

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 9th December, 1942.

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. Pretheroe, M.C., K.C.

The Hon. J. S. Dash, Director of Agriculture.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. L. G. Crease, Director of Education.

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus, (Western Berbice).

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

The Hon. H. C. Humphrys, K.C., (Eastern Demerara).

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

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

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 the 4th December, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

SIR COSMO PARKINSON WELCOMED.

THE PRESIDENT: Hon. Members of Council, I have the great honour and privilege of welcoming with us to-day Sir Cosmo Parkinson, who has been kind enough to pay us a courtesy call on the first morning of his visit to Demerara, having arrived in Georgetown very late last night. By an

unhappy incident he has already seen the Demerara river for quite a number of hours.

We welcome him here this morning. I am sure that in his capacity in the Colonial Office his attention has been frequently given to the proceedings of the Council in this Chamber from the distance of London, and I am sure he is as glad to see us here as we are to receive him in this fitting, dignified and even beautiful Council Chamber.

I do not suppose Sir Cosmo will spend the afternoon with us when we get to the Estimates under the Head "Miscellaneous". I know the gentlemen of the Press are waiting for him and that he wishes to pay his first visit to Georgetown. As my guests, hon. Members of Council will have the opportunity of a more intimate meeting at Government House.

MILITIA EXERCISES POSTPONED.

Before I proceed to to-day's business I may touch on one other less social engagement. We had invited Members of Council to the exercises of the Militia on December 17. We thought that a convenient opportunity to show hon. Members the progress that is being made, but in view of the rains we have been having within the last few days the Commandant tells me that it would be unsuitable and uncomfortable and he would have to defer it to a later date. I had intended to invite hon. Members to be my guests in my capacity as Commander-in-Chief at a luncheon on that date, but we must postpone that also.

LOCAL AERODROME SITE.

I have just received, and I am sure hon. Members would like to know it, a report from the Special Committee under the Director of Public Works on the question of building an aerodrome for land planes near Georgetown.

Hon. Members will remember the history of this matter. On the completion

of the U.S. Army Base we had to defer any question of building an aerodrome for land planes near Georgetown, for which the initial purpose had been, of course, military. As I had said a few weeks ago, now that we are quite certain that the future lies with land planes and not sea planes it is an obligation on us to see what we can do to get a first-class landing ground.

This is the first report and it gives a great deal of attention to a number of factors touching aerodromes. One thing has emerged, and that is that Bel Air site is not adequate for a full-size landing ground with the necessary approaches and other things of that kind. Therefore, it means that if we are to have a first-class ground, we have to go farther afield. I hope to be able to circulate this report or something of it to hon. Members later.

DRAINAGE AND IRRIGATION SCHEMES.

I would also like to take this opportunity, which may be opportune, of speaking on the Drainage and Irrigation Schemes that are before Government and will come before the Council shortly. Hon. Members will remember that in August last we came to the decision that though we would go ahead with the Bonasika-Boerasirie Scheme it was not very practical to depend entirely on those very big, comprehensive, expensive and ambitious schemes which had been prepared, some of them running to 1½ million dollars (\$1,500,000) and making a total of 12 million dollars (\$12,000,000), but that it would be a more practicable thing for us to go ahead with smaller schemes which would give immediate benefit, bring more protection or safe-guarding of crops and which we could see our way to carry out fairly quickly. Since that date in August we have examined a number of them and I have the first report of the Consulting Engineer and the Drainage Board, and I would just like to indicate to Members what we have in front of us,

There are two schedules. The first deals with schemes in drainage areas—Golden Grove—Victoria, a total of \$20,300; Ann's Grove—Lancaster, a total of \$40,900; Mahaica—Helena, \$500; Johanna Cecelia—Annandale, \$5,700; Three Friends—Walton Hall, \$10,000; Canals Polder Area, West Bank, Demerara, \$25,000; Vreed-en-Hoop—Ruinzigt District, West Demerara, \$6,300; and others under consideration at Triumph—Betoverwagting Area, Plaisance Area, and Canals Nos. 1 & 2 Polder Area.

In the second schedule we have areas which are not at present Declared Drainage Areas and, therefore, do not come under the Ordinance and will require some kind of special provision for subsequent maintenance and administration. The areas approved are—Gibraltar—Courflands, \$10,000; Sisters Settlement, Berbice River, \$12,700; Crabwood Creek Area—Internal drainage and irrigation, \$54,000; Sarah-Mahaicony—Re-opening of old Dutch Canal, \$16,700; Mahaicony—Abary, \$42,500; Mahaica—Clonbrook Cattle Pasture, \$25,000; North Klien, Poudroyen, \$10,500; Salem, West Coast, Demerara, \$1,400; and the following are under consideration—Lots 57-72, Corentyne—Internal drainage; Lots 31-74 Corentyne, Cattle Pasture; Rose Hall Village; Leguan—Internal drainage; Wakenaam—Internal drainage; Tempe-Hopetown, West Coast Berbice.

Some of these schemes are completely uneconomical and have to be considered from the welfare and protective angle rather than from the productive. Gibraltar which covers a very small number of people but nevertheless, in my opinion and surely that of the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar), is absolutely necessary, Mahaicony, Abary and Salem—the works in respect of these four are either welfare or protective or both, and for those it is proposed that we may properly make application for a free grant under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act. The general principles govern-

ing all these will be that the capital cost will be entirely met and there will be no attempt to rate properties for the replacement of the capital cost. On the other hand they may come under the same principles adopted for the Bonasika-Boerasirie Scheme, that where there is an enhanced value of private property due to this heavy expenditure it will be proper to recover something from local revenue.

I have got one other interesting list which deals with some of the Local Authorities, and it is a proposal put up by the Commissioner of Local Government that a number of grants might be applied for drainage and irrigation in respect of those areas administered by the following Local Authorities—

Kingston, Leguan	.....	\$1,300.00
Dartmouth	.....	2,000.00
Fellowship	.....	3,045.84
Grove	.....	3,263.40
Huntley	.....	2,405.34
Airy Hall	.....	3,308.20
Dundee	.....	4,953.96
Novar	.....	4,503.68
Good Faith	.....	3,757.50
Recess	.....	4,096.40
Calcutta	.....	5,183.20
Catherine	.....	4,508.64
Abary	.....	6,313.00
Total	.....	\$48,839.16

Under certain proposals recommended and supported by the Social Adviser to the Comptroller for Colonial Development and Welfare we may be able to put up an application for a free grant under the Act. I shall pass these schedules to the Press, which are a little more detailed than I have read, and take a later opportunity to circulate them to hon. Members.

The principal business is to get on with the Estimates in Committee. I understand Wednesday is "Members' Day" and preference is given to motions by Unofficial Members. I would, however, have preferred to proceed, as I suggest, with the Estimates in Committee.

BRITISH EMPIRE CANCER CAMPAIGN.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: (Mr. G. D. Owen): I beg to inform hon. Members that a letter has been received from the British Empire Cancer Campaign, thanking the Colony for its generous contribution of £100 given again this year.

NOTICE OF QUESTIONS.

ACCUMULATED SURPLUS BALANCE.

Mr. JACOB: I beg to give notice of the following questions:—

1. How much of the accumulated surplus balance of \$2,440,933 as at 1st January, 1942, has been invested and how much is held in cash as reported in the Budget Statement of 18th November, 1942?

2. What is the nature of the investment, and at what rate of interest was the amount invested?

3. Where is the cash held?

4. What was the amount due to Barclays Bank (D.C. & Co.) and the Royal Bank of Canada as at 31st March and 30th September, 1942, by the E.G. Rice Marketing Board?

5. What were the amounts paid as interest to the two Banks mentioned in Question 4 for the periods 31st March and 30th September, 1942, each separately, and what rate of interest was charged by the Banks?

6. In view of the large accumulated surplus balance will Government consider the advisability of making immediate arrangements to finance the E.G. Rice Marketing Board and other Boards from the Treasury?

7. Will Government consider the advisability of utilising a portion of the surplus balance to finance Land Settlement Schemes in Demerara and Berbice, as recommended by the Land Settlement Committee of 1939, (vide Legislative Council Paper No. 2 of 1939)?

ORDER OF THE DAY.

OLD AGE PENSIONS.

THE PRESIDENT: If no Member wishes to proceed with any special business I would take the first item on the Order of the Day.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Your Excellency has already referred to the Order of the Day and to the question of "Members' Day", which is to-day. I was going to ask your permission to make that statement and also to be allowed to proceed with my motion which, as far as I am concerned, is very short. Perhaps, we may dispose of it in a very short time. It ought not to last more than a quarter of an hour.

THE PRESIDENT: That being the desire of the hon. Member I propose to allow him to move the motion standing in his name. If hon. Members are agreeable, I call upon the hon. Member for Western Essequibo to move his motion:

WHEREAS a Committee was on October 27, 1939, appointed by His Excellency the Governor to consider the possibility of making further provision for the Poor and/or aged inhabitants of the Colony of British Guiana and more especially the introduction into this Colony of the provisions of the law relating to Old Age Pensions as pertain in the British Empire;

AND WHEREAS the aforesaid Committee submitted its report (vide Legislative Council paper No. 11/1940 C.S. No. 93/17) to which was annexed a Draft Pensions Ordinance and Regulations;

AND WHEREAS the Committee recommended that the aforesaid Ordinance and Regulations should be brought into effect as from January 1st, 1941, in order to allow Old Age Pension payments to commence on July 1st, 1941:

Be it Resolved.—That this Council recommends that Government makes provision on the Estimates for the year 1942, in the sum of \$200,000 for payments under an Old Age Pensions Ordinance which should be forthwith enacted.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Sir, in moving the motion which stands in my name on the Order Paper I do not propose to go into more details other than to give a short summary of how this motion came about. It seems to me a corollary to the motion of which notice was given by me in this Council on the 2nd August, 1939, which is printed in the Hansard Reports, volume 2, at page 885. In the same volume at page 1204, on the 25th October, 1939, I moved that motion standing in my name and gave certain reasons for its support. Following upon that, a Committee was appointed by the then Governor and that Committee forwarded its report in due course.

Hon. Members will observe that there are two motions of the same import on the Order Paper, and I think an explanation is due not only to hon. Members but to the public as to how this came about. During the meetings of the Finance Committee, while the Head "Poor" was being discussed the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) asked me what I intended to do about my motion for Old Age Pensions. The hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) then referred to the fact that we had discussed the question of Old Age Pensions, and I then informed those present that I had a motion in draft, and I proposed giving notice of that motion at this Session of the Council. It was then drawn to my attention by another hon. Member that I was rather indiscreet in so showing my hands. I, therefore, said that I thought, as I do now, it is the duty of hon. Members of this Council not so much to move motions, not so much to take credit for any work done individually, but to co-operate, unite and give the necessary support to those matters which we think are of considerable importance to the inhabitants of this Colony. In other words, Members should not use any particular motion in the form of credit with ulterior motive or with the idea in one's head

that at some future date they can use it for their own pecuniary or material advantage. I have nothing further to say at the moment on that but, I think, it is due to hon. Members of Council and to the public to explain how these two motions of the same import are on the Order Paper.

All I have to say in addition to what I have already referred to in the Hansard Reports is to ask hon. Members for their wholehearted support of this motion, which is long overdue and which I have no hesitation in saying speaks for itself and supports itself.

