

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 29th August, 1940.

The Council met at 10.30 a.m. pursuant to adjournment, His Excellency the Governor, SIR WILFRID JACKSON, K.C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary Mr. G. D. Owen, C.M.G.

The Hon. the Attorney-General Mr. E. O. Pretheroe, M.C.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. N. M. Maclean, Director of Medical Services.

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

The Hon. G. O. Case, Director of Public Works and Sea Defences.

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

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

The Hon. L. D. Cleare, Director of Agriculture, Acting.

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

The Hon. J. Eleazar (Berbice River).

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

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

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

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

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

MINUTE.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 28th August, 1940, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

RICE INDUSTRY DEBATE.

Mr. JACOB: Before the business of the Council proceeds I crave your indulgence to refer to a matter of personal and public interest which occurred on Tuesday, 27th August. When the hon. Colonial Treasurer was replying to the debate he made use of certain statements which I could not then follow or understand at this end of the table. I waited until they were reproduced in the *Daily Argosy*, and I should like to read them and get a clear statement from the hon. Colonial Treasurer as to what he meant exactly by the following statement:

Mr. Jacob went to me in November last, after having acquired some technique from abroad in the matter of co-operation. He offered his co-operation in connection with the rice industry, and that co-operation was to be given on condition that he be made a paid member of the Rice Marketing Board.

Continuing the Colonial Treasurer stated that another condition which Mr. Jacob laid down in connection with giving the Board his co-operation was that he be allowed to carry out certain extensive blending operations, but here again, the Board would not agree to lend itself to co-operation of that kind.

Well, sir, it will be remembered that I admitted making a general statement as regards the payment of members of certain Boards, but I want to say most emphatically that that had no personal relation to myself. As regards the second statement I had absolutely no conversation with the hon. Colonial Treasurer in regard

to blending—absolutely none. In fact, sir, it cannot be denied but it will be confirmed that some time early in December I refrained from discussing any matter in connection with the rice industry with the hon. Colonial Treasurer as Chairman of that Board. What I would like him to say is when and where this conversation took place, because I have never attempted to do such a thing, and I should like my integrity, in so far as that part of the report is concerned, to be made clear. Further reference was made to it in the leading article of to-day's *Daily Argosy* which states—

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. Member must not try to bring up here articles or matters that occurred outside the Council. He is entitled to ask for an explanation of anything which occurs in the Council.

Mr. JACOB: Very well, sir, I will not refer to it, but before I say anything further I should like to be advised first of all as to when and where this second statement was made.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): Sir, in the first place I should like to say that the hon. Member was reading what appeared in the *Daily Argosy*, but the *Daily Chronicle's* report of what took place is probably clearer than the text read from the *Daily Argosy*. I have got a copy of the *Daily Chronicle* of the same date and I find therein I am reported as having said:

Another suggestion by Mr. Jacob, continued the Colonial Treasurer, was that of offering his co-operation to the Board provided he be allowed to carry out certain extensive rice blending operations, but there again the Board could not agree to lend itself to such a thing.

There is no reason whatever for the hon. Member to infer that the incident in connection with the blending operations, to which I referred, took place at the same time as the conversation in November. It must have been quite clear to the hon. Member that the conversation about the blending incident could not have taken place in November, for the very reason that the Board did not begin to function as a Board of control until December. The incident to which I was referring did not take place with me. The hon. Member saw the Secretary of the Rice Marketing Board at the office of the Board and

made his proposition to the Secretary of the Board. That proposition was officially put before the Board, and I shall ask your permission, sir, to read an extract from the minutes of the Board of the 29th April dealing with that particular matter.

Mr. JACOB: I should like to interrupt here to say that I will not be a party to allowing an extract of something that did not occur here to be read here. (laughter). The point I want to make clear is that I made no such suggestion to the Colonial Treasurer himself.

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. Member has made his position clear, that he did not make the statement to the hon. Colonial Treasurer and, I think, the hon. Colonial Treasurer never said that he did, but that he made it to the Secretary of the Board and it was dealt with by the Board. I think it is better that the minutes of the Board be not read in the Council, but they can be available to hon. Members to see.

Mr. JACOB: I have correspondence here—

THE PRESIDENT: I think the hon. Member has gone as far as he need go. The position is perfectly clear.

Mr. JACOB: Very well, sir; the matter will be dealt with somewhere else.

LIVESTOCK EXPERIMENT STATION.

