

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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

THURSDAY, 23RD MAY, 1957.

The Council met at 2 p.m.

PRESENT:

His Honour the Speaker:

Sir Eustace Gordon Woolford,
O.B.E., Q.C.

Ex Officio Members:

The Hon. the Chief Secretary,
Mr. M. S. Porcher (Ag.)

The Hon. the Attorney General,
Mr. A. M. I. Austin.

The Hon. the Financial Secretary,
Mr. F. W. Essex.

*Nominated Members of Executive
Council:*

The Hon. P. A. Cummings (Mem-
ber for Labour, Health and Housing).

The Hon. W. O. R. Kendall (Mem-
ber for Communications and Works).

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

Nominated Official:

Mr. I. I. Bannister

Nominated Unofficials:

Mr. C. A. Carter

Mr. E. F. Correia.

Mr. H. Rahaman

Miss Gertie H. Collins.

Mrs. Esther E. Dey.

Dr. H. A. Fraser

Mr. R. B. Jailal

Mr. Sugrim Singh

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

Clerk of the Legislature:

Mr. I. Crum Ewing.

Assistant Clerk of the Legislature:

Mr. E. V. Viapree.

Absent:

The Hon. Sir Frank McDavid,
C.M.G., C.B.E.—on leave.

The Hon. R. B. Gajraj—on leave.

The Hon. R. C. Tello—on leave.

Mr. T. Lee—on leave.

Mr. W. A. Phang —on leave.

Mr. L. A. Luckhoo, Q.C.—on leave.

Rev. D. C. J. Bobb—on leave.

The Speaker read prayers.

The Minutes of the meeting of
the Council held on Thursday, 16th May,
1957, as printed and circulated were

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Mr. LACKHOO is unable to be present today, and has asked to be excused.

PAPERS LAID

The Financial Secretary (Mr. Essex): I beg to lay on the table—

Order in Council No. 22 of 1957 made under section 8 of the Customs Ordinance, Chapter 309, on the 10th day of May, 1957 and published in the Gazette on the 18th of May, 1957.

Schedule of Supplementary Estimates for the month of April, 1957.

Schedule of Supplementary Estimates (Development) for the month of April, 1957.

Statement showing Supplementary Expenditure to be admitted as a charge to the Development Fund in the accounts of the year 1955, and the allocation thereof.

Annual Report of the Comptroller of Customs and Excise for the year 1956.

Mr. W. O. R. Kendall (Member for Communications and Works): I beg to lay on the table—

The British Postal Order (Amendment) Regulations, 1957 (No. 10).

The Official Inland Correspondence (Amendment) Regulations, 1957 (No. 11).

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move the following motions:

“Be it resolved: That this Council in terms of section 9 of the Customs Ordinance, Chapter 309, confirms Order in Council No. 22 of 1957, which was made on the 10th day of May, 1957, and published in the Gazette on the 18th of May, 1957.”

“Be it resolved: That this Council approves of the Supplementary Estimates for the month of April, 1957, totalling

\$111,037.00, which have been laid on the table.”

“Be it resolved: That this Council approves of the Supplementary Estimates (Development) for the month of April, 1957, totalling \$217,118.00; which have been laid on the table.”

“Be it resolved: That this Council approves of the Statement of Supplementary Expenditure totalling \$21,098.68 which was incurred during the year 1955 and was not included in any previous schedule and is to be admitted as a charge to the Development Fund, and which has been laid on the table.”

Mr. Kendall: I beg to give notice of the following motion standing in my name—

“Be it resolved: That with reference to Sessional Paper No. 5/1957, this Council approves of the Government arranging to purchase the undertaking of the Demerara Electric Company, Limited, and all the Company's lands, buildings, works, materials and plant suitable to and used by the Company for the purposes of such undertaking, within the Colony, upon such terms relating to valuation and determination of the purchase price as would be applicable if such purchase were in pursuance of the provisions of section 4 (d) of the Georgetown Electric Supply Ordinance, Chapter 238.”

It is my intention, Sir, to move the suspension of the relevant Standing Orders, permission having been given by His Excellency to move this motion through all its stages.

Mr. Speaker: It is a very important motion. Do you want to do it today? We shall see if it can be done.

STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF
EXECUTIVE COUNCILALLEGED IMPROPER BEHAVIOUR OF
MOUNTED POLICE

The Chief Secretary (Mr. Porcher, acting): I should like to refer to a publication in the “Guiana Graphic”

of Wednesday, May 22nd. The front page carried a report of a letter which Sir Alexander Bustamante is alleged to have addressed to His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government. I want to make it quite clear that I am in no way replying to that letter. It is not my place to do so. But I want to call attention to the comment on the behaviour of the Mounted Police on the evening in question.

As soon as I read the newspaper, I called for a report from the Commissioner of Police, which I have before me. He stated that the Mounted Police behaved properly. No complaint of any sort was received as a result of their behaviour on the evening when Sir Alexander Bustamante was speaking on Bourda Green.

This is one occasion when I do not have to reply on reports. I was present myself throughout the whole of Sir Alexander Bustamante's speech. I saw the Mounted Police on duty. One horse was at one time a little excited but he was well managed by his rider who withdrew him to the outskirts of the crowd.

I think it is only fair to the Mounted Branch — and I am sure that this Council would agree with me — that I should say publicly that they behaved in my opinion, not improperly at all.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The Chief Secretary: I beg to give notice of the introduction and first reading of a Bill intituled:

“Distribution of Enemy Property Bill, 1957.”

The Financial Secretary (Mr. Egsex): I beg to give notice of the in-

roduction and first reading of a Bill intituled:

“Industries Aid and Encouragement (Amendment) Bill, 1957.”

ORDER OF THE DAY

BILLS—FIRST READING

The following Bills were read a first time:

DISTRIBUTION OF ENEMY PROPERTY BILL

A Bill intituled “An Ordinance to provide for the distribution of German enemy property in the payment of debts incurred by German persons to British persons in the Colony.”

INDUSTRIES AID AND ENCOURAGEMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL

A Bill intituled “An Ordinance to amend the Industries Aid and Encouragement Ordinance.”

Mr. Kendall: Sir —

Mr. Speaker: You are very anxious to proceed. I was wondering whether we could take the third reading of the Criminal Justice Bill and perhaps dispose of the Customs motion by the Financial Secretary. This affects revenue and yours affects expenditure. The Financial Secretary is very anxious to get his motion through.

Mr. Kendall: I will give way to him.

The Attorney General (Mr. Austin): I beg to move that the Bill intituled:

“An Ordinance to abolish Penal Servitude and Imprisonment with Hard Labour”.

be read a third time and passed, as amended in Committee.

The Financial Secretary: I beg to second that.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

MOTIONS

ORDER IN COUNCIL NO. 19 OF 1957

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that it be resolved:

"That this Council in terms of section 9 of the Customs Ordinance, Chapter 309, confirms Order in Council No. 19 of 1957, which was made on the 17th day of April, 1957, and published in the Gazette on the 4th day of May, 1957."

In December last year this Council undertook by resolution to pass the necessary amending legislation to cover the changes in import and export duties set out in the Appendix to Sessional Paper No. 14 of 1956, which Members will remember was concerned with the establishment of the alumina industry.

