are expecting to get the money. The second is a much larger one. I have seen several despatches.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: One deals with the Crabwood creek area and the other with an additional water supply on the East Coast and in Georgetown.

THE CHAIRMAN: I approved of two despatches this morning. What was the other one?

Mr. CASE: The survey of the rivers in the North-West District.

THE CHAIRMAN: That has also gone forward to the Comptroller and the Secretary of State.

Mr. CASE: As regards the Corentyne Coast all the surveys have been made, and it is expected in seven or eight months' time to complete the area. For the information of the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) I may say that it includes the Mara area.

THE CHAIRMAN: There are about 10 or 12 schemes which are certainly considered uneconomic and they are being held up, but I think matters are going forward with respect to five other schemes.

Mr. JACOB: Is there no definite date when any of the schemes will be undertaken?

THE CHAIRMAN: The most forward one is the one which will cost \$460,000, and we may get the money at any moment. If we get it, the work will start immediately.

Mr. LEE: May I ask which are the rivers to be surveyed?

THE CHAIRMAN: The details are shown in the notes.

Mr. CASE: It is proposed that a small Committee should be appointed consisting of the Conservator of Forests, the Director of Geological Surveys, the Director of Agriculture and myself, which would consider which of the schemes should be done first.

Mr. SEAFORD: I do not think we can begin any large schemes until we know that we are likely to get machinery to carry them out. I doubt very much whether we are likely to get machinery at the present time.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does that \$460,000 scheme require machinery?

Mr. CASE: We could use part of the machinery at the Canals Polder.

THE CHAIRMAN: Will you be able to get machinery?

Mr. CASE: I did make enquiry in Canada. The work can be started with the existing machinery and be of considerable benefit, because we can dig the canal in the existing conservancy and build sluices which would be of considerable benefit.

Mr. SEAFORD: I was referring to the other schemes. The scheme in regard to the West Coast, Berbice, which has been put forward only includes the main irrigation. It does not include the subsidiary canals and sluices that will be required, the cost of which will have to be borne by the proprietors themselves. That again will cost a very large sum of money, and I guess that the total cost will be nearer \$3,000,000.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I do not know if we are discussing the details.

Mr. SEAFORD: I have no desire to discuss the details, and I am afraid if I did very few hon. Members would understand them. I do not know if the hon. Member wishes to hide the facts. The reason why the scheme was sent back was to find out whether the owners of the properties in

front were willing to put up the money for the rest of the scheme.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is it right to say that if the Imperial Government provides that big capital cost the persons who are going to benefit will do their part?

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I think the most important information required by the Comptroller is whether, after that scheme is completed, the people in that area will be in a position to maintain the scheme.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, that is the point.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I think that information can be easily furnished.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is a point we have to be satisfied about before we ask for the money.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item 15—Miscellaneous, \$240.

Mr. JACOB: I would like to ask when did the officer from the Audit Office visit the Potaro district?

THE CHAIRMAN: The question is answerable but we must have notice of it.
PUBLIC WORKS—ANNUALLY RECURRENT.

Item 1—Maintenance and Reconditioning of Public Buildings, \$108,925.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be increased by \$58,145 and carried out at \$167,070. Of this increase \$56,000 is being transferred from Public Works—Extraordinary—for new buildings and erections. The difference of \$2,145 is a small sum with which to do certain works in the Rupununi district. The items which will be taken out of the Public Works—Extraordinary estimate will be referred to by me when we come to that head.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is considered that we will not be able to keep to the proposed programme of extraordinary works, but a much better programme of maintenance and re-conditioning. There is extra expenditure on slight alteration in the classification of the estimates which brings up our total recurrent expenditure and reduces our extraordinary expenditure, but our recurrent expenditure will still stand substantially below the current level.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

Item 15—Roads, Rivers, Creeks and Portages, \$265,550.

Mr. LEE: Provision was made for the maintenance of the road between Providence and Craig. I would like to know what amount was voted for making up that road.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: We shall come to that item when we reach Public Works—Extraordinary.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item 20 — Temporary War Bonus, \$32,281.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be increased by \$3,000.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

PUBLIC WORKS—EXTRAORDINARY.

Item 2 (b)—Teachers' Training Centre Hostel—extension to building and major repairs, \$16,000.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the deletion of this item. The money will be granted under the Development and Welfare Act.

Item deleted.

Item 3 (b)—Industrial School, Onderneeming — general reconditioning and improvements to buildings, \$6,000.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the deletion of this item. This amount has been transferred as part of the increase which we have just approved under Public Works—Annually Recurrent—and altogether under that head there will be \$11,000 for expenditure next year on the reconditioning of the Industrial School.

Item deleted.

Item 4 (d)—Government Station, Coverden—boathands' quarters, office and store-room, \$2,500.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I also move the deletion of this item. Further on hon. Members will see an item for the erection of a police station at Soesdyke. One compound will be put up in that district and it is unnecessary to vote this special amount for boathands' quarters.

Item deleted.

Item 7 (a)—Mental Hospital, Berbice—Chapel and Mortuary, \$1,700.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the deletion of this item. We can do without it for another year.

Item deleted.

Item 9 (c)—Medical Department, Public Hospital, Georgetown,—construction of clothes-room for female patients, \$1,200.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the deletion of this item. It is very desirable to have this clothes-room, but the Director of Medical Services was asked at the meeting we had on Saturday, when one or two Members attended, to cut out one of the items, and he thought this one should come out for 1942.

Item deleted.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: With regard to item (b)—Nursing Sisters' quarters—extension of quarters to provide additional accommodation, \$1,200—when did the necessity for extension become apparent?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Since it was agreed to appoint a Sister-Tutor, this will enable her to be accommodated.

THE CHAIRMAN: With regard to these extraordinary items I may say that I will not include them in special warrants. They will have to come to me for specific approval of the expenditure. I will go into that matter with the Treasurer in the next few days.

Item 13—Dispensary, Christianburg, Demerara River—construction of Dispensary, Health Centre, \$3,200.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the deletion of this item.

Item deleted.

Item 12—Public Hospital, Mabaruma—replacement of 2 vats (5,000 gals. each) attached to hospital building, \$700.

