

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 22nd December, 1932.

The Council met pursuant to adjournment, His Excellency the Governor, SIR EDWARD DENHAM, K.C.M.G., K.B.E., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. C. Douglas-Jones, C.M.G.

The Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr. Hector Josephs, K.C., B.A., LL.M. (Cantab.), LL.B. (Lond.).

The Hon. T. T. Smellie (Nominated Unofficial Member).

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

The Hon. T. Millard, C.M.G., Colonial Treasurer.

Major the Hon. W. Bain Gray, M.A., Ph.D. (Edin.), B. Litt. (Oxon), Director of Education.

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

The Hon. E. F. Fredericks, LL.B. (Essequibo River).

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

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

The Hon. Q. B. De Freitas, M.R.C.S. (Eng.), L.R.C.P. (Lond.), Surgeon-General (Acting).

The Hon. J. Mullin, M.I.M.M., F.S.I., Commissioner of Lands and Mines.

The Hon. F. Birkitt, Postmaster-General.

The Hon. A. V. Crane, LL.B. (Lond.) (Demerara River).

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

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

The Hon. F. J. Seaford (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 21st December, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

GOVERNMENT NOTICE.

GEORGETOWN IMPROVEMENT RATES (FUNDING) BILL.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr. Hector Josephs) gave notice that at a later stage he would move that Standing Orders Nos. 11 (1) and 36 (d) be suspended to enable to be taken through its remaining stages:—

A Bill to empower the Georgetown Town Council to fund the total amount outstanding in respect of unpaid rates which have been levied under the Georgetown Sewerage and Water Ordinance (Chapter 96) and the Georgetown Sewerage and Water Ordinance, 1930, together with interest thereon, and also to make provision for the payment of such rates and interest.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

GEORGETOWN IMPROVEMENT RATES (FUNDING) BILL.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move that "A Bill to empower the Georgetown Town Council to fund the total amount outstanding in respect of unpaid rates which have been levied under the Georgetown Sewerage and Water Ordinance (Chapter 96) and the Georgetown Sewerage and Water Ordinance, 1930, together with interest thereon, and also to make provision for the payment of such rates and interest" be read the first time.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the first time.

Pursuant to notice the Standing Orders were suspended to enable the Bill to be taken through its remaining stages.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that the Bill be read the second time. The objects of the Bill are set out in the title as well as in the preamble. The position with regard to it is fairly well known to hon. Members. Rates in respect of sewerage, namely, the main drainage and house connections, and also in respect of matters relating to water for the purpose of the Georgetown Sewerage and Water Ordinance, have been levied under the Georgetown Sewerage and Water Ordinance, Chapter 96, along with Ordinance 10 of 1930. It has happened that in connection with these rates there have been arrears of rates which have not been paid or collected for the years 1930, 1931 and 1932. One of the objects of this Bill is to confer power on the Town Council to raise a loan to cover the amount of those outstanding rates and interest thereon at the rate of 6 per cent. calculated from 31st December, 1932. The Council will then be in a position of having at its command the amount of money which up to that time ought to have been paid in respect of those rates. Then provision is made in the Bill for the payment of those arrears by the ratepayers in arrears. The amount of money which is due for arrears of rates, together with 6 per cent. interest thereon down to the 31st December, is styled in the Bill "The Ratepayer's Debt" in respect of the premises to which they refer, and "Premises" is defined in accordance with the term used in the Georgetown Town Council Ordinance to mean, shortly, "any lot or portion of a lot together with buildings or without buildings or buildings only which are taxable." The ratepayer's debt will from the 1st January bear interest thereon at the rate of 6 per cent. until it is paid. Provision is made for the payment of that debt by five equal instalments on the 15th December, 1933, 1934, 1935 and 1936, and on the 15th November, 1937. Interest outstanding is also payable on those dates.