Mr. LEE: I beg leave to second the motion and in support of that I would like to say that I knew that this motion was being drafted by the hon. Member for Western Essequibo and I reminded him about it in the Finance Committee. The motion speaks for itself, as the hon. mover says, but I can assure this Council that although the amount mentioned is \$200,000, when the details are gone into it may be found that the amount will have to be increased a little later when the finances of the Colony can afford it. I do say it is a very necessary thing for this Colony and it is in keeping with the idea that is rampant now, that very good Christian ideal—freedom from want.

Mr. JACOB: As the Member who has given notice of the other motion I would just like to say that I was appointed a Member of the Committee referred to by the hon. Member for Western Essequibo and I took an exceedingly keen interest in the drafting of the report, which was submitted as Legislative Council Paper, No. 11 of 1940. Prior to that, I think it is necessary to state, I took a very keen interest in the question of Old Age Pensions. That began from 1938. While in Trinidad as a Labour delegate I investigated the question of Old Age Pensions which were then already in existence in Trinidad and Barbados, and I am glad to say I was able to get some

valuable information. Since our Sister Colonies have them I thought it was essential that a similar provision should be introduced in this Colony. I have in my hand the Barbados Act—"An Act to provide for Old Age Pensions"—dated 26th November, 1937, and assent given to it by G. D. Owen, acting Governor, on the 26th November, 1937. I also went into the question of Old Age Pension Relief in Trinidad and came to the conclusion that since those two Colonies had this provision British Guiana could do no better than have it introduced here as soon as possible.

The Committee had recommended that Old Age Pensions should be introduced and one of the clauses was that an Old Age Pensions scheme should be brought into operation in British Guiana with the least necessary delay. Now that there is a surplus balance I urge on Government to place the sum of \$200,000 on next year's Estimates and to introduce forthwith the necessary legislation empowering the payment of this sum. I would like to say, Sir, that I am not in favour of all the recommendations made in that Committee's report. For instance, it is provided in the report, paragraph 9 (b), that the amount to be given persons resident in Georgetown should be \$5 inclusive of any amount that those persons might receive from private sources, and those resident in the country districts should be given \$4 with the same proviso. At the present time it is hardly possible that one can exist on \$4 per month or even \$5 per month, even with private means. This provision would mean that if the recommendations of the report are adopted *in toto* the amount to be provided would be exceedingly small. I urge for record purposes that the amount for country district residents should be \$5 and the amount for residents in Georgetown and New Amsterdam should be \$6 at least.

Further I notice that the Committee recommended, and for the sake of unanimity I agreed, that the age limit

should be sixty. I know, and I think it is within the knowledge of hon. Members of this Council, that a large section of the community here is suffering under a disability as regards age, particularly those introduced from India under the indenture system. If one looks at the Indentured Immigrants' Register one would see hardly any of those persons registered as being over 30 years of age. I say from practical knowledge that although you might have seen some arriving in the Colony who are over the age 30 years they were put down as being below 30 years. That was the system that did prevail, I am sorry to say. In my travels around the country districts I have seen people really looking as if they are 70 years of age but on looking at their necessary papers I have found that they are not even 60 years of age. Some of the ages have been entered in the Register five to ten years below the actual ages. Therefore, I say it may be advisable to reduce the age in respect of certain people to 55 if this Pensions scheme is going to be equitably and profitably distributed among the really poor and needy people of the Colony.

An Old Age Pension is one of the greatest social benefits that can ever be given to a people in any part of the world. I have in my hand here the "Daily Herald" of February 21, 1940, containing a report of the discussion when the Pensions Scheme for England was being debated in the House of Commons. Mr. George Hall, until recently Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, is reported as having made this statement:

"This Bill is shamefully trifling with the greatest human problem the country is confronted with, and the treatment meted out to the old age pensioners is a disgrace to this nation."

Mr. George Hall made that statement in the House of Commons when a very liberal Pensions Scheme for England was being debated in 1940 and, therefore, I think so far as this Colony is concerned

that at no distant date, if this motion is accepted, the amount should be increased. It can hardly be expected that a person can live on \$5 or \$6 a month, and even if a person has private means he should be given more. I say in all confidence, having in mind the human sufferings we have here and the assistance that should be given to that kind of suffering, this Colony at least should provide \$5 per month as Old Age Pension whether a person has any private means or not. I support this motion and trust that it will be accepted by Government and everything will be done to bring the scheme into operation as from the 1st January, 1943.

Mr. JACKSON: I rise to give my support to the motion before the Council, but there is one point that I cannot just understand. Why is it that the amount for those who live in Georgetown and New Amsterdam should be larger than the amount for those who live in the country districts? This question has been operating in my mind for some time now, as even in the matter of the distribution of the Poor Law funds a larger amount is being given to the people in Georgetown than to those in the country districts. I know as a matter of fact that there are numbers of persons in the country districts who are worse off than the people in Georgetown. I want to mention also that there are many social organizations in the City of Georgetown as well as in New Amsterdam that cater for the Poor. Such organizations do not exist in the country districts for many reasons. The people in Georgetown are centred together in one place, but in the country districts they are spread over large tracts of land. I want to say that it is my studied opinion that the amount should be the same throughout the Colony, and if any portion of the Colony should get more it should be the poor districts in the country. So far as the motion itself is concerned I think it is timely, and I would be very glad if the

Council supports it. I hope that the motion may, therefore, have the unanimous support of this Council.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I do not think any Member of this Council would oppose this motion in principle, and I certainly do not intend to do so. But, Sir, I would really like to hear from the Government side of the Table whether Government is satisfied that at the present time, having regard to the present financial position of the Colony, this motion should be carried now. I feel there is every need, if finances allow, to have Old Age Pensions in this Colony, but I wish to be assured by Government that we are not going to have \$200,000 on the Estimates this year and \$300,000 next year and so on, increasing the amount every year. We know that as soon as anything goes on the Estimates in the nature of Social Welfare funds, every year it seems to increase. No sane person is going to attempt to oppose a measure of this kind and there is no need for a lot of debate to take place when the Ordinance comes forward, but before voting on this motion I would like Government to say whether it conscientiously feels, having regard to the finances of the Colony and the means which are adopted to raise revenue, we are justified in voting this amount at the present time. Unless Government can conscientiously assure this Council that it will be a practical matter to find this amount without straining the taxpayers to the utmost limit, I am afraid I cannot support it. I do urge that further investigation be made by Government before launching the scheme. I do want an assurance from Government that this amount can be placed on the Estimates without creating an undue strain on the Colony's finances.

Mr. SEAFORD: To a certain extent I agree with the views expressed by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Humphrys). I feel that no one in this Council or in this Colony

who has the interests of the Colony at heart—and I am sure the Government is included too—will be against the principle of this motion, but we have before us here a resolution which asks Government to place \$200,000 on the Estimates. I feel that figure has been probably arrived at because a report a couple of years ago—

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I would just like to point out for the benefit of the hon. Member that if the hon. Member had read the report which was signed by hon. Members of this Council he would have found that there was a definite figure arrived at—\$187,000. I have not the exact figures with me.

Mr. SEAFORD: I am quite aware of all the hon. Member has said, and I maintain that if Government went into conditions today it would find that estimate is considerably inaccurate. We do not know whether the people in the country are better off or worse off today, if there are more or less in number. I do believe that it will be found that wherever the health conditions in this Colony have improved the people live to a greater age and, therefore, it will be necessary for Government to face an increasing estimate from year to year. No one can be against the motion in principle because I think it is a duty we have to those people who are in want. It is like so many other things we have in this Colony. It is a social welfare act and I do believe it is an obligation on Government. At present a good many old people are living on charity—the kindness of those who employed them in the past, friends and relatives—and I do feel it is only fair to them that they should be able to look forward in their old age to some security and not have to go about from house to house begging alms. For that reason I agree in principle with the motion, but at the same time I feel Government should not accept a motion for a definite sum before being satisfied that the amount is correct.

I am going to suggest that the hon. Member withdraw that definite amount and ask Government to consider the motion and place on the Estimates such sum which may be necessary as soon as Government is in a position to state the amount. Government cannot accept this motion as it is when it has no idea whether the amount will eventually be \$200,000 or \$300,000. I do feel that to put \$200,000 now and come back later and ask for another amount is bad budgeting. I do feel the hon. Colonial Treasurer would not like to add a sum like that to the Estimates when he does not know where he is from month to month.

Mr. GONSALVES: The hon. Member has rather anticipated me with his suggestion. We are in favour of the motion in principle but the difficulty, as I see it, is that we have not yet seen the proposed legislation and considered it. It seems to me that from the rate of progress made in regard to legislation, except legislation of a certain kind, it will be some time before we get the draft legislation placed before us. If the one is to go with the other, it seems that it is inadvisable to burden the Estimates for next year with the sum of \$200,000, as that amount may not be expended for the whole year. I was thinking along the same lines as suggested by the hon. Member, whether the motion cannot be amended in such a way as to make it possible for the purpose of the motion to be carried without inflicting the amount of \$200,000 on the Estimates for us to find ways and means of meeting it, when it may not be necessary to expend it. If the legislation will not be ready for another three or four months then, perhaps, a sum sufficient for six months' allowance may be provided so as to carry out what is intended. I think the hon. Member who moved the motion should reconsider it in that light and so, perhaps, secure the approval of the whole Council.

Mr. De AGUIAR: I do not think there can be any question at all about the object of this motion. I would like to say at once that I am in entire agreement with the views expressed by the speakers on the motion, but I cannot from my seat here support a motion that will give effect to a sum of money being voted for a purpose for which no special legislation has been considered and approved by this Council.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I do not like to interrupt the hon. Member, but I rise to a point of explanation. I do not know if the hon. Member has read the report to which is annexed a draft Ordinance or draft legislation. I am not replying to the hon. Member's speech, but it seems that the suggestion is that the draft Ordinance has not been considered by the Law Officers of the Crown nor have the Regulations. That seems to me to be the position. The suggestion seems to indicate that the report was hardly considered much less the draft Ordinance and Regulations.

Mr. GONSALVES: If the reference is made to my remarks, when I said the draft legislation has not been put before the Council for consideration, I may say I was not dealing with the report at all.

Mr. De AGUIAR: I am afraid the hon. Member's vision is far greater than mine. I have not had the privilege or pleasure of seeing the draft Ordinance referred to in the report, but even if I had, the point I have made remains unchallenged that this Council as a legislative body has not had an opportunity of considering any legislation of this nature and giving effect to it. As I gather from the remarks of the previous speakers, we are all in agreement with the principle, but what we are not in agreement with,—and certainly I am not—is that this Council should approve of a recommendation to Government that a sum of \$200,000, or

any figure, be placed on the Estimates for the purpose of providing Old Age Pension without knowing to whom it is payable, or to what, when, and how. I am not going to be guided at the moment by the report referred to by the hon. Member, however valuable it may be. I want to see a scheme or the legislation set out in proper form as to the way this money is going to be paid out, when it is to be paid out and to whom it is to be paid, before I can approve of any item being placed on the Estimates. As the hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Gonsalves) has rightly said, if this Council carries a motion of this kind and Government accepts it, the next position we would find ourselves in is that we would be faced with meeting that expenditure. I question very much how the administration would be able to deal with it if there is no legislation setting out how the money is to be expended. I feel that the hon. Member will agree with me now that the Department that will be charged with the administration of this money cannot be guided by the report of that Committee but by some special legislation. I would suggest for the hon. Member's consideration, though he seems very unwilling to do so, that his motion be so amended as to ask Government to give early consideration to the recommendations contained in the report of the Committee and to introduce the necessary legislation giving effect to those recommendations. The hon. Member seems unwilling to do so and, therefore, as a Member of this Council I am entitled to move and I do move the following amendment to the operative clause of the motion:—

"That this Council respectfully requests that early consideration be given by Government to the recommendations contained in the report of the Committee referred to in the second preamble of the motion and that Government introduces the necessary legislation that will give effect to the principle."