Mr. JACOB: What is the precise importance of this? I believe that the two vats were sold—actually given away.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The vats could not hold water and the wood, or what was left of it, was sold.

Mr. JACOB: Are you putting up wooden or concrete vats?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Public Works Department hopes to be able to replace them with concrete vats.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is a gradual process going on of replacing wooden vats which have gone to pieces with concrete ones. There are two vats down at Mabaruma and the Director of Public Works hopes to be able to replace them with concrete ones. He may be an optimist.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: On the one hand we are told by the Controller of Supplies that we cannot get cement, and on the other hand Government is using cement when it can use wallaba.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is exactly what I am asking.

Mr. SEAFORD: There is a large supply of cement. We can get all the cement we want if we are prepared to pay for it. There are fairly large stocks in the Colony now. Cement is being used as ballast.

Mr. WIGHT: Only yesterday afternoon when the Council adjourned I was discussing the matter with the Conservator of Forests. I told him that I understood that we could get all the cement we wanted and he informed me that that was not so.

Mr. WOOD: (Conservator of Forests): No, sir, I did not say that cement was not obtainable. I think our discussion hinged on what a sea captain had told me and what the Secretary of State had told me in regard to the position. The captain was perfectly correct up to a certain point. The position in regard to cement, salt and one or two other heavy commodities of that nature is this: What is done in the United Kingdom at present, or was being done some while ago, was that it was regarded of vital importance not to risk damage to ships; that if a ship was unloaded at a British port and was waiting to be loaded they would, rather than delay the loading and risk having the ship "blitzed" in port, put enough of some heavy substance in her to make ballast and get her out again quickly before the "blitz" came on.

Mr. WIGHT: I do not think the Conservator is aware of the statement by the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford) that we can get all the cement we require.

Mr. WOOD: What I was saying was that they are ready, willing and anxious to send cement as ballast in ships, but the position we are in is this: that if a ship is in dock and is coming here, and if there is cement on the dock (and they keep cement on the docks for that purpose) and they

are expecting a "blitz" and want to get the ship out they load the cement. In that way we may suddenly get quite a large shipment of cement, but if those conditions do not repeat themselves for a very long time we may not get any more cement. That is the position as it has been explained to me.

Mr. WIGHT: I am worried from another angle. The hon. Member for Georgetown North said we can get cement. If we can get it then the Public Works Department can go ahead, but the Controller says we must not spend too much; the Order-in-Council is against it.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Order-in-Council is subject to permission being given.

Mr. WOOD: The Order says that no new building operations may be undertaken or repairs or improvements to buildings involving the use of more than \$120 worth of new imported materials without permission being obtained to do so. The policy in regard to the issue of permits is being adhered to quite strictly. There has been a great deal of controversy between the cement manufacturers and the Home Government. The control of buildings in England involves cement and every kind of material, and involves labour costs as well, and it has recently been decreed that no building operation may be undertaken in the United Kingdom involving a total cost, material, labour and everything, of more than £40 without a permit, and that permit will only be granted if the building is directly necessary for the war, and if it has been found impossible to obtain any suitable building. In other words, for a building which is going to cost more than £40 it has to be shown that it is to be a munitions factory or something of that nature before a permit is granted at all.

THE CHAIRMAN: But if the hon. Member wants a permit for cement we shall probably give him.

Mr. WOOD: The hon. Member is not too badly off. I do not know if the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight) is doing this or the live Mayor of Georgetown. (laughter).

Mr. Wight: Last week I gave instructions to the City Engineer to put in all the cement he could and it is there. We took the precaution.

Mr. JACOB: I do not think I have got an answer to my question about the two vats.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item 14—Dispensary. Ida Sabina, Berbice river—addition of gallery, etc., \$700.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be deleted.

Item deleted.

Item 15 remember 13 (b)—Construction of Mortuary, Fort Wellington, West Coast, Berbice, \$1,200.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that the word "Weldaad" be substituted for the words "Fort Wellington." The matter was raised by the hon. Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Peer Bacchus) and after consideration the Director of Medical Services has decided that Weldaad would be a better place.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion under "Militia" of a new sub-head 14 (a) —Extensions and improvements to the Artillery Sports Club, Eve Leary, \$2,000.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item 19 renumbered 18 (b)—Police Stations, Georgetown and East Bank resurfacing compound, \$2,000.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be deleted. It will have to stand over for another year.

Item deleted.

Item 18 (c)—Police Station, Ruimveldt—rebuilding of station on same site and providing quarters for N.C.O. in charge, \$25,000.

MR. LEE: I suggest that the present building be sold.

MR. PEER BACCHUS: I suggest that the Public Works Department should utilize all the material that can be used.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is quite likely that the building will be put up for sale, but no decision has been taken yet.

Item put, and agreed to.

Item 20 renumbered 19—Eve Leary compound, Georgetown—(a)—provision of quarters for married Police Officers and 2 married Warrant Officers, \$20,000.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be amended to read

"Provision of quarters for 2 married Police Officers, \$12,000."

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: What I cannot appreciate is that Government is allowed to spend all this money on new buildings and repairs while the public is restricted to a paltry expenditure of \$120. I am the last person to disagree with Government on the expenditure of money which finds its way into the pockets of labouring people, but these new constructions involve the purchase of a tremendous amount of material.

THE CHAIRMAN: We have cut the vote down to \$50,000, so that quite a substantial amount will be spent on maintenance.

Mr. WIGHT: Have you satisfied yourself that we have got the materials for all this work?

THE CHAIRMAN: I cannot say I am. I can only take the estimates as put before me and listen to explanations.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Director of Public Works is rather worried as to whether he will be able to carry out the programme, but he hopes to be able to do so. Warrant Officers are coming out and they are entitled to quarters. If we cannot get the material the money will not be spent.

THE CHAIRMAN: A further safeguard is that none of this expenditure will be allowed unless each individual item is brought up to me to be authorized on special warrant. I have to be satisfied that the Department can get the material.

Mr. WIGHT: That is quite satisfactory to me.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

Item 21 (b) renumbered 20 (b)—Police station, Soesdyke, Demerara river, \$4,000.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be increased to \$6,200.

Item as amended put, and agreed to.

