

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 8th November, 1935.

The Council met pursuant to adjournment, His Excellency the Governor, SIR GEOFFREY A. S. NORTHCOTE, K.C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT.

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

The Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr. Hector Josephs, K.C.

The Hon. T. T. Smellie, O.B.E. (Nominated Unofficial Member).

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

Major the Hon. W. Bain Gray, C.B.E., Director of Education.

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

The Hon. E. A. Luckhoo (Eastern Berbice).

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

The Hon. J. Mullin, O.B.E. Commissioner of Lands and Mines.

The Hon. F. J. Seaford (Georgetown North).

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

Major the Hon. J. C. Craig, D.S.O., Director of Public Works.

The Hon. M. B. Laing, District Commissioner, East Coast Demerara District.

The Hon. Q. B. De Freitas, Surgeon-General (Acting).

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

The Hon. J. Eleazar (Berbice River).

The Hon. J. Gonsalves (Georgetown South).

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

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

The Hon. M. B. G. Austin (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

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

The Hon. A. R. Crum Ewing (Essequibo River).

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

The Hon. A. G. King (Demerara River).

The Hon. S. H. Seymour (Western Essequibo).

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

MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 7th November, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

PETITION.

Mr. JACOB laid on the table a petition from T. N. Henry praying for a compassionate gratuity in respect of his services as a lorry driver in the Public Works Department.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

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, 1936.

FOREST DEPARTMENT.

Mr. De AGUIAR : When the Council adjourned yesterday afternoon I was giving reasons for my own objection to the continuity of expenditure on this Department. I had then reached the stage where I gave the figures of the expenditure for

the last ten years and I was questioning the wisdom of continuing to spend further sums of money in connection with the Department. This morning I propose to deal with a few points which occurred to me when this estimate was being considered by the Select Committee. We had an opportunity of discussing the matter with the Conservator of Forests, and I must confess that I heard what he had to say with a good deal of interest—and I would like to add that he endeavoured to present a very good case for the continuance of this Department—yet at the end of his speech I was still unconvinced as to the wisdom of spending this money.

The Colonial Secretary made reference to local prejudice. My own experience of local prejudice is one which I think would be of more value to Government. It is inconceivable to expect people of the Colony to be prepared to buy local wood at the price of wood imported from a foreign country. There can be no doubt that any attempt to sell determa or crabwood at the same price as pitch-pine is bound to result in failure. People are accustomed to buying pitch-pine, which has given them satisfaction, and if you want them to try something new there must be some consideration to them to do so. This Department cannot produce wood of the nature they are trying to produce at the cost of imported wood, for the reason that transportation costs are so heavy that we must charge a very high price or a price in line with the imported article. Has Government endeavoured to reduce transportation costs of woods from the interior? No attempt has been made in that direction, and, until that aspect of the matter has been adjusted, I cannot conceive how it is possible for the cost of local wood to be reduced.

Those of us who have some connection with this matter will tell you that attempts have been made to bring down forest wood at a lower cost of transportation than exists at present, but every such attempt which has been made has proved absolutely unworkable. As wood-cutters proceed inland 5 or 10 miles transportation costs increase, because you have to depend either on man power or mechanical power, but whichever of these two methods is adopted the cost is very high, and unless

we tackle transportation costs I cannot see how it is possible to put our wood on the market at a price which will compare favourably with imported wood. The argument put forward to show that local prejudice is on the wane cannot bear examination. Figures supplied to me by the Conservator with respect to transactions this year show that 66 per cent. of the trade that was done was for lumber delivered to the Public Works Department and 18 per cent. to other Government Departments, leaving only 16 per cent. to the general buyers of wood in the Colony. Even when that 16 per cent. is gone into carefully it would be found that very special circumstances arose to account for such a high percentage.

On the question of crabwood the Conservator also made a statement which left one fairly alarmed. I understood from him that we can never hope, at any time, to obtain a greater percentage of the export market than 30 per cent. which means that we must find a local market for 70 per cent. of our crabwood. If we have to depend on the local market to take 70 per cent. we are flogging a dead horse. What is the value of our imports? Speaking off-hand, I think it is something like \$60,000 or \$70,000 per annum. If that is the value of our imports of wood, is the Department justified in spending \$30,000 or \$40,000 to capture that trade? It seems to me that Government is hoping that we shall be able at some time or other to break down the bridge. I should like to see that but there are many difficulties in the way, and the expenditure of such a large sum of money year after year is not justified.

Another bit of information that was given us by the Conservator of Forests that caused me very great concern was the fact that apart from greenheart, crabwood, determa and mora, other kinds of wood are very rare indeed. We know what the market for greenheart is like. The Conservator has told us what we must expect from crabwood. If we have no other wood which will interest foreign buyers, it seems to me that we are only wasting money on this Department. On this question of imports, can we successfully keep out the importation of imported lumber? After a careful study of the question I must frankly confess that we cannot. You will never

be able to do it irrespective of any tariff, as suggested by the hon. Member for North Western District. I agree with him that if it becomes necessary we should put on a protective duty in order to protect our local wood, but Government must be satisfied that we can take care of our needs before such an attempt is made. I think that warning is unnecessary, because I happen to know from my own experience that Government is very careful on that score and will hardly increase the duty on any article unless it is satisfied that it can fulfil local demands.

The hon. Member for Georgetown North yesterday referred to the difficulty of our competing in foreign markets. I join him on that score. I know what this Colony will be up against if any serious attempt is made to place any of our woods in the United States of America or in Europe. If it were possible at all for us to embark on a very big scheme, and if we could afford to spend any large sum of money in order to foster the industry, I would be the first person to encourage Government to embark on such an undertaking. But this attempt is getting us nowhere; it is frittering away money that we cannot afford to spend, and we are getting no result. Although the Department has been in existence for 11 or 12 years, it is only within the last year that an attempt was made to cure the woods of the Colony. What was the Department doing previous to that time?—creating a nursery from which we can expect no result for 50 or 100 years. Are we justified in continuing to spend money on those grounds? Would Government make an announcement as to whether this Department is being maintained for local purposes or on instructions of the Imperial Government? If the latter is the reason, then we cannot afford to continue this expenditure. We must go to the Imperial Government and tell them that this country cannot afford to maintain this Department with an annual expenditure of \$30,000 or \$40,000 a year and ask them for an absolute grant for the purpose. If the Imperial Government are willing to do that, or to spend some of their own money in the pursuit of its activities, I shall be very silent on the expenditure on this Department.

My main submission is that having

regard to the Colony's financial position, we cannot afford to keep a Department which does not hold out any promise of any kind of being remunerative in the near future, and until such time as we can afford to maintain a luxury Department my view is that Government would be wise to cut its loss and run. Nothing I have said, however, must be taken to mean that I am against any attempt that might be made to improve the curing of our local woods. I am in favour of some attempt being made to do that; but, in order to do that, is it absolutely necessary to maintain the Department at this strength merely to cure 100,000, 200,000 or 500,000 feet of lumber per annum? Is it justifiable to mulct the Colony in expenditure of \$30,000 a year in order to cure our wood and make it serviceable for our requirements? It seems to me that would not occur in a commercial establishment because the annual working loss would be more than that commercial establishment would be able to bear. Government is in the same position and cannot afford to spend this money year after year. We cannot balance our budget and the deficit is going up every year. No attempt is being made to reduce expenditure. If we are to go on in this way we shall never be able to say we are masters in our own house. I appeal to Your Excellency to consider the points I have raised. If next year at least we must go on with this Department, some effort should be made to reduce the expenditure very substantially.

Mr. AUSTIN: There is no doubt that the present Administration is suffering, to a certain extent, from mal-administration in the past. It has been made sufficiently clear during the past three years that this Department can be economically amalgamated with the Department of Lands and Mines and the two worked together to the benefit of the Colony. A qualified undertaking was given to that extent, but it has not yet materialised. After Your Excellency has been a little longer in the Colony you will find that the officers of the Forest Department are drawing large salaries and have little or no work to do, and that the material coming out of the forest does not warrant the expenditure of the sum provided in the Estimates. Apart from that we know in shipping circles that the timber people

in the United Kingdom stock the green heart shipped from this country at Liverpool and London for three or four years awaiting sales, while other stuff from other parts of the Empire find sales very readily. Not long ago we sent home samples of various woods to the station at Princes Risborough, but if those samples had been shipped by any person in this Colony they would have been left behind. We shipped what we thought was best. I mention that to show the interest that officials of the Department take in despatching woods abroad which might interest people in the United Kingdom. If this Department is amalgamated with another Department, as has been suggested, I think we might make some progress.