There is provision in the Bill that the person liable for the payment of the ratepayer's debt will be permitted to pay any of these five instalments in not less than four equal parts. The effect therefore of these provisions is that the outstanding debt may be paid in five years, or if a ratepayer chooses to anticipate the payment he could pay it off at once and there will be no further liability for

interest. He may also at any time anticipate the payment of any amount which is outstanding, and that also puts an end to interest for the rest of the time. I should like to point out that this effects what I might term a moratorium so far as the ratepayers are concerned, and it is to be observed that the moratorium extends in some instances beyond the period provided for in this Bill because some of the rates are outstanding from the year 1930. In effect the moratorium which a particular owner will be getting will be the period provided in the Bill, in addition to the period for which down to the commencement of the Ordinance he has been in arrears of these particular rates. The position has arisen from two causes. There have been cases where some ratepayers have not found it practicable, without being seriously distressed or inconvenienced or ruined, to pay their liabilities, and it has been the desire and object of Government that these rates should be collected without bringing undue hardship on the people who have not been able to pay. The other cases are those where the existence of the arrears has been due to the fact that persons who can pay have not paid, so that the Bill will be covering the two classes of debtors. One of them might be described as the poor debtor and the other one might be described as the class of debtor who has elected to remain so.

I think I have clearly outlined the scope and object of the Bill. The Town Council will be placed in the position of raising on loan the moneys which they ought to receive during this period, and provision is made that the loan should be repaid by the Council at the expiration of five years after the issue of the bonds. There is also provision in the last clause that the moneys received by the Council with respect to the ratepayer's debt and interest thereon shall be paid to a special account which the Council will keep and use for the amortization of the loan. Pending the raising of the loan authority is given to the Council to borrow from a Bank or Banks an amount not exceeding \$148,000. This amount covers the sum which by the Finance Bill passed a few days ago the Town Council is under an obligation to pay to the Government for the year 1932 in performance of the arrangement whereby

Government undertook to be responsible for 50 per cent. of the cost of the sewerage works. I ought to refer to the fact that the measure is one which has been put forward by the Town Council and embodied in a draft Bill submitted by them. The present measure is in effect the terms and principles contained in the draft Bill put forward by the Town Council and it can therefore be regarded as the Council's measure. I may say with regard to that, sir, that those of us who had to do with the preparation of the Bill are very grateful indeed for the trouble, care and precision with which the draft Bill was framed.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

Mr. CRANE: I rise merely to endorse from the Town Council's point of view the statement put forward by the Attorney-General as to the general purpose and object of this Bill. There are one or two minor suggestions I want to make as we go through the Committee stage, and it is therefore not necessary for me to detain the Council for any time during the second reading. With regard to clause 3, which proposes that the amount for which bonds should be issued shall include the improvement rate and interest thereon calculated to the 31st December, 1932, I desire to make a comment relating to the convenience of the Council. The Council desires to raise the money before the end of the year. Not only has it to pay Government certain moneys before the 31st December, but it has certain other out-goings which should also be set right before that date. It seems to me therefore that an appointed time prior to the 31st December should be fixed and that the rates in arrears up to that date should be the amount to be raised by bonds. That was the way in which the Council proposed that the matter should be treated. It is a matter that does not affect Government but will embarrass the Town Council to a very great extent. It would be preferable to give the Town Council a discretion and the amount outstanding on the due date will be the amount to be raised by the bonds. It would take a few days to put things in order before the 31st December, and the Council should then pass a resolution, prepare the bonds and issue them. When we get into Committee I shall suggest the addi-

tion of certain words to clause 3 (3) which will make certain sections apply instead this special issue of bonds. Sections 210 and 211 of Chapter 43, I think, should be made applicable to these bonds. It has also been brought to my notice this morning by the Accountant of the Town Council that in the matter of obtaining payment of interest on bonds there are at present no regulations and matters are in a hopeless state. I want to get the same machinery which the Bank uses giving the Council the right to claim deposit of coupons for 48 hours, which will enable the Council to check the coupons and get rid of fraud. It is a matter that can be left to the Council, and I am going to suggest a sub-clause to the effect that the Council may make regulations which it may deem fit for the purpose of facilitating the payment of interest to the holders of the bonds.

Mr. WIGHT: I do not agree with the last speaker with respect to the lodging of coupons. People in this Colony are very suspicious and such a provision would only be putting into their heads what ought not to be there. I am satisfied that the present system is as good as it can be. It struck me that the officers of the Council were trying to lessen their work more than anything else and I do not subscribe to their views. We can always keep a proper check and I think it would be a retrograde step to alter the system. If a man has to lodge his coupons for two days it would bring suspicion to his mind right away. With regard to the alteration to clause 3, the explanation given by the hon. Member might have some bearing if the question arose that the Council wanted money immediately to pay the bonds. A man applying for Town Council bonds would not get them as soon as he pays his money as the bonds have to be printed and would not be ready when applied for. The procedure is that he would deposit his money and get a receipt, and on a fixed date he would get the bond on production of the receipt, so that there will be no difficulty about that at all.