I feel sure that a motion of this kind will receive the unanimous approval of Council.

Mr. AUSTIN: I would like to say a few words on this motion. I think most of us have already stated that we are in agreement with the motion in principle, but it is only recently this Colony has got out of its indebtedness to the Imperial Government and we do not wish — I think it is the general wish of Members of Council and of the Colony, as a whole—to borrow money for a purpose of this sort. I agree with the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight) this thing is somewhat overdue and should have been looked after, perhaps, some years ago, but we had been passing through bad times and may well have to pass through very strenuous times in the future and, therefore, the matter has to be considered from all aspects. The suggestion just made by the hon. Member who has just sat down is a sound one. Let us consider the matter from a business point of view and see what it would be if applied to a business house. I think it should be further examined in an endeavour to arrive at some kind of decision which would carry out the wishes of the Council and also be helpful to those unfortunate people in this Colony who, as the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) has said, receive a small grant to live on. It is true that \$4 a month in these times is inadequate, and so is \$5 a month also, but we must not forget that this Colony contributes to Poor Law Relief a sum which, I think, is as generous as Barbados is doing, though they call it Old Age Pensions and we call it by some other name. From my seat here I desire to state I really think this thing should be examined further, and I do trust the hon. mover of the motion would look at it from that point of view. Let us re-examine the whole thing from a more up-to-date standpoint with the future in front of us in so far as the economic conditions

of this Colony are likely to be affected for certain reasons which Your Excellency has recently given.

THE PRESIDENT: Would you second the amendment?

Mr. AUSTIN: I would like to second the amendment.

Mr. SEAFORD: Before the hon. mover of the motion replies, may I ask if this \$200,000 is to be included in the amount that is being given at present as Poor Law Relief or is it in addition to that? It will affect considerably so many people who are getting Poor Law Relief today and who will be Old Age Pensioners, that I do not know how you are going to apply it.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I would ask the hon. Member who moved this motion to accept the suggestion that it be postponed. He knows as well as I do that there is considerable difficulty in this matter. As I have pointed out and will again remind the hon. Member, it is quite impossible to put it into operation on the 1st January or at all until and unless some system of registration of those people who are old and will be entitled to this relief is compiled throughout this Colony. The Poor Law Commissioners in paying out their contributions hardly adopt what is called a strict "means" tests. I know of my own experience, although I hesitate to do it, I have addressed a letter to the Secretary to the Poor Law Commissioners and asked that relief be given to certain people. I intended it to be temporary and not that they should be permanently on the Poor Law Relief schedule. It is quite clear that in order that these pensions should be applied with regularity and certainty and should achieve the aims and intentions of the Ordinance there must be a register so as to find out if the persons are in receipt not only of Poor Law Relief but have other sources which will disentitle them receiving that relief. As the hon. Member on my left (Mr. Seaford) has pointed out,

if it is to become effective from January those people who are getting \$6 a month or any kind of Poor Relief at the present moment will immediately become disentitled to receive such Poor Law Relief. I think there is a great deal of spade work to be done, and I would ask that a commencement be made by the Executive Government in asking the Poor Law Commissioners and their Deputies in the several districts to examine the conditions of living of all those people who are entitled or will become entitled under the Ordinance by the submission of their birth certificates and other details as to whether they are married, whether they depend on their children, and to employ other means by which the question is settled in England.

I rather fancy that before this measure can be carried into operation there are other social welfare aids that may come into operation and which are of a far more general nature than this particular one. There is no use rushing or trying to rush Government into this particular vote. The sum may be exceeded or lessened, but it does not seem businesslike to suggest that a particular sum should be put on the Estimates at all.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: To a point of explanation! May I suggest to the hon. Member for New Amsterdam that as the report which he signed had the sum of \$189,000, we may insert that instead of \$200,000.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I am familiar with that sum. There was some reason for arriving at that figure. That was based on what we knew the Poor Law Commissioners were paying out. It was not really an estimate. The hon. Member will agree with me that we had the Secretary to the Poor Law Commissioners who told us how many people were receiving Poor Relief of the average age of sixty, under the age of sixty and any particulars on which that estimate was based. I am under the impression that the age limit in Barbados is over sixty.

Mr. JACOB: Seventy.

Mr. AUSTIN: Not sixty-five?

Mr. JACOB: It is 65 in Trinidad and 70 in Barbados.

Mr. WOOLFORD: And therefore the age may be a matter for consideration. It is no use comparing conditions in Barbados with those here.

Mr. LUCKHOO: I agree with the suggestion made by the hon. Member for New Amsterdam, that this matter be further investigated and not rushed as is intended to be done this morning. I feel that in a matter of this sort statistics will have to be obtained, a real census taken as to the number that will come under this Old Age Pensions scheme. Then there is the other question as to whether the town folks should get a bigger amount than the country ones,—the point raised by the hon. Mr. Jackson. That is worthy of attention too. Further we have pensioners who are over 60 years and who are in receipt of pension from Government. It will have to be considered whether they should get Old Age Pensions in addition to what they are receiving now from Government. Let us get all those points straightened out. To relieve the sick and help the poor and indigent is an idea that commends itself to this Council. There are charitable institutions trying to fill that gap in a measure by assisting those in need and terrible want, and there is no use having the amount fixed here, as if \$200,000 would be sufficient to carry out the project next year. It seems a mere matter of guess-work. The principle is sound, but let us proceed with it on businesslike lines.

Dr. SINGH: I rise in support of this motion. This question was previously before the Council and was sympathetically received. It is true that before we can put the motion into operation certain machinery has to be set up. There must be a certain

amount of framework in order to meet the expenditure, and the basis should be on the question of age, 60 or 65. The other point is that one cannot easily assess age.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I rise to support this motion exactly as it stands. I consider that those persons who are asking Government to say whether it will accept it or not are merely drawing a red herring across the trail, as is the custom in this Council ever since I have been here. Old Age Pension is certainly long overdue in this Colony but the Colony has always been in a state of chronic impecuniosity. Now that there is some improvement the hon. Member comes and asks Government to set aside a certain sum for this purpose and to set up the machinery. If when the machinery is set up and the obligation is agreed to it is found that it requires more money Government can come back to the Council and get the balance. What is the trouble in doing that? If it is found that the money is too much you are not going to spend it because it is voted. Where is the difficulty in having a certain amount voted for the purpose of the framework? I cannot see it.

Some hon. Members are asking Government not to give to those over-worked Officials who have arrived at the age to retire and are given a pension below \$10 a month any relief under the Scheme. That is a scandal. Government should level up those amounts that are being given now as pension—\$4, \$5, \$6 a month—to at least \$10 before it starts to give Old Age Pensions. This Council, I remember, once passed a motion that pensioners should not get less than \$15 a month, and as time went on new Members came and also new Governors and the amount was reduced from \$15 to \$10 and then to \$6 and \$5 and \$4—all kinds of figures. Government Officials who have served Government until they arrived at the age to retire and get a pension should certainly

not get less than \$10 a month. Government should take advantage of this motion to level that up before starting on this new scheme which I support with all my heart.

As regards the age of a certain class in the community, I do not know if the hon. Member for North-Western District ever heard of young old men. I do not expect we are propounding a scheme for young old men—men who become old before their time. I have known young men who looked as old as Methuselah and some old men who were as fleetly as a hare.

I support the motion and I see no reason why Members should not support it as it stands, but rather than losing their support I think the mover should fall in with them. I do not think their objection is a good one. I think a man who lives in Georgetown finds it harder to live on a small amount than one who lives in the country. I have lived in a town as well as in the country, and experience teaches me that you can live much easier on a small sum in the country than in a town. Let us make a start, and I hope Your Excellency will let your régime go down at least with the blessing of the poor who need help. It would be one of the things that will be accounted unto you for righteousness.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I support the motion in principle and I hope I will not be accused of dragging red herrings across the trail. What does the argument amount to that this motion should be approved as it reads? It means that \$200,000 would be placed on the estimate and Government would legislate and consider ways and means of spending the money. It does not matter whether Government takes another year to find ways and means or to introduce legislation, that amount would be put on the estimate and revenue would

have to be raised to meet it. Is that a sound principle? I think the hon. Member should be more honest in his views. If Government accepts the motion and undertakes to give effect to the recommendations of the Committee I think that should be sufficient, and he should accept the sincerity of Government and vote for the amendment instead of the original motion. Instead of that we still find Members discussing the details of the scheme. I admit that the Committee has submitted a figure, but would it be bold enough to say that the figure submitted would be the cost of the scheme? It may be enough or too small; one does not know what the cost will be. I think it is only fair and reasonable that if Government accepts the principle of the motion and undertakes that the matter will be looked into immediately, that should satisfy the mover.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: In Finance Committee one or two Members raised some question with regard to the resolution passed not long ago in this Council authorizing an additional expenditure of \$5,000 a month in November and December through the Poor Law Commissioners. They asked whether that additional amount was going to be continued in 1943, and I reminded them that the reason for that resolution was that the Colony was suffering from lack of imports of foodstuffs, and local products were not coming in very rapidly. Your Excellency therefore decided that additional assistance should be given, and that the matter should be further considered towards the end of the year as to whether any additional amount should be asked for in 1943. The mover of the motion then decided to introduce this motion.

The position is that the Committee reported in 1940, and last year, shortly before Your Excellency's predecessor left the Colony, the scheme was considered by him. His view was that the financial position of the Colony at that time was not sufficiently

clear to introduce it. I think the position today is that Your Excellency has not had an opportunity to delve into the papers and the Committee's report and to satisfy yourself whether the time has arrived for introducing this amount into the budget, and I think I am right in saying that it will not be possible for you to give a decision today.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I see now that it is going to be put on Your Excellency. If Your Excellency desires some time to go into the matter I am not concerned with that. Will the Colonial Secretary inform this Council if this matter has ever been considered by the Executive Council, or by any of Your Excellency's predecessors, or by any of the Law Officers? If he says that it was considered by Your Excellency's predecessor, by the Law Officers and by the Executive Council. I would like him to give this Council the reasons for turning it down. But if he says definitely that Government proposes to introduce the scheme in three months I will accept that assurance.

THE PRESIDENT: You must not make another speech.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think I stated definitely that the matter was considered by Your Excellency's predecessor, and I also say that it was considered by your predecessor in Executive Council. With regard to its consideration by the Law Officers the reply is "No." The hon. Member has asked me to give the reason why it has not been introduced. I think I gave it. I said it was considered just before Your Excellency's predecessor left the Colony, that the Colony's financial position was not sufficiently clear to introduce it at that time. If I made a wrong statement when I said Your Excellency wished time to consider the matter you will, of course, correct me. What I was going on to say was that whereas I felt sure Your Excellency would not hesitate to accept the amendment I think it would be

difficult to accept the motion as it stands, as it requests the insertion in the estimates for next year of a sum of \$200,000.