MR. KING: I ask Your Excellency's indulgence to preface the remarks I wish to make on this question by saying that I always felt that, in the shadow of those illustrious Members who have sat in this Hall in the past, and in the presence of those other illustrious Members who are now sitting in this Hall, I would speak for the first time here with a feeling of awe, but after listening to some of the speeches made in this Hall within the past few days, that feeling of awe is now mingled with a feeling of surprise. Nevertheless, I trust that the deliberations of the Council will always be tempered with a spirit of co-operation and give-and-take between Official and Unofficial Members. I feel sure that if hon. Members will co-operate in that way it would undoubtedly be to the benefit of the Colony and the welfare of its inhabitants. I cannot agree with the view of the Member for Berbice River that this is a luxury Department. I cannot subscribe to that view because I cannot conceive how any Department which is doing some good for the Colony can be described as a luxury. I am satisfied from what I heard in the Select Committee—and I am sorry that the hon. Member for Berbice River did not take advantage of attending those meetings—that this Department is doing good work, and it will I hope in time give good service to the Colony. I personally intend to support any movement of this nature which Government might bring forward in this House.

I feel sure that if Members would con-

sider the matter a little they will realise that a Department of this nature is bound to react to the benefit of the Colony. It is in my opinion a better gamble than some of the gambles this House has sanctioned, and not only do I see a ray of light which the hon. Member for Berbice River does not see but I see a sunbeam. After all this country is composed mostly of a wealth of timbers, and if we are going to allow those timbers to remain in the interior without making any serious effort to turn them to beneficial account, we are doing something which we have no right to do. We must make every effort we can to endeavour to bring out to the markets of the world the timbers which are lying in the interior of British Guiana just as we are making every effort now with the gold industry. The gold industry is one that should proceed and should receive the support of every man in British Guiana, as I believe the timber industry should receive the support of every Member of this House. I am sure I will be doing no injustice to myself by supporting the expenditure on this Department.

Apart from that, the Imperial Government, which is advancing the money necessary to meet any deficit suffered by this Colony, are the people most concerned with expenditure of this kind, and if they are satisfied that expenditure of this nature is justified and is for the good of the Colony then I think we should support it. It is true that in years to come we will be asked to repay the money advanced, but, nevertheless, if it is a gamble we are engaging in it is a gamble with their money which should be tried out. This Colony is somewhat deficient in an export trade of any considerable size other than sugar, and if an export trade in the timbers of British Guiana can be established abroad I feel sure we can look forward with a certain amount of optimism to the improvement of economic conditions in the Colony. One of the timbers of this Colony at least is well known throughout the world, and it is only a matter of getting the others on the market. It will take time, but it takes time to establish any industry in the markets of the world. Do not let us be afraid because we cannot get any immediate return from this Department. I am in favour of it, and I appeal to hon. Members

to consider the matter from a different point of view to what has been expressed by some of them, and to look forward with more optimism to the future of the timber industry of British Guiana.

Mr. CRUM EWING: I was not present yesterday when this question was being discussed, but if some of my colleagues would realise that 80 per cent. of the country's hinterland resources are in timber, they would see the value of this investment. Within the past 10 years the best investment we have had in the hinterland has been the geological survey. What we now need is a topographical and hydrographic survey so as to be able to handle all our woods. A man has to cut greenheart from the transporting point only to find that he has to leave several other woods like mora, silverball or determa. If a man is able to cut either of those woods by itself that would eventually mean a wonderful source of income to the Colony. It is impossible to expect foreign capital to be interested in our timber unless people here are in a position to place statistical data at their disposal. That is what the Forest Department is doing now. For that purpose the Department will have my support, and if at any time a further grant is necessary for placing such data on the world's markets for the timber or mineral industries it would have my whole-hearted support.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: It seems to me that no one can controvert the necessity of having data as regards the timbers of the Colony, but I do not think that anyone can gainsay the fact that we have practically all the data that we require. This Department has been in existence for quite a number of years. When it was started I was a Member of the Council and my impression is that the idea then was that it would continue for just a few years in order to collect all the data that was necessary. It seems to me that those years have passed, but the Department is still here. I entirely agree that it is necessary to have at least one well-qualified forestry officer attached to some other Department, but I do not see the necessity of continuing this Department at a cost of \$30,000 from year to year. In the Committee the Conservator of Forests informed us that there are still some areas which have not yet been

thoroughly investigated. The Mazaruni and Essequebo and other well known areas have been investigated and plotted out, but he said it might be necessary, for example, to investigate the potentialities of creeks like the Mahaica, the Mahaicony and the Abary. One cannot think of any easier way of wasting money than that. There is no chance of timber of any value at all being found in those areas, and if we have already plotted out the areas of timbers in the Mazaruni and the Essequibo the work of the Department is almost completed.

I am not entirely in favour of wiping out this Department *en bloc*, but I appeal to Government, having regard to all the work already done and what remains to be done as to the testing of timbers for marketing and the durability and drying powers of the timbers, to enquire whether it cannot be done by one or at least two of the Assistant Conservators rather than having a highly paid Department as at present. I am sure that no straightforward and honest official can gainsay the fact that the Conservator of Forests and his Assistants do not do a day's work; they do not for the simple reason that they have not got it to do. I think there is a great future for the timbers of this Colony but not for many years to come, and if we are to give data to those who are willing to invest capital in the country all that is needed is the testing of the durability and other attributes of the timbers available. I ask Government seriously to consider whether the Department cannot be considerably reduced, and to take Members of the Council into your confidence and tell us frankly whether we should not retain a skeleton Department with one well-qualified Assistant Conservator of Forests. If Your Excellency would give the Council an undertaking that the matter will be thoroughly gone into and the expenditure considerably reduced in the next Estimates, I think most of the Members of the Council would be inclined to vote for it, but there seems to be no prospect of that ever arising. Unless it is a fact that the Secretary of State insists upon the Department continuing, in which case, of course, you will be bound by that decision, I suggest that Your Excellency take some time to consider the matter and leave over these estimates until you have done so. We can then return to

them and decide whether the expenditure on the Department cannot be considerably reduced, or what can be done to the officers at present employed.

Mr. SEYMOUR: In the last 10 years this Department has spent half-a-million dollars. Take greenheart alone: the exports instead of showing an increase show a decrease. I propose to follow the hon. Member in asking Government to go into the question whether we are going to produce timbers to meet the requirements of the outside world. It is not always economical to do so.

Mr. WIGHT: I desire to say that in Committee I never heard a more clear and concise argument for carrying on the Department. I have always been against the Department because I considered it too expensive. The idea is that the houses in this country are all built of wood and if the Department could give us a proper cure for all our woods used for building purposes it would be alright. I am afraid that the only success the Department has made that I am familiar with is in the curing of crabwood and cedar. I have had some given to me by the Conservator for experiment and I found it beautiful in the manufacture of household furniture. But an expenditure of \$31,000 requires an investment of capital of over \$1,000,000. Where is the possibility of our being able from this Department to pay even the interest on the investment apart from the reduction of the capital? I am not going to agree with those Members who want to shut the Department down. From what I have heard from the Conservator, and what I know about crabwood and cedar, it will serve its purpose one of these days. I am in agreement with those who argue that we are paying too much and that it should be gone into very carefully. The Conservator is a man, in my opinion, who can fill almost any position in this community, and I think his services can be utilised in another Department, like the Lands and Mines or any other like it, and the two Departments should be amalgamated.