Item 20 (c)—Police station, Wismar—Quarters for 4 married policemen, \$12,000.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be reduced to \$8,000. It is intended to put up a smaller type of building.

Item as amended put and agreed to.

Item 23—Post and Telegraph Departments.—Post Office, Plaisance, East Coast,

Demerara—extension to building and sanitary improvements, \$1,500.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be deleted.

Item deleted.

Item 27—Prison—Forest Station, Mazaru—reconditioning buildings and alterations necessary for partial re-establishment as convict prison, \$12,000.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be deleted. The amount has been transferred to the head Public Works—Annually Recurrent.

Item deleted.

Item 30—General—Car shelters, Public Buildings and Victoria Law Courts, \$2,500.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Is this absolutely necessary?

Mr. LEE: I move the deletion of the item.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. Member raised the question at the Committee meeting on Saturday and asked the Committee to consider the deletion of the item. I would ask hon. Members if possible to grant this item. It is rather hard on public officers and Members of the Council who come to the Public Buildings and who drive their own cars which have to be left out in the rain. Cars are very expensive now and are not luxuries for officers who do not get a travelling allowance and do not keep a chauffeur.

THE CHAIRMAN: They can use bicycles.

Mr. LEE: If I considered this necessary for Government officers I would vote for it, but I do not think it is necessary. Georgetown is within a limit of two miles and I feel sure that it would do Government officers a lot of good to walk to their offices.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The question of waste of time must be considered.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I will support the deletion of the item. We have deleted more important items than this.

Mr. JACOB: While I had wished to delete sub-head 9 (c)—“Construction of Clothes’ Room for female patients, Public Hospital, Georgetown, \$1,200.”—I am advocating the construction of these

shelters, though I think clothes are more essential than a motor car.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am glad the hon. Member has raised the point. I was discussing it with the Director of Public Works and it is proposed to take down one of the old buildings—the old X-ray building which is not now in use and which the Authorities wish to get rid of. I have asked the Director of Public Works to consider the utilization of that wood in making the shelter. Some of the old material taken out may also be utilized.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I am not saying it is not necessary, but not at this stage. I can take a walk with the hon. Colonial Secretary when he desires, and he will see the pathway blocked by motor cars. The cars should be protected as much as possible, but I do not think that at this stage when we are trying to economise that it is necessary. While the item will be of convenience to Officials and one will not like to inconvenience them, yet I do not think the item is imperative.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: May I suggest that we delete the item and, if old wood is found available, the work may be proceeded with.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Only wood; not nails too?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I find it very hard to resist the hon. Member.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: After the explanation given I do not see how hon. Members can get up and prevail against it. You have said definitely that you are going into the details and hon. Members should leave the matter in your hands. Personally I think you are undertaking far too much.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. Member will have Officials continue to leave their cars in the rain.

THE CHAIRMAN: He does not mean that!

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): I am sorry the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Dias, is not here. I believe it originated with him. He is very much concerned over the number of cars using the area of the Victoria Law Courts and advised Government strongly to have a shelter constructed in the compound at the back of the Law Courts. At the same time this building is very badly in need of some shelter for cars. As the hon.

Colonial Secretary has said, we have a number of valuable cars which we cannot protect. While I would like to agree that it is a question of time, as long as we have cars we must protect them. I use my car on public business and do not charge for it, and I am entitled to protection for my car.

THE CHAIRMAN: Some have shelters?

Mr. McDAVID: There are two shelters but they are not assigned to any special officer.

THE CHAIRMAN: Why not assign them and keep the others out?

Mr. McDAVID: The accommodation there is only for about five cars and, I think, at least ten cars ought to be protected.

THE CHAIRMAN: The whole lot of officers using cars do not need them for public business.

Mr. McDAVID: That may be true, but at least 12 cars are not protected.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Why do not Public Officers subscribe and get one conveyance to bring them, or subscribe for one or two chauffeurs to bring them down?

Mr. SEAFORD: They do not sit in their offices the whole time and only go back home in the afternoons. They have to leave on other business.

THE CHAIRMAN: Suppose we cut it down to \$1,000? I will go into it.

Mr. LEE: It would be of interest to Government and to you sir, to know who are parking cars at the Law Courts. I think this item should not be effected at all.

THE CHAIRMAN: In any case I will look into it. Shall we cut it out altogether or leave something on the Estimates?

Voices: Leave something!

THE CHAIRMAN: We will leave \$1,000 in, and I will look into the matter before it is expended.

Mr. LEE: I do not agree with you. I desire its deletion in toto.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I suggest that we leave it at \$1,000, as I see Your Excellency has undertaken that you will not allow its expenditure after you have looked into the matter and seen that it is not absolutely essential.

Question put, and item carried out at \$1,000.

GENERAL.

Item 31—New river koker at Hyde Park and Grove, East Bank, Demerara, \$1,800.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the deletion of this sub-head, as the work has been carried out this year.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item deleted.

Item 36—Provision of Pure Water Supply System, Wismar-Christianburg District, \$18,000.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the reduction of this sub-head by \$4,000 and that it be carried out at \$14,000. I have been informed that only a shallow well will be drilled there.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item 37—Reconditioning of Government Estates, West Coast, Demerara, \$16,640.

Mr. LEE: May I under this sub-head ask Government if it has not considered the advisability of selling the lands outright and giving the people title by transport in order to effect a peasant proprietorship?

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not know what the position is myself.

Mr. LEE: These are lands leased from the Colony, some for a long period of 99 years, some for 25 years and 21 years and some for a shorter period.

THE CHAIRMAN: Did we not have this matter before us the other day? I understand that as a matter of policy we are not selling.

Mr. JACOB: Yes, I raised it a week or so ago. We did not know the difference between Colony Lands and Crown Lands and the matter was left at that. I had raised the point in regard to some of the lands in this area that by the expenditure of \$2,000 another 300 acres can be put under cultivation immediately, and I got the usual stereotyped reply "The matter is under consideration" by letter from Government. Where there are small plots of land not under cultivation but can be put under cultivation at a small cost, that is a matter for urgent attention, if it is the intention of Government to increase the

production of very many necessary things. Not until then will you be able to bring new blocks of land under cultivation. There are, however, large areas in certain districts that can be brought under cultivation at a reasonable cost. I ask that the matter be gone into.