There are just one or two points to which I should like to refer. The hon. Mr. Jackson says he cannot understand why the Poor Law Commissioners give larger doles in Georgetown and New Amsterdam than in the country. In the report the hon. Member will see that the Committee apparently considered that point because they actually report that it was stated to them that living in Georgetown was more expensive, and they go on to submit recommendations which show that they must have accepted that, because the doles recommended by them for Georgetown are higher than those for the country districts. No doubt the Committee was satisfied by evidence that what the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) says is correct.

The hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Woolford) referred to the question of registration. It takes a fairly long time to get that done, and it would be impossible in any case to start registration in January. In Barbados it took several months to effect satisfactory registration, and it would take a few months in this Colony to get the right people registered.

The hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) referred to a Resolution passed about 15 years ago to the effect that the minimum pension to be granted to Government employees should be \$10 per month. I have an idea that that resolution has been superseded by the superannuation benefits scheme which has been adopted by the Council, and I think payments are now made under that scheme and not under the resolution.

I should like to express my personal opinion on the motion. I was pleased to be associated with the introduction of the scheme in Barbados where it relieved a lot of suffering, and I hope the day is not far distant

when it will be introduced here. I hope that the hon. Member will accept the suggestion to amend his motion, or that the amendment moved by the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) will be carried at this stage.

Mr. McDAVID: I would like to point out that in the case of old age pension or any pension the vote itself is ineffectual. What is required really is the enactment of legislation which would provide the machinery and prescribe the scales and rates of pension, and that legislation would itself provide the financial provisions. Automatically the law would direct that the Treasurer or the Government provide the necessary sum from revenue. In fact I agree entirely with what was stated by the hon. Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Peer Bacchus), that the mere placing of an item on the estimate will not achieve the purpose which the hon. Member has in view. The first thing is, of course, the enactment of an Ordinance which would automatically make the necessary financial provision for carrying the object of it into effect.

Mr. GONSALVES: I would suggest another amendment which might meet the purpose. I move:—

“That the original motion be amended by the deletion of all the words after the word “Government” in the twelfth line, and the substitution therefor of the following words:—

“immediately proceed to enact an Old Age Pensions Ordinance and thereafter provide such sum as may be necessary under the Ordinance.”

I have suggested the last words in view of the statement of the Treasurer that the Ordinance would make provision for such sums as may be necessary for carrying out the purpose of the Ordinance. If my amendment is accepted it would meet the object of the motion—that something be got going in the matter.

Mr. JACOB: I am inclined to support the amendment.

THE PRESIDENT: I cannot allow a second speech. Members are continuing to speak twice on the motion. Do you wish to speak on the amendment now proposed?

Mr. JACOB: I wish to second the amendment. I think I can say a few words.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Mr. JACOB: In my motion on page 2 of the Order Paper of to-day there are two resolve clauses which read:—

Be it Resolved.— That early effect be given to the recommendations of the Committee by way of introducing the necessary legislation to provide for the payment of Old Age Pensions:

And be it Further Resolved.— That this Council recommends and approves of a sum not exceeding \$200,000 being placed in the Draft Estimates of Expenditure of 1943 for the payment of Old Age Pensions as recommended by the Old Age Pensions Committee.

I realize that it is necessary to enact legislation to authorize Government to pay these pensions, and I trust that if the amendment is accepted Government will forthwith introduce the necessary legislation. A draft Ordinance and Regulations have already been submitted by the Committee, and I cannot see why it should take more than two or three months to introduce the legislation. If necessary a supplementary estimate could be submitted to provide for the payment of these pensions as from March or April, 1943. There is no doubt that there is a lot of suffering in the Colony, and it is absolutely necessary that something be done to relieve it. I was particularly pleased to hear the Colonial Secretary say that the motion has his support in principle.

THE PRESIDENT: I am placed in a certain difficulty of procedure. Under our Rules, where there is a second

amendment I am required to put the question: "That the words of the question stand as in the original motion," which, if it is decided in the affirmative, will throw out all the amendments.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The view of the majority of Members is quite clear. They all agree that it is necessary, and that a great deal of spade work has to be done before it can in fact be brought in. Some hon. Members have said that the first thing to do is to draft a Bill and then this Council would pass the Bill and ask for the requisite money. In point of fact that is not quite right. The Law Officers can draft a Bill and this Council can pass it, but the first thing that has to be done is the spade work. Any local Bill will have to be based on the English Statute. In England old age pension is paid to persons over a certain age. There is no difficulty in Great Britain where anybody can prove his age. One hon. Member says that quite a large number of very deserving people in this Colony, for whose benefit this legislation will be made, cannot prove their age. What is the good of drafting a Bill and saying that people over 65 years of age shall have old age pension when we know there are large numbers of people who cannot prove their age?

Mr. JACOB: I think I am a little bit misunderstood. They can prove their age by their papers, but that age is a fictitious age. (laughter).

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I accept the amendment moved by the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar). For the purposes of this legislation a large number of the population cannot prove their true ages, therefore local legislation must be somewhat different from other models in order to cope with that position. The Law Officers cannot draft a Bill to cope with that situation; somebody in the field has to solve

that difficulty. That will take time, and I suggest that as two amendments have been put forward, Members will be put in a very difficult position. I think the majority agree that they must have time, and that a vote should not be put on the estimate now but after the Bill has been passed. I therefore suggest that it would save a lot of difficulty if the mover of the last amendment withdrew it and left a straight issue between the original motion and the first amendment.

THE PRESIDENT: Beyond all question it is the principal policy of Government that Old Age Pension should be one of the most valuable planks in the platform of social security, and should be proceeded with as early as possible, as has been done in other Colonies and countries. The hon. Member asked how many Members have read the report of the Committee? I confess that I have not read it, and I make no apology for that. I have made notes of matters which I consider important, but this is one of the things I have not been able to read. On my table there is at least as large a bundle of papers as this in front of me here, dealing with matters of major importance. What I did say in my address to Council was that:

“ what I had asked for was a realistic approach to the problems of this country and the difficulties inherent and fundamental, as well as incidental to the war position, which we should endeavour to face with open eyes and without the blinkers of wishful thinking.”

People are far too ready to think that everything can be got both ways. We have, it is true, a very substantial balance but we have a number of very substantial items which are eating into that balance. For instance we have subsidies, and I have indicated that we desire to raise wages for unskilled labour. We also have drainage and irrigation schemes, some of which I mentioned this morning. These can be carried on or stopped at

will, but once we embark on Old Age Pension that is a recurrent obligation which we are bound to carry on.

Social security should be our standard for the future, but we have to do it with our eyes open. What I say is this: if you are going to carry out that policy of social security you will not do it on your present basis of landed property and taxation. You will require a drastic revision of your laws—something in the nature of what somebody once reported me as advocating—conscription of land and wealth. Anybody who thinks that all these desirable things can be obtained on our present basis of taxation is living in a fool's paradise, and by allowing people to think that they can be got by passing a Bill is misleading the public. In principle the proposal in the motion is completely acceptable, and we must go on with it as soon as we can, but we cannot put it on the estimate now. I shall be prepared to accept the terms of the amendment which deals with the main question, but I cannot accept the recommendation that such a sum be put on the estimate now. Nor can I accept the proposal that an Ordinance should be enacted forthwith. Therefore I consider the words of the first amendment such as would pass this Council absolutely unanimously. However, as we have two amendments I shall have to put them in a somewhat complicated form. The first question I will have to put is: “That the words of the question stand as in the original motion.”

Mr. GONSALVES: I moved my amendment because I thought it might have been a compromise between the two views expressed during the debate, but with the permission of my seconder I will withdraw it, especially in view of what Your Excellency has just said—that you have not yet had an opportunity to consider the report of the Committee. I would further suggest to the Council that rather than press either the motion or the first amendment to a division Your Excellency

might be given an opportunity to consider the matter, after which it can be brought up again. Your Excellency has frankly said that you have not considered the Committee's report, therefore it is impossible to ask that the vote be taken now.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not, of course, object in any way to the wording of your amendment. It is the matter of form we are discussing. It might help if we have unanimity in the passing of the first amendment, but we have still the original motion to put. We have in front of us the original motion and the first amendment, therefore I have to put the amendment: "That the words in the motion from the word "recommends" be deleted." If, that is carried I will proceed to put the amendment: "That the words proposed to be substituted be inserted." Those who wish to vote for the motion as it stands should vote "Aye" and those who prefer the amendment should vote "No."

Mr. WOOLFORD: The interpretation of Rule 17 has produced confusion in this Council before. I have known a vote taken and the result was entirely opposed to the views of those who voted against it. I again ask you, sir, to invite the Attorney-General to read Rule 17. It seems to me to contemplate that where there are more amendments than one the motion should be put first. There is only one amendment in this case, and it is not necessary for the Chair to put the amendment. I gather that Your Excellency is about to put the amendment first.

THE PRESIDENT: I have done it in that way for a number of years. When I have an amendment that certain words of the motion should be deleted in order that certain other words be inserted I put the question: "That the words proposed to be deleted stand part of the motion."

Mr. WOOLFORD: I think you rather indicated that those who approve of the amendment should say "Aye."

THE PRESIDENT: When I put the question "That the words proposed to be deleted stand part of the motion", if Members like the amendment they will say "No."

Mr. LEE: Are you putting the original motion as moved by the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight)?

THE PRESIDENT: In the terms in which it stands in the print. The amendment is that certain words be deleted. Therefore, if I put the question: "That the words proposed to be deleted stand part of the motion" and Members vote "Aye" they vote for the original motion. If they vote "No" then those words do not stand part of the motion, which will in effect mean that they have voted for the amendment. I will now put the question: "That the words proposed to be deleted stand part of the motion." Those in favour will say "Aye."

Three Members voted "Aye" and the President declared that the words would be deleted.

THE PRESIDENT: I will now put the amendment for the insertion of the words "respectfully requests that early consideration be given by Government to the recommendations contained in the report of the Committee referred to in the second preamble of the motion and introduce the necessary legislation that would give effect to the principle." Those in favour say "Aye," those against say "No."

The amendment was declared carried.

THE PRESIDENT: I now put the motion in its revised form.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I ask for a division, please.

The Council divided and voted:—

For—Messrs. Jackson, Humphrys, Peer Bacchus, De Aguiar, Gonsalves,

Eleazar, Wood, Crease, Case, Laing, D'Andrade, Austin, Seaford, McDavid, Woolford, Luckhoo, Dr. Singh, Prof. Dash, the Attorney-General, and the Colonial Secretary.—20.

Against—Messrs. C. V. Wight, Lee, and Jacob.—3.

Motion, as amended, carried.

THE PRESIDENT: Three Members have put themselves in the curious position of not requesting Government to take any steps in the matter. (laughter). It is not exactly what they mean, I know, but that is the effect of their voting against the motion as amended.

Mr. LEE: We feel that the original motion should be carried as it stands. Legislation will not be introduced in this Council for the next six months.

THE PRESIDENT: We have another motion on the same subject. Does the hon. Member desire to move it?

Mr. JACOB: In view of all the circumstances I beg to withdraw my motion. I trust that the amended motion which has been carried will be put into effect very soon.