Mr. JACOB: I spoke on this Department yesterday. In discussing it last night with a few friends I was reliably informed that one or two officers at Mazaruni do practically nothing. I understand that

they have time hanging on their hands, particularly one officer, and in comparing salaries paid the Conservator and Assistant Conservator with those of Heads of other Departments, I strongly suggest and earnestly recommend that steps be taken to reduce these salaries. I do not subscribe to the view that there must be an Assistant to take the place of the Conservator when he goes on leave, and I do not think this Colony can afford to have so many Assistants. I agree that there should be a reduction of expenditure on this Department.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I have not heard anything to convince me that this vote should not be struck out. I have my own vices, but gambling is not one of them. Gambling is a bad enough vice with your own money, but when you gamble with other people's money you are a fool, and when Government ask us to gamble away the taxpayers' money it is almost a criminal offence. The Conservator was brought here to make an investigation and to appraise the value of our forests. When he had given us all we wanted him to do the idea was conceived to establish this Department. Members thought that we did not need a separate Department, but if there must be an officer their view was that he should be attached to the Lands and Mines Department. In the face of that this Department was created, and it was discovered that it would take \$150,000 to run it up to 1928 and make it of any use. We cannot find up to this time any adequate return for \$31,000 and we cannot afford to incur this expenditure.

The hon. Member for Central Demerara has hit the nail on the head. That Member has to do with shipping and he tells us, from his point of view, why the Department should not be continued. The hon. Member for Georgetown North is connected with an industry which does most with greenheart and woods of that nature, and we have also heard his views on the question. To discard the views of persons who are competent to express an opinion and go out and get a fisherman to say his fish is of the best quality is unheard of. From my point of view Mr. Wood is one of the best officials I know. More than that, I know that as Chairman of the Local Government Board he alone would have put things on proper lines, and

he would have been better able to do it than the District Administration. But instead of being made to do that he was sent to Mazaruni to cool his heels. He is a good officer, but we say we have no work for him to do. Not even Mr. Wood himself can convince us that we are justified in spending this money, nor can tell us that there is any opportunity of recouping it. If the Imperial Government want to retain this Department hand it over to them because we cannot afford to retain it. It is a crime to gamble with the country's money, and we cannot afford to carry it on when there is no guarantee that we will get any benefit, especially at a time when we are borrowing money to carry on.

MR. WALCOTT: There is one statement made by the hon. Member for Berbice River which I think I should contradict. He said the Conservator of Forests promised he would make us rich in a short time.

MR. ELEAZAR: I never said a word like that.

MR. WALCOTT: I would like to say that the Conservator of Forests was most helpful in giving us all the information possible about the timber industry, and he was certainly very conservative in telling us what he anticipated as the result of his work. The Department is with us. It is true it may be a very expensive Department for the amount of benefit we get out of it at the present time, but I believe that the day will come when we shall be very glad that we have kept it alive. Of course it would be better for the Colony if we could get the Imperial Government to carry it on. It is a decided load on our shoulders at the present time. But when I hear Members speak, as some of them have done, about getting nothing out of this Department, I recall similar remarks being made about the geological survey from which we are benefiting to-day. I know several men who have put money into this Colony as the result of that survey—they never thought of doing so before—and I suppose others will be influenced to do so.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Waddington): I have really very little to add. I would like to refer, in the first place, to a statement which was made criticising the figures that I gave of the increase of the

output from the Forest Department. Those figures were criticised on the ground that a good deal of that output went to Government Departments. That is true. A good deal of it does, but, nevertheless, the amount going outside Government Departments is increasing, and it would increase very much more rapidly if the people in this country would only give the same support to their own industry. I stressed yesterday that it is necessary that we should put our own house in order before we can hope to get substantial markets overseas, but all Members present at the Select Committee would remember the remarks of the Conservator of Forests when he explained to us his discussions in England and his expectations of being able to find a substantial market for our woods, especially in regard to furniture.

The vote of the Select Committee, after hearing the statements and arguments of the Conservator of Forests, is conclusive proof that in the opinion of the Committee the expectations of the Conservator were entirely justified. I would just like to make one reference to greenheart because two hon. Members have referred to it. One said that foreign wood was taking its place and the other that there was a serious decline in the exports. Foreign wood has been used in a few cases in place of greenheart, but that has been due entirely to the question of length and it has only been used in cases where the lengths required are much greater than greenheart can supply. In the ordinary way it is not supplanting greenheart in any way. In regard to the decline in the exports, I may remind Members who heard the Conservator of Forests of his remarks that greenheart is one, and probably the only, wood which has held its own in these times of economic depression.

THE CHAIRMAN: I would like to add one or two remarks to this important debate before I put the question to the vote. I am an optimist with regard to our forests. I would say no more on that point because there is nothing I can usefully add to what the hon. Member for Demerara River has said. Our troubles here to a large extent have been in regard to marketing. Hon. Members have admitted that in the last year at any rate—I cannot speak of any time previous to

that—endeavours have been made—I think successful endeavours—by the Forest Department to prove that our timbers can be cured to a pitch which would make them useful. I urge hon. Members to continue with that experiment in view of the enormous quantity of our timber assets in this country. I refuse to accept the argument that we have special transportation difficulties. We are well served by water in this country, and it is the case that as they have gradually to go aback from the waterside they will have to go overland. As far as I know no special disability attaches to British Guiana on that score.

If out of 100,000 feet of timber some 80,000 feet was bought by Government Departments, it has been bought with public money. It seems to me to matter not one jot whether the timber, which is bought with money which remains in this country instead of going out of it, is used by a Government Department for the purpose of the taxpayer or is used by a private individual. The fact remains that the consumption of local timber in this country is going up, which is excluding to some extent imported timber, and I fail to see any reason why we should strive for a continuance of imported timber when we can supply our own needs.

Several references have been made to the legend that the Forest Department is maintained for Imperial reasons. If anybody can give me chapter and verse for that legend subsequently showing why that belief has arisen, I shall be glad to try and satisfy his mind.

With regard to the Department it seems to be assumed that its sole objective is to investigate the forests. The Forest Department has other duties besides investigation. The investigation in relation to the forests is far from complete, and even if it were there are duties in relation to the management of the forests. There is also the question of conservation and exploitation to be taken into consideration.

I have been asked to pledge myself to reduce the Department next year, or at any rate to consider its reduction. I will say this. I am prepared to reduce any Department in this Colony which I think

is in excess of its necessary strength. I have personally investigated this Department. I have no reason to think that the Department is excessive in strength, but I regard Members of this Council as responsible persons and when a statement is made to me by responsible persons I investigate it. I shall make an investigation into the statement that the members of this Department are in excess of its requirements. Further than that I am not prepared to go. There is only one other argument I wish to refer to, and that is the suggestion that our timber may be worth while but we should develop it 100 years hence. I heard that stated by at least one hon. Member, who gave no reasons why we should put off for 100 years what might be done at the moment.

Question that the item stand as printed put, and agreed to.

LANDS AND MINES.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move in the insertion of a new item—" (2) Personal Allowance to Mr. Mullin Commissioner of Lands and Mines, \$240". While we were in Select Committee I informed hon. Members it was possible that this item would be brought forward, but I was not in a position at that time to tell them definitely whether it would or not because the matter was under reference to the Secretary of State. A telegram has since been received on the subject and it is therefore possible to bring it forward with the Estimates.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: The question of personal allowances is a very invidious one. I suggest that instead of having long discussions on each item the question be just put and Members vote as they like.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I cannot find any potent argument why I should deprive Mr. Mullin of this \$240. It seems to me that Government are now out to give personal allowances. I have in mind certain officers whose claim I shall bring to the notice of Government, and I should very much like to know what the objection to them will be.

Question put, and agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that item "(3) 1 Class I. Officer, \$1,812" be increased to \$2,004. It was

explained in Committee that this item and items (7) and (8) are bound up together.

Question put, and agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of a new item "(8) 1 Class II Clerk, \$1,404" and item (10) be amended to read "1 Class III. Clerk, \$1,045." The object is to substitute a Class III. Clerk for a Class II. Clerk.

Question put, and agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion as item (27) of "(27) Substitutes for Government Surveyors employed on Boundary Commission, \$600." This vote represents leave pay and is recoverable.

Mr. D^E AGUIAR: Now that the Boundary Commissioner's salary no longer appears on these Estimates, I would like to know whether there is going to be a balancing of the accounts with the Imperial Government.