The Order which is now before the Council will implement that promise. The first part of it prescribes that the export duty on calcined bauxite shall be reduced from \$1 per ton to 45 cents per ton. Forty-five cents, of course, is the present export duty on dried bauxite. In a sense the reduction is connected with the alumina industry, but not entirely. It is connected with it in that the reduction came from negotiations in which it was agreed that the royalty which was to be paid on bauxite to be processed into alumina was to be raised from 2c. per ton to a realistic 20c. per ton. There is, however, a long history attached to the export duty on calcined bauxite. The dollar export duty was put on some years ago purely as a revenue measure, and as I said in this House when speaking on Sessional Paper No. 14 of 1956, it has

for some time been felt wrong in principle that the processed bauxite should carry a higher export duty than that which is simply dried. The calcined is a much more valuable product and the Government's collection from it is through the higher income they derived from it as compared with dried bauxite.

It may be that it cannot really be justified on this account as the income tax on calcined bauxite is far higher than it is on ordinary bauxite. The other point is that there has always been a tax on this highly processed bauxite as the Board feels that it should bear an export duty higher than the ordinary processed bauxite. Calcined bauxite is normally of a higher value than ordinary bauxite and it also carries a higher export duty.

As I explained last December, this follows the policy which this Council has adopted in that a number of the imports which will be needed for many years have been exempted from import duty. I do not think there is need for me to say anything else, I move that the motion be adopted.

The Attorney General: I beg to second the motion.

Mr. Speaker: Would any Member like to support the motion?

Motion carried.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, JANUARY TO MARCH, 1957.

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move the following motion:

"Resolved, That this Council approves of the Supplementary Estimates for the months of January and March, 1957, totalling \$52,447.63 and \$223,790.00, respectively, which have been laid on the table."

The supplementary estimates for January to March 1957, represented totals of \$52,447.63 and \$223,790 respectively, as laid on the table. There is, I think, a sum of \$8,000 representing re-votes in the January provision and the rest is mainly accounted for by a vote of \$17,500 to 'enable the entire Colony to benefit from the assistance provided by the I.C.A. The other estimates — the March supplementary provision — includes as the largest item the sum of \$50,000 which was required as an emergency measure to provide for the inoculation of cattle against rabies in the Rupununi and the Berbice river districts. There is also a provision of \$30,000 for an increase in the Colony's contribution toward the regional Economic Committee, and \$114,000 for the increased cost of printing regulated by contract. There are large and unavoidable items and I wish to say that these two Schedules which were laid in the middle of the year gave no indication that these amounts would have been required by Government. I move that the motion be adopted by this Council.

The Attorney General: I beg to second the motion.

Motion carried.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES
(DEVELOPMENT)—JANUARY TO
MARCH 1957

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move the following motion:

"Be it resolved, that this Council approves of the Supplementary Estimates (Development) for the months of January and March, 1957, totalling \$384,7464.00 and \$371,526.00, respectively, which have been laid on the table."

These two development Schedules are based largely on the assumption that the first two-year provision that was made for improvement works

would have enabled the acceleration of development at Pln. Mara, E.B. Berbice, and the protection of those parts of the Demerara River called Wismar and Christianburg. The Development Programme shows in these two Schedules, that it might not be possible to keep for re-allocation the item for drainage and irrigation amounts. Then there are such development items as the Corentyne drainage and irrigation scheme. The whole question of the increased cost of drainage and irrigation works in the Development Plan for the coming year will have to come before the Council in the near future. The other two Schedules should give the items which cannot be noted. I move that the motion be adopted.

The Attorney General: I beg to second the motion.

Mr. Speaker: Does anyone wish to speak on the motion?

Motion carried.

PURCHASE OF DEMERARA
ELECTRIC COMPANY

Mr. Kendall: I beg to move the suspension of the relevant Standing Orders so as to enable me to move a motion (relating to the purchase of the Demerara Electric Company, Limited).

Mr. Farnum: I beg to second the motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Relevant Standing Orders suspended.

Mr. Kendall: I beg to move the following motion:

"Be it resolved, That with reference to Sessional Paper No. 5 of 1957, this Coun-

[Mr. Kendall]

cil approves of the Government arranging to purchase the undertaking of the Demerara Electric Company, Limited, and all the Company's lands, buildings, works, materials and plant suitable to and used by the Company for the purposes of such undertaking, within the Colony, upon such terms relating to valuation and determination of the purchase price as would be applicable if such purchase were in pursuance of the provisions of section 4 (d) of the Georgetown Electric Supply Ordinance, Chapter 238."

Hon. Members will recall that in Sessional Paper No. 5 of 1957 it was indicated in paragraph 7 that arising out of negotiations with respect to a notice served on the Demerara Electric Company in the form of a letter of requirements, proposals have been made by the Company for the voluntary sale of the undertaking to Government. These talks have now reached a stage at which a decision must be made very soon as to whether or not the undertaking should be taken over, and I am happy to announce that Government, pending the approval of the Legislative Council, has agreed to enter into negotiations with a view to purchasing the Company.

I might state that acquisition of the Demerara Electric Company Limited is a very important step forward in the development of the supply of electricity throughout the Colony. As Members are aware, Government has embarked on the establishment of a rural electrification scheme which, it is hoped, would be managed by a public electricity authority. In their report on rural electrification in 1956, Messrs. Preece, Cardew and Ryder, Consulting Engineers to the Government, advised that from a long view the possibility of supplying hydro-electric power within the present Georgetown franchise area is from seven to ten years. The rural electrification scheme could secure part

of the supply in bulk from the Demerara Electric Company Limited for distribution. The Company were accordingly approached but informed Government that to meet the requirement and at the same time to provide the necessary power for the rural scheme a substantial increase in the present generating capacity was needed. In order to meet the urgent demands it is proposed to install generating equipment at a cost of \$5 million.

The Consulting Engineers regarded it unwise to install a plant of such magnitude in view of the hydro-electric development and suggested that the gap could be filled by putting down two diesel plants at considerably cheaper cost. The ever-increasing demand for electric power in and out of the franchise area makes it important that an early decision be made to acquire the company so that firm orders could be placed with the manufacturers for the new plant.

I sincerely trust Members will appreciate the urgency of the matter and confirm in Council their acceptance of the proposal. I am hoping very shortly to give notice of the introduction of a Bill to provide for the establishment of a Public Electricity Corporation which would be the sole body responsible for the generating, distribution and sale of electricity throughout British Guiana, and it would also include the supply of such power as the Corporation might secure from a hydro-electric project. This step, Sir, of creating a Public Electricity Corporation is not new; it has been taken in many Colonies with successful results and I hope that in British Guiana we would have the same experience. I now beg to move this motion and to ask that it be adopted.

Mr. Farnum : I beg to second the motion.

Mr. Speaker: Does anyone wish to speak on this motion?

Mr. Lord: I feel that the time has come when the electricity services in the Colony should be taken over by some organization and controlled by Government.

I feel that the Demerara Electric Company has more or less covered all the ground. Time was when they ran the electrical tram service in the city; they serviced electrical appliances and provided the electric lights in the city. The time came when they did not find it an economic proposition any longer and they gave up transportation and the servicing of electrical equipment. They then maintained only the lighting services, which is a paying concern because there are very few bad debts. They are in the position of being able to cut off the current when bills are unpaid, which I believe is not the case in New Amsterdam. The Company has made money and if it had been more progressive it would have taken steps to try and establish hydro-electric development. But we have now in the offing gigantic possibilities through hydro-electric power which will take care not only of industrial areas but the rural electrification scheme on which Government has embarked. The time has come, I feel, when we should take over the Demerara Electric Company providing, of course, that the value amounts to the cost Government will pay.