Mr. SEAFORD: As a member of the public I welcome this Bill and hope it is the end of the muddle that has been going on. I regret that it has been found necessary to bring the word "sewerage" into the Bill as it is such an unsavoury subject.

I hope the measure is the end of all the irrational and irresponsible talking and writing that has been going on. We must all try to work together and pull together for the public good. I do not think it can serve any good purpose to bring about recriminations, and at this time of the year we should make everyone realise that what has been done has been done in the interest of all.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

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

Clause 3 (1)—Authority of Council to raise loan and issue bonds.

Mr. MILLARD (Colonial Treasurer): The hon. Member for Demerara River has suggested that it would be more convenient to the Town Council to have a different date and it should be open to them to fix the date by resolution. It is necessary to have a precise date for the purpose of funding debts, particularly when the funding period carries the calculation of interest. The collection of the ratepayer's debt is by annual instalments over a period of five years with interest on the instalments up to the time of payment, but it is necessary to have that from the date of the funding of the debt and it does not appear to me how any other date can be used in lieu of the last day of the year. I suggest that the Town Council in raising the money are going to appeal to the public to invest their money under certain terms and conditions stated precisely in the advertisement, and I cannot think that the Council can have a date prior to the 31st December. The 31st December is a very convenient date to calculate the debts, and the interest on those debts, but I do not see why the Town Council should not establish the procedure to raise the money from the public forthwith on the passing the Bill. The purpose of the Bill is to fund the debts and interest thereon to the date of funding.

Mr. CRANE: The date I am suggesting is just as definite as the date mentioned in this clause. It is the date the resolution is passed by the Council anterior to this date, and the interest due up to that date

together with the unpaid rates will be the total sum to be paid by bonds. The interest on the ratepayer's debt will also begin from the date the resolution is passed by the Council.

Mr. MILLARD: I do not think there is any misunderstanding of what the hon. Member said. He suggests that rather than insert a date other than the 31st December the clause itself shall allow a date to be stated by resolution of the Town Council. I see no objection to a precise alternative date instead of the date prescribed in the Bill.

Mr. WIGHT: I suggest that the date be specifically fixed as the 28th December. The Council will be having a meeting on that date and a resolution can be passed then.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. C. Douglas Jones): The point of the hon. Member for Demerara River is that the Town Council should be allowed to fix a date prior to the 31st December and in any case the whole thing must be fixed before the 31st December.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: My impression of the present position is that the authority to raise a loan in the Bill as drafted will be for the capital amount. The fixed date down to which interest would be calculated will be the 31st December. There probably will be no greater difficulty in calculating interest down to the 31st December than any other date, except that the 31st December is the end of the calendar year and the ratepayer's debt, which will then come into existence, will start bearing interest on the 1st January. It is just fixing the date down to which interest is calculated. I venture to submit that there is some advantage about that, and it will not involve any more calculation by the Town Clerk and his officers than if they had to calculate to the 28th December or any other date.

Mr. CRANE: The decision to enact this Bill was not carried by the Council unanimously and I do not want to place the Council in any difficulty that can be avoided. We should commence the execution of the plan designed by this Bill while the present Council is in power. There may be some difficulty if it has to be dealt

with by the new Council. I want it to be done before the 31st December and this Bill fixes it rigidly at that date.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I should like to point out that the amount of capital which will have to be taken into account would be the amount now due. The calculation of interest to the 31st December need not be deferred until that date. The calculation can be done the moment the Bill is passed and the amount definitely ascertained, and the loan can be issued if it were practicable before the 31st December. The original Bill did provide, as the hon. Member has pointed out, for the Council being authorised to raise a sum of money not exceeding the amount, including interest, payable at the date of the resolution. It must be remembered that the Town Council is an expiring one. When the meeting is held difficulties might arise through the unavoidable absence of members of the Council, but those difficulties would not arise under the provisions of clause 3 (1).