Item 43—Unspecified works, \$5,000.

Mr. LEE: May I enquire—

THE CHAIRMAN: Would you like them specified? It is customary in Estimates of this kind to have a heading "Minor or Unspecified works" which cannot be specified at the beginning of the year. They all come to me on a requisition for the particular work.

Mr. LEE: That is what I would like to get.

Item 43—Roads and Bridges Extraordinary, \$124,350.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is the sub-head which the hon. Member for Essequibo River is making enquiry about. If you turn to page 42, Appendix F, item 11—Repairing and reconditioning of road between Providence and Craig, East Bank, Demerara, \$87,500—you will see the marginal note states: "Existing burnt earth roadway cannot carry present day traffic and provision of asphalt macadam surface is essential."

Mr. LEE: I practically travel over this road once every month. I am sure this amount is not required, as stated, for repairing and reconditioning. I do not know whether it is possible for this Government to suggest to the American Authorities, as they use the road, to take it over and maintain it. They have taken over the road from Craig right on and its condition is a marvel to those who reside there and those who travel over that road now. I knew that road when it was impossible to carry a car over it, but to-day you can drive a car over it comfortably at 50 miles an hour. If the Public Works Department would take that as an example and try to get the machinery they used and produce a road like that, it would be well, but I think the amount is too much for repairing and reconditioning. I do not know if there is any explanation to be given in respect of this huge expenditure.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Public Works Department will be very pleased to get that machinery; it costs \$200 a day to operate!

THE CHAIRMAN: What do you suggest should be the amount?

Mr. LEE: What I suggest is that there is more pressing need for the commencement of the erection of the new Queen's College and that \$25,000 of this amount should be allocated for that purpose.

THE CHAIRMAN: What does the Department think about cutting off \$25,000?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am informed by the Head of the Department that he cannot make a proper job of it with less. Very heavy traffic passes over the road and he wants to make a good job of it.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: Don't you think it wise to re-allocate it in order to do the Kitty-Rosignol road as well?

THE CHAIRMAN: We have to keep this road up decently. There is a lot of traffic on it and we cannot allow it to go to pieces. The question of whether we can get some of the cost met by the American Authorities is one which will take a long time to settle. The Department says it cannot do it with less than the amount stated.

Mr. LEE: In respect of the traffic the Police Department has limited the number of omnibuses that should run over this road and, in point of fact which I doubt very much, there are prosecutions for overloading to the extent of 81 or 87 passengers. I am sure that buses carrying 26 passengers cannot be overloaded to that extent. The general complaint is that there are not sufficient buses on this road to bring the workmen at the Air Base to Georgetown after they have received their pay at week-end. I say that the traffic is not as great as it is desired to make out to Government.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is not that argument that we should put the road in condition so as to carry more buses?

Mr. LEE: If the buses are allowed to run.

THE CHAIRMAN: They will be.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I do not think an expenditure of \$200 a day is beyond the ability of the Public Works Department.

Mr. JACOB: I do not know, but the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford) may be able to tell us. I

understand that the methods adopted by the Americans in road-building are entirely different and more economical. I do not know, but they have been able to put this road in first class condition within a short time. Perhaps the Department will investigate and tell us whether our methods are more economical but not so quick. The question of roads in this Colony is a very sore one. Motorists find it extremely difficult, especially those who travel about the country, and I would like to see, if it can be done, a better method employed in making up the roads in this Colony.

Item 44—Houston and Craig, East Bank Demerara River Defences, \$30,000.

Mr. LEE: I must move the deletion of this item. Although a resolution was passed in this Council in respect of this matter, I feel that if careful enquiry is made Your Excellency would see that this expenditure or part of it is not necessary.

Mr. SEAFORD: Unless this expenditure is made, you will have to spend a very much larger sum to maintain the road later on.

Mr. CASE (Consulting Engineer): It is absolutely necessary.

THE CHAIRMAN: My own colonial experience for the last 15 years is that the increase of motor traffic and the use of particular buses is playing havoc with the maintenance cost of the roads. In some Colonies it is a problem indeed. We must have good roads, and that means money.

Mr. LEE: When Your Excellency makes enquiry into this expenditure you will see that it is not absolutely necessary.

Mr. SEAFORD: I am satisfied Your Excellency will take an entirely opposite view to the hon. Member's. I am supported in that by the hon. Consulting Engineer.

Mr. CASE: I am quite satisfied.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will see what I can do.

Item 46 — Temporary War Bonus \$29,492.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the reduction of this vote by \$3,000.

Question put, and agreed to.

NEW QUEEN'S COLLEGE.

Mr. LEE: May I appeal to Your Excellency for some provision to be made

whereby the construction of the new Queen's College can be started? There is such a pressing need for it. I know that the Old Boys' Association of which I am a member is very much concerned over the present building.

THE CHAIRMAN: Can we not take that up under the Head "Queen's College?"

Mr. LEE: Very well sir.

NEW AMSTERDAM DRAINAGE SYSTEM.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I ask leave to move in two new items. The first is "28—Improvements, Drainage System, New Amsterdam, Berbice, \$1,750" I understand that this small amount will complete the Drainage System in New Amsterdam. I think the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) has been waiting to vote for this item.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Very patiently indeed! It is now to be completed otherwise all that has been done will be practically of no use. Some farms that were taken in as a war measure have been flooded and the ground provisions lost because the system was not completed. I was wishing that Government would not forget it.

THE CHAIRMAN: You are voting this time?

Mr. ELEAZAR: Yes, sir.

Question put, and agreed to.

MILITIA.

Item 14 (a)—Extensions and improvements to the Artillery Sports Club, Eve Leary —\$2,000

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of the following new sub-head under Militia—"14 (a)—Extensions and improvements to the Artillery Sports Club, Eve Leary—\$2,000." As everybody is aware a large number of militiamen are now in barracks and it will be agreed that they should in some way receive encouragement to entertain themselves and others and to have concerts and parties, as is done in other places, so as to maintain their morals and discipline. Government will be allowed the use of the present building by the Artillery Sports Club, but it means that \$2,000 will have to be spent on it in making certain alterations and improvements. I hope hon. Members will see their way to support this item.