Mr. Jailal: I feel that this is one of the good things that is happening to British Guiana. I remember some time ago having to compare the rates paid here for electricity with those paid in other parts of the world and coming up with the answer that we probably pay

the highest rates in the world. I welcome this proposed take-over for through it I see a new vista as we have already made inroads towards bringing hydro-electricity into being and we are talking at high levels about rural electrification. This country will do fine with a complete and thorough electrical system which will replace the use of Diesel power in some services. In that way, things like drainage and irrigation would be easier accomplished. I say that because I have no real faith in what is called 'gravity drainage' or a system that entails miles and miles of circuitous trenches and dams that can easily be blown away when nature becomes destructive. I am a layman but my experience tells me that the only way to get rid of water that floods our fields and prevents our industries from working the way they should is by a system of pumps. Diesel oil can never be the answer.

I have just come back from an exhibition where for the past three weeks I have had an opportunity to learn about West Indian industries, and I am sure that British Guiana needs further development of industries. I am not at this moment staking claim to big industries, but I feel that when we have secured widespread electric power we would be able to put out the finished product in many industries. I look forward to the day when we would no longer have to depend on charcoal or Diesel oil to fuel our engines, but to be able to travel from Crabwood Creek to the tip of the Waini by electrically-serviced railways.

For these reasons and for many other reasons I feel Government is making a great move for the benefit of the country. I wish to say that while I heartily support and endorse this motion, yet I do so with the ultimate hope that Government does not retain the electricity works as a business run

[Mr. Jailal]

by Government, but that it would hand it over to a public company—something of the order of the beer brewery here. I have in mind management by a free enterprise so that it would be free of the fetters that usually surround Government undertakings, and free of some of the burdens that Government is usually forced to carry. With that hope I am prepared fully to support the motion.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: I would have liked the hon. Mover to go a bit further and discuss (1) how far the extension of hydro-electric projects will affect the operation of the Company in Georgetown, and (2) whether purchasing the Company at this time for \$5 million with the possibility of hydro-electricity around the corner—

The Financial Secretary: Could I ask on what authority the hon. Member gives us the figure \$5 million? It is interesting.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: I heard the amount was \$5 million.

Mr. Kendall: Let me explain that \$5 million was the cost of putting down new plant into the existing undertaking in order to meet the demand which exists presently and which will increase in the future.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: Well then, that fixes me.

The Financial Secretary: The point is, you see, that the cost has not been determined yet.

Mr. Speaker: If the hon. Member (Mr. Sugrim Singh) reads the motion he will see there is no mention of the figure.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: I am grateful to the hon. mover of the motion for his very kind and timely intervention. I had the figure in my mind. I cannot remember if this Council is the source of my impression, but the idea of \$5 million kept lingering.

Mr. Cummings: It may be from Party sources.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: The hon. Member for Housing has changed the face of the suburbs but I say in all sincerity that the buildings would not have the same attraction they should without electricity.

Mr. Cummings: To a point of correction, the buildings are already lighted.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: I do not know why the hon. Member for Housing intervened. He anticipated my point. It is carrying coals to Newcastle to tell Members of this Council they are lighted with electricity. I happen to be something of a rustic—I come from the country. People were given the promise in big speeches that the Essequibo Coast would be supplied with electricity from Charity to Supenaam by a certain time. A 'Minister' of the Interim Government told them that, and up to now they have not even seen a candle, still more electric lights. We have to be careful when we make these promises. Members of this Council have gone to the villages and they know that they have several amenities except electric lights; at night it is gloomy except for those who have gas lamps, and in some cases it is difficult for a villager to travel from one place to another. We have had enough reports—for 25 years—on rural electrification.

The Demerara Electric Company's equipment is to be secured for Georgetown and hydro-electric power is to be

channelled to Georgetown. I would like something to be done for the rural areas. I think there is too much talk in this Council and the rural people are fed up with these talks. They are fed up with continuing to wait for these amenities which they have lacked for years.

I hope in supporting this action of Government it will not turn out to be a white elephant and that there is some planning behind it, so that the people, not only those in the immediate vicinity of Georgetown but even in the rural areas, will benefit. We have gone to Trinidad, Jamaica and Barbados and seen a telephone in almost every home. One can find a telephone even in the bath in some places in Barbados. I do not know what is wrong here. I do not know what is happening in this place. There are no telephones, no this and that. I do ask hon. Members with portfolios to stop travelling and get down to some work.

Mr. Correia: In supporting this motion I would like to say that I would not have supported it so readily as I do today, if we were not told recently in this Council that we would have a hydro-electric scheme for the Demerara River very soon. When I say "very soon", I mean within the next seven years. That is soon for a scheme like that. It must be realised that such schemes must take some time to be brought into use. A year ago I would not have had supported this motion so readily as I do today, because it would have had no connection with hydro-electric power. I think the Government should acquire the Demerara Electric Company now.

If we are to renew our contract with the Company for 25 years, we would be tied down to that Company

for our electric power supply for 25 years, but if on the other hand our hydro-electric power supply comes into being in the next 10 years then we would enjoy 15 years of much cheaper electricity in Georgetown and the rural areas.

I want to support this motion, though I am never in favour of Government running a commercial business. I am never in favour of nationalising industries, but there are several utility services which should be run by Government, and electricity is one, I think, should be run by Government. In the big countries abroad you have large electric Companies who sell power to the Corporations who in turn redistribute that power to industries, householders, etc.

That is why I think the supply of electric power should be a Government Utility Service. Further, why I would like to support this motion and do it so readily today is that I can foresee in the very near future the cost of our agricultural production considerably reduced. We would be able to supply cheaper power to the sugar estates and rice farmers and to have cheaper drainage when hydro-electric power comes into being.

I am sorry to digress from the motion, but the two things are linked together—the acquisition of the Demerara Electric Company and Hydro-electric power. It is because of the obtaining of hydro-electric power that we are purchasing the Demerara Electric Company. So if I have digressed hon. Members of the Council would excuse me. I would like to tell this Council that I see in the future cheap power for agricultural industries and the electrification of the rural areas. Probably we will be able to have reduced the cost of running our railways and possibly still retain them, although this Govern-

[Mr. Correia]

ment in the past was thinking of abolishing the railways in favour of roads. I can even see now that with cheaper power we will possibly be able to keep the railways together with our roads. That is why I speak on the motion and support it.

The Attorney General: I would just like, if I may, to put in their right perspective one or two remarks made by the hon. Members, Mr. Correia and Mr. Jailal. Mr. Correia said he supported this motion because he thought the supply of electricity, which is by all standards an essential service, should be run by Government. It must not be thought, however, that behind this move to acquire the undertaking of the Demerara Electric Company is the idea of the Government securing the franchise to generate and supply electricity in order to make a profit which can be used for other purposes.

The general view of public utility undertakings is that they are established in respect of essential services which in the public interest should be enjoyed by members of the public on, as it were, a non-profit basis. It is in the interest of any country that these essential services whether it is supplying water, electricity or gas, or whatever it is, should be available to the public as cheaply as possible. They are blessings of recent times and should be available to all, as they make all the difference to the lives and enjoyment of everyone of us.