THE PRESIDENT: So you now vote for the motion as amended? (laughter). I am sure we can say that all the Members of the Council, in spite of the division, desire that we give earnest attention to the matter.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Perhaps Your Excellency will now give us some idea when the necessary machinery will be set up.

THE PRESIDENT: I am afraid I cannot commit myself to any date. We have disposed of two of the motions on the Order Paper. There is still a third in the name of the hon. Member for Berbice River. Would he like to defer it?

Mr. ELEAZAR: Until to-morrow morning?

THE PRESIDENT: We would like to get on with the Estimates. Shall we give you your opportunity as soon as we finish the Estimates? It might be very soon.

Mr. ELEAZAR: It depends on the time. I do not want to go back to Berbice and return.

THE PRESIDENT: We will give you an opportunity this week.

ESTIMATES, 1943.

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, 1943.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Item 3—Public Printing, regulated by Contract, \$42,600.

Mr. JACOB: I merely rise to say that I have not been getting the printed reports of the debates of the Council recently, and I am wondering what is the reason. The reports of the debates help me to keep before my mind certain things I have in view, and I shall be glad if they will continue to be sent as regularly as in the past.

Item 15—Wakenaam—Leguan Launch Service Subsidy, \$300.

Mr. LEE: I would like to ask if Government has considered the question of an increase of this subsidy. A petition was sent to me and to the Transport and Harbours Board asking for an increase of the subsidy, and I forwarded it to Government. There is no doubt that there has been an increase in the price of fuel and spare parts, and I am asking Government to see its way to grant an increase of the subsidy, otherwise the charges for

passages and freight will have to be increased, which would not be a good thing for the people in the two islands. If Government decides to grant an increase of the subsidy it should be made a condition that there must be no increase in fares and freight charges.

Item 20—Miscellaneous Expenses—Ex-Servicemen—\$480.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Is there any connection between this item and item 22 on page 48—Grant to Ex-Servicemen's Association, \$1,200? If they refer to the same Association I think they should be placed under one head.

THE CHAIRMAN: They are two different things. The Treasurer will explain.

Mr. McDAVID: As far as I know the item on page 48 is an outright grant to the Association to be expended on medical and other benefits. Item 20 on page 45 is for specific expenses administered by Government, and does not pass through the Association at all, although its object is the same.

Mr. WIGHT: The grant of \$1,200 has been paid to this Association for several years, and I was wondering whether it would not be necessary to increase the amount for next year in case some of the men return from the present war.

Item 22—Tourist Bureau and advertisement of the Colony in Canada and elsewhere, \$4,800.

Mr. JACOB: I have raised this matter year after year and I have tried to find out what value this Colony gets from this expenditure on the Tourist Bureau and advertisement in Canada and elsewhere. If I could see any real advantage from the expenditure of this money I would support it. I want to record my opposition to this continuous expenditure which is, in my opinion, unproductive,

Item 23—Labour Registration Bureau, \$540.

Mr. JACOB: We have a Labour Department yet under Lands and Mines there is an item (12)—Registration of Labourers—Payment to Registering Officer, \$900. On page 45 we have another item—Labour Registration Bureau, \$540. I wish to emphasize that the Labour Department should deal with all matters connected with labour so that the responsibility could be fixed at one place and on one officer. It is very unsatisfactory to find several officers registering labour. At one time we are told that there is a surplus of labour and at another time there is a shortage. There should be one Department dealing with labour, and one officer responsible to Government and this Council. I understood in Finance Committee that the matter was being gone into, but I make these remarks here in order that they may be put on record.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is the intention to bring it into one, and a scheme is being drawn up now.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I would like to support what the hon. Member has said. Ever since I have been in political life I have advocated the necessity for a Labour Registration Bureau. Anybody who comes into contact with the people of this Colony, as I do as a lawyer, knows that it is impossible to know whether there is unemployment in this Colony. One can only say that there are several unemployed people seeking employment, but there is nowhere to send them. I do hope that this Bureau will be set up and will be functioning as soon as possible.

Mr. SEAFORD: I quite agree with what the hon. Member has said. It is not an easy matter to have registration of labour in this Colony. A man may be working as a gardener one week and next week he may be working somewhere else as a carpenter. I believe

that question has been gone into, and I am sorry the Director of Public Works is not here to tell us of the difficulty experienced by his Department in that respect. In registering labourers it will be necessary to put them through some examination or test.

Mr. WIGHT: A man would be registered as a carpenter, a gardener, or something else. It is all very well to make those remarks, but I was informed only recently that there was no labour to carry out certain works on the East Coast on which this Colony is spending a considerable sum of money. I refer to the Mahaicony scheme. I am told it is very difficult at certain times to get labour, and at other times I am told that all the labour required can be got. Unless there is a Registration Bureau it is impossible to tell what labour is available.

Mr. LEE: If a man desires to work and wants to be registered he will go to the Bureau as long as he knows that it is under Government control, even if he has to pay a small fee for registration and an identification card. It is absolutely necessary that there should be an examination by which those youngsters who have served a number of years of skilled apprenticeship can obtain certificates. I agree that at present there is no registration of labourers and no examination to show whether a man is skilled or unskilled.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is not just so easy, and it needs more elaborate machinery than exists at the moment. Proposals to that end will be put up soon. It will, of course, be more elaborate and more expensive than this for which only \$450 is provided. If Government tries to do it well and takes the responsibility it will mean a lot of certifying, which is not quite so easy. It will mean examination and the issue of certificates.

Mr. LEE: It will only involve the cost of the examination. Is that too much for Government to do? A young

man may register himself, and the only expenditure that would entail would be the keeping of records at the central office in Georgetown.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not think it would be so simple as that.

Mr. ELEAZAR: It is up to the hon. Member who has just taken his seat, and others like him, to encourage those people to register. When you have an unskilled labourer today as a gold-digger, tomorrow as an agricultural labourer and the next day as a balata bleeder, what is the use of his having a card. He will have to go every day for a card to show what work he wants to do. The unskilled labourer, as we know him in this Colony, does whatever his hands find to do. If the hon. Member and others like himself think it is of advantage let them tell the men what to do. But it seems to me a herculean task. To-day he is a shovelman at Mahaicony, next week a field labourer on the estates, when the season offers he is a balata bleeder and at another time he is a gold-digger. What are you going to do in such a case?

Mr. JACOB: I am very disappointed to hear the remarks of the last speakers, especially the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford). Is it the intention of this Council to continue to have this confused and irregular manner of doing business in this Colony? If it is, I am not in favour of it. As one interested in the progress and advancement of this Colony, I think it should be known how many agricultural labourers, how many skilled artisans, how many balata bleeders are there. We have a Labour Department which is capable of giving us that information. Under present conditions, there is a shortage of labour this month and a surplus the next month. I urge that some regular and systematic scheme be adopted from now on. Everything is difficult, and that is the only way to overcome difficulties. When I look at the personnel of the various Boards and Committees I see all kinds of peo

ple there passing as experts on subjects which they know nothing about. It is very good to indict the worker that to-day he is a carpenter, and at another time a gardener, but if he cannot get work as a carpenter why should he not go and work as a gardener? He can be registered as both. It is time that we find work for every man in whatever capacity he can serve.

Mr. SEAFORD: It is not often the hon. Member is not disappointed. Once again he misunderstands things completely. It is a little fallacy of his, I am not against it. No one is against it. I do not think the hon. Member knows what he is talking about. He does not understand the difficulty in it. He has never gone into it and so knows nothing about the system. If he did he would not—to use an expression commonly heard—stand here and talk a lot of hot air.

Sub-head agreed to.

Item 24—WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION
ORDINANCE—\$1,200.

Mr. JACOB: I am going to speak a little bit of "hot air", on this item. Here you have a Workmen's Compensation Ordinance and I take this opportunity to refer to this matter. If a workman engaged in a factory of any kind is injured he is entitled to compensation, but if he is injured while working outside a factory even though he has to feed machinery from outside he is not entitled to any compensation if injured. That is another piece of technique I cannot understand. This is supposed to be an agricultural country and it has very few factories. There are hundreds of people working outside of factories who are liable to be injured but they are not entitled to compensation under the Ordinance if they are injured. I think that where a workman is injured in the course of his employment, whether in or out of a factory, he should be entitled to compensation, provided it is not a case of his own negligence or drunkenness. I know I will be told the same argument

that was expressed in regard to Sub-head 23—Labour Registration Bureau—"It is a very difficult thing. How can we do it?" I again repeat that all these things are difficult and it is important in this country that we endeavour to overcome them. The Workmen's Compensation Ordinance should be amended to embrace all trades and industries whether the injured is working in or out of a factory.

Mr. LEE: In respect of the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance I would urge for the consideration of Government that the days an injured workman should remain in hospital or otherwise be reduced from 11 to 3 and that any charges for carriage of the injured workman to the hospital or any other place for first aid should be met by the employer, and also the cost of any medical certificate that has to be got by the injured workman. I am not saying that certain employers are not doing that now. They are doing that but out of sympathy for the workman. I do appeal to Government to make it a legal obligation.

Mr. LUCKHOO: I think this point about the definition of "Workmen's Compensation" does not come under the item we are now considering. That is a matter of legislation. A certain definition has been given to "workman" and passed by this Council, and if the hon. Member wants to extend it to any other class then the legislation should be before the Council for that to be considered. I do not see, however, how that affects the Estimates. This item is only to provide for compensation to persons within the sections of the Ordinance. Apart from that, the question of labour is a very difficult one. It has been fully debated in this Council as to what should be included in the term "workman". I do not see that the matter has anything to do with the Estimates.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The question raised by the hon. Member for Essequibo River as regards an in-

creased subsidy to the Leguan Service was under consideration by the Transport Board at its last meeting in November. Certain further information was required as regards the operative cost. It is due to come up before the Board at its next meeting.

Item 26—LOSS OF STORES AT SEA
THROUGH ENEMY ACTION—\$1,000.

Mr. De AGUIAR: Under this item I would like to raise a matter which I have raised before, and, perhaps, it would be of interest. This is an item for \$1,000 as a token vote. I see that the 1941 experience was pretty bad, the amount involved being \$21,530. I do not know what it will be in 1942, but I raise the matter to ask whether Government has considered the question of covering shipments by insurance.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Treasurer will answer that.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): I take this opportunity to move two recommendations of the Finance Committee. In respect of sub-head 3—Public Printing regulated by Contract—\$42,600 the amount to be increased by \$7,200 and sub-head 8—Hindi Examinations—\$70 to be increased by \$30.

Amendments put, and agreed to.

Mr. McDAVID: One item has been mentioned by the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob)—The Tourist Bureau. I can say that that matter is under immediate consideration now. It is a question of reducing this vote. I understand that the Secretary who is employed abroad has voluntarily relinquished the sum of money paid to him as salary and certain other expenses. Government is taking immediate steps to go into the question of reducing the amount spent under this sub-head. I suggest that in the meantime it be left at this figure.