Mr. MULLIN (Commissioner of Lands and Mines): Accounts are balanced month by month. This vote is to allow for the period of leave earned by this officer whilst he was acting.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: This Colony provided the Boundary Commissioners with Surveyors from the Lands and Mines Department drawing a certain scale of salaries, the Imperial Government undertaking at the time to pay for the substitutes of these officials at a lower rate of salary. I do not know whether I am right in assuming that when the demarcation of the boundary is completed this Colony will obtain the difference we have paid in salaries to these officers and the amount received from the Imperial Government. Quite a substantial sum is involved and I ask whether Government can hope to get back that difference.

Mr. MULLIN: The bargain was that the officers of this Government would be seconded to the Boundary Commission and the Imperial Government would pay for such substitutes as we required. The substitutes available were not of the same standard as the officers seconded, therefore the salaries paid to them were not so high,

but there is no question of our recovering the difference.

Question put, and agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that item (25) be renumbered (28) and amended to read "(28) Apprentices, \$1,620."

Question put, and agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that sub-head 14—House Allowance (Acting Superintendent of Surveys), \$480—be reduced to \$40.

Question put, and agreed to.

LAW OFFICERS.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I wish to make a few comments on "Fees to Counsel for prosecuting at Criminal Sessions, \$1,200." In a recent important murder case—the only one in my experience for a number of years—I observed that the Crown was represented by only the Assistant Attorney-General while there were two stalwart legal practitioners on the other side. It is not the policy of Government to get a verdict, but, viewed from a distance, it looked very much as if the Assistant Attorney-General was overwhelmed by counsel on the other side. He might have had a practitioner or two to assist him. If the money is not sufficient to engage other counsel it should be increased in the interest of justice.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr. Hector Josephs): The amount is sufficient. It is what we have had to put on for the last two years, in view of increased criminal prosecutions and also to give an opportunity for more work being done by the Law Officers in Chambers. With regard to the recent prosecution to which my hon. and learned friend referred, the prosecution was very well conducted by my colleague, who is quite capable and competent and for the last six years has been conducting important prosecutions in this country with knowledge and experience. If we had thought—he or I—that there was reason or necessity for his having other counsel with him that would have been provided. Of course, I do not know what my hon. friend sees at a distance. Distance some-

times blurs the view. It is rather different to be in close contact with the heart of things. My hon. friend will agree with me that one forms a different opinion of proceedings in Court from impressions gathered outside the Court. Many of these prosecutions have been conducted by one counsel alone. Only last year there was another prosecution for murder, the trial of which lasted for a month, which was conducted by a barrister who happened not to be a man. The prisoner in that case was convicted and recently executed. I assure the hon. Member that great care is taken in these matters to see that the interest of the Crown is properly looked after and with the object to do justice from every stand-point.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Distance lends some enchantment to the view, but the magnitude of the forces made me think.

MAGISTRATES.

Mr. ELEAZAR: When I went to New Amsterdam 20 years ago I met two Magistrates there. When a certain Magistrate went there he suggested that if Government would give him an extra £100 he would run the district alone and save them about £800 per annum. The hon. Member for Eastern Berbice and I were consulted and we said it was a good idea, and Government accepted the proposal and the Magistrate got the extra £100. When the Magistrate was leaving the district he attempted to carry the £100 with him, but Government said it was not personal to him and his successor got it. Later the allowance was withdrawn and other Magistrates carried on the work with varying success until the present Magistrate was appointed. To the surprise of everyone this Magistrate has done the work and there is no complaint. One expects Government to be just when it is inclined to be generous, as it has shown at this session. This officer is doing the work with so much satisfaction compared with those who did it before him that I appeal to Government to give him the extra £100. Government has a free house but the Magistrate has to pay rent, and he is a junior Magistrate.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will look into the matter and see if there is any inequity in it.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Is item "(g) Remuneration to officers acting as Stipendiary Magistrates, \$2,400" to provide substitutes for Magistrates going on leave, or is it for the payment of a Magistrate who is permanently employed?

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The sum of \$2,400 was provided a year ago for the first time because when Magistrates went on leave or a Magistrate was appointed to act as a Judge of the Supreme Court there was no provision in the Estimates to put a person to act for him. This money was provided to meet the case where an acting Magistrate is required for any reason whatsoever. This year there was a Magistrate on leave, another acted as Registrar and another as a Judge of the Supreme Court.

Mr. JACOB: I have given notice of certain questions and I should like to take this opportunity to make a few comments under this head in relation to the registration of voters and Stipendiary Magistrates as a whole. Magistrates are used as Registering Officers.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No, they are not.

THE CHAIRMAN: It has nothing to do with the Magisterial Vote.

Mr. JACOB: Very well, sir. We have Magistrates who have been acting for some considerable time. There is a particular Magistrate who has been acting for nearly 15 years and Members feel that it would be better if that officer is appointed to the permanent staff, or that he should be given some assurance that he would be appointed permanently later on. On the other hand there is in my constituency a gentleman who has been performing the duties of Magistrate and giving excellent service, but he is not a qualified legal practitioner. People who have been convicted felt that there might have been some legal technicality which they could not raise themselves and which had not been taken in their favour. Objections on legal grounds may not be discovered until after a conviction, but by the time a person could consult a lawyer and file his appeal the time within which he may appeal has expired. A Magistrate who is not a qualified barrister overlooks certain points, and in the interest of justice and the people's liberty there

should be qualified Magistrates in all parts of the Colony. There are several qualified barristers who may be appointed as Magistrates, and we hope Government will give this matter some consideration and appoint only qualified persons as Magistrates.

Mr. LUCKHOO: I do not know whether we constitute ourselves a Court of Appeal, but I think it is a matter for the Attorney-General to look into. The particular officer to whom reference has been made has been acting for some time. I do not know of any complaint of grave injustice.

Mr. JACOB: I was not referring specifically to the Commissioner of the North West District but was making general observations.

Mr. LUCKHOO: I am glad that the explanation has been made. I am referring to the general principle. Persons without legal knowledge act as Magistrates and we get a good deal of commonsense from them, while we have had legal men resorting to lecturing people instead of carrying out their duties. I have no complaint against the manner unqualified men have dealt with cases which have come before them. They exercise every care and attention as well as commonsense, and if qualified Magistrates display equal commonsense there would be no complaint. If there is a case of any grave injustice done to any particular individual it would be the duty of the Attorney-General, as representing the Crown, to move the Supreme Court by way of motion and get the matter dealt with. I am not aware that any grave hardship or injustice has been done, but if any such case is brought to the notice of the Attorney-General I am sure it would be enquired into. I wish to endorse the remarks of the hon. Member for Berbice River in respect of the efficiency of the Magistrate in Berbice and of his claim for special consideration.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Sir, in 1922 the Governor, Sir Wilfred Collet, gave an assurance to the Legislature that after that time no person who was not qualified as a barrister or solicitor would be appointed as a Magistrate, and that has been Government's policy in respect of those districts where a whole-time Magis-

trate is required. That policy has been maintained since then, and nobody has been appointed Magistrate since 1922 in whole-time districts except lawyers. There are certain other districts where it is not possible to have a lawyer as Magistrate. One is the North West District where the Commissioner is also Magistrate, and the Commissioner is one of those lay Magistrates who from my experience of his work takes a great deal of care of it with the proper desire to do justice to anyone who comes before him. The other districts in which there are lay Magistrates are the Rupununi and Essequibo districts. In the Rupununi the Commissioner carries on as Magistrate and in the Essequibo the Warden is also travelling Magistrate. I think it will be admitted that in the present state of our finances it is not possible in those districts to appoint other persons who are qualified to administer the law. The cases are very few indeed and they are dealt with by the Magistrate with a great deal of care.