The Council resumed consideration of the following motion:—

THAT, with reference to Governor's Message No. 23 of 21st August, 1940, this Council approves of a free grant of \$14,000 for the first year and \$4,000 per annum for four consecutive years hereafter from the Development Trust Fund for the purpose of financing the establishment and operation of a livestock experiment station at Ebini Downs, Berbice River.

During the discussion Messrs. Woolford, Dr. Aguiar and King entered the Chamber and took their seats.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: When the Council adjourned yesterday afternoon I was saying that there were vast areas of lands at the rear of the coastlands

in the County of Berbice on which the expansion of the industry can be carried out. Some time ago there was a Committee appointed to consider the advisability of establishing a modern livestock farm to be managed by the Agricultural Department. That Committee recommended such a farm on condition that it be established at a centre where it is easily accessible to the public so that it could be an incentive to the small farmers to improve their herd also. There is more need for protective measures for the expansion of the cattle industry than to go 75 miles from New Amsterdam to find out whether the pasture there is suitable for cattle or not. I do not know if Government is thinking of establishing a small cattle farm 75 miles from New Amsterdam so as to further increase the cost of administration of this Government. Our agricultural industries have been crying out for assistance for years now, and they are still crying out for assistance along definite lines which will improve the situation which presently exists and has been in existence for some time now. While Government can find funds for experiment nothing has been done to improve this situation in which not only cattle but crops suffer from flood one year and from drought another year. I say that such a policy is nothing short of leaving the substance and grasping at the shadow.

Our sheep industry, if I may make reference to that, is a disgrace to the country. We have great possibilities for improving that industry, but despite that fact we cannot produce sufficient sheep in the Colony to even meet our local requirements. I have taken up that matter with the Director of Agriculture for the past two years in order to see if anything could be done to improve that industry by way of importing new rams into the Colony so that small farmers might have the benefit of them in improving their sheep stock. Nothing, however, has been done in that direction. I see now that it is proposed to import two rams to be taken right up the Berbice river. From information I received these rams will cost anything between £18 and £20 landed, which is beyond the means of any small farmer to invest for the improvement of his sheep.

I am not an expert, neither do I claim to be one, but I say without fear of contradic-

tion that the most important factor in the lack of improvement of the cattle in the Rupununi is inter-breeding. The first lot of cattle—100 head—were taken there in the year 1863, over 70 years ago, and they were inter-breeding for all these years. I think the ranchers in the Rupununi fully realized that that has been the drawback so far as improvement of their stock is concerned, and added a fair number of bulls to their herd. I feel certain, and it cannot be disputed, that the progeny of those bulls has shown a distinct improvement. But to get added bulls into this district, we need not have an experimental station up the Berbice river at a cost of \$30,000 to the taxpayers. That can be done with the existing experimental farm for which only recently a grant of not less than \$14,000 from the Colonial Development Fund was obtained. One thing, I must admit, is very peculiar in so far as the Rupununi cattle ranches are concerned, and that is that the cattle from there compare favourably with the cattle reared on the coastlands. That is a fact.

If Government insist on putting this motion through I fear that within the next five years, or by the end of this experiment, more than half of the \$30 000 would have disappeared. I think I have said sufficient to show that this is an experiment of a doubtful nature, and I hope that if as the result of opposition to this motion today Government has any doubt as to the success of the scheme Government would defer this motion until it is fully satisfied whether the scheme can succeed or not.

Mr. SEAFORD: I think it is my duty as Chairman of this Development Trust Fund Committee, before which this scheme was put and which recommended it to Government, to give expression to the views of that Committee. The Committee went into this whole question very fully and had the advantage of the presence of the Director of Agriculture and Dr. Duthie. Various questions were put to them from every possible angle. With the exception of one member the Committee were all in favour of recommending this expenditure. The Committee, sir, were quite unable as a whole to accept the very narrow interpretation of that word "development" put forward by the hon.

Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Bacchus).

Mr. BACCHUS: "Promotion" not "development"!

Mr. SEAFORD: It was called the Development Trust Fund Committee, and I think the hon. Member said that he could not see how this scheme could possibly come within the orbit of the Ordinance which governs that fund. That is to say, he felt it was not development. I feel that it is no good imagining you are going to develop this country unless you put out feelers and see how that development can be accomplished. I feel that to get full development you are bound to have experiments. It is the same way as regards development in irrigation; before that can be done it is necessary to have surveys, which I am very glad to see have been carried out. The hon. Member called "surveys" development work. I would like to point out also that as regards oil, before any work is done experimental boring has to be carried out, and I think hon. Members of this Council would consider that development. No one would go in for large-scale drilling for oil unless he did experimental work. I am quite satisfied, therefore, that the Committee is quite within its right and jurisdiction in considering this scheme as a development scheme. We in this Colony cry out for development and are always asking why Government does not develop this Colony with its vast resources, but it seems that whenever any attempt is made to do so it is usually strangled at birth.