Because the development of this country as of the other countries is undoubtedly moving ahead, it is necessary to bring such services to the outlying districts. It would need an enormous amount of capital, and it is very doubtful whether the services can earn sufficient profits to reward private enterprise to invest that capital needed to be put in. That is to say, where necessary in the public interest a large

amount of capital is needed for development and at the same time to keep the cost down, it is only by means of some form of Government or quasi-Government authority that it is possible for that development to take place, and the planning which the hon. Member, Mr. Sugrim Singh, hopes is behind this move is in fact there. Normally, it will not be the Government that will run the undertaking. There will be formed a quasi Government corporation which will operate with, as it were, Government having a say in the running of it. Nevertheless, the corporation will be independent, so it will not be subjected to the difficulties of a nationalized undertaking.

I think the hon. Member, Mr. Jailal, said he hoped that eventually the generation of electricity in the Colony would be run by a company like the Brewery Company. I think what I just said shows that it is not in the interest of the country as a whole that an undertaking, which must be capable of expansion to bring the benefit of electricity to a large number of people, can only be achieved if it is run by a national institution in the form of a corporation in which the Government has an interest although not handling it.

While I am on my feet possibly I can with advantage to hon. Members elaborate slightly on the resolution and what is behind it, in so far as what the amount of money or the purchase price of the undertaking will be. The fact is that, as the result of negotiation which has been going on for some time, the Company has made an offer to sell this undertaking to the Government, and the basis of that offer is that the undertaking will be sold within the terms of the franchise

The franchise does by implication or incorporation include a basis or formula for the acquisition of the under-

taking, which is generally accepted as the modern formula to acquire any undertaking of this sort. It is stated in section 27 of the Electric Lighting Ordinance (Chapter 237) what the terms should be. The section states:

"27. Where the undertakers are authorised by order or special Ordinance to supply electricity within any area and that order or special Ordinance, or any extension thereof, is about to expire and the undertakers have given the prescribed notice of their intention to apply for a renewal thereof, the Government, or the local authority or local authorities within whose jurisdiction that area or any part thereof lies, may, at any time before the day fixed under the provisions of section 5 of this Ordinance for consideration of the application, by notice in writing, require the undertakers to sell, and thereupon the undertakers shall sell, to them the undertaking, or so much thereof as is within their jurisdiction, upon terms of paying the then value thereof and of all lands, buildings, works, materials, and plant of the undertakers suitable to, and used by them for the purposes of, the undertaking, and within that jurisdiction, that value to be, in case of difference, determined by three arbitrators, one of whom shall be appointed by the Government of the Colony, or the local authority, as the case may be, another by the undertakers, and those two shall appoint the third arbitrator, but in case those two cannot agree upon the appointment of the third arbitrator, that arbitrator shall be appointed by the Chief Justice. The expenses of the arbitration shall be borne and paid as the arbitrators may direct, and the arbitrators' fees shall be fixed by the Governor in Council:

Provided that the value aforesaid be deemed to be the fair value at the time of the purchase, due regard being had to the cost of construction less depreciation, the nature and condition of the buildings, works, materials, and plant, the state of repair thereof, and to the circumstances that they are in such a position as to be ready for immediate working, and the suitability of the same for the purposes of the undertaking, but without any addition in respect of compulsory sale, or of goodwill, or of any profits which may be or might have been made from the undertaking, or of any similar considerations."

That formula in our law is based on a formula which is in other

West Indian legislation, and is generally accepted to be the modern and most suitable legislation, and it entails pricing and costing of the assets of the undertaking. By mutual arrangement that has already been done. It is now a question of agreeing on the price.

There is provision in the franchise that in the event of a difference between the Government estimate of value and the Company's estimate of value, the value will be determined by arbitration. I hope hon. Members will support this motion.

Mr. Ramphal: I rise to support this motion but I do not think it needs any speech from me, because I think there is hardly any Member of this Council who would not support it. I am sure that Mr. Sugrim Singh who has made an automatic speech will remember that one of the first things spoken at creation were the words "Let there be light." The people in the rural areas are demanding light; this Council is therefore charging the hon. Member (Mr. Kendall) to give them their expectation by producing the light that is so necessary. I rise, however, to say that the resolution seeks to give power to Government to purchase on certain terms and conditions, what I may call the physical and tangible assets of the Demerara Electric Company. We all agree that they should be acquired at the cheapest and fairest price possible, and I was very glad to hear the Attorney General in his speech laying stress on the expeditious manner, as it were, in which these things should be done.

What I do wish to refer to is the question of indemnity. There are certain rights and privileges that have accrued to the people who are in the employ of the Company, and I do ask the authorities who would be negotiating with this Company to keep the

[Mr. Ramphal]

rights and privileges of these particular persons in mind, as their services may be preserved or extended in the days to come. There are superannuation schemes and superannuation benefits for a certain group of people and I do ask the hon. Member concerned (Mr. Kendall) to look into that matter with the object of taking every case into consideration. This Company has been with us for a long time and has done very good business in this country. Whatever I say must not be taken that I am partial to them or that I would not play fair with those who have been in the service of the Company before. I do ask the hon. Member to look after these intangible assets when he is taking care of the tangible ones.

Mrs. Dey: I am very happy to support this motion. In doing so I heartily endorse all that the motion seeks to do, with special reference to the remarks of the last speaker. I desire, however, to speak purely from a woman's point of view since I am like most women a housewife in British Guiana. You may remember, Sir, that just a short space of time after I entered this Council I tabled some questions relating to the Demerara Electric Company. Those questions were answered and those answers led me to ask many other questions. In supporting this motion today I feel that here is the answer to our problems. We have our wives and even our teachers and those who are about to become wives—those who will get married and become the home builders—have to cook in a very undignified way and I do not blame them in that they do not want to learn as I did—with smoke in their eyes.

They must turn to electrical appliances, but when one considers how much they have to pay at the end of the month for current for these said appliances, I am afraid that when the husband sees the gifts given to his wife

at the "shower" before the wedding he feels that more money would have to be paid for current and that what remains would be hardly possible to buy food. As the electricity bill comes in every month there is one item on it—fuel charge—which housewives are unable to appreciate and we have all endeavoured to find out the reason for it. Up to this very day we are not satisfied with the explanation given as to why we have to pay this fuel charge.

I feel that if the Company is generating electricity at a certain rate customers should pay accordingly for their requirements, but in addition we have to pay this fuel charge of something like 10 per cent. on the cost of electricity used. It is very proper that we should have heard from the hon. Member (Mr. Kendall) that the new Company would not be a profit-making concern and we hope that dream would come true. In the taking over of the Demerara Electric Company Government would enable housewives to make much greater use of electrical appliances thus putting more joy into their housework and the amount of drudgery they have to experience. My final words are that if the proposal in this motion becomes a reality then there will be light throughout the Colony of British Guiana and the country will be happy indeed. Therefore, I have very great pleasure in supporting the motion.

Mr. Rahaman: I desire to join in supporting this motion. I am very glad that a move is being made whereby Government will acquire the Demerara Electric Company and also supply electricity to consumers all over the Colony. I have already expressed the view that two things are necessary for widespread progress in this Colony—firstly, a reliable pure water supply and, secondly, a supply of cheap electricity for private consumption. If these things are supplied I do not think that people from the rural areas would continue

to flock and run into the City. Cheap electricity would enable many of these people to train themselves in various ways and, among other things, reduce the incidence of illiteracy.