With regard to the question of appeal, in the Appeal Ordinance special time is provided for these far-away districts; and in other cases where special circumstances make it difficult for any person to send in an appeal in time, the Court very rightly grants applications of that kind. I am informed that an application was granted only this morning of time for making an appeal. In special cases—it may be through ignorance, or some important question of law is involved—the Attorney-General goes to the Court to have the question settled. That has been done here. Somebody has been convicted by a Magistrate. On the facts the Attorney-General was of opinion that there was a miscarriage of justice, and he took the case by way of review to the Full Court and the conviction was quashed. In addition to that returns of all convictions go to the Attorney-General with regard to offences and the punishment, and those are investigated. There are instances in which punishment has been given not warranted by law. In all probability the people thus dealt with are unaware of the defect in the judgment, but those cases are investigated by the Attorney-General and if, as sometimes happens, it is clear that the sentence which has been imposed or the order which has been made is not warranted by law, the Attorney-General

tenders certain advice to the Governor as to what might be done in such cases and the action advised is usually taken.

THE CHAIRMAN: I hope that satisfies the hon. Member. I am afraid I must say that as far as the finances of the Colony go, it will not be possible for me to meet his request.

Mr. JACOB: I am very grateful for the explanation given by the Attorney-General, sir, but I think you will agree with me that there is room for improvement when the finances of the Colony permit.

Mr. SEYMOUR: Are there six Magistrates in the Colony at present?

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There are.

Mr. SEYMOUR: The reason why I ask the question is that there is a Magistrate in Essequebo who has been acting off and on for years, and when a vacancy does occur I suggest his appointment without any lump sum or pension. It may be possible to save a few dollars there.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will have that matter enquired into. I am afraid that I am not fully conversant with the facts.

The Committee adjourned for the luncheon recess.

MEDICAL.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Some little time ago the Council accepted a motion to enquire into the working of the Medical Department. That Committee, I understand, has been appointed and has been going on with its duties, but up to the present it has not reported and one wonders what is going to happen. It seems that immediately we have passed the Estimates the Committee will send in its report. It puts one in a false position.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will ask the Chairman of the Committee to inform the Council how this Committee stands.

Major BAIN GRAY (Director of Education): Sir, every important question affecting the Medical Department has been considered by the Committee and decisions

arrived at. These decisions are recorded in the minutes and at the present moment the Secretary has in draft a portion of the official report. We have held what we hope is the last ordinary meeting of the Committee and the only necessity for a further meeting will be for discussion and approval of the report in final form. I can say from the nature of the report that it requires careful consideration by Government and perhaps consideration by the Legislative Council and thereafter by the Secretary of State.

THE CHAIRMAN: In these circumstances I think the only thing to do is to pass these estimates, or to consider these estimates at any rate as they stand, and during the year we can make such alterations as this Council approves in the light of that report and what the Secretary of State accepts. It is not possible at this stage to hold up the Medical estimate until it has been approved by the Committee, this Council and the Secretary of State.

Mr. ELEAZAR: The sins of omission and commission of the Medical Department are so numerous that one does not know where to begin, and one hopes that the Committee's report will at least do some good. There are so many things to find fault with that, as I said, one does not know where to begin. First of all, we have Nursing Sisters brought to this country for the Leper Hospital. When these people were brought here we were told that they were Nursing Sisters of a religious organisation who were willing to serve.

THE CHAIRMAN: What is the sub-head the hon. Member is speaking on?

Mr. ELEAZAR: The Leprosy Hospital, Your Excellency.

THE CHAIRMAN: Possibly the hon. Member is speaking on Head XXI; at present we are on Head XVIII.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I thought it came under the Medical Department.

THE CHAIRMAN: The matter before the Committee at the present moment is sub-head 1 of Head XVIII.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Very well, sir; I will wait until we come to the other Head.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move that item (c)—27 Medical Officers, \$87,265—be increased to \$87,865. This item is bound up with item (f) where there is a decrease. I also move the deletion of item (f) and the increase of item (p) from \$6,140 to \$6,380 to allow for an additional \$240 for the Medical Superintendent of the Mental Hospital.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Is not that officer to be retired some time next year?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, that is the case.

Dr. DE FREITAS (Surgeon General): He is retiring in September.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am so very pleased to hear that that I have nothing more to say.

Item 20—Allowances to Medical Officers undergoing courses of study in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, \$500.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think if I made a short statement on this item it may shorten debate. During discussion in the Select Committee all the Unofficial Members voted against this item. Government's view is that the item should stand and the reasons are as follows. It is necessary to have one, probably two, new medical officers during next year. To get these medical officers we have to go into the market and we wish to get the best we can. That will be restricted. Young men coming into the Colonial Service may be local men; others may come from Home, and in most cases their conditions of service are better than they are here. In a good many cases they do not have this qualification before they are selected, and if we are going to confine ourselves to people who have that qualification we are most unlikely to get as good people in the Medical Service as we would wish to have. With that explanation Government propose to press the matter on those grounds, and I think it may be left to the vote and probably no discussion is necessary. Unofficial Members now know the view of Government, and as they were unanimously against the item in the Select Committee perhaps they would consider that it will be best dealt with by going to the vote at once. I would like to say though that in looking

round the House I notice a good many vacant seats, and if it is the wish to defer it until more Members are present the matter can be held over.

THE CHAIRMAN: I hope that the Unofficial Members will take another view. I observe that the majority are here at the present time.

Mr. SMELLIE: One of the chief reasons for the opposition to the item was that it had not been used for two years, and I moved that it be struck out and everybody agreed.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Colonial Secretary is not suggesting that there should be no discussion, but a shortening of the debate; any Member who wishes to speak is at liberty to do so.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: As far as I am concerned I am quite willing to allow the position to stand over for another year, but there was one remark of the Colonial Secretary which made me rise. I understood him to say that officers coming here would not be in quite as good a position. Officials are in as good a position in our Service as anywhere else. I was very strongly opposed to this item. I am a little convinced by what the Colonial Secretary said, but I do not think the position should be extended beyond a year, so as to give Your Excellency an opportunity to go into the matter again. I hold that medical officers in the Service should possess all the necessary qualifications that Government demands, but I agree that at the present stage a hardship might be created by striking out the vote at once. I will approve of it for next year, but I certainly do not think it should appear on the Estimates after next year.

Mr. SEAFORD: The hon. Member has stated that a hardship might be created. Government might enlighten us as to what this hardship may be. Is there anyone undergoing this course who is entitled to an allowance from this vote?

Dr. DE FREITAS: At present there is no vacancy in the Service and nobody is going on study leave, but there are likely to be two vacancies next year when this vote may be required. This vote has appeared on the Estimates since 1922, and

only last year, for some reason or other, it was deleted. It caused the Department a good deal of inconvenience for the reason that an officer was appointed this year and he had to take the course at his own expense. When he claimed payment of the amount to which he was entitled there was no money to provide for it. If the vote is struck out now and next year there is an appointment it would be a little awkward.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: Is this money used in respect of a local man here wishing to go Home to take the course, or is it only used to enable medical men coming here to take the course before they come out? I want to know whether local men have an opportunity of participating in it too.

Dr. DE FREITAS: Any candidate who has been appointed by the Secretary of State for service in this Colony is entitled to benefit from the vote. It is only restricted to candidates appointed by the Secretary of State before arriving to take up their appointments.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: If a local man is appointed would he be at liberty to share in this vote to take his degree when on leave?

Dr. DE FREITAS: There is another vote for officers already in the Service. On going on leave they can get their fees paid. This is for maintenance and lodging allowance to enable officers on appointment to live while undergoing the course for five months.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Unofficial Members should accept the sportsmanship suggestion of the Colonial Secretary and let the item stand over until we have a full House. We are told that Government wants officers here with certain qualifications and we are asked to provide the money for these officers to qualify themselves for appointment. We are anticipating that candidates will not have the qualification and are providing the money for them to get it. I ask the Committee to accept the suggestion of the Colonial Secretary to postpone the matter and let it then be settled once and for all.

Mr. AUSTIN: This matter was considered by the Medical Re-organisation Committee. It was distinctly stated there that this money is voted for officers

appointed to this Colony by the Secretary of State who had not got the necessary qualifications. The Committee were not against the expenditure because we knew that some local students before coming to the Colony had benefited by having some of this money paid to them, but it was felt that medical men from abroad appointed to this Colony should pay the qualification fees out of their own pocket. I think that was the decision arrived at, and perhaps the Surgeon-General can say whether that is so or not.