Mr. CRANE: If it is intended to authorise the Council to act immediately on the passing of the Ordinance and that is so expressed it would meet my point.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Perhaps it would meet the hon. Member's view to insert the words "at the commencement of this Ordinance" between the words "due" and "for" in the third line and to delete the words "calculated to the thirty-first day of December nine hundred and thirty-two" at the end of the clause.

THE CHAIRMAN: Government fully appreciates assistance in this matter and is anxious to arrive at an agreement which will make it easy both for the Municipality and Government to secure the collection of the amount.

Sub-clause (1) as amended put, and agreed to.

Mr. CRANE: I suggest to the Attorney-General that we apply the special provisions of sections 210 and 211 of the Georgetown Town Council Ordinance to this legislation. *

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I agree with the hon. Member and propose that they be inserted as clauses 4 and 5:—

4.—(1) If any bond is by accident defaced, the Council may cause a new bond to be made and delivered to the bearer and the defaced bond to be cancelled.

(2) The new bond shall bear the same number, date, and principal sum, carrying the same interest, and be subject to the same rules as the original bond.

5. The Council, on proof to its satisfaction that any bond has by accident been lost or destroyed before being paid off, may, if the number and amount of the bond are ascertained, and upon being furnished with due security for indemnifying the Council for any loss to which it may at any time be subjected by reason thereof, issue a new bond corresponding in all respects with the bond so lost or destroyed, or, if any bond when so lost or destroyed is overdue, the Council may cause the money thereon to be paid off and discharged.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. CRANE: The hon. Member for Georgetown Central seemed to have misunderstood my point with respect to the payment of interest (sub-clause (2)). My point is that where interest is collected through a Bank the Bank does the correct thing in handing in the coupons and taking a receipt for them until the interest is paid. That method is correct because it requires some time to enable the Council to check the coupons in order to prevent fraud. Where interest is not collected through the Bank the Town Council draws a cheque in the name of the person who drew the last half-year's interest so as to enable him to be paid forthwith. A bond may change hands and if the coupon is left for two days to be checked it would avoid difficulties and possibly fraud.

Mr. WIGHT: I quite understood the last speaker. Cheques are sent to the Mayor for his signature some days before the due date. It is quite a different thing with the Bank, which holds the coupons as security and sends them in to be checked.

Mr. CRANE: The statement that cheques are signed days before the interest is due strengthens my argument.

Mr. SMELLIE: Cheques are not made payable to order but to bearer.

Mr. MILLARD: The hon. Member is suggesting a peculiar difficulty in my experience. The right of an individual to obtain cash on demand I do not think can be varied by any regulations.

Mr. CRANE: I am not pressing the amendment.

Clause 7 (renumbered 9)—Register of unpaid improvement rates.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In view of the amendment to clause 3 (1), sub-clause (2) will have to be amended by the substitution of the words "date of the commencement of this Ordinance" for the words "first day of January nineteen hundred and thirty-three."

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause 9 (renumbered 11)—Interest payable on ratepayer's debt.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: For the words "first day of January nineteen hundred and thirty-three" I move that the words "day after the commencement of this Ordinance" be substituted.

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause 10 (2) (renumbered 12) was amended by the substitution of the word "eleven" for the word "nine."

The Council resumed.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that the Bill be now read a third time.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: In putting this motion I should only like to say from the Chair here that I endorse the remarks made by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Seaford. I hope this may be the termination of an unfortunate matter which for too many years has been the subject of discussion in this Council and elsewhere. Two Bills have been put before the Council, one establishing the agreement arrived at with the consent of the Secretary of State between Government and the Municipality, to which full effect has been given. The second Bill we are passing to-day is proof of the intention of Government and the Municipality with regard to the taxpayers generally. It is giving a moratorium with regard to all the arrears of rates due and giving time to everyone, both rich and poor, to pay in instalments what has been due from them not merely with regard to arrears for 1930 and 1931 but also with regard to payments for 1932 which became due by a resolution of the Council in April or May this year. Government throughout has shown its willing-

ness to meet in every way payment by those who are unable to pay. The position is reached now when payments in respect of arrears are spread over a period of five years on the basis of 50-50, which is equitable from every point of view and is an agreement with which Government hopes everyone will be satisfied. The final decision has been embodied in the Bill and it is a decision which should be treated as final. It should give the Municipality in the future much more to think of in other directions. There is much to be done in this town. I think it would be of advantage to every townsman to feel relieved of a question which has been the subject of so much discussion, and the Town Council will now be able to devote its time to those problems which are of urgent importance to the rich and the poor of this town.