We have been told by a lot of people that we can develop a cattle industry. A lot of money has been sunk in the industry already, and it is surely the right thing for Government to put up \$30,000, which after all is a very small amount, to try and further this industry or, I may say, to promote an industry. We have been trying to get cattle into Trinidad, and had asked Trinidad in the past to give us protection for our cattle. The Trinidad people naturally turned round and said: "We cannot do that unless you are prepared to guarantee the supply." We are not in a position to do that. The cattle we sent to Trinidad from the coastlands, I am sorry to say, were turned down, a lot of them being tubercular. All the

cattle exported now are examined by the Government Veterinary Surgeon, and so that is not likely to occur again. To be able to get a market in the West Indies—and we have had requests from Dutch Guiana, from Trinidad and from Martinique for beef cattle which we were not able to supply. We must be able to guarantee a supply.

The hon. Member referred to the coastlands and considered that development should be carried out on the coastlands. A certain amount of work has been done for the cattle industry on the coastlands, but this present suggestion or experiment should not in any case be confused with those coastland experiments. Those coastland experiments are for the benefit of the small farmer to improve the breed of his cattle, but that is on a small scale. What Government envisages now is on a very much larger scale. You have on the coastlands a very limited amount of land suitable for cattle-rearing, and that land is gradually becoming less and less. The extension of agricultural products is gradually closing down the pasturage, and I think it is the duty of this Council to try and foster an industry where there can be expansion. I said the coastlands are very unsuitable for cattle rearing, and I have every reason for saying so. If one were to fly over the coastlands except in a drought one sees nothing but water everywhere. Hon. Members of this Council would realize that petitions come to Government periodically that cattle are being drowned, and at other times there are petitions coming to Government that there is no water for the cattle and they are dying as a result. That is what happens to the industry on the coastlands, and I do not think anyone can maintain that it can ever pay to drain and irrigate pasture lands for beef cattle. You may do it for milk cattle to an extent. With the cost of irrigation and drainage in this Colony being anything between \$4 and \$8 per acre, I do not think anyone can maintain that it can ever pay to drain and irrigate lands to make them suitable for the rearing of cattle on the coastlands.

We are told that there are 2,000 square miles of intermediate savannahs around the Berbice river. If it can be proved that these lands are available, and if they can be made use of surely it is not only

right but the duty of Government to experiment and see if these lands cannot be made available and put to successful use as cattle country. The land there, we are told, has natural drainage. A large portion of that land where it is proposed to carry out Government experiment has a continuous water supply from a spring. It does not cost anything, therefore, for drainage and irrigation of those lands.

A point that we felt ought to be considered by the Committee was whether we were in order in accepting this proposal. It was not up to the Committee to say whether it would be or would not be successful. We were unable to say so, but what we felt was that we were perfectly justified in considering it an experiment well worth trying as it might lead to large-scale development. It therefore came within our scope. A recommendation, I think, was also made by the Dairy Products Factory Committee in which they pointed out the lack of pasturage on the coastlands, and Government was urged by that Committee to attempt to do something. I think the motion now before this Council is partly the outcome of that Committee's report.

The hon. Member referred to the sheep industry. Once again I am going to say that I do not think anybody here can consider the coastlands as sheep country. Sheep are not animals that can swim very well, and within the last six months anyone can see what our pastures are like. It happens every year when there is dry weather, and one wonders where the sheep would get any feed from at all. The hon. Member also mentioned that it was beyond the means of the people to pay such high prices for rams as Government is doing. That, I take it, is the very reason why Government is importing those high priced rams. It is to be able to produce rams which can be sold at a very much cheaper price. It is because Government realises that the average farmer is not in a position to pay the high prices that it is importing those rams and is doing everything it can to help in the matter.