Major BAIN GRAY: I was not present at that meeting; it was before my time as Chairman.

Mr. SEAFORD: It is not a question of fees at all but a question of maintenance.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am prepared to defer the item. I do not want to take a snap vote in view of the opinion of the Select Committee, and perhaps some of the few absent Members may take another view.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: If by any action we are going to do an injustice to any officer who has been already appointed then we are not doing the correct thing.

Dr. DE FREITAS: There are no vacancies at all at present.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will pass on to the other sub-heads and reserve sub-head 20 for the time being.

Sub-head 23—Dental Treatment of School Children, \$960.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: It is said that the dental treatment of school children is not all that is desirable, and it has been suggested that perhaps better arrangements might be made not only with the dentists concerned but also that the children should be sent to a particular centre for treatment. I think the arrangement at present is that certain charges are made for particular work done, and a report is sent in by the dentists to the Surgeon-General containing a statement of the work done during the preceding month and of the number of children who attended. It is felt that a larger number of children might be treated with the present vote if an inclusive fee is paid to the dentists for performing this work. Another complaint

is that only school children from Georgetown are being treated. I am not quite sure about that, but, if it is the case, perhaps the treatment should be extended to school children in country districts. That would be far more beneficial than the present arrangement.

THE CHAIRMAN: I understand that arrangements have already been made to that effect.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I suggest that New Amsterdam should be included. I hope New Amsterdam is not regarded as a country district.

THE CHAIRMAN: I have already approved of an arrangement by the Surgeon-General to divide this vote between Georgetown and New Amsterdam.

Dr. DE FREITAS: That is not quite correct, sir. There is another proposal for adults, not school children.

THE CHAIRMAN: In principle I agree with the hon. Member for Berbice River. There is no reason why Georgetown alone should enjoy this privilege. We will leave this sub-head with sub-head 20 open.

BACTERIOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I would like to bring to the notice of Government something which is very material. It is with reference to the clinic for Infant Welfare up the Berbice River.

THE CHAIRMAN: That item arises under the Head of Subventions.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that sub-head 2 (Instruments, supplies, etc, \$750) be increased to \$800.

Question put, and agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that sub-head 3 (Electric Current, \$330) be reduced to \$280.

Question put, and agreed to.

X-RAY DEPARTMENT.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion as sub-head 7 of "Passages, \$384" for the Assistant Radiographer and his family.

Question put, and agreed to.

HOSPITALS AND DISPENSARIES.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that sub-head 1 (22)—Honorarium to Dental Surgeon, \$1,200—be amended to read "(22) Honorarium to Dental Surgeons, Georgetown and New Amsterdam, \$1,680."

Mr. SEAFORD: Does that include children as well?

Dr. DE FREITAS: It is only to cover adults. There is only one dentist in New Amsterdam at present and he has not the time to cope with the work to be done. Arrangements will have to be made with some dentist in Georgetown to undertake this work. If it is possible to extend the clinic in New Amsterdam it will be extended to school children. At present it is only intended for persons applying at the Hospital for dental treatment. We shall have to see how it works as it is a new item. The addition to the vote is for payment of a part-time officer to attend adults at the hospital and children if they go there, but dental treatment of school children is quite a different thing.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the answer is that this officer will not attend the schools but will attend children if they go to the Hospital.

Mr. ELFAZAR: I understand that the amount is for a Dental Surgeon in New Amsterdam and that children will be attended to as well if they need his services at the Hospital.

THE CHAIRMAN: I suggest that the Committee vote the provision and leave it to the Medical Department to make arrangements to the best interest of the Hospital.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I think we should be clear on this point. It must be for the treatment of adults as well as children, otherwise the amount would be out of proportion to what it is for Georgetown.

THE CHAIRMAN: It will be for those who attend the Hospital clinic. On that understanding the question is that the sub-head be amended to read "Honorarium to Dental Surgeons, \$1,680."

Question put, and agreed to.

Item (23)—Nursing Sisters at Leprosy Hospital, etc, \$792.

Mr. ELEAZAR : This item should not continue to be on the Estimates at all. When this matter was first brought to the House it was understood that these charitable Sisters were coming here to devote their services to assisting suffering mankind and it would not cost anything. Six of them came. One was supposed to be Superintendent of the others and another was supposed to be the servant of the other five. Each one had a separate bath-room, and \$60 a month was paid one for superintending the others, in addition to a ration and laundry allowance to all alike. Further, they have a Chaplain towards the cost of whose travelling we are making a contribution. Now all six have left the Colony and those who are succeeding them are coming from America. At present our people cannot go to America owing to the quota system.

THE CHAIRMAN : The ladies now coming are Canadians.

Mr. ELEAZAR : If they are Canadians my remarks will go by the board, but I suppose they would be coming here under similar conditions. Is it fair to the people of this country to treat them so handsomely when we have our own unemployed with nothing to do ? It is differentiation which cannot be justified.

Dr. DE FREITAS : The hon. Member is not fully acquainted with all the facts in connection with this matter, and, with Your Excellency's permission, I will try to enlighten him. If the hon. Member had been present, as I was early this year, he would have discovered that these ladies had captivated the inmates of the Leprosy Hospital. These ladies came to the Colony and undertook dangerous and unpleasant work. Government had to provide them with maintenance and suitable accommodation. As a matter of fact the first Sisters who came were having their first experience in a tropical climate, and I can assure the Council that the way they put up with the numerous discomforts at the Hospital spoke volumes for them. In anything the Colony did to make them tolerably comfortable I do not think it erred on the side of generosity. If the hon. Member went there now and saw the change which has been effected in that institution, I do not think he would come to any other conclusion than that the money the Colony has spent for these

ladies' bare subsistence has been very well spent. It is true that these ladies attach a good deal of importance to their spiritual surroundings and that they insisted on getting certain conditions which they are naturally entitled to.

I may also say that Bishop Weld provides for the maintenance of the Chaplain and the Sisters make a contribution to it. Apart from his missionary duties, the Priest is in charge of the Mahaica and Mahacony districts, but most of his duties are at the Leprosy Hospital and his visits are covered from these allowances. It is not quite correct for the hon. Member to say that these ladies were provided with a bath-room apiece, because to my knowledge there are only four bath-rooms, but whatever expenditure was incurred was absolutely repaid by the degree of comfort, satisfaction and improvement of the inmates brought about by them. I am sure that the fact that these ladies were recalled to their country had nothing to do with conditions here. They were recalled by their Superiors, due notice was given, and another community arrived in the Colony three weeks ago. The arrangements are exactly the same. These ladies paid their passages to the Colony and we have been put to no extra expense. There have been improvements in the nursing, conditions and surroundings of the institution by their residence here.

Mr. SEAFORD : I do not like it to go forth that the views which have been expressed by the hon. Member for Berbice River are the views of the Members of this Council or of the people of the Colony. I think Members of the Council and the people of the Colony are extremely grateful to the ladies who come here to perform arduous and unpleasant duties.

Mr. AUSTIN : The longer I sit here the more apparent it is to me that the hon. Member for Berbice River is never enlightened until he comes to Georgetown. He persists in making statements and asserting that they are correct, and a lot of time is wasted on these fallacies, on which he is allowed to talk, and talk at length, half a dozen times. It is becoming thoroughly boring (Laughter). The members of the Medical Re-organisation Committee went up to the Leprosy Hospital in the course of their investigations.

We arrived there at one o'clock and left at five. We took such evidence as we could get and it was explained to us that these Nursing Sisters live under very modest conditions. I do not contradict the statement of the Surgeon-General that they have four bath-rooms, but I think the number is exaggerated. The Sisters made no complaint whatever. They were carrying out their duties, for which they receive little or no thanks from such persons as the hon. Member for Berbice River, but I am glad to think that is not the view of 99 per cent. of the people of this Colony, and I hope the hon. Member will have the honesty to withdraw the reflections he has made.