Question put, and agreed to.

QUEEN'S COLLEGE.

Mr. C. V. Wight: May I ask if Government has had any report from Mr. Hammond on the general administration of Queen's College and if so, if it would be laid before Members? I would like to take this opportunity—

THE CHAIRMAN: I have the papers in front of me now. I am going to deal with that for action and recommendation. I am going to circulate it to Members in due course.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I was going to take this opportunity of thanking you for the memorandum which you circulated on Education. I think it is a good eye-opener to Members when advocating certain necessary reforms. You have just left them with a wall which they must get over or decide whether or not in the economic state of the Colony they are on the proper side in regard to recurrent expenditure which the Colony will have to face.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I propose to deal with that bit by bit. It was of interest to find in my papers an extract from that report by Mr. Hammond for the Leeward and Windward Islands which I had printed and circulated in those Colonies for general interest. I have one copy which I shall have circulated.

Mr. LEE: In 1939 there was actually voted in this Council \$3,000 for the purpose of preparing plans for the construction of a new Queen's College, and I am informed that those plans were actually received. I do not know whether that is so or not, but it shows that this Government has acceded to the cry for a new Queen's College. The Old Boys of Queen's College are concerned about it. They have visited the present one and found it not to their liking as a cultural school. As one of a Committee for the preparation of the petition to Government, I may state that we are concerned that Government should know of the necessity for a new Queen's College. As far as we understand, the members of the Board are also concerned and have recommended a new Queen's College. I do urge that consideration be given and, if it can be done during this session, that some vote be added under Extraordinary Expenditure in order to see whether it can be carried out, I leave the matter entirely in Your Excellency's hands. If we get an early pronouncement as to Government's policy we would be relieved.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think that the plans for the building and a scale model are

available for anyone to see. Your petition was attached and sent forward to the Secretary of State for approval, but the actual estimates and cost of the new building have not been done.

Mr. LEE: As far as I understand the estimated cost was mentioned by Sir Geoffrey Northcote.

THE CHAIRMAN: I mean the actual scale of cost on the scale model. That is now being prepared.

Mr. SEAFORD: I would like to endorse what the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. LEE) said. It is to my personal knowledge that the old building is in a deplorable condition. The matter was taken up by the Board of Governors with Government and plans were prepared locally for a new building. Sir Geoffrey Northcote, the then Governor, felt that such a building as that should be of a very much more permanent nature and should be a credit to the Colony, and he wanted it to be made not of wood and on a large scale. The suggestion was put forward that we should get an architect in the United Kingdom, who is versed in such matters as school or college building, to prepare the plans and estimates. That was on the tapis for some time, but before we got very far ahead the matter was dropped. We had a new Governor and he took the matter up, and we started but did not get any farther. I was going to suggest that perhaps, as I believe there is a well known architect in the West Indies—we did hear from the hon. Director of Medical Services that he may be coming here shortly in respect of the hospital—we may take advantage of his services while here and get some idea about it.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think we will have to ask the Government of Trinidad to lend us him to do that when he is doing the medical building.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I wrote a letter and asked if the architect could be spared to advise Government in regard to the Queen's College building and the reply came back advising that the matter be taken up with Mr. Gray when he visits this Colony.

Mr. LEE: Will it be at any cost to this Government? If so, I would ask that we vote the amount.

THE CHAIRMAN: Have we not got to arrange through the Government of Trinidad?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: It will involve a small cost.

Mr. LEE: Will it not be necessary then to vote the money now?

THE CHAIRMAN: There is no value in doing that.

Mr. LEE: I would like to have the matter settled.

THE CHAIRMAN: Would you like a token vote?

Mr. LEE: Yes.

Mr. SEAFORD: I am satisfied that he is coming here and, if Government gives the undertaking that advantage will be taken of his time here, that is all that is necessary now. I do not see the advantage of having a token vote.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will note it on the paper that the matter has been brought up by you in the Legislative Council.

Mr. LEE: Thank you.

SEA DEFENCES.

ITEM 1—MAINTENANCE WORKS, \$85,000.

Mr. LEE: I am appealing to Your Excellency. It is in Government's files that a river dam constructed by Government aback of Leguan will open up some lands that can be put under cultivation with rice and economic provision and also made into pasture lands. If Your Excellency consult the papers you would see that Government would certainly be compensated at this time for the cost. I do ask that, if it is possible, this dam be erected.

THE CHAIRMAN: Where is this particular place?

Mr. LEE: From Success to Phoenix in the Island of Leguan.

Mr. CASE (Consulting Engineer): A survey was made and an estimate submitted to the Sea Defences Board, and I advised that the work was uneconomical. The cost was not in due proportion to the value of the lands.

Mr. LEE: I recommend that it will open up certain lands which will be of use to the people of that Island. With respect to the hon. Mr. Case's remark, I have been told that the sea wall at a certain part of Uitvlugt is likely to give way through erosion. I am not an expert and do not pretend to be one, but it has been brought to my knowledge that when the wall was originally constructed, it was not done in such a manner as to prevent this erosion. From what I see on the East Coast,

Demerara, they are doing it in another manner. I do say that if it can be avoided and things can be done in time so as to save money, it would be useful expenditure.

Mr. SEAFORD: I may say that as regards the first point raised, I quite admit that building a dam will be of advantage to the people of that Island, but it will be of greater advantage if you put a sea defence wall around the Island. The cost, however, will be as much as 1,000 times what the Island is worth. As regards Uitvlugt, what I think the hon. Member is referring to is the Boerasirie. That is having the attention of the Sea Defences Board. The Consulting Engineer and an Executive Officer have been down there to see the works. Certain works are in progress. The last report of the hon. Mr. Case shows that is being watched by everyone on the spot. Government has been asked to agree to certain works which had been done there already so as to prevent any disaster.

Mr. LEE: In reply to the hon. Member I may state that it is an earth dam that is desired to be built. If that is done, certain lands would be thrown open for cultivation and the sugar estates would not get the labourers who now go to the sugar estates on the West Coast to get work.