As things are at present there is little encouragement for these people to read and otherwise improve themselves. I know people who, after a few years, have forgotten everything they learnt at school, and they would tell one that there is no encouragement for them to read newspapers and so on. There are only oil lamps in these rural districts and these people complain that they cannot see well with them at night. That is one of the reasons why many of the people living in these parts can merely sign their names. If there is a Colony-wide supply of electricity we would be able to vie with foreign manufacturers in the supply of various articles, especially rice. If there is a wider use of cheap electricity there will be less need for oil, and it should be pointed out that several sugar estates have scrapped their oil plants and are now using electricity to produce sugar and other things.

Miss Collins: I desire to support the motion and would like to recall that in a motion tabled in June last year, I drew the attention of Government to the need for electrification in the rural areas. I happened to be a member of the Government at the time and I took opportunity to congratulate Mr. Sugrim Singh for having brought forward the motion. I am convinced that cheap electricity would assist greatly in the development of British Guiana.

Mr. Kendall: (replying): It is very heartening to see the support received for this motion and I want to thank hon. Members for that support. I wish also to thank the hon. the Attorney General for the assistance he gave me in explaining the method to be adopted in purchasing the Demerara Electric Company. I would like to assure the

hon. Member, Mr. Ramphal, that everything will be done to see that the rights of the present employees are protected. We did that in a previous exercise, when the B.G. Airways concern was purchased, and it is our intention to continue in that way.

I would like to tell Members that tenders will be closed for the rural electrification scheme. After that, the tenders will be in the hands of the consulting engineers and the Crown Agents, and I have a feeling that before we leave the Interim Government we will be able to give out the job. (*Applause*).

It is true that a Member of the Government made a promise in a certain part of this Colony that electricity would be supplied on the Essequibo coast, but I assure Members that the delay in proceeding with that is due to the fact that in our investigation into rural electrification we found out there would be a possibility of getting hydro-electric power and in that light we had to change our plans in order to fit in with this new idea. I think that those who have to wait a little longer will benefit because with hydro-electricity becoming a fact — as one speaker said — they would be able to get electric current at a cheaper rate than otherwise.

I do not think I have anything else to say but to thank hon. Members for the support they have given to the motion. I can assure them that it is one of the things which, in spite of the fact that some people say that the Interim Government has done nothing, will stand out and posterity will thank us for. (*Applause*).

Mr. Speaker: The older people among us will remember that this Company provided the public transport system for this Colony many years ago in the form of tramcars. I think Mr. Lord, referring to this

[Mr. Speaker]

Company mentioned that they abandoned the transport system and reaped the benefit of the lighting industry. I think they had to do just what they did because the Colony at that time would not give that Company the right to use certain roads. They wanted to strip the old roads that skirted the city and proposed to use the road where Mr. Lord's family house used to be. I am speaking of Croal Street. There were reasons why they could not have done it. I do not know what can be done to take better care of the school children now but that was a far better system than the many bicycles we have now. The present Lord Beaverbrook, as Mr. W. M. Aitken visited this Colony when the Electric Company was running the system and he said that the laws had a good deal to do with the position. That is only for the record.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion affirmed.

SUBSIDY FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The Chief Secretary: I beg to move the motion standing in my name:

"Be it resolved: That with reference to Sessional Paper No. 9 of 1957 on the Memorandum on Secondary Education, this Council approves of Government's proposals set out therein, and undertakes to provide the necessary financial provision to implement those proposals."

It seems to be my lot shortly after being appointed as Acting Chief Secretary to have the privilege and also the burden of introducing an important paper in this Council on education, and I only hope the Council will bear with me this time as they did on the last occasion. This time we are dealing with secondary education.

Attached to the Sessional Paper laid in this Council some two weeks

ago is also a Memorandum and I would like to say a few words about that memorandum first. This memorandum has been produced by the Department of Education with the assistance of a large number of other people. On the first page of the Sessional Paper is set out the names of all the bodies and persons who were consulted and whose views were obtained about the proposals in the memorandum.

I think the memorandum is an excellent document; I think it provides an extremely sound and sensible basis for planning the development of Secondary Education in this country. It would be impossible for me to thank everybody who was concerned in its preparation, but I think I should mention specifically the individual contribution of the Director of Education, Mr. Clough. I know from personal experience he has put in very many hours of hard study and work in preparing this memorandum.

When we talk about secondary education we are talking of what they would say in the new-fangled way, "post-primary" education. Personally I prefer to go on talking about secondary education, but I would like to make it clear that I am talking about children from 10½ years to 19 years. And so we are talking about the senior classes of the primary schools and all forms of secondary schools whether they be the grammar school type or the modern senior schools as they are called. We are also talking about special evening classes.

There are really three fundamental things about secondary education. First of all one must not consider it in isolation: it is part of the educative process for the child and it must be linked to what comes before and what comes after. Secondly, the purpose of secondary education is to provide the most suitable form of education having

regard to the child's ability and aptitude. Some people may think in terms of a rather narrow academic education when talking about secondary education, but this is not true; for it should cover the widest possible field and it should be adapted so it can meet the requirements of every child no matter what his ability and aptitude may be. That leads me to the third point and it is, of course, that secondary education must offer a very wide variety of programmes and courses.

Now how are we going to tackle the problem of secondary education here? Well, the memorandum sets out exhaustively the various ways and means which are suggested for doing so. The general conclusion is that at the present time we lack both quality and quantity. I do not think that anybody is to be blamed for it—it's just that it happened. Our funds are limited and when we first looked at the problem it was rather like shopping before Christmas. You go into the stores and see so many wonderful things. You feel you would like to buy the whole lot, but you actually come away with only two or three gifts. Our funds are limited and we have to be realistic about it.

We have attempted in the Sessional Paper to try and pick out what are the most important things in the memorandum and to spread out the available money over as wide a distribution as possible, to the best advantage of as many people as possible. First of all there is the question of what improvements can be made in the senior classes of the primary schools. That is a very important matter because a large percentage of children may never get any secondary education after leaving their primary school. It is most important that we should do our best for them in the senior classes of those schools,

Obviously the quality of teaching depends upon the quality of a teacher, and the quality of a teacher depends very largely upon his training; so the training of teachers in the primary schools must for us be a first priority. We have set aside half a million dollars from the capital sum which has been allocated in the Development Programme for education — postprimary education—for the construction of a new training college for teachers. That training college should hold about 150 teachers. There has been a little delay in getting started with the building of this college. I had hoped we would be able to start it this year but we have got to be quite certain we have got the best plans, the best site and so on and that takes time.

We are trying to get the staff necessary to supervise the design and we do hope to start construction of this training college next year. In addition to that, we are already holding courses for teachers. We started last year and we have held more this year, and I think all the teachers who have attended these courses will agree with me when I say they are very valuable. When one is teaching for several years in school it is very refreshing and helpful to go back to a refresher course and have a re-orientation and an opportunity to discuss one's problems with other teachers and also to hear up-to-date views and theories of expert lecturers. Teachers will remember the visit of Dr. Walters last year and how helpful her lectures were. So we are tackling the problems on two fronts: one is in operation and one we hope to start next year.

Next there is the revision of the curricula in the schools. The recommendations for that are set out in detail in the memorandum, and the Government accepts them. Broadly speaking, the intention is to widen

[The Chief Secretary]

the range of the curricula of schools, and to introduce a number of more practical subjects. I may say that we are not proposing to reduce academic standards but to broaden the basis of them. Then there is a scheme for providing a better supply of books. I am glad to say a Pilot Scheme has been already launched at Buxton, and I have no doubt hon. Members may like to know something about that scheme.