Mr. ELEAZAR: If I were guilty of dishonesty I would apologise. The hon. Member began by saying that it was a fallacy that there are six baths for these ladies. He does not know how many there are. Because I do not allow sentiment to guide me when dealing with public funds I am told I am a dishonest person. When these people were coming here it was understood that they were coming as charitable Sisters. When we find one getting \$60 a month for walking round a ward and another is a cook and washer for the others, where is the fallacy? The hon. Member has gone beyond his depth in charging me with dishonesty for stating matters of fact which cannot be denied. I did not say the ladies were doing nothing. I deprecate Members charging others with dishonesty because they tell Government exactly what is going on. The Matron of the institution does quite as much work as the lady who is walking round and getting \$60 a month and she has not got a bath for herself. Am I not to tell Government that because Members' sentimental feelings go in the other direction? I am telling Government that the work these ladies are doing can be performed by people here just as well, and it is Government's duty to know.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I purposely avoided taking part in this discussion, especially when one hon. Member introduced the question of Religion. I would like to ask the hon. Member what is his complaint. This vote for 1935 is \$2,904 and for 1936 we are asked to vote \$2,640. I am at a loss to understand quite what is the view

of the hon. Member for Berbice River. Is he suggesting that the amount is too much for the Colony to bear, or that there is some other reason for incurring the expenditure? I do not think any Member of this House, excluding the hon. Member, is of opinion that these Sisters are not giving valuable assistance to the Colony. The hon. Member has stated that when these Sisters were being introduced the Council was told that they were coming from a charitable organisation. Assuming that that was so, on that occasion the Council voted \$2,904 and it was stated for what purpose.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not think any good purpose will be served by prolonging this discussion. From my own personal observation at the Leper Hospital, which I have visited two or three times, these ladies were giving service with the utmost devotion. I heard them spoken of by many people in the highest terms. They are giving nursing service which could not possibly be obtained from persons in this country, and we have no knowledge of other volunteers who will be prepared to accept so low a rate of remuneration. I propose now to put the sub-head as it stands in the Estimates.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I ask that my protest be noted.

Sub-head 11—Animals, Fodder and Harness, \$5,825.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this sub-head be reduced to \$4,825. That provision is considered to be sufficient.

Question put, and agreed to.

Sub-head 16—Freight, \$5,367.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I desire to say that any remarks which I will make on the Head "Miscellaneous" will apply particularly to this vote.

Sub-head 21—Contribution towards cost of travelling of Chaplain to Nursing Sisters of the Leprosy Hospital, \$180.

Mr. ELEAZAR: When I was saying just now that we are making a contribu-

tion towards the cost of the travelling of the Chaplain to the Nursing Sisters of the Leprosy Hospital it was no doubt regarded as another fallacy. Here it is as plain as a flagstaff. It is for travelling to the Nursing Sisters and not for travelling to the Hospital. That is what this Council is asked to do, and when a Member has the temerity to say it another has the audacity to charge him with dishonest motives. I have no ulterior motive, but I do not think it is a fair charge to the Colony, especially under the conditions that these people were brought here. I again desire to record my protest.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of a new item, viz., "(22) Equipment for Dental Surgeon, Public Hospital, New Amsterdam, \$100."

Question put, and agreed to.

Sub-head 23—Maintenance and running expenses, Motor Ambulance, Morawhanna, \$300.

Mr. JACOB: The Surgeon-General may tell this House whether there is a motor ambulance at Morawhanna (Laughter).

Dr. DE FREITAS: I am sorry to say, sir, there is none. There is a vehicle there that does the work of an ambulance but it is an apology for an ambulance.

Mr. JACOB: Having heard that, and sub-head 11 having been reduced by \$1,000, I suggest that that sum be provided for a motor ambulance.

THE CHAIRMAN: I may inform the Committee at once that the Surgeon-General pressed this matter very hard upon me when the Estimates were being considered. I had regretfully to turn it down, as he might be able to make the vehicle in use serviceable, but I will keep an open mind on the subject. I will be going into the North West District in January, and I would like to look into the matter myself. I cannot accept the amendment at the moment.

GOVERNMENT HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think if I made a short statement in regard to this Head generally it might save a certain amount of time in debate. The ques-

tion of the second Assistant Government Medical Officer of Health was discussed exhaustively in the Select Committee. Government considers two Assistant Medical Officers of Health necessary, one of whom should be stationed in Berbice, but the Committee which has been considering medical re-organisation is about to report and deal with this subject among others. The report of that Committee will in due course be laid before the Council, and Government will undertake not to make the appointment to the vacancy of the second Assistant Medical Officer of Health if the estimates are approved as they now stand until the Council has had an opportunity of considering that report.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I understood that Government was always adverse to placing items on the Estimates under the conditions mentioned by the Colonial Secretary. I am going to ask that this officer be removed from the Estimates. This officer was appointed against advice to Government that it was unnecessary to have an officer in New Amsterdam. Some time after the officer was in New Amsterdam he, of his own motion, said he had nothing to do—and that was a fact. Very shortly after that he was removed to Georgetown, and he has never been back to New Amsterdam. I do not think in all he spent six months in New Amsterdam, and he has now gone somewhere else where there is something for him to do.

THE CHAIRMAN: I suggested the course indicated by the Colonial Secretary because, personally, from long experience, I am convinced that more Medical Officers of Health are necessary in this country. At the same time I am prepared to make a concession for the time being. If the Committee considering the whole question find that a Medical Officer of Health is not necessary, an Inspector of Health or a Superintendent of Health—whatever the title may be—would be necessary in his place. I therefore suggest that provision be made on the Estimates, but the position be not filled until this Council has an opportunity of considering the report of the Committee.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Personally, I accept the course suggested by you, sir, but I would like to bring to your attention the gravamen of the complaint of Members.

The Government Medical Officer of Health is performing duties outside those of his appointment, and Members feel that he is not devoting sufficient time to his office. We were told that he is the Surgeon-General's Deputy, Registrar-General, Immigration Agent General, acting Chairman of the Poor Law Commissioners, a member of the Infant Welfare and Maternity League and a member of the Local Government Board. If the officer has to perform all those duties, he has very little or no time to devote to public health matters. If that information is correct Members of the Council are quite justified in opposing the retention of two Assistant Medical Officers of Health because there is no work for one to do.

THE CHAIRMAN: All the duties that the hon. Member has referred to, except those of Immigration Agent General, fall within the ambit of the Local Government Board and Public Health.

MR. DE AGUIAR: At any rate that is the complaint. We maintain that is not his work. When we had two Assistant Medical Officers of Health one was stationed in the Rupununi District. It seems to me that two officers represent so much waste of the taxpayers' money, and I hope the necessity will not arise for Your Excellency to make the appointment next year.

MR. SEAFORD: I think the hon. Member should accept the assurance that the appointment will not be made until the report of the Committee has been discussed in this House. I should like to draw attention to the fact that the remarks of the hon. Member for Central Demerara emphasise the other jobs done by the Medical Officer of Health. Government admit that the Immigration Agent General's is hardly a job for the Medical Officer of Health. In the country districts and in Georgetown the District Commissioners are Immigration Agents, and it would be much better for them to carry out those duties than the Medical Officer of Health. The other position which I do not quite understand is that of Deputy to the Surgeon-General. It is quite a new appointment and I understand that a considerable amount of his time is taken up in doing that work. I do not know whether the Surgeon-General has

more work to do than before, but if he needs a Deputy it would be very much better if one of the senior Medical Officers is appointed. The Medical Officer of Health's job should be to go out of town, but he very seldom goes out as he is too busy doing the Surgeon-General's work. In the past the senior officer carried on for the Surgeon-General, and I feel sure that arrangement can be made to serve the purpose to-day as in the past.

DR. DE FREITAS: I wish to make some observations on the remarks of the hon. Member for Central Demerara. Since the new Public Health Ordinance came into force the activities required of the Department have been considerably increased. We have had the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice suggesting propaganda work in the districts. That phase of the Department's activities had to be suspended this year on account of the shortage of the staff. Owing to the fact that the Assistant Medical Officer of Health was transferred to another Colony, the work of the Department was considerably handicapped; and in addition to that we were confronted with an epidemic, which fortunately was of short duration but increased the work on account of the extensive preparations that had to be made to deal with it. Another fact was that during the illness of the junior Assistant Medical Officer of Health the Department had to utilise the services of a private practitioner for two months. That shows that the Department is by no means overstaffed by having three officers. It has been said that the officer in Berbice has nothing to do. I do not agree with that inasmuch as the officer acted as a sort of honorary Medical Officer of Health and came to the rescue of the New Amsterdam Municipality who could not afford to have an officer of its own.