The hon. Member also referred to the question of Rupununi cattle. That was considered very carefully by the Committee, and it was felt that by the time the cattle arrived on the coastlands from the

Rupununi after a very strenuous journey they are really unfit for anything at all. One of the experiments to be carried out is to see if these animals from the hinterland cannot be reconditioned by giving them some mineral food. That we considered was a very important factor. If it is possible to condition these animals that would help to a great extent to get over the difficulty of supplying markets abroad. The question was also raised as to these animals being very wild. We were assured that it might be difficult for the first few days, but after that there would be no difficulty in feeding these wild cattle, as from experience gained it does not take very long for them to become tame and to like this extra or additional mineral food supplied them. In view of those facts, and in view of the fact that it was unanimously agreed by the Committee, with the exception of one member, that this money will be well spent, I think it is in the interest of this Colony and feel sure that the majority of hon. Members of this Council will do nothing to hinder any development work which is going to be attempted at the present time.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I must say that I admire the special pleading on behalf of his Committee by the hon. Member who has just taken his seat. I noticed he did not claim as usual a monopoly of wisdom for that Committee which was appointed by Government, but if my own experience is any guide I think it is very good reason why when matters are brought into this Council those on the Committee which recommended them should sit and listen to the arguments of the other people who did not get the advice they got. They will then be able to make a comparison. I had been appointed to sit on a Committee of eight to make investigation into one thing in particular amongst other things. Seven of the eight members of that Committee were against the project that we had in view before we started. I do not know what is to be expected from that Committee. These committees are formed to make a *bona fide* report and hear the views of the other side as to whether it should be changed or otherwise, but to make their recommendation and say we need not do anything else does not meet with my approval. Too much of that is being done by Government. That is

why Government, with the best intention, is subjected to such criticism from time to time. It seems that schemes are made generally with a tilt in favour of some vested interest somewhere or other.

The Berbice river, as I know it—and I know it because I have had the fortune or misfortune of residing there for some time—is a district which can rear a certain type of animal well enough, and that has been going on for some time. But this is what has been discovered after experiment and experiment by men who are very much interested in the cattle industry—the late F. Patoir, who was the largest cattle rancher on the Corentyne Coast and had a cattle farm of four or five miles facade with a depth of four or five estates whereon he reared sheep as well as cattle, and his brother, Henry Patoir, who lived 80 miles up the Berbice river in the vicinity of Ebini Downs which we call savannah, and I suppose the fashion is to change names, and when you change the name you change everything. You may change the wine in the bottle but that does not change the label.—

THE PRESIDENT: You may change the label but not change the wine!

Mr. ELEAZAR: That is also correct.

THE PRESIDENT: That is the more usual way. It is done, I know.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Your Excellency, what I was about to say about those two men who were both large cattle farmers—I am speaking of my own personal experience—was that the one on the Corentyne would send to the other one up the Berbice river a couple of bulls, looking everything that can be desired, to assist the breed of his cattle and improve his farm because he wanted some fresh blood. What took place? Those youngsters after a couple of years began to deteriorate. Similarly the man up the river would send excellent animals to his brother on the Corentyne and the same thing would occur. I think that in the very vicinity of Ebini Downs you have ranchers who are carrying on now, and a little lower down you have some too. Before Government embarks on this scheme calling for the spending of \$30,000, and commences by saying that it is an experiment, it seems cheaper and wiser to assist the men who have been

there all these years. Government should seek to find out their difficulty and, if it is possible, give some little help in one way or another to improve their stock, instead of embarking on a \$30,000 experiment. When Government advocates these matters in this Council, Government very often invokes the law. Government does as the British Parliament which is said to be able to do everything except turning a male into a female. The hon. Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Peer Bacchus) contends that this scheme does not come under the scope of the Ordinance as it is an experiment which, it cannot be said, will result in the promotion of the industry, while on the other hand it is claimed to be a form of development. As to whether it is development or promotion, this is how the section reads:

The Trust Fund shall be employed to provide for expenditure which may be required in respect of approved schemes for any of the following purposes:—

(a) the improvement of social conditions in any part of the Colony: provided that any amount which may be allotted in respect of the City of Georgetown and the town of New Amsterdam shall be by way of loan;

(b) the promotion of agriculture or other industry.

I cannot understand how anybody, reading that and telling a Judge that (b) means experiment, can claim he is interpreting the law. Government always finds excuses to carry out what it wants and to call black white. Further there is, I understand, the complaint that the soil is deficient of certain minerals which is reflected in the fodder and grass and feed for the cattle. But instead of taking the trouble to improve their holdings by doing some experimental work themselves these interested parties ask Government to spend money belonging to all the taxpayers of the Colony for their personal benefit. That cannot be just. Whenever Government brings forward one of these schemes I say without fear of contradiction it is because men are always on the alert to look after their own interests. There is always somebody to give them a tilt in that direction. You can hardly find anything brought forward by Government which has not a tilt in favour of somebody's interest.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is a very harsh statement. Government

does not favour any individual or company whenever it proposes anything.