Mr. SEAFORD: I must protest against the insinuation by the hon. Member. He cannot get up here and make remarks which he has no justification for whatever. He is judging others by himself. The sooner he learns to behave himself as an honourable Member the better it will be for all concerned.

Mr. LEE: I am bringing certain facts to the notice of Your Excellency and asking you to enquire into them. The hon. Member tries to speak sarcastically knowing that labourers do go from Leguan to the West Coast Demerara to work on the sugar estates there.

Item 2—New construction and replacement works, \$40,000.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am afraid Government has to ask the Council to vote \$75,000 in respect of two items. I move that sub-item (iv)—Building new earth dams, \$6,000—be increased by \$24,500 and carried out at \$30,500. If the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) votes in favour of this work, the work which he asked for would be done.

Mr. LEE: I did not know that Government was making provision to do the work.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item 5—Boulder type Wall at Le Res-souvenir-Success, E.C., Demerara, \$93,000.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be increased by \$50,500 and carried out at \$143,500, and the sub-head amended to read "Boulder type Wall at Le Ressouvenir Success, East Coast, Demerara, and second line sea defence between Ogle and Triumph." Acting on the advice of the Sea Defences authorities who consider that this work should be done immediately, Government asks the Council to vote the increase.

Question put, and agreed to.

SUPREME COURT.

ITEM 1 (a)—CHIEF JUSTICE, \$7,680.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: An increase in this item does not require the vote of this Council. You are only asked to amend the figure 7,680 to read 8640. That is £1,800, the maximum salary provided under the Civil List Ordinance, Chapter 10, for the new Chief Justice.

Question put, and agreed to.

COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEAL.

Mr. LEE: Under this item I would like to appeal to Government once again, now that Government, in its opinion and sound judgment, sees that we have among the practitioners certain members of the Bar who can act as Judges of this Colony, that consideration be given to the constitution of a Court of Criminal Appeal. Perhaps, if Your Excellency look up the files you would see what has been done in respect of it. I feel sure that those members of the Bar can at any time serve on such a Court. The British Constitution rests on Justice, and I am proud of being a British citizen, but at the same time I cannot allow such a position to go on when we can alter it.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I would like to add one word. I would like to support the appeal made by the hon. Member who has just taken his seat. I think the hon. Colonial Secretary is perfectly aware of the need or necessity for such a Court, as there were certain matters which engaged his attention when acting as Officer Administering the Government. I do not think I need say anything more.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. Member had raised the question when the Council was in session in October. I consulted the hon. Attorney-General after

turning up the papers dating back to 1938, and the decision reached up to a quite recent date was that there was not sufficient work to necessitate the appointment of an additional Judge. I think the hon. Attorney-General will bear me out that the statement is correct. Whether the facts are correct or not is a different matter.

Mr. LEE: I am not asking for the appointment of an additional Judge. I am asking that the Ordinance be brought into being for the constitution of a Court of Criminal Appeal. When that is done, Your Excellency can consider the constitution of the Court after. The only expenditure Government will have as a result will be for the services of shorthand writers at the trial, because I feel sure the members of the Bar will voluntarily serve on such a Court.

THE CHAIRMAN: I fully understand your representation.

Item 15—Passages of Chief Justice and family to the Colony.—\$1,000.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of the following new sub-head—"15—Passages of Chief Justice and family to the Colony—\$1,000." It is a token vote, as it is not known what the cost will be.

Question put, and agreed to.

TRANSPORT AND HARBOURS.

ITEM 1—NET DEFICIENCY, \$217,171.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that the amount be increased by \$8,750 and the item carried out at \$110,871. This amount was not foreseen. \$8,000 is required for the purchase of a launch to replace the launch "Lady Thomson" which met with a regrettable accident not long ago, and \$750 is required to strengthen the light structure at Best groyne.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I see that under item 2 provision is made for a new locomotive. Are we likely to get that?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It was in this year's Estimates but we failed to get it. It is a revote, and it is necessary to get it if we possibly can.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: We cannot take it out until we can get it.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: If the money is not there we cannot try to get it.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): It is on order.

Mr. LEE: With respect to the Best groyne, one Department of Government has refused to allow the wall to continue right through on the ground that it will interfere with the land. It seems they have to spend extra money in the construction of moulds for the casting of the cement. I am not an engineer, nor am I a mason nor a carpenter, but I feel that if that light can be elevated it will save the expense of the construction of moulds and the wall can be extended as it is going.

Mr. CASE: The statement made by the hon. Member is entirely incorrect.

Mr. LEE: I am glad to hear that.

TREASURY.—INCOME TAX OFFICE.

Mr. JACOB: Under this Head I would like to make one or two observations. I had asked in October certain questions about the collection of Income Tax, and I am sorry to say that up to now they have not been answered.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They have lapsed!

Mr. JACOB: When questions lapse, Members should be treated with courtesy by submitting the answers in letter form. I do not think that they have lapsed, but it is the manner in which things are done here. The hon. Member for Essequibo River and myself raised the question since 1939 by letters, by personal interviews and in question form recently. I do ask that the matter be gone into. I think if the matter is gone into properly Government would collect a decent sum of money. A Member speaking here on the 24th of this month started to give certain information as to how certain people evaded Income tax. I was hoping that hon. Member would have carried on further by stating how some other people with whom I am acquainted might have been evading payment of Income tax. I know from my personal knowledge—I have not got the books as they are in the hands of Government—that a large sum of money was made on a certain transaction, and I have a strong suspicion that the Income tax was evaded in 1940 and again in 1941. I did not raise it in 1940 because it would have been covered up, and I allowed it to go on until the Income tax period closed in 1941 when I raised it and put it in question form. I urge that that matter be gone into, Your Excellency, as I feel sure that Government can collect a decent sum of money.

There is something more. I notice that the Income Tax Commissioners' Report is only signed by one Commissioner, and yet

under this vote we are asked to pay two Commissioners £100 each. I wonder if a satisfactory explanation can be offered as to why both did not sign the report! I am very sorry that I have not got the report with me. I think that the matter ought to be gone into, and I may say that I am not prepared to allow the matter to rest any longer. It has been in abeyance for nearly two years, and unless there is very good reason for not doing so, I feel sure that Your Excellency will go into this matter immediately.