There are six schools involved. Each school provides a cupboard and \$25; and there is a Development and Welfare grant which enables us to allocate an extra \$200 to each school. With this sum of \$225, school books are purchased by the Education Department and given to each school. There are one or two books that are common to each school, but for the most part each school receives books on a particular set of subjects; later the books are passed on from school to school. In this way the schools have a revolving library which is an important help to them and provides them with a very good opportunity for widening their reading and study. We are hoping to expand that programme and take in more schools.

Lastly, there is the question of a better design for schools and particularly the construction of home economics and woodwork work-rooms. It is proposed to allocate the sum of \$40,000 in the 1957 Estimates for this purpose out of the sum of money set aside for post-primary education development work, and it is hoped to allocate similar sums in future years. In these ways we hope to improve considerably the standard and variety of education in the senior sections of primary schools.

If I may, I would like now to turn to the secondary schools. First of all.

let us take the Government Secondary Schools—Queen's College and Bishops' High School for Girls. It has been recommended in the memorandum and by the Education Committee that these schools should be integrated within the national educational system and made to observe the same Regulations as for other secondary schools and come under the general direction of the Ministry of Education and the Department of Education. I know that as soon as one suggests that schools of long standing should change their ways, one is treading on dangerous ground and one is likely to find a certain amount of opposition. It is very understandable indeed, but as proposals are made on the advice of qualified educationists who have given matured thought to this question, Government feels these proposals should be accepted. The existing arrangements under which the teachers are Civil Servants and the schools operate as sub-departments often causes difficulties, delays and sometimes misunderstandings.

It is also proposed that consideration should be given to placing these schools under autonomous boards. The Sessional Paper does not contain a firm recommendation about this but states that Government is proceeding with further consideration of the idea. That again may provoke some criticism but in the long run, I am sure, it will be found that it is right and necessary that these schools should have boards which have the authority really to manage and run them. There are difficulties at the moment through not having this sort of direction. The Headmaster of Queen's College does an excellent job and works very hard. The Board of Governors have also done excellent work but they are only advisory at the moment and the usual practice is for the Board to be autonomous within financial limitations.

They should have the power to run the school and make their own arrangements. I think that is a proposal I should commend to this Council.

For the Bishops' High School the same procedure is suggested. In addition it is proposed to construct a new Laboratory and also to start this year a commercial course for girls. This, I think, is an excellent idea. When the girls are reaching the end of their time at school, they will have an opportunity for a year to take up a commercial course which will carry with it subjects like Shorthand and Typing, which will be of great use to them afterwards. The girls will thus be provided with a liberal education but the bias of their education will be in commercial subjects. They will be in a better position to get jobs and to play their part in the commercial life on leaving school.

There is one other thing I should mention regarding Government Secondary schools. Again this is one which may not be entirely welcomed. The preparatory department of Queen's College and Bishops' High School are to be discontinued after August 1959. Here again sentiment must play an important part. The fact of the matter is, these preparatory departments cost a great deal of money to run. With the limited resources at our disposal we do not think it wise that Government should duplicate its efforts. If these preparatory forms are discontinued, it would be possible to have another entry form which would in due course lead to a greater number of boys and girls at Queen's College and the Bishops' High School obtaining secondary education, although that may depend on our ability to provide some additional accommodation as well.

Turning to the private secondary schools, there are a number of these schools in the country, and they vary

in their efficiency. All of them, I think, are feeling the strain and require assistance. The problem which faces us, is how best to give that assistance within our available resources. Here again quality, we consider, should come first. We get quality by having good teaching and good teachers. If you want to get good teachers you must provide them with a satisfactory career and a reasonable salary.

So our first effort is devoted towards providing means to assist these schools to pay better salaries. With the funds at our disposal we cannot provide grants for every school. There must be certain requirements, and we are going to require that any secondary school which requires assistance from Government must measure up to certain requirements and come under the Regulations and be open to Inspection by the Department of Education. I am sure that the Director of Education would like me to say that in such an exercise the school inspector's function is to be helpful; he goes to a school to try to help that school, not to carry out an inquisition.

One of the most important requirements which private secondary schools will have to observe is that they are managed by Boards and are not run for personal gain. So those private schools which at the present moment are run purely as private schools if they wish assistance — there is no compulsion whatever — must set up Boards and they must not be run for gain. It is very likely that the number of schools that will quickly qualify and seek assistance will exceed the number we can assist at any rate to start with.

Government proposes to seek the advice of the Education Committee as to which schools should be selected

[The Chief Secretary]
first. One of the most important considerations in reaching a decision in this matter would be the geographical situation of the schools. Government wishes to spread its assistance as widely throughout the country as is possible. Thus, if for instance the first four schools in order of merit are in one town and the next two schools in order of merit are in rural areas, it is likely that those last two schools in the country would receive assistance before say the third and fourth schools in the town.

The memorandum contains a lot of information about what has happened elsewhere with respect to the method of assisting schools by giving grants towards teachers' salaries. There are suggestions for giving grants on a percentage basis, but Government, after very careful consideration has devised a rather different method. The object of this method is to provide an incentive to the schools to get better teachers and to the teachers to get better qualifications. Very briefly, Government's proposal is that in schools which are to be assisted, those teachers who have the prescribed qualifications are to be put on basic minimum salary scales related to their qualifications. These scales and qualifications are set out in the memorandum. The school would be responsible for paying the first \$70 per month of the teacher's salary and Government would pay the balance up to the approved salary scale. Whenever a teacher improves his qualifications he would be eligible for a higher scale and the additional cost would be met by Government. I should like to state that these salary scales are basic minimum scales.

There is nothing to prevent a higher salary scale being paid to a

teacher in order to get a better man for the school. But the school would have to pay that part of the salary which exceeded the basic scale. For instance if a teacher is on a salary of \$150 per month in a basic scale, the school would pay \$70 of that amount and Government would pay the remainder, \$80. If the school chooses to increase the teacher's salary to \$200 a month — \$50 above the basic scale — then that \$50 in addition to the original \$70 must be provided by the school.

Government recognizes that there must be both Headmasters and Assistant Masters who have not got the prescribed qualifications, but have many years of teaching experience and who are efficient teachers. That is recognised, and is expected that we might have to work out special salary scales for these teachers. The school would remain entirely responsible for the salaries of any other unqualified teachers and for non-teaching staff such as caretakers and cleaners.

I do hope that by providing these salaries for the teachers Government would be creating satisfactory careers for teachers in secondary schools, whether they be in Georgetown or not. I do hope that teachers would be attracted to secondary schools in other parts of the Colony besides Georgetown so that the standard in those schools can be raised to the same level as that of the schools in Georgetown.

The probable cost of these proposals in the first year, working on information already obtained, and assuming that all those schools which will immediately qualify for assistance will be assisted, will be \$150,000 in grants for the first year. We want to start paying these grants with effect from September this year. This will cost \$40,000 this year, so we are asking this Council to

approve that the sum of \$40,000 be expended this year for the purpose of paying grants to those schools which are qualified to receive them and are selected.

A second way for providing assistance to existing secondary schools is by way of annual grants to assist them in maintaining laboratories, school-rooms for home economics, and school-rooms for commercial subjects. It is proposed to award an annual grant of \$1,000 a year to each approved school for a laboratory, \$600 a year for a classroom for the teaching of home economics, and \$500 a year for a classroom for commercial subjects. The reason for that is to encourage secondary schools, as far as possible, to widen the basis of their curricula. No fixed sum has been earmarked for this purpose; we shall have to see how many schools qualify for assistance and then decide which ones should be assisted.