THE PRESIDENT: I am sure the hon. Member does not mean that. He is simply carried away by his argument and is not always quite sure about what he says.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Sometimes you paint a picture bigger so as to have the advantage of looking at it better. I say if it is the intention of this Government to get people to help themselves, one can understand. Can't you take a limited area, put into the soil such minerals as are required and see how that will work? Why ask Government to establish an experimental station at a cost of \$30,000 so that after three or four years you will be able to say whether it is worth while continuing it or not? While Government is doing that I know of my own knowledge that this Department has over and over again said that British Guiana needs a Farm School where girls may be taught dairying and other things, and boys taught how to rear pigs, sheep, cattle etc., and to cure ham. I do not like to speak of myself but I wrote to Government and said: "here is an opportunity to establish your farm school which you have all along said is the best thing, and which you have preached all over the country." Government, however, said there was no money. I was told by a high Government official: "Better let the thing drop, because we will not like it to be the first draw on that fund." Why not, if it is a good thing? No one would oppose or object to any experiment if it is bound to bring results. You have this hair-brained scheme put up here, and we are being told that Government cannot do otherwise. That is the way Government officials argue. I have heard a very eminent counsel on the part of Government, when it was pointed out that it is not the law, reply: "I agree it is not the law, but it is the best these people could have done." That is the kind of way Government carries on these things. I say that the reason set forth in the Message and that which the hon. Member has just given us here are not sufficient reasons for this experiment. More than that: the project as outlined to us here cannot by any stretch of imagination be said to be for the promotion or development of the industry at all. You cannot

develop a thing until you have got some foundation for it.

I have heard, perhaps for the first time, that we have not got sufficient land on the coast to rear cattle. Well, I know that very much more can be done to drain and irrigate the lands on the Corentyne and to improve conditions for the cattle there at a cost very much less than \$30,000 and, more than that, even if it is done it would be helping the industry on the spot. Your Excellency, I know that Government can assist the drainage of the Corentyne and the people there to promote or develop their industries at a cost very much less than \$30,000. They are rearing cattle on the Corentyne now under bad drainage conditions and, fortunately or unfortunately, the Corentyne is made up practically of reefs and low levels. On the reefs they plant provisions and rear cattle, and on the low levels they plant rice. No one, therefore, need be afraid that there will not be sufficient drainage on the Corentyne to rear cattle. It used to be done all these years without the assistance which Government can now offer. I am told that sheep cannot swim.

THE PRESIDENT: Sheep do swim here a lot. (laughter).

Mr. ELEAZAR: I thought I heard the hon. Member for Georgetown North say so. Not only sheep swim but goats too.

THE PRESIDENT: And pigs too, but it is not good for them.

Mr. ELEAZAR: What I was going to say is that in the river districts, although the land is far higher than on the Coast, it is more or less damp, and the cold there is as bad for sheep as the coastlands where they have to swim sometimes. But that is no argument in favour of experimenting with sheep in the river districts at all. If that is the only argument then it is better to stop it at once. What I want to urge is this: Is there nothing that Government can start which will assist to promote or develop the industry outside of this experiment, which if not bound to failure at the start is doubtful of success when it has gone some distance? I see there is a shortage of paper in Great Britain now. Can Government not see the possibility of doing something to establish industries which will bring im-

mediate benefit without having to wait for three or four years on this experiment? What has become of the La Belle Alliance scheme?

THE PRESIDENT: It is still going on.

Mr. ELEAZAR: It cannot stand development, or recruitment, or promotion? If it can, it would not cost \$30,000 to do that. Why not put some of this money there? What has become of the scheme which was being carried out just a few hundred yards from this place?

THE PRESIDENT: What scheme?

Mr. ELEAZAR: Livestock Farm.

Mr. SEAFORD: I think it was pointed out that that could not be extended because there was no more room. It is aback of Lodge Village.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I think Government is experimenting even there in providing stock for people to go and buy out and so keep the thing at a certain level. If that is the case, why does Government not utilize this money there? If you do not want to extend it, why not sell out what you have and bring in new ones? You have got this one and the one at La Belle Alliance. When Government brings forward these things, it does not matter whatever you say Government clings on to them like a limpet to a rock. Two or three men who have no personal knowledge of the interior went to the district for a day or two and after looking around have given a scheme like this at this time. This is war time and you do not want experiments. You want such things as you will get immediate returns from. There are so many things to be done, but Government leaves them out to embark upon this costly experiment. Why? Perhaps a different place is meant, but if it is Ebini Savannahs I do not know how you can have it 200 yards away from another ranch which is now being carried on in that district. The hon. Member may inform me about that. Perhaps I am thinking of a wrong district.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: If I can help the hon. Member—I do not want to interrupt—I may state that 500 square miles of the 2,000 square miles is held under a grazing permission, but very little

of that is being beneficially occupied, and it is proposed to take it over.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Somebody wanting to make money takes the whole area but finds it is doubtful and so only makes use of 500 square miles!