With regard to the question of insurance I had intended to make a statement on it but the hon. Member for

Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) has anticipated me and raised it himself. I do not know whether the Council appreciates what I said on the last occasion that this matter came up. I think it was raised by the late Hon. Mr. Mackey, and I said then that as an Imperial Treasury-controlled Colony this Colony had to fall into line with the policy laid down for such Colonies and that is, that Government should carry its own insurance risks. Very early in the War we were reminded of that by the Colonial Office and informed quite definitely that we should carry our own war insurance and carry out that policy. We had started locally to take out War Risk Insurance but we had to carry out that policy laid down not only in respect of ordinary marine risks but also war risk insurance. From April, 1940, to the present time we have taken out no war risk insurance at all. As a matter of principle it does seem the right policy having regard to the volume of goods to be insured against risk. In the case of Government where the volume is very large it may very well pay to carry its own risk.

On the last occasion that I spoke on the subject I undertook to go into the question in detail and ascertain what the position is. I have done so and found that from April, 1940, to September, 1942, we imported into the Colony on Government account, goods to the value of just under \$1,000,000. The insurance premium for war risk which would have been paid at the prevailing rate is just over £20,000 (\$96,000). Our losses actually incurred up to to-day, as far as I know, are \$27,932. That does not include a certain amount of loss arising from a certain vessel which, hon. Members are aware, has recently been lost. I do not anticipate from my calculation that the loss on that vessel will be more than another \$20,000. As I see it we should have paid war insurance premium amounting to \$96,000 and our losses up-to-date could not be more than \$48,000. So we are still in credit. On the other hand I am

not relying too much on those figures. I think the theory is quite sound that where you have a large volume of goods for insurance there is no reason why Government or any large commercial firm should not carry its own insurance. The Insurance Companies go into the business to make profit out of it, and why should not Government? I do not see why we should take our insurance outside of Government.

I would like to point out that as regards the transactions of the Commodity Control Board they are ordinary commercial transactions and all those goods imported are being insured against war risk except those obtained under "Lease-Lend". Goods imported not on Government account are being treated as commercial transactions and are being insured against war risks. Government is still carrying on the policy of not insuring goods imported for itself but carrying its own risk.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: It does not include goods imported, for instance, by the Public Works Department?

Mr. McDAVID: Yes.

Mr. De AGUIAR: As the one who raised the question I must accept the figures quoted by the hon. Colonial Treasurer. I do not propose to challenge them, but I have merely risen to get some more information. The loss by a particular vessel was not more than \$20,000 and he referred to a previous figure of \$27,000 in order to arrive at the figure, \$48,000. I have only risen to ask whether those figures have been compiled within the period of the imports he previously referred to. He gave the period April, 1940 to September, 1942, but I see that in 1941 alone our experience was \$21,000 in respect of that year and I assume that the other \$20,000 referred to was in respect of 1942. I am wondering whether it was through an oversight he overlooked the figures for 1940. I merely ask for further information. I would say this—

I have said it before and it is worth repeating: Several firms prior to the outbreak of hostilities carried their own insurance but they have found it to their advantage to cover their shipments during the present period. I make that statement because I was very interested to hear the hon. Colonial Treasurer say if the Insurance Company can make a profit why not Government. The commercial firms, I think, know what they are doing and I repeat that they have decided in their interest not to carry their own insurance at this particular time because the risk is very great. I have referred to it because I would like to see Government on the right side in its finances.

Mr. JACOB: Comparisons are very odious. I do not pretend to know much about this matter at all. In fact I know very little about it, but it will be interesting to find out what amount was paid for insurance in 1940, and the amount of goods received each year. We are told that we imported \$1,000,000 worth of goods and that the insurance premium was roughly 10 per cent. I did not know that war insurance was 10 per cent. from 1940 to now. I would like to be enlightened on that point. The whole argument hinges on this, and I had raised it at some Select Committee meeting. When it was realized that the enemy was at our door there was then the necessity to insure, but prior to that, I agree, it was not absolutely necessary and, therefore, if the Insurance Companies are making a profit then Government should. It is a considered policy, as stated by the hon. Colonial Treasurer, that each Colony should carry its own insurance and ultimately the Imperial Government would pay all the losses. We have been looking at the Imperial Government too long, definitely too long, and I was glad when the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Austin, said during the debate on the Old Age Pension motion that we have got to look at it from a business point of view. That is how I am looking at this ques-

tion. Every businessman carries his own insurance when it suits him, but when he knows the risk is very much against him he decides otherwise. I am, however, sorry to say the policy here is that so long as it is recorded in the books that a certain instruction has been received it cannot be changed. That is how Government governs. That is why the Colony's finances, except for the War, have been in such a state. There is too much of this red tape business. I do not know anything about the matter. I am talking "hot air" all the time.

Mr. SEAFORD: I may remind the hon. Member that there are different insurances in this Colony. To which does he refer?

Mr. JACOB: I would like the hon. Colonial Treasurer to tell this Council if the bulk purchases will not be insured. If Government likes that policy to be carried on, then we know where we are. We will know whether we have the best business acumen in the Government. We have had this drag on the community for nearly a century and it is time that we shake it off, if possible, ruthlessly.

Mr. McDAVID: I do not know what the hon. Member has been talking about these five minutes. It is just because Government considers the matter along business lines and as a business proposition that it carries its own insurance. I had said before that there is no reason why Government or any large business firm should not definitely carry their own risk and insurance, and I said further that it is perfectly sound for a Government not to insure. It is because we are business people that we follow the policy.

Mr. SEAFORD: The hon. Member said that the hon. Colonial Treasurer had said our losses will be met by the Imperial Government. Is that correct?

Mr. McDAVID: I was not aware whether it was a query or a statement. This is a token vote on the Estimates. We meet actual losses when they occur from this Colony's funds.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I do not think the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) was talking in the air. There was sound logic in what he stated. What I do not like is the question of the 10 per cent. basis used by the hon. Colonial Treasurer. It must be wrong. If you examine it you would find that the hon. Member was right. It is 15 per cent. now but it was $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. previously, and so there is no doubt about it that we have lost by not insuring. I do not think it is fair—

Mr. McDAVID: I rise to a point of correction! If you take 10 per cent. as the premium charges it will be much higher than what is shown as the actual war risk insurance premium. As far as possible we have ascertained from month to month the appropriate rates and applied these to the importations of those periods; it varied from 15 to $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. It happens that the average figure is very nearly 10 per cent. The calculation was made exactly in the same manner as the hon. Member indicated.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I challenge the hon. Colonial Treasurer's calculation. 15 per cent. was only for a short period, but it has been as low as $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. \$20,000 could not be anything like the premiums paid over that period of $2\frac{1}{2}$ years. I know what I am speaking about. I happen to be associated with an Insurance Company which takes that risk, and I cross swords with him as regards our being much too poor to take that risk. The Colonial Office Officials are not experts on insurance. The Insurance Companies had terrific figures to go upon. They know what the percentage will be, but we as laymen have got to calculate on some other period than a war period. I say it is unsafe and bad business

and a rotten policy not to insure. If the big companies can stand it, it is because their capital is enormous. We here cannot stand a loss of \$20,000 on any one shipment. Luckily it has moved in the right direction, but this bulk purchases scheme, I particularly stated before, I would like to know is being covered by insurance.

Mr. McDAVID: I was very glad the hon. Member mentioned the local Insurance Companies. I was careful to ascertain the cheapest rate which we could have obtained and wrote a letter asking for details of insurance rates from British Guiana to England and *vice versa* from the outbreak of the War to the day of calculation and we were given the figures which would have been quoted by his own Company.

Item 27—COST OF LIVING SURVEY IN GEORGETOWN AND ITS SUBURBS, \$1,700.

Mr. JACOB: The people in Georgetown get the best of everything that is going. It is all very well to find out how the people are getting on in Georgetown, but it has its advantages and disadvantages. I think the country districts have greater disadvantages than Georgetown. I would certainly like to know the result of a cost of living survey for the whole of the various parts of the Colony, particularly my constituency and other remote parts. I want to be satisfied that farming does pay. At the moment it does pay. A war period is beneficial to some people but hits others very hard. I have been looking around Essequibo and certain parts of Berbice and have found that a large number of people cannot exist on what they earn, as they get very little opportunity to earn anything. They cannot sell what they produce because of lack of transportation facilities. I would like to see the cost of living survey made over a period of ten years—what the people started with what they have to-day—to see how much they have pro-

gressed in farming in my constituency. You may make a cost of living survey for a few weeks or months, but you must make it for a period of years too. If we are going to do anything of material social benefit to the people, we have to do it for all parts of the Colony and so obtain a fair average. The survey should be made in other parts of the Colony as well.

Head passed as amended.

MISCELLANEOUS—(a) SUBVENTIONS, &c., MUNICIPAL.

Mr. McDAVID: I move the following amendments recommended in the report of the Finance Committee relating to items 1 and 3 and adding \$1,921 to the Estimates.

Items 1 to 9 passed as amended.

Item 10—Moiety of cost of maintenance of Roads and Streets (Mayor & Town Council of New Amsterdam) \$6,000.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I did not get an opportunity to be present at the meetings of the Select Committee of this august body. I understand it is no use bringing up here what was not discussed there, but I wish to draw attention to this item. I see the hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Woolford) is begging me to let him refer to it, and I prefer to follow him as he seldom says anything about it.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I think Government has already been made aware of the facts in regard to this particular vote, and I have taken the trouble to obtain some more information on it. I am sorry the hon. Colonial Treasurer is not here, but I am glad to direct attention to the wording of the vote itself. It reads: "Moiety of cost of maintenance of Roads and Streets". The word "Bridges" is omitted. I do not know whether that is intentional or accidental, but there has been a definite

understanding between the Government and the Municipality of New Amsterdam that at least there will be a contribution or subvention of one-half of the total expenditure under this particular Head. I have seen the correspondence and the word "Bridges" was definitely included in that vote. In the appeal which I am about to make—that this amount be increased by the sum of \$1,500—I am going to ask hon. Members to bear with me if I give the Council the information, which was supplied to me, on the expenditure on roads alone. I have it from 1927. In that year the total Road expenditure was \$8,600. I will skip the intervening years to 1937 because that was the year in which the whole question was reviewed. In that year the total cost to the Municipality was \$11,385. When the Municipality found that it had spent \$11,385, it applied to Government for its one-half contribution under the agreement. In other words one-half of that year's expenditure amounted to \$5,692. But Government would not contribute more than \$5,500 and it was not until the following year, I have the correspondence, that Government consented to pay the Municipality the \$192.50 in excess of its usual contribution. It was then pointed out, however, that Government would in future limit its contribution per year, from the end of 1938.

There was a suggestion that there should be a conference between Government and the Municipality, as I think there was a supposed conference between the Georgetown Municipality and Government which had relation to the whole question of the licences which were being collected by Government and which the Municipalities received no portion of, although they had both asked that they should be allowed to share in it. It will surprise hon. Members to know that the estimated collection from licences in the township area of New Amsterdam amounts to \$13,000, and the excise collection on gasolene to \$20,000, making

a total of \$33,000. It is perfectly clear that the source from which that revenue is collected does make some impression, and a very heavy impression, on the maintenance cost of the roads of New Amsterdam. There can be no denial of that, and it must be added that such increased cost of maintenance and general expenditure is the result of the very heavy vehicular traffic that finds its way into the town from the Corentyne Districts. I do not altogether subscribe to the view that because there is such traffic the New Amsterdam Corporation should bear the cost because, after all, the citizens do derive indirect benefit from the immediate transportation contact with the Corentyne and the people on the Corentyne do pay and contribute indirectly towards the general taxation of New Amsterdam. It was an arbitrary act on the part of Government to fix a maximum contribution of \$6,000. In other words, assuming that the agreement was verbal the Municipality was entitled to look forward to it. In these wretched and critical years it seems that the Municipality has made out a good case. In 1938 the expenditure was \$14,719 and in 1939 it was \$16,000. The figures for 1940, 1941 and 1942 have not been supplied to me, but I have been told that they have exceeded the figures for 1939. In these circumstances it is perfectly clear that to contribute merely \$6,000 is less than one-half the total expenditure for each year since the end of 1938.