Lastly, there is provision for special capital grants to secondary schools for new buildings, such as new laboratories, new school blocks and so on. We do not propose to provide anything this year for this purpose, but we do propose to provide \$50,000 next year and to see, as time goes by, whether further assistance would be required. The various proposals which I have just described are designed primarily to improve the quality of education in existing secondary schools. But there is the question of quantity as well. Government does not propose to build any more Grammar School type of secondary schools for the time being, but we do propose to build six new modern schools—they are often called senior schools—by 1960.

There is often some misconception about these senior schools and many people seem to think that they provide an inferior education to that education obtainable at a Grammar School. This

is not true. These schools are in fact secondary schools and their curricula include subjects in the arts and the classics — but, unlike the orthodox Grammar Schools, the curricula also include a number of more practical subjects such as home economics, wood work, Agricultural Science and so, and I should like to point out that these subjects can be taken in the G.C.E. in just the same way as the more academic subjects such as Latin or Greek.

Thus in a senior school the children are provided with much more varied educational opportunities and the courses are designed with a view to suiting the aptitude and ability of each child. Those children who have obvious aptitude for the more academic subjects will be able to take them; but other children and they are generally the majority, will be able to take a number of more practical subjects, in addition to the basic academic subjects, and should as a result, receive an education which will be of more use to them when they grow up.

In deciding where to build these six new schools, geographical considerations are again of great importance. At present there are a number of secondary schools in Georgetown, about three in Berbice and none at all in Essequibo or in rural Demerara. We have therefore proposed that Essequibo should be given first priority and that the first senior school should be built at Anna Regina, where there is already a good primary school.

We also propose to construct a school in the Essequibo Islands, at Bartica, in Berbice and in Rural Demerara. That is the plan. Each of these schools is likely to cost \$100,000 to build and when they are all complete they will cost something like \$180,000 a year to run, so that they are going to cost a lot of money to construct and maintain.

[The Chief Secretary]

I have described the assistance to existing secondary schools and I have touched very briefly upon the proposals for constructing new modern senior schools. There is one other thing we are doing to improve technical education. We are providing school courses in the Technical Institute which boys in the secondary schools can attend. Boys from Queen's College and St. Stanislaus College are already attending these courses at the Technical Institute several times a week learning subjects in a place designed for the teaching of these subjects. It is a much more practical and economical way than trying to build workshops or special laboratories in the secondary schools themselves. So we have increased the number of courses at the Institute for that purpose and we are also revising the curricula for the entry courses as well. We are also trying to develop the apprentice system which is already in operation and to make more use of it.

In addition to this assistance and this construction programme we are also increasing the number of scholarship awards. There are two sorts of scholarships, county scholarships and the Guiana scholarship. We are increasing the county scholarships by 10 and Members will find in the Sessional Paper the method we propose to adopt. The memorandum suggested that these additional 10 should all go to rural Demerara because in the past rural Demerara has had a rather small slice of the cake; it had been grouped with Georgetown and if one looks at the statistics one will find that almost all the scholarships have been taken by boys and girls in Georgetown in the past. Because of that we have decided to re-allocate the scholarships completely and make four divisions, Georgetown and rural Demerara being separate ones.

The total number of county scholarships will be 44, made up as follows: Rural Demerara 12, Georgetown 7, Berbice 14 and Essequibo 11. In addition to that we are still retaining 15 open scholarships available to pupils from the whole country. Here again statistics show that over the past five years most of these scholarships have been won by children from Georgetown schools. So in practice Georgetown will have seven closed scholarships and will very likely obtain a large majority of the 15 open scholarships as well, but rural Demerara now has 12 to itself and that will give the children there a better opportunity.

In connection with the Guiana scholarship, the memorandum recommended that we make two additional awards, but after careful consideration we came to the conclusion that we could only include one more award; that award is to be for the runner-up, boy or girl.

Mr. Speaker: At the moment there are two.

The Chief Secretary: At the moment there is one for a boy and one for a girl and the difficulty is that in order of merit very often the first three candidates are boys and a girl is fourth; as only one boy receives a scholarship.

Lastly, I want to say one short word about agricultural education. Here I am afraid the Sessional Paper may cause some disappointment to hon. Members but I would like to point out that agricultural education is a special subject which requires special treatment and should not really be linked too closely with other proposals in the memorandum. The Legislative Council passed a resolution in 1955 urging the creation of a farm

school for the purpose of settling young farmers on the land. Government accepted that resolution and Government still believes in it. But it is a very expensive business and at the moment we have not got the funds in the Development Programme for it.

The mere fact that it is not included in this Sessional Paper does not mean to say it is completely out of our minds. Government accepted the proposal in principal but we have not the available resources to implement it at the present time. We are however, I think, increasing the number of young men we send to the Farm Institute in Trinidad. They go to be trained as instructors. We are also trying to concentrate more on school gardening and so on at the primary school level and to introduce in our modern senior schools a greater bias towards agricultural education.

As I have said, there is so much one would like to do but the funds available are limited and therefore the amount we can do must be limited. I have no doubt that some hon. Members may feel it would be better to do something other than what we have proposed, and I am sure, all Members would like to do a great deal more. But I can assure the Council that the Government's proposals have been formulated only after a tremendous amount of study and consideration of the educational needs of the country. I think we are proposing to do as much as we can afford and I think that the recommendations of the memorandum which we have decided to adopt are the ones which will bring the greatest benefit to the greatest number.

I do feel that the memorandum provides this country with an extremely valuable guide to follow for the

future development of secondary education and I do suggest that the proposals in the Sessional Paper provide a thoroughly realistic and sound proposal for implementing as many as possible of these recommendations which at the present moment this country can afford. I very much hope hon. Members will support this Sessional Paper. (*Applause*).

The Attorney General: I beg to second the motion.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: I wish in the first place to express thanks to Government for at length and at last bringing this long felt motion to this Council. I speak with some amount of interest in this subject. Hon. Members of this Council would forgive me if I attempt or in fact paint a very strong picture for the necessity for such a motion. I have personally been associated with the teaching profession for over 15 years, five of which were spent in running what is known as a private secondary school. For some years now the public has had to fall back on these private secondary schools to assist in post-primary education of their children, due to the fact that there was no accommodation in the leading Government Secondary Schools or Colleges for the past 20 years. The teachers of these private secondary schools, have had indeed a very rough time. Sometimes they are sinking, sometimes they rise, and in many cases with great difficulty they have had to run their schools.

I remember somewhere in 1945 the Government proposed to introduce a Bill in the Legislative Council to provide Government with some degree of control over these private secondary schools and requiring certain specific advice as to buildings, working conditions and accommodations. As hon. Members of this Council know, most of our private secondary schools are pioneer efforts and

[Mr. Sugrim Singh]

are conducted in private properties converted as reasonably as possible to afford accommodation to the students of those schools.

There are the larger private secondary schools where the owners have been able to achieve satisfaction in the establishment of those schools. I am glad this afternoon to be able to help in this proposed movement which is a step forward. I say so advisedly because I feel that in the not too distant future Government should make a further step to assist these private secondary schools in this Colony.

I must thank the hon. Mover of the motion in expressing the appreciation of this Council for this very constructive memorandum which, I am sure, will be a beacon light in the field of secondary education for some time. Although all the recommendations in this memorandum may not be implemented at the present time, we trust and hope that in the near future all these recommendations will in due course be given the necessary implementation.