With regard to the remarks about the Deputy to the Surgeon-General, hon. Members seem to forget that at the time immigration was in existence there was a Medical Inspector who was assistant to the Surgeon-General. His functions were inspection work of the sugar estates and estates' hospitals, but he also acted in the absence of the Surgeon-General. With the abolition of that office provision had to be made for a deputy, and the late Surgeon-General arranged to have the Chief Health Officer as his assistant inas-

much as there was no provision for that purpose. It is true that in the past it was the custom for the senior Medical Officer to act for the Surgeon-General. That has been done up to the present, and I happen to be that officer for the second time, but the need of an assistant to the Surgeon-General is very necessary, because there is a good deal of inspecting and office work and other duties which have to be done.

MR. DE AGUIAR: It seems to me that the position might very well be met by having only one Assistant Medical Officer of Health and strengthening the staff of County Sanitary Inspectors. The County Sanitary Inspectors are the officers who have to go round and see that health matters are properly controlled: the Medical Officers of Health do not do that. Strengthen the staff a little lower down also and dispense with an Assistant Medical Officer at the top.

MR. ELEAZAR: The District Medical Officers used to be the Medical Officers of Health of their districts and they reported every month. Now an Assistant Medical Officer of Health runs along with the Sanitary Inspector of the districts without asking them a single word. The Medical Officers on the spot are ignored. It is no wonder that the officer in New Amsterdam had to remark "I thought I had work to do here, but I have none."

THE CHAIRMAN: I suggest that the Committee leave the provision on the Estimate, and Government will see that the post is not filled until the Committee dealing with the re-organisation of the Medical Service has reported and its report is before this Council. I wish to say, however, that the statement of the hon. Member for Berbice River—that the Medical Officers of Health have nothing to do—is not consistent with the facts.

MR. SEAFORD: There is another point. The Surgeon-General pointed out that they have not enough officers to go round lecturing. When these officers were appointed one was brought out for Demerara, one for Berbice and one for Essequebo. Essequebo has never seen its officer. The Government Medical Officer of Health did not come out for that post,

but he was gradually pushed into it with the additional title of Deputy to the Surgeon-General. The Government Medical Officers in the districts are quite able to carry out sanitation work and are anxious to do it, and in case anything cropped up which they do not understand there is always the Medical Officer of Health to call in. The Medical Officers in the districts are quite capable, and that is a good reason for suggesting that one Assistant Health Officer is quite enough.

DR. DE FREITAS: I may point out that under the new Public Health Ordinance the Medical Officers in the districts would be Medical Officers of Health in the districts.

Question that the item stand as printed put, and agreed to on the undertaking given by Government.

Sub-head 7—Government Lands and Compounds in Georgetown—Sanitary Improvements; \$1,500.

MR. ELEAZAR: I am informed that \$500 has been taken off this vote at the expense of New Amsterdam.

THE CHAIRMAN: Who informed the hon. Member?

MR. ELEAZAR: I was informed from outside; I did not ask Government. This vote was \$2,000; now it is reduced to \$1,500. For a considerable time not only Georgetown but all the villages and Local Authorities got some help from Government for sanitary purposes. New Amsterdam did not get anything until recent times when it was dwindled down from \$1,500 to \$500; now we are getting nothing at all. If this amount is considered sufficient I would be very glad to know that New Amsterdam is included in it.

DR. DE FREITAS: This vote has been reduced from year to year. I cannot give any undertaking at present that it will be extended to New Amsterdam because it is only sufficient for Georgetown.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will give the hon. Member an undertaking that New Amsterdam will get its fair share. The amount was reduced by me because in 1934 the sum spent was \$1,200 and I considered \$1,500 sufficient for next year.

Sub-head 5—Travelling Expenses and Subsistence Allowance, \$2,100.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: This vote is nearly four times the sum at which it previously stood. What is the explanation?

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): It represents fixed mileage rates and depends on the allowance.

Dr. DE FREITAS: Another explanation is that the area of some of the districts has been enlarged, and officers have to attend prosecutions in Police Courts. That to a great extent accounts for the increase in travelling expenses and subsistence allowance.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I submit that is not sufficient explanation.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am prepared to defer the item as a full explanation is not forthcoming.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The explanation is quite clear. If hon. Members would look at the actual expenditure for 1934 they would see that travelling allowances amounted to \$1,281, which does not occur either in 1935 or 1936.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara satisfied?

Mr. HUMPHRYS: More or less, sir, not quite.

MEDICAL.

The Committee reverted to Head XVIII.—Medical—sub-head 20, Allowances to Medical Officers undergoing courses of study in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, \$500—and divided on the question:

Ayes—Messrs. Jackson, Jacob, De Aguiar, Dr. De Freitas, Laing, Major Craig, D'Andrade, Mullin, McDavid, Professor Dash, Major Bain Gray, Dias, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary—14.

Noes—Messrs. Seymour, King, Crum Ewing, Humphrys, Walcott, Austin, Eleazar, Seaford and Smellie—9.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Mr. JACOB: May I enquire with respect to sub-head 19 (Remittances—

Commission on \$4,000) what are these remittances?

Mr. McDAVID: They are merely the cost of remitting money from this Colony to the Crown Agents or *vice versa* when, and if, necessary.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: What the hon. Member wants to know is whether this vote includes the cost of remittance of pensions of officers residing outside the Colony.

Mr. McDAVID: On that specific question the Colonial Regulations provide that salaries or pensions paid in the United Kingdom are payable free of cost of remittance. There are certain pensions paid in other countries outside the British Empire and in Canada on which the cost of remittance is deducted. The Regulations provide definitely that wherever pension or salary is paid in the United Kingdom there is no charge.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Am I correct in assuming that where payment of pension is made by the Crown Agents we have to pay the rate of exchange? I always thought there was a debit and credit system.

THE CHAIRMAN: I assume that any money remitted Home has commission paid on it, and pensions paid by the Crown Agents are paid from those funds, therefore remittances or pensions do pay commission.

Mr. McDAVID: The cost of remittances is paid by Government because it is part of the general arrangement with the Colony, but it is not recovered from the pensioner.

Mr. ELEAZAR: It seems very hard that the Colony should pay the commission.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I ask the Colonial Treasurer to explain the Regulations a little more fully. A pensioner is not a person employed. I can understand Government providing the salaries of officers on leave, but I cannot understand this Colony paying the cost of remittance of pensions if the officers live in the United Kingdom, while pensioners living in Russia have to pay it themselves.

THE CHAIRMAN: As far as I know

it is the same practice throughout the whole of the British Empire. If a pensioner of the United Kingdom lives in South Africa he still gets his full pension. It is paid by the South African Government. I think the rule is Empire-wide.

Mr. JACOB : I am not satisfied with the explanation. The point is that we employ someone here; he retires and resides in another country, and we send the money to him there and pay the charges. Perhaps the Attorney-General will look into the matter and inform the House whether the cost of remittance should be a charge on the Colony. It does not seem fair. Salaries are in a different position. We give an officer leave and he is entitled to get his pay. But when a pensioner leaves this Colony and resides in another country, to transmit money there to him at our expense seems rather hard, and if it is so it might be possible to take the matter up. May I enquire also if these pensioners pay Income Tax?

Mr. McDAVID : They do.

Mr. JACOB : If they do we are getting something back. I made the suggestion earlier during this session, and I ask Your Excellency to give it consideration, that a tax be put on pensioners residing out of the Colony.

Mr. SEAFORD : When a man joins the Service you make a contract with him and you are only fulfilling that contract.

Mr. McDAVID : I assure the hon. Member that Income Tax is collected from every pensioner of the Colony, provided he is assessible.

Question put, and agreed to.

Sub-heads 20 to 23 were approved without discussion.

The Council resumed and adjourned until Wednesday, 13th November, at 11 o'clock.