There is another matter. I feel that official secrets have been given out resulting in the evasion of this tax. I cannot understand myself why there should be so much secrecy about the Income tax. We know the salaries of all the Officials of Government. They are printed for the information of the whole world. There may be special reasons for keeping the tax on certain individuals private, but I think there is far too much secrecy in regard to the Income tax.

I was told on one occasion that even the Governor of this Colony has no right to enquire. I know a Secretary of the Colonial Empire was indicted for giving official secrets and an enquiry was made and certain action taken. Here in this Colony almost everything is secret. It appears to me that hon. Members of this Council have very little privileges. I, as a Member of this Council, claim the privileges of this Council. If those privileges are denied by certain Government Officials here, then the sooner they realize that cannot continue indefinitely the better. I have been denied many privileges of this Council. I can only object and protest. Of course certain people believe they can do what they please and as long as they please, but the time has come when it must stop. I ask Your Excellency to go into the question raised and that the questions asked be answered in letter form.

Mr. JACKSON: Do I understand the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) is pleading that he should be given official secrets, that he should be given the privilege of knowing official secrets?

Mr. MACKEY: Some of us in this Council may recall that many years ago in the House of Commons Sir John Simon as Chancellor of the Exchequer definitely stated that he would not allow any information to be given whatever with regard to the income of anyone in the United Kingdom. If that privilege is not afforded Members of the House of Commons, I see

no reason why it should be given to Members of this Council.

Mr. JACOB: I have not asked for the privilege of seeing any papers, but I think when definite charges are made they should be answered. I have just found the Report of the Income Tax Commissioners for 1940, which is signed by one Commissioner only.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I do not know whether I will be allowed the indulgence to refer to a matter which appears in the Treasurer's Report as it ought to have been done under the previous Head. I would ask your Excellency personally to investigate this matter, which I have previously raised on one or two occasions. I have raised it not because I represent a particular district or otherwise but, as I have suggested, as a matter of general policy which is really of some considerable import. I do not think I need be specific in my remarks. I will just refer to page 39 of the Colonial Treasurer's Report for the year 1940, "Recoverable Unemployment Relief Grants and Loans," as a policy, I consider, following the principles not only of logic but of equity. I see certain sums mentioned there which are really small, amounting to \$3,189.68 and including the Pomeroun Relief Loans to which reference was made by me previously. If Your Excellency read the Report of the Colonial Auditor for 1939 (Legislative Council Paper No. 5 of 1941) at page 14, Your Excellency would see that there was a sum of \$191,438.07 under the very Head, "Recoverable Unemployment Relief Grants and Loans," which had been entirely wiped out by the Colonial Welfare Act. That amount was due by an industry from whom it could have been recovered. It was practically the same relief as that given the small individuals, but it was not thought fit to relieve those individuals of repayment. I refer to that again as a matter of general policy, and I am going to state without hesitation that it is not because I represent the Pomeroun that I am asking for relief for the Pomeroun farmers. I am referring to it as the principle seems not to be consistent with either logic or equity. The note reads:

"Recovery if effected will be by means of a special tax on the industry when conditions improve sufficiently to justify the imposition of such a tax, the yield from which is also to be used in the formation of a Reserve Fund to provide similar assistance to the industry in periods of depression in the future."

I ask you to look at these two particular documents and, I have no doubt, Your Excellency will formulate the policy advocated by me. I do ask, if that indus-

try can be relieved, that the other people, to whom relief will be much greater although the sum is much smaller, should receive some consideration and similar treatment. I have endeavoured for nearly two years to find out whether the recommendation was made from this end for that relief at the other end, or it just came from the United Kingdom Colonial Office. Your Excellency may make enquiries as to whether any suggestions were put up by Government on this side for relief in the one instance and not the other.

Mr. Mc DAVID (Colonial Treasurer): The hon. Member for Western Essequibo has been very earnest for a long time in advocating the claims of the Pomeroun farmers, and I sympathize with him. They were lent \$4,000 from money which this Colony originally received as a grant from the Imperial Government and have been pressed from time to time for repayment. Now that the Imperial Government has been good enough to write off some very large loans owing by other people, the hon. Member's advocacy is very strong. There is, however, a difficulty. Several of those farmers have already paid and others have refused to pay and are encouraging others not to pay.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: To a point of information! One farmer who has been summoned is now paying at the rate of \$20 per month. He told me he had interfered with politics and that is the reason why he was being made to pay. I do not make rash statements unless I have verified them myself. My argument is, here is a big loan owed by people who can well afford to stand the burden of it and they are being relieved, while the small man is being pressed for payment of his loan at a time when we are endeavouring to encourage the farmer to grow more food for our own self-sufficiency. We know what has happened to the loans made to the farmers.

Mr. McDAVID: We can take that point a little further. The town of New Amsterdam had a loan £3,000 and that was not of written off. I merely mention that to show that the writing off of loans made during that particular period is not general. I suggest that the hon. Member should try again and press his case and he might succeed. He has approached Government several times and the matter was very carefully considered.

THE CHAIRMAN: The best method is to move a resolution in the Legislative Council for the amount to be met either out of revenue or written off.

Mr. McDAVID: I think that will be the best way.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I speak subject to correction. I think it will be in order for me as an Elected Member to move such a resolution.

THE CHAIRMAN: With my permission, you can certainly do that, not in the middle of this business but at the proper time.

Mr. McDAVID: In reply to the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) the only observation I would make is to the report and his question as to why the report was only signed by one Commissioner. I should like to refer him to the Ordinance of 1931 which specifically empowers one Commissioner to act. As most people know there are two Commissioners and the work is divided between them, but one Commissioner has complete power to make assessments and to carry on, not two. Two Commissioners only act where an objection has been raised and an appeal has to be heard. In so far as the report is concerned, I think this Council is well aware of the fact that the Administration of Income Tax is officed in the Treasury and the Colonial Treasurer himself is supervisor of the office and the administration. It is, therefore, only right and proper for the report to be signed by the Colonial Treasurer as Commissioner. There is no objection to two Commissioners signing. If that is the general feeling I would approach the second Commissioner and get him to sign, as he usually sees the report.