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I did not say that. Government will require the portion of 500 square miles which is under a grazing licence. It is not a question of the person asking Government to take it over. There is no suggestion of that nature. It is Government land.

Mr. ELEAZAR: That person has cattle grazing on it and has discovered, perhaps, that his project is not making money. Government should have asked that person for his views in the matter, because no one is going to apply for such an extensive area, start business on it and then be willing to allow Government to come in and experiment there if he can make money out of it. I have the misfortune of always calling a spade a spade and not a garden shovel. If by calling it "a tilt in favour of vested interests" I use a highfalutin expression, I may be wrong but it is still a "rose" though called by another name. I ask Government to put the motion to the vote and so allow me to record my vote against it. I do not think the section of the Ordinance under which this recommendation is made can be stretched to mean this thing that is being done. I think Government will not be well advised to spend that \$30,000 on an experiment the success of which, it admits, it is doubtful of. If even Government is able to say whether it can succeed or not, is this the time for Government to carry on such an investigation when we want quick return? It is an extremely costly experiment.

Mr. JACOB: I have always been in favour of something being done to improve the cattle industry of this Colony. If this Colony is to progress its cattle as well as its rice and other agricultural products must be improved, and that in the proper direction. I wish I can support the principle of this proposed experiment, but I have no hesitation in saying—I am saying it so as to caution those responsible—that this scheme is going to fail. It is not that I wish it to fail—far from that—I hope it will be successful, but to place it

in an isolated area 75 miles from New Amsterdam where there are no proper means of communication and transport is to court failure. I understand that the only means of transport is by steamer once a fortnight, though we may probably acquire the new technique of going there by plane and transporting our cattle by plane, in which case it may be successful. Until such a technique is acquired and there are only the usual transport facilities available to the majority of people, no scheme however well organised or designed can succeed.

THE PRESIDENT: You cannot have it at New Amsterdam because there is not sufficient room.

Mr. JACOB: I am not suggesting that, but I know there is room available at other places, as intimated by hon. Members. I think you can have it in Essequibo or in Demerara, or on the Corentyne Coast as intimated by the hon. Member who has just taken his seat. I feel sure, like the Bush Lot Land Settlement Scheme, it is bound to fail. Any land scheme carried miles away from the inhabited areas must be a failure. A drainage scheme was started on the Essequibo Coast between Pomeroy and Dartmouth and has failed, not because of want of irrigation and drainage, but because it was not properly designed and planned. I say regretfully that not a single scheme started by Government within recent years has succeeded. I see the hon. Colonial Treasurer is laughing. He had used the term "technique in co-operation" in respect of me. I have acquired a technique in co-operation and I wish Government had acquired a similar technique so as to co-operate with the people of this Colony. I do not know whom it will benefit. It has been suggested that it will benefit certain vested interests, but I am sure it is not going to benefit the people.

Reference has been made to the report of the Dairy Products Committee. I claim to know something about cattle. I was secretary of a cattle ranch company for over ten years. When I visited Europe in 1938 and 1939 I went to Holland and was very much interested in the cattle I saw there, and also in the manufacture of dairy products there. On my return here Government accepted a motion and appointed this

Dairy Products Committee to consider the erection of dairy products factories. I have not seen the Committee's report as yet, but one hon. Member referred to it and probably he has seen it. I am very much in favour of something being done in that direction. In Jamaica a dairy products factory has been erected and is going to supply the West Indies with condensed milk. We are attempting here to oust Venezuelan and other foreign cattle from certain West Indian markets. Whether we are going to succeed I do not know, but I congratulate Government on its attempt to bring it within the limits of the small cattle farmers so that we can manufacture condensed milk and other dairy products to supply the West Indies. I think we should pursue this problem on those lines. I am not against trying to foster a beef cattle industry here. It is being done at La Belle Alliance, but we have no money to expend on such large schemes at the moment. I am sure this scheme is not going to be a success, and it should be made to meet the convenience of the small cattle farmers.

When I stated that 75 miles from New Amsterdam is far away, it drew from Your Excellency the remark that the experiment cannot be started in New Amsterdam. I think the experiment ought to be carried out in the County of Berbice. I think it would be a successful experiment if it is not taken so far away from civilization, so to speak. In paragraph 2 of the Message it is stated:

The associated problems of pasturage and feeding are among the chief difficulties to be solved. Other considerations apart, the need for augmented rice production has led to increasing restriction of grazing facilities on coastal areas which are already overstocked.