Question "That this Bill be now read a third time and passed" put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time.

VILLAGE ADMINISTRATION.

THE PRESIDENT: Before anything else is done to-day I wish to inform the Council of the appointment of a Committee, as promised, to investigate and report on the management and control of Local Authorities and village affairs and to deal with the proposals made by the hon. Member for New Amsterdam and any other proposals in connection with the Local Government Ordinance. The Committee will consist of the Commissioner of Lands and Mines (Mr. J. Mullin), Chairman, the hon. Member for Demerara River (Mr. A. V. Crane), the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. E. F. Fredericks), the hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. E. G. Woolford), the Hon. Mr. Austin, Mr. P. W. King (Crown Solicitor), the District Commissioner, East Coast Demerara (Mr. M. B. Laing) and the District Commissioner, West Coast Demerara (Mr. W. A. Macnie).

BILLS OF EXCHANGE BILL.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that "A Bill to amend the Bills of Exchange Ordinance, Chapter 56, with respect to crossed cheques drawn by a

Bank on itself" be read the second time. This measure is not controversial and has recently been adopted in England. The effect will be to make effective the crossing of a demand draft of a bank upon itself or another office of the same bank. The banker who in good faith and without negligence receives payment for a customer of such a draft crossed to himself, if the customer has no title or a defective title, as in the case of a crossed cheque, will not incur any liability to the true owner by reason only of having received payment.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and considered the Bill clause by clause without discussion.

The Council resumed.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that the Bill be read a third time.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

Question "That this Bill be now read a third time and passed" put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time.

COLONY'S FINANCIAL POSITION.

Mr. MILLARD: I ask leave of the Council to make a brief explanation of the financial position as presented by the draft Budget and revised by the Council. The expenditure estimates passed by the Council total \$5,367,937. To balance the Budget it was necessary to have that total as the total of the abstract revenue side. Various alterations have been made in the details of the revenue estimate in connection with points that have arisen during consideration of these estimates in Council. I will just state them briefly. Under Head IV, the sum of \$3,900 has been added to Fines and Seizures. This has been rendered necessary by the appropriation of the Revenue Defence Fund and provision having to be made for awards under heads of expenditure of estimated receipts from fines and seizures. Under Head VIII, (Interest) a reduction of \$19,634 has been made in respect of the amount of relief to

the Town Council representing the 50-50 per cent. basis of calculation for the period prior to the 1st January, 1932. Reparation payment was received by the Colony and taken into account in calculating the requirements for the current year. That was put in the estimated figure in the Estimates for 1933. Subsequently in the receipts of the Crown Agents the amount appeared as extraordinary general receipts for 1932. For 1933 the sum of \$8,400 has been transferred from the Revenue Defence Fund. The position then is the substitution of \$768,000 for 1932, plus the loan granted in respect of the accumulated deficit, the amount for the year 1932 being \$576,000. The figure \$640,197 means that of the loans made for that year \$127,803 was carried forward to assist the Budget for 1933. The loan-in-aid to balance the Budget for 1933 should be the figure \$166,888. Taking the balance of the loan-in-aid for 1932 the sum required to be provided is \$39,085. At the opening of this session, in His Excellency's speech, it was explained to the Council that following on discussions in the United Kingdom a calculation had been made and the Secretary of State has obtained the sanction of the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury to assist the Colony to the extent of a net amount of \$91,200. That figure now stands at \$31,095. I do not wish hon. Members to assume from my remarks that this shows any variation of position from the calculations in London. It is within the limit of assistance actually made available, but the calculation for 1933 included the receipt of the Reparation payment, which was \$71,569, brought to account in 1932.

Mr. CRANE: Mention has been made in the statement of the utilisation of the Revenue Defence Fund. I happened not to be in Council when the resolution dealing with the appropriation of this Fund to general revenue was discussed. I want to ask Government to give an assurance that the proper charges against that Fund prior to the appropriation of the Fund to general revenue will be met out of general revenue. I know of claims and of a particular one which has not yet been considered. I ask for an assurance that claims will be considered identically in the same way as if this Fund had remained in existence.