I would ask that Government either fix an increased subvention or revert back to the old method of dividing the total cost of maintenance. It is a fact, I think, that the estimated cost based on the increased cost of transportation, fuel, tyres, increased labour cost, would mean that this Municipality should ask for more than an increase of \$1,500 on the total estimates: I believe it is true, or almost true, that there is very considerable improvement in the character of the road construction attempted by

the Corporation. I understand that for the last two years there has been some indication that the roads are being made more permanently. Burnt earth materials are not being used, only granite, and we know that the cost of that has gone up. It would pay Government to assist in the establishment of those roads during these years. Now that the Corporation has embarked on this road improvement scheme it does seem that more money will be required than is suggested by the Estimates. I know that the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) is anxious to make his contribution to the debate and, perhaps, he may be able to supply the latest figures. I believe that on Your Excellency's visit to New Amsterdam the position of the Corporation in regard to this matter was brought to your notice. I do not think that any hon. Member would object to the principle of increasing the grant, as during the last two or three years the cost of road construction has gone up. I do make the recommendation that this amount be increased by the sum of \$1,500. Perhaps the hon. Colonial Treasurer may explain what has occurred that the word "Bridges" has been omitted from the vote and calculation. The Corporation maintains roads and bridges and, as far as New Amsterdam is concerned, I would like to know what is the distinction between "roads" and "streets". In New Amsterdam they do not have roads like Brickdam or what are known as roads. If the contribution is to embrace "bridges" then the cost to the Corporation becomes all the more unbearable.

Mr. LUCKHOO: I would like to support the earnest appeal made by the hon. Member for New Amsterdam for an increase under this sub-head. I think his representation should receive the best attention from Government. I have been connected with that Municipality for over thirty years but I am not a Member at the present time. I know that there existed some sort of arrangement between Government and

the Municipality whereby Government would pay the Municipality one-half of the total expenditure on the roads. If the Municipality spent \$10,000 Government would pay \$5,000. We never exceeded \$10,000 until 1937-38 when there was a rise in the cost of maintenance of the roads. Government should give the Municipality credit for not having taken full advantage of that agreement before, because the Municipality might have made the expenditure \$50,000 in one year and called on Government for its contribution of \$25,000. The Municipality kept the expenditure within reasonable bounds until the cost of maintenance went up due to increased wages, high cost of materials, fuel, transportation, etc. This caused the Municipality to make representation to Government in the matter as Government had fixed \$5,000 as its contribution. The Municipality supplied Government with the figures and Government was generous to give the excess. Since that year, 1938, the War broke out and the cost of materials has gone up very much indeed and also the cost of labour, which together with the increased traffic of the buses made it impossible for the Municipality to carry on maintaining the streets in a reasonable state of repair with the usual amount. In view of the fact that it is the desire of the Municipality to improve its road construction this small sum of \$1,500 that is being asked for as an increase is not one that this Government cannot give. The Municipality is not asking Government for an increase in any other respect.

On Your Excellency's visit to Berbice on the last occasion this matter was brought to your notice, and if Your Excellency felt then that a case had been made out for sympathetic treatment on the part of Government you would not deny the Municipality this increased vote, having due regard to the fact that the Municipality did not take advantage of the agreement that Government should contribute one-half of the actual expenditure. That year

when the Municipality spent \$11,000 there was abnormal rainfall and it was discovered that the Municipality had acted fairly and straightforward in that matter. In view of the extra demands the Municipality is called upon to face, I think that in justice to them, Government's contribution should be increased. It is an appeal based on justice, and I commend it to the earnest consideration of Government.

THE CHAIRMAN: I allowed this motion to be put forward in order to make provision in the Estimates. As both hon. Members have said, it is brought to my notice every time I go to New Amsterdam. I cannot get away from the argument that as the result of the increased cost of materials and wages it costs more per mile to maintain the roads than it used to before, and therefore, I have thought it proper to allow the motion to come forward to this Council. I will ask the hon. Colonial Treasurer later what he thinks about it.

Mr. ELIAZAR: When Your Excellency knows exactly what transpired you will not hesitate to support this increase. I have been a Member of the New Amsterdam Town Council for a considerable time and I know that it was impossible to keep the roads in a state of decency when this half-and-half arrangement was going on. That went on until the roads got into a condition that could not be worse and the Town Council was forced to spend a little more than the usual \$10,000. When we sent to Government for the moiety the reply we got was "Very well, the next time we are going to give \$6,000 and no more." We had no alternative than to receive this \$6,000 every year. But that was in normal times. Everything has gone up in cost since then, and Government has some fortresses using the roads which have not been made to carry such heavy traffic. I beg to support the appeal made by the Hon. Members very heartily. We cannot spend more on the roads than we are

doing from Municipal funds. I ask Your Excellency to grant the increased amount as indicated. I leave the matter in your hands.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I am glad to see the question has received the support of the hon. Members for Eastern Berbice (Mr. Luckhoo), and New Amsterdam (Mr. Woolford), both of whom are on the Executive Council. I hope that when a similar request is made for Georgetown it will receive their support before the Executive Council.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF LETHAL CHAMBER.

There is one item I would like to refer to and that is item 6—"Cost of operating and maintaining Lethal Chamber, \$100." Unfortunately, the point did not strike me in Finance Committee. The demands on that Chamber will be increased throughout next year especially when it comes to the necessary rounding up of defaulters for licences. I would ask that some consideration be given the matter and, perhaps, the amount be increased from \$100 to \$200 as that Chamber will be considerably used for the destruction of canines from now on.

Mr. McDAVID: I am somewhat in a difficulty as regards this matter of the New Amsterdam Town Council subvention, as the hon. Members who spoke on it were most emphatic. The matter was under consideration by Government as late as two weeks ago. The hon. Member on my left (Mr. Luckhoo) did give a correct version of the matter. It is quite true that the old arrangement was that Government pay one-half of whatever was the Municipal expenditure. But as the hon. Member said, the New Amsterdam Town Council might take it into its head to spend \$50,000 and Government thought it wise to put a limit of \$12,000 and laid it down that Government will not pay more than \$6,000. Very shortly after that the New Am-

sterdam Town Council approached Government on the same lines that there was an increase in the cost and asked for help. As the result of that Government agreed to the Director of Public Works visiting New Amsterdam and reporting on the condition of the streets. Arising out of that report Government informed the Town Council that while it was unwilling to increase the annual contribution for the maintenance of the roads it would provide a loan of \$17,500 for the reconstruction of the main roads.

Several mysterious things happened after that. The New Amsterdam Town Council did not take up the loan and the money was not spent. As far as I know they made no attempt to proceed with the reconstruction programme. I recollect there was correspondence in which they asked Government's permission to divert this loan to some other purpose. Had this loan, which was provided in 1942 for general reconstruction, been used the cost of maintenance would probably have been decreasing by now. Government intended that such cost should be decreased as the result of the general reconstruction out of this loan to the Municipality of New Amsterdam. Government felt very sympathetic in the matter and has written the Town Council to ask that before going any further with the matter it be informed as to what they propose to do with the loan, and until some definite conclusion is reached in that particular matter I do not see how it is possible for Government to increase this annual grant. The matter is still under consideration. If more money is required for the execution of more canines I am sure Government will be quite willing to give it.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Government has told us that if we borrow money, which we have to repay, and improve the roads that would give Government an opportunity to reduce its subvention,

Mr. McDAVID: Government and the New Amsterdam Town Council arrived at an agreement on the subject, and as far as I know the Town Council accepted the recommendation of the Director of Public Works. The loan was to be repaid in 15 years at 3 per cent. This was a matter which was entirely agreed upon, and I do not know why no action has been taken.

THE CHAIRMAN: The money has lapsed.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Some members of the New Amsterdam Town Council discovered that it was the intention of Government to make the Council pay the full amount of the cost of repairing their roads by taking a loan, and then withdraw the subvention. Although I was not present when the matter was discussed I could not believe that that was Government's intention. We discovered that that small amount could only do half a mile of road, and it seems as if that is the principal reason why the loan was not taken up. If that was Government's view I cannot go behind it, but I know what is the Council's view.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: With reference to what the hon. Member has said, I think the question raised by the New Amsterdam Town Council after they accepted the proposal was whether they might be allowed to charge the interest on the loan under this head, and I think the reply was "No." It was pointed out that they would spend less on the maintenance of the roads than the interest would amount to. After that Government heard no more about the loan.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I must ask for a reconsideration of the view of Government in regard to this matter. There can be no doubt about it that there was an existing arrangement between Government and the Municipality of New Amsterdam. May I be allowed to read a portion of a letter addressed by the Colonial Secretary in October, 1938? It says;

"In terms of the existing arrangement between the Council and the Government provision for the payment of \$7,000 in 1939 has been included in the Draft Estimates shortly to be considered by the Legislative Council."

This arrangement is referred to in a letter from the Colonial Secretary to the Council in October, 1938, and it must not be allowed that the Government should show so bad an example by putting a period to that arrangement by merely telling the Municipality that it must not spend more than \$12,000. The Municipality was at fault. Their position should have been that they should spend exactly what they thought necessary to spend. They should never have allowed Government to say "You must not spend any more," and Government should have said to them "You may spend what you like but our contribution, instead of being one-half, is going to be limited to \$6,000 or \$7,000 as the case may be, and we propose to put an end to that arrangement."

What Government did was to dictate to the Municipality the amount they should spend, and say that the Government would only contribute \$6,000. If the Council chose to accept that position that was their fault, and they must allow me to say that it does appear to me from private information that there is a considerable amount of hesitancy on the part of individual members of the Council—whether they were influenced by the ratepayers or not I do not know—in the spending of the \$17,500. But this I may say publicly: that Members of the Executive Council know that I did suggest that before this permanent reconstruction was undertaken the New Amsterdam Municipality should be given the services of the Georgetown Town Council's City Engineer, Mr. Rattray, and my recollection is that the work was to be done under his supervision. I have a shrewd suspicion that that is why the work has not yet been undertaken. I do ask that the loan should not be regarded as having lapsed. I know that

Mr. Rattray went to New Amsterdam, and I think Members of the Executive Council will recollect that that was one of the stipulations imposed by Sir Geoffry Northcote. I do not think they had the City Engineer, but the Georgetown Town Council agreed to lend Mr. Rattray to them for such supervision. That explains in part why this work has not yet commenced.

I agree with the Treasurer that if this reconstruction work was started and it became general, it should have some effect on the cost of maintenance in future, but in the interval, the work not having been commenced, is the Municipality to be left in a state of flux because some of the members do not know what ought to be done? It is perfectly clear that if \$7,000 was necessary for 1938, what is being asked for must be needed for 1942. I do not quite appreciate why this application for assistance should be deferred because the \$17,500 has not been expended on the roads, because that only makes the case for the Council stronger. It would have been a good case for a reduction of the \$6,000 asked for if that work had been put into operation, but to use that as an argument is illogical. In fact it is good reason being urged in support of the Council.