I make the deduction from that statement that the coastal areas are already overstocked. I cannot agree with that, nor can I agree that there is increased acreage under rice. I wish there was. That was what I am asking for. I was told by the hon. Member on my left that owing to the method of control we could not have increased production. We are yet to be supplied with figures showing increased acreage under rice cultivation. The acreage figures as supplied by the Agricultural Department all these years have not been correct. I plead with Government that the whole thing be

re-considered and brought within the reach of the people in the coastal areas.

Mr. WOOD (Conservator of Forests) : I am not one of those, who have any particular "tilt" in this direction and who gave evidence before the Committee, but I feel I would like to give a certain amount of evidence before this Council now. The fact remains, sir, despite whatever the hon. Member for North Western District has said, that this Colony imports or consumes an average of about 2,500 cases of condensed milk per month which is obtained from abroad and sometimes with great difficulty. Trinidad consumes more than 10,000 cases of condensed milk per month, also imported from great distances, and in normal times almost entirely from foreign countries. At the same time I do not think it can be challenged that if the coastlands carry as many cattle as they can, there would not be sufficient to supply the population collected on the coast with fresh milk. At the same time we have the problem of the savannahs in the near interior. If these savannahs can produce cattle, both for meat and for dairy products in sufficient quantity to enable the manufacture of condensed milk, which we import in normal times from Holland and at the present time from Canada, I do not think this Council would agree with the hon. Member for North Western District in thinking that 75 miles is too far to carry a product which hitherto was fetched from Holland or Canada.

The object of this motion is to try an experiment to see whether these savannah lands can be made to carry cattle properly pastured. These lands are extremely poor and are so deficient in minerals that the cattle living on them are in the habit of gnawing bones of skeletons of former cattle in order to get minerals, and I would urge on the Council that this experiment should be carried out. Like the hon. Member for Berbice River, I have some experience in the rearing of cattle in the near interior. When I moved up to the Mazaruni which has a savannah which has been used since 1760 when it grew the first sugar cane ever grown in this Colony, I found it extremely deficient in minerals, very poor indeed, and there was left there a herd of cattle which the Prison used to maintain. That herd was being disposed of. The institutions were

asked to take some of these cattle over. Some of them went to the Onderneeming School and some went to the Leper Hospital. The Director of Agriculture was invited to take some for the Gardens and he replied in language which is hardly sufficiently parliamentary to repeat in this Council. When they had foisted all the cattle they could on to the other institutions there were eight left, the dregs of a scrub herd, and they did not know what to do with them. I dislike condensed milk, and one of my officers whose family had been farmers for generations also disliked condensed milk. When we were asked what should be done with those animals we said we were perfectly willing to employ a cow-minder to look after them in return for their milk, but we would not buy them as they were not worth anything. We preferred to buy one or two decent ones of our own rather than buy those animals. We took them over and paid a cow-minder to look after them.

As a hobby we started to try to improve the condition of the herd and to grow decent fodder up there. The Government Veterinary Surgeon took a great interest in what we were doing and we eventually acquired the loan of a pure bred bull. We started to convert this scrub herd into first class animals and found it a very expensive business. When you have a mother cow that gives four pints of milk and the calf has to get eight pints a day, I am not quite sure some of these people who are so keen on breeding good bred cattle out here know that it is a somewhat expensive business. We had our own milk and when more cows came in to milk we used to sell the surplus at half the market rates to the hospital and places like that. When we had succeeded in building up a herd the position was that we were selling the surplus milk at half price, taking our own milk and not charging ourselves, and maintaining our own cattle in a decent manner, providing them with proper minerals etc., and we paid the wages of the cowminder, \$20 per month, and that of an assistant \$12 per month, and fenced two pastures entirely out of the profits. We did more: we bought a cheap cream separator and made our own butter. We supplied ourselves with butter. When we had to feed the calves with eight pints of milk per day, which was very expensive,

we fed them on skimmed milk. We made ghee — proper ghee which did not go rancid. We did that for six years on an interior savannah.