The world is changing today and the ambition of parents is to give their children at least a secondary education so that they can qualify to fit into our economic and civic set-up in this country. To my mind the ideal in this country is characteristic of a welfare state wherein there is free secondary education for all.

We hope that these rural areas would find themselves in a position to achieve this object. I know that there is available material in our primary schools and that teachers themselves expressed regret that such available material, due to poverty of family connections at least, cannot find it possible to take advantage of secondary education. It has been

found from experience that with the assistance of charitable people material of this kind, given a chance, has made outstanding progress in secondary schools. As a result of the absence of free secondary education, it has been my experience that such material goes "down the drain", and that such children are merely left to scramble for themselves in this world.

I was very happy to hear the hon. Mover of this motion stating that secondary schools will be erected in some of the rural areas and particularly to hear that there will be one at Anna Regina. I have been reliably informed that there are over 60 students there whose parents have had to make arrangements to house them in Georgetown and they have to travel and live away from home, suffering many disadvantages. There have been abortive attempts by private individuals to start secondary schools in Essequibo and even at Bartica, and I happen to have been approached with respect to the latter case.

There was difficulty in maintaining the staff, for financial reasons, and the whole project collapsed. Parents in the rural areas find it extremely difficult to foot the bill of considerable expenses which necessarily follow when their children are away from home. In the case of girls particularly they become extremely worried, and I am glad to know that Government has decided, as a matter of policy and in keeping with this memorandum, to erect this school at Anna Regina to serve the entire Essequibo Coast from Charity to Supenaam. When better transportation is available it would enable secondary education to be given to those children who leave the primary schools and whose parents desire to further their education. The

same thing goes for Bartica, the Essequibo Islands — Leguan and Wakenaam. According to the Memorandum a secondary school has been recommended for the Essequibo islands — at Sans Souci in Wakenaam — and I think that is good because there is a very reliable transportation service between Leguan and Wakenaam which would enable children to attend school regularly.

As regards the question of minimum qualification for teachers, I am reliably informed that this minimum qualification will be the London G.C.E., Grade II. I am indeed happy to learn from the hon. Mover of the motion that provision has been made for those teachers who do not possess these minimum qualifications but who have, as against that, years of experience. I am happy because if these minimum qualifications were insisted on we would have wiped out a large number of useful teachers with ordinary Senior Cambridge Certificate and also years of experience.

I place a very high premium on experience in teaching, for while examinations are necessary as a test or guide as to a student's education, I might be pardoned for saying that I have come across teachers without any of these qualifications but who have been wholly responsible for instructing students who obtain them. I have also experienced the fact that while some of these unqualified teachers instructed students successfully they tried to pass the examinations themselves but could not do so. Examinations are not always a criterion of one's ability and while they are necessary they must not be considered the end-all so far as education is concerned.

I repeat that I am very glad that grants are being made to secondary

schools so as to enable them to streamline their educational activities and I think this would enable things to be shaped more in consonance with our views. It was unfortunate for one to look around the country and instead of finding nice buildings and nice environments being utilised by secondary schools one often found school buildings deteriorating and dilapidated. I think the hon. mover will agree with me when I say that environment is an important factor in building the character of the individual.

We trust that from these grants secondary schools will no longer be adapted to a race to pass examinations but that they will emphasize other aspects of the training of students in their impressionable years of 11 to 19, such as making them desirable citizens who will fit with dignity and decorum into the society which we visualize. Teachers have had to toe the line and often to do so with their small resources, and my sympathy goes out to those who have been told in effect, "if you do not get results, you are out of the business."

Government has quite rightly come to the assistance of secondary schools and we appreciate this assistance, but it is far from what Government will be spending on educational institutions like Queen's College, *per capita*. There can be absolutely no comparison. I trust that in the near future there would be another step forward in assisting the pioneering secondary schools in this country to come up to the standard of Queen's College because it does not make for a good educational system to have a great disparity in standards. It behoves Government to see that the children do not suffer through no fault of their own. But we are moving on and I hope eventually we

[Mr. Sugrim Singh]

will hit the bull's eye — free secondary education.

While indeed we may be spending a colossal amount on the construction and maintenance of primary school buildings, the teachers themselves put in a staggering amount of hours, in terms of work. Their efforts would not entirely be lost if secondary education and other senior school training could be made available to more of the bright students, for it is hard to see many a brilliant child say good-bye to his education after leaving primary school. That day I hope is not far off.

Mr. Lord: I have read with interest the memorandum and the accompanying Sessional Paper, and I must congratulate the authors on presenting a very comprehensive study of the educational needs of the Colony. I agree with the recommendations and I would touch particularly on that in favour of a grant from Government towards the improvement of the Colony's teachers, because I fear that the poor quality sometimes found among teachers in private secondary schools is due to the fact that people with the most suitable qualifications cannot always be found for the service.

I also welcome the desire by Government to provide money grants for the improvement of the equipment in private secondary schools, because it is obvious that Government cannot all by itself provide the secondary education with facilities necessary to meet the ever-increasing population of young people. I think it is very commendable on the part of Government to try to assist private secondary schools. The intention of Government also to provide secondary schools in the rural

districts of the Colony is very laudable for it is very expensive for parents who have to send their children from the rural districts to Georgetown to undergo training at secondary schools.

What I am really concerned about is what is to happen to those children who are leaving the secondary schools. It is possible that some of them may enter the Civil Service and others into commercial and industrial undertakings but those avenues cannot absorb all of them. I think it is something like 20,000 young persons who are needing employment every year and they are between the ages of 11 and 19. A great number of young people will have to go back to the land.

What is to be done is, as the memorandum states, to provide the right attitude to agricultural pursuits. That should be inculcated into the minds of the young children. I am therefore somewhat disappointed that — I think the hon. Member for Education surmised that — there is not more positive action in regard to agricultural education and that no funds have been provided in the 1956-60 Development Programme for this purpose. In reviewing the memorandum, however, I can see where reference has been made to recommendations of the Sixth West Indian Conference of 1955 which have been followed to some extent. At that Conference it was laid down that "it is essential that Governments appreciate the need for provision of an education service to farmers on a basis as permanent as any other form of education". Having regard to a Resolution passed in this Council in November, 1955, recommending the "establishment of a Pilot Agricultural Farm School where young

persons will receive training, both theoretical and practical, with the object of settling them on the land". I consider that Government should take immediate action to give effect to that Resolution.

Government is spending a great deal of money, \$8 million, to make available well-drained and irrigated land for the use of the rising population—Torani Scheme, Blocks I and II and the Boerasirie Extension project. I feel sure that these schemes and projects will not be successful if the best possible use is not made of the land and for that reason I feel greater accent should be placed on training farmers to go on the land. Priority should also be given to the instruction of children in agri-

cultural pursuits. The memorandum admits that —

"The facilities for training the Staff of the Agriculture and other Government Departments planned for the Central Agricultural Station at Mon Repos are strictly limited, and that consideration is being given to the establishment of a proper training school at Mon Repos for theoretical and practical training with hostel accommodation and all the necessary ancillary facilities".

I consider that the Sessional Paper could very well have made reference to the proposals in this respect. I have very great pleasure, however, in supporting the Sessional Paper and the recommendations it contains.

At this stage Council adjourned to Thursday, 30th May, 1957 at 2 p.m.