I ask Members to realize that there has been a serious fire in New Amsterdam, and I see no prospect of those properties being reinstated. To that extent the revenue of the Council will be depleted, and I do ask Government to re-consider the matter and allow this vote to be increased. I suggest that if that were done and the re-vote of \$17,500 granted, the Council would be able to start the new work early next year, in which case Government may reduce the subvention. But to make no provision whatever is only going to hinder the Council and cause a certain amount of disappointment. I think the case for the Council has been very well put forward. In an

interview I had with Mr. Rattray he assured me that the work was being well supervised, and with his assistance I think there should be no difficulty in getting good results. There is no attempt at anything like road construction in New Amsterdam, and the whole expenditure on repair work is lost from year to year. We cannot allow the principal town in Berbice to remain in that position. Your Excellency seems to like the place and I hope you will direct that the vote be increased.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am not clear where the hon. Member got his limit of \$12,000 from. He read from a letter but I do not think it was stated in that letter that Government had fixed any limit to expenditure on the roads of New Amsterdam. I would like to get that clear, because I have a very distinct recollection that when the matter was discussed in Executive Council it was decided that Government should not limit their expenditure but could limit Government's contribution, and that is borne out in the footnote to the Estimates for 1941. Under "Actual Expenditure" the figure of Government's contribution is given at \$7,000, but in the marginal note the following is the explanation:

"Based on one-half of the expenditure incurred on the maintenance of township roads subject to maximum annual contribution by Government of \$6,000 as from 1940."

I think I am right in saying that while Government has fixed its contribution it has fixed no limit to the Council's expenditure.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will allow it to be increased to \$7,500. That is, of course, Government's maximum contribution.

Item as amended agreed to.

THE CHAIRMAN: I should like to adjourn at half-past three because I

am receiving Members of the Council at half-past four at Government House, but if Members prefer to continue the Colonial Secretary will take the chair.

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

Item 22—Grant to Ex-Service Men's Association, \$1,200.

Mr. SEAFORD: I would like to know if there are any conditions attached to this grant to the Ex-Service Men's Association. There was a great deal of comment and criticism during the recent Poppy Day collection, and I think it was inferred that the money collected here goes far afield, and that this grant by Government should go to the returned soldiers who are suffering, and not towards buildings and things of that kind.

Mr. McDAVID: As far as I recollect Government proposed to appoint a Committee to go into the matter.

THE CHAIRMAN: No, I said that the distribution of the money would be under my auspices, and that I should appoint a Committee for that purpose. I refer to the fact that 50 per cent. of the money collected in this Colony will be returned by the Legion. That does not affect this vote at all.

Mr. McDAVID: There is no condition attached to this particular grant.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I would like to ask whether this grant should not be increased in view of the necessity for relief of men returning from this war.

Mr. SEAFORD: I understood when this grant was voted it was given definitely for the relief of returned soldiers. Whether Government feels now that it should be used towards the building of a club-house is a different matter. I would like to get an expression of Government's views on the subject and those of Members of the Council. My feeling is that the entire amount

should be used for the relief of returned soldiers who are in distress. If there is any more money to be given for a club that is another matter, but I do not think Members understood when this sum was granted that it would go towards the building of a club-house. I think it was looked upon as some relief to those men, and I think some of them are still suffering. I think this money should be ear-marked for those who have done their bit and are now destitute.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is a condition which this Council is quite entitled to attach — that it is entirely intended for the relief of the destitute, and not for building or administration expenses.

Mr. De AGUIAR: I think a condition which could rightly be attached would be an examination of the accounts of the Association so as to see how the money is expended. I think that was in the mind of the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford).

THE CHAIRMAN: They submit their accounts in general at least and it has been seen that some of the Poppy Day Fund has been used for the building of a club-house. There is some difficulty about that because nine or ten years ago some money was contributed by the British Government to a special fund which was intended for that purpose but was never used. So that there is a kind of reason for their coming back and using some of the Poppy Day money for that purpose, but that has passed now and they are entitled to use the Poppy Day money in that way. The question is should we attach any condition to this grant?

Mr. LEE: I think the public would be satisfied if the condition is attached that this grant should only be used for distribution to returned soldiers and their dependents, and not applied to any club or administration.

THE CHAIRMAN: We do not object to their making a club-house if they can do it in some other way. For instance, they can issue a special appeal for funds for that purpose. Is it the general feeling of the Council that we attach that condition to this grant?

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I am suggesting that the grant should be increased because men will be coming back from this war.

THE CHAIRMAN: This year?

Mr. WIGHT: I can imagine our having one or two of them coming back. There are some people who feel that the war will last ten years but I am optimistic enough to think that it will end long before that.

THE CHAIRMAN: They will come back with provision made for them for a few months.

Mr. WOOD (Conservator of Forests): I think we have to distinguish between men who are invalided out of the service, which is the only way they can come back now, and men who are discharged from the Army after the war perfectly fit and healthy but may become destitute afterwards. The only cases we have had so far of men returning are men who, after they had reached the United Kingdom, have been returned through failure of health. I do not think the question of making grants to them through the Ex-Service Men's Association will arise until after the war, because the provision they are receiving now is definitely ample.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is my feeling. It would be premature to increase the grant at the moment, but eventually it will have to be increased.

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

Item 23—Annual Grant to Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture — \$3,600.

Mr. SEAFORD: I am going to move the reduction of this item by one dollar because I do not intend that it should be struck out altogether now. I feel that this Colony is getting no advantage from this vote or from the College in Trinidad. We have been subscribing to the College for a considerable number of years, but I do not know what return we get. Recently we hoped to get some help in the matter of cane-farming and we approached Government in the matter. The suggestion was put up by Government that we should ask the Agricultural Economist attached to the College to come here and go into the whole question of economics. He is a man of wide experience who has done the same thing for other Colonies in the Caribbean and made recommendations to those Governments. From our point of view, whatever recommendations he made we proposed to stand by, but apparently he is not available to us. For some reason the Principal of the College does not like his officers to leave the island. If we are not to get any benefit from the College I do not see any reason why we should continue to subscribe to it. I had intended to move that the grant be struck out but I know that the estimates of the College have been framed for next year on the strength of it. I think, however, that Government should intimate to the authorities of the College that if we are not to get any advantage we will not vote any further contribution.

There is a certain amount of training of students from this Colony, but the Colony as a whole gets no value at all for its contribution to the College. There may be one or two students who have come back to the Colony after receiving training at the College, but the majority of them do not come back here. We could get training there if we were prepared to pay for it. I would much prefer to pay a fixed sum for each student we send. I feel rather strongly on the question of the assistance given by this College, because cer-

tain Colonies are getting benefit from it while we are not. I am asking Government to consider the matter and point out to the authorities that unless they can see their way to assist us we do not propose to continue this contribution. The experiments they carry out at the College are of no value to us at all because soil conditions in Trinidad are entirely different, and from our point of view they are of no value to the sugar industry or the cane-farmers of this Colony.

THE CHAIRMAN: I have heard that opinion expressed in various quarters and I would like to have the feeling of the Council on the subject.

Mr. JACOB: I do not pretend to know much about this matter, but I do recollect that an officer who is engaged now with the sugar producers went to Trinidad and got training at the College, and I think he is considered a very valuable officer at the Sugar Experiment Station. I think there are others, and while we may not be getting practical benefits at the moment from the College I do not think it would be a wise thing to delete the item from the estimate. I think the tendency now is to have West Indian Colleges, and I should not like to put the hands of the clock back; I would like to see them go forward. Some benefit is accruing to this Colony.

I recollect that a student of a certain pigmentation went to the College from this Colony but when he came back he could not get a job anywhere and he had to go to London to take up studies in law. I think if the question of colour is removed from students going to the College there would be greater benefit to this Colony. I have in mind a particular student, and I am sure of my facts. He could not get any employment here after having been trained in Trinidad, and if there is any fault I do not think it is due to the College but to conditions here amongst a certain class of people. I am opposed to the suggestion that the item be deleted.

Mr. De AGUIAR: I do not share the views of the last two speakers. I am much wider in my views, and I think the time has come when we should carefully consider the contributions we are making under this head. I do not quite follow the logic. It seems to me that when we make grants we should see what we are getting from them. If the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford) is sure of his facts, and I have reason to believe he is, I think the matter should be carefully examined. I agree with him that perhaps it would be unwise at this stage to move the deletion of the item as it may be necessary to give notice. Those are points which can only be ascertained accurately if the various contributions were examined in the light of the criticisms made to-day.

I think we might also examine the position in regard to item 24—Recruitment and Training of Officers for Colonial Agricultural Departments, \$1,872. I do not know what advantages we get from that contribution. There are several other items of that kind. My view is that we should re-examine those grants regularly. Some of them were given for specific periods.

THE CHAIRMAN: May I just take the general feeling as regards item 23? The proposal is that Government should make certain representations to the College. Is that the general feeling of Members? If so it will guide Government's action.

Mr. LEE: I would like to find out from Government how many students have been sent from this Colony, how many are employed by Government, and where are the others? If by contributing \$3,600 a year we are sending two students every year to the College I think that is some benefit to the Colony. After all this is an agricultural country, and if the Colony develops agriculturally, young men who have been trained at the College will be required here.

THE CHAIRMAN: Apart from the question of students I am aware that it is very difficult to get certain investigations carried out by the College, and it is a great deal more difficult now than it used to be. We have a problem here touching cane-farming, but for some reason or other it is impossible to get an officer from the College to come here to investigate it, and that is one of the principal reasons why the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford) has raised the point. I am quite prepared to address the Secretary of State and the Principal of the College on the lines that the authorities of the College should be more helpful in sending an officer down to investigate our problems. We are probably getting some advantage from the training of students at the College, but how it is to be estimated in numbers I do not know. Does anyone feel that we should not make an approach of this kind?

Mr. De AGUIAR: I did not want to give an instance I had in mind of the lack of assistance from the College, but not very long ago we wanted the assistance of an Entomologist in connection with rice weevils, and we tried very hard to get a man from the College. It was hopeless. It is impossible to get any assistance, and that being so it seems to me that the time has come when we should re-examine the question of our contribution to the College.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I think we should put an end to the arrangement altogether. When it was introduced I could not see what benefit we would get from the College. Now, after all these years, Members have discovered that we are not getting any benefit. We are paying too much for what little advantage we get.

THE CHAIRMAN: So you agree that we should address the Principal of the College and the Secretary of State on the subject?

Mr. ELEAZAR: Yes, Sir.

FINANCING OF DRAINAGE SCHEMES.

THE CHAIRMAN: We have come to half-past three. In speaking this morning about the Drainage and Irrigation schemes I omitted to mention about the financing of them. Hon. Members will remember that in August last, and then later in September, we met at the time of Sir Frank Stockdale's visit and agreed to meet half the cost of the Bonasika-Boerasirie scheme from the Colonial Development

Trust Fund, which meant that we would have to finance the smaller schemes from our own funds. As it happens, now that the Bonasika-Boerasirie scheme will be financed by the Home Government, it will be possible to draw on the Colonial Development Trust Fund for a good deal of what we propose to do ourselves.

The Council resumed and adjourned until 12 noon the following day.