I have the impression that the hon. Member is referring to some correspondence that he addressed to Government, and in that he has taken upon himself to make the charge that certain individuals, whom he has named, have not paid the correct amount of Income Tax and the Commissioners ought to investigate it further and, what is more, an outside investigation ought to take place. If any Member of this Council thinks he has the privilege and right to suggest to Government that a particular member of the public has not paid the tax and to call upon Government to make an investigation into it. I think that would be an abuse of his privilege. They are merely vague insinuations which have been made, and it is indecent for anyone to attempt to use the Income Tax administration as a means of venting a private spleen on some individual with whom he is displeased. Income Tax is not to be used as a weapon of offence in that way, and certainly it is an abuse of privilege for a Member of this Council to do that.

Mr. JACOB: I am asking that the questions I asked be answered.

THE CHAIRMAN: What are the questions?

Mr. JACOB: Notice was given on the 22nd October and the usual courtesy is paid Members when the Council is prorogued to give answers to questions in letter form, but that has not been done.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will enquire into it.

With the consent of the Council several Heads were reverted to for the purpose of making minor amendments.

MEDICAL.

Item 15—Government Lands and Compounds, Sanitary Improvements, \$2,000.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be increased by \$830 and carried out at \$2,830. This is to enable certain sanitary improvements to be carried out in the neighbourhood of the Fort Wellington Police Compound so as to improve living conditions there. I think reference was made to this under some other Head and it was decided that it should be put under this Head.

Question put, and agreed to.

MEDICAL—HOSPITALS AND DISPENSARIES.

Item 29—Renewal of bedsteads at Public Hospitals, \$1,120.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be increased by \$720 and carried out at \$1,840. This is to cover the cost of replacing bedsteads ordered this year which have been lost by enemy action.

Mr. JACOB: Were those goods insured?

THE CHAIRMAN: I am speaking subject to correction. Government carries its own insurance in these matters.

Question put, and agreed to.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Item 29 — For purchase of land at Mahaicony used as roadway between railway station and public road, \$750.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that the following new sub-head be inserted: "29—For purchase of land at Mahaicony used as roadway between railway station and public road,—\$750." As far back as 1924 the Combined Court made provision for the expenditure of \$750 to

purchase a parcel of land from Messrs. J. T. and A. F. Whitehead to enable a road to be made to connect the railway station at Mahaicony with the public road. The parties concerned at that time refused to accept payment of that sum, and from time to time since then Government has been approaching them and asking them to reconsider the offer which had been turned down. They have come back to Government this year and said they are prepared to accept the sum. Government is now asking this Council to vote it, so that payment may be made early in the new year.

Question put, and agreed to.

MISCELLANEOUS—(a) SUBVENTIONS,
ETC., MUNICIPAL.

MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL,
NEW AMSTERDAM.

Item 11—Loan to Council for reconstruction of arterial roads—\$17,500.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I moved the insertion of the following new sub-head—"11—Loan to Council for reconstruction of arterial roads—\$17,500." It is proposed that this loan be repayable in 15 annual instalments at 3 per cent. It is to assist the Municipality in the reconstruction of the main roads in New Amsterdam.

Question put, and agreed to.

The Council resumed.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that the original motion:

That this Council approves the estimates of expenditure to be defrayed from revenue during the year ending 31st December, 1942, which have been laid on the table.

be amended by the substitution of the words "as amended in Committee" for the words "which have been laid on the table."

Mr. McDAVID seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion as amended carried.

THIRD SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move—

That this Council approves 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 in-

cluded in the First or Second Schedule of Additional Provision for 1941, which was laid on the table.

Hon. Members have copies of the Schedule. I will just refer to the largest of the items. On page 1, under Head VII—Customs—a vote of \$55,000 is required to enable refunds to be made. It is not possible to control that vote. On page 2 under Head XXVII—Poor—the sum of \$13,600 and some smaller sums are included making the amount \$13,629. That is due to the increase in the number of paupers. On page 3 under head XXXVIII—Sea Defences—"new construction and replacement works," a new type of sea wall is estimated to cost \$23,000. Particulars of that sum are given in the Marginal Remarks: Under Head XL—Transport and Harbours—the sum of \$21,000 is needed—\$13,000 for the extension of the Fort groyne and \$8,000 for the purchase of a new heavy duty launch for the Pilotage Service. Government was advised by the Consulting Engineer that the Fort groyne should be extended by 65 feet during 1941, but altogether it has to be extended by 740 feet over a period of years. Those are the largest items. I move that the Council go into Committee to consider the Schedule item by item.

Mr. McDAVID seconded.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I was going to second the motion for the purpose of enquiring whether this expenditure is not already made. If that is so, what else can we do but adopt it. Are we going to recover the money back from those people to whom it has been paid? I have much pleasure in seconding the payment that has been already made.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: In view of what has been said I will support the suggestion to have a Finance Committee to consider these matters every year. We are rather in advance of our usual date in dealing with this Schedule.

THE PRESIDENT: The proper procedure is what I suggested at the opening of the Session. Have a Standing Finance Committee to which the Colonial Secretary and myself will put these things as they come along.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and proceeded to consider the Schedule.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Item 29—For purchase of land at Mahaicony used as roadway between railway station and public road; \$750.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: This item has just been moved into the Annual Estimates for next year as the money was not paid. I therefore move its deletion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item deleted.

MISCELLANEOUS—(a) SUBVENTIONS, etc., MUNICIPAL, MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL, NEW AMSTERDAM.

Item 11—Loan to Council for reconstruction of arterial roads, \$17,500.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be deleted for the same reason as in the case of the other item.

Question put, and agreed to.

Item deleted.

Schedule as appended passed as amended.

The Council resumed.

Mr. JACOB: May I ask the total appropriation?

Mr. McDAVID: I cannot say definitely what the amount is, but according to my figures it is \$146,898, subject to correction. It will have to be verified.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that the original motion be amended by the deletion of the words "which has been laid on the table" and by the substitution therefor of the words "as amended in Committee."

Mr. McDAVID seconded.

Motion as amended put, and carried.

The Council adjourned until Friday, 2nd January, 1942, at 12 noon.