Mr. MILLARD: At the time the appropriation of this Fund was discussed the Council's approval was obtained to the insertion of provision under four heads of the Estimate to the extent of \$2,200 to meet payments from the proceeds of Fines and Seizures.

THE PRESIDENT: I should like to add to what the Colonial Treasurer has stated—and I think the Council will agree—that we have reached a satisfactory position as regards the Estimates for 1933 in that we have been able to reduce the measure of the grant-in-aid which we would have received. But it must not be lost sight of, as the Colonial Treasurer has pointed out, that new items have been included in the Estimates. I refer in particular to the proposal with regard to the Transport and Harbours Department, additions under the head of the Education Department and so on, which we would not have been able to include if we had used up the whole measure of the grant-in-aid. I feel that the Secretary of State will have no hesitation in approving those items, especially those in regard to railway and transport, in view of the financial position which will be disclosed. Our revenue estimates have been framed on a conservative basis and there are other items which might have been squeezed out of them. What we want to show is still better working for next year. With regard to the full measure of Imperial assistance, I propose to ask the Secretary of State to allow that to stand to our credit and contribute to some other items of expenditure which could not have been brought before the Council during the discussion of the Estimates as they naturally involve expenditure which should be, and must be, explained in detail. If our finances permit and the working of the first three months of 1933 show that the Customs revenue is above the amount estimated, and additional items of revenue give better results than anticipated, then I think we should give full consideration to other proposals.

I do not wish to say this is a final list or the list that the Council should finally consider, for we want proposals from Members of the Council themselves, and of the points I will mention now two of them at least are suggestions which came from Elected Members of this Council.

One of the first suggestions I shall put forward is the urgent need of an Industrial Home and School for Women and Girls. That is a matter that should be taken up if we can find the money for buildings and maintenance. We may be able to find the money for buildings from unemployment relief funds, but it is no good doing anything of this kind unless we are going to find money for the staff. The second item that should be dealt with is the need for rebuilding the Seamen's Ward at the Public Hospital. There again we can get assistance for the erection of the buildings from two sources—unemployment relief funds and the grant for maintenance and upkeep of Government buildings—but it is quite obvious that the grant for maintenance of buildings is not given us to put up new buildings. We cannot spend it for that purpose but we can utilise it in improving the hospital. I think those are two very important items. The third need is with regard to the Prison Department. I shall take an early opportunity to lay before the Council a report which I have received with regard to the Prison, and I think it will be necessary to ask the Council and obtain the approval of the Secretary of State for proposals in regard to the control and management of the Prisons and the general question of staff and the feeding of prisoners. The whole position requires to be considered. Then we have the question of Artesian Wells. The Secretary of State has granted us annually for five years authority to incur expenditure of £5,000 on reconditioning the wells. If there is a further balance from the grant-in-aid the Secretary of State might permit us to spend £10,000 instead of £5,000 this year as it is obviously more economical to spend the larger sum on wells while we have the equipment. If we can get the assistance anticipated and get it in advance, it would be more economical from every point of view to spread the work over three years instead of five. Another matter is the question of Education. We have this year provided an extra amount for teachers. I think the Director of Education will be the first to say—in fact he has said so already—that he does not think that meets the case, but I would be averse to putting forward to the Secretary of State proposals for increasing expenditure on Education until we consider the present expenditure and

see if we cannot effect improvements. I do not propose to ask for any increase until we can make out a case based on more self-help. These questions necessarily involve full details being put before the Council. That being all the business it only remains for me to wish all Members present a very Happy Christmas and a very Happy New Year, which I hope will be a prosperous one for this Colony.

Mr. SMELLIE : On behalf of the Mem-

bers of the Council, sir, I wish to thank you for your very kind wishes and to reciprocate them. We also wish you the compliments of the season and desire that those wishes be extended to Lady Denham.

Mr. CRANE : I wish on behalf of the Elected Members to endorse the remarks of the hon. Member and to join in what has been said.

THE PRESIDENT : I thank hon. Members and now adjourn the Council *sine die*.