I believe that if a proper method were worked out the experiment of brining up cattle on these areas would pay handsomely, and that a very good breed of cattle could be produced—both milk cattle and beef cattle. That would not necessarily help vested interests. Anybody can keep a few cattle and can make them pay and can make a living out of them. An industry introduced like that can spread its tentacles very widely over the Colony. Some day, as some hon. Members hope we will have a central rice mill, we will have a lot of rice bran to be disposed of. There is none in the Colony at present. Rice bran is the basis of the home-made cattle feed we can make out here. That cattle feed is made on the Government Vet's prescription, and rice bran has had to be imported from Surinam, Dutch Guiana, for the purpose. I believe from the personal experience which I have had—I do not pretend to be a cattle man and I have never been secretary of a cattle ranch concern—in converting a really bad scrub herd into a first class herd which paid, that an industry can be established on these savannahs when the proper technique has been worked out on the feeding of the cattle and bringing them up. Cattle with breeding do not degenerate on savannahs at a rapid rate. It takes many generations for deterioration to set in. I hope the Council will support this motion.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: It seems on perusal of the various reasons given by hon. Members for the rejection of this motion, that there may be some doubt. In principle the motion is accepted, but the opposition is to the site as a place for the experiment. It is, perhaps, unfortunate that no mention is made as to any other areas having been investigated, and the reason or reasons for the rejection of those areas. Perhaps, that might have eliminated any discussion as to the rejection of the motion as regards the site, as it has been accepted in principle. The hon. Conservator of Forests mentioned the question of condensed milk. In Your Excellency's Message it appears that the ancillary object makes no mention of it. That was discussed on the Dairy Products Committee, the

report of which is now out, and the two reasons given by the experts were a shortage of cattle and a shortage of grazing areas, for not attempting at the present moment to manufacture condensed milk in any quantity. We hoped that it would be given consideration as soon as the effects of the scheme are experienced.

As regards the question of areas, one hon. Member has suggested Essequibo. We do not know, and at least we have not heard, whether this experiment was considered in relation to any of the areas in Essequibo. The question of congestion may be relieved, not necessarily, but congestion may be occasioned by lack of facility of transport on the part of those persons interested in the cattle industry. They may desire to keep as near to the central spots as possible, and maybe that is why excellent areas are congested. We have heard nothing to that effect. Then there is also the question of vested interests. Have other areas been considered and the reasons for objection put before the Council? Perhaps further details may be given as to when it is likely to expect the first indication of success of this experiment, the number of cattle to be placed at the station. These may be details which have been considered or, if I may be allowed to say so, should have been considered by the Committee which went into the matter before placing it before this Council. We do not know whether it has been considered whether the amount to be expended on the experiment should not be utilized so as to have immediate effect by way of grants or loans to enable those who are able to increase not only the herd of cattle they have at the present moment in their possession or under their control but also the breed.

The hon. Conservator of Forests mentioned the question of the central rice mill and stated that we would get some benefit from the rice bran to be obtained from that mill. We also trust that these are also corollary to what the main purpose of this experiment would be. I think that if hon. Members were supplied with some of the points I have made, perhaps we may get the unanimous desire, as it should be I submit, of the Council to move in directions where we can utilize all our productive capacity. It can hardly be doubted that the cattle industry is one

which can be furthered. I think, if these doubts in the minds of hon. Members can be dispelled no objection will be raised. There seems to be a feeling permeating the debate that this is to help or assist some vested interest. Whether it is one individual or otherwise makes no difference. What seems to be a genuine suggestion or hint—perhaps that has been the cause of any objection raised—is that the doubts of hon. Members may be dispelled on this ground. One can visualize where the arrow is pointing, which vested interest is meant. One only has to make oneself conversant with the area in question, and it will not take long to find out all about it. Perhaps I may suggest to this Council that if these matters were satisfactorily explained one may have no objection at all to the carrying out of this experiment.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think the hon. Member was absent when the figures were given, and I shall repeat them for his benefit. The number of animals it is proposed to start the experiment with is as follows:—100 head of creole cows, 3 bulls, 50 ewe sheep, 2 rams 2 pairs of cart oxen, 3 horses and one pack mule. The hon. Member must bear in mind that a part of the experiment is the improvement of savannah areas. He was a member of the Dairy Products Committee as well as the hon. Member for North Western District. Although the report was received some time ago several minority reports promised caused some delay before they were received, and the reports are now being printed. I would like to read a portion of the report, as the hon. Members may not know the contents, not having signed it. This experiment follows on the recommendation made by that Committee. The report states:

The more important problems of the industry at the moment centre on the question of pasturage and over-stocking. It is essential in the interest of the small cattle owner that these problems should be tackled without further delay if he is to reap the benefits of any improved policy involving expenditure of public funds. Reports from nearly every section of the Colony, with the possible exception of the Essequibo Coast, indicate that pastures are now so overcrowded that they have long since ceased to provide adequate grazing for the large number of animals of an indifferent type which are allowed to remain on them. In many cases these animals possess little or no value to their owners and must be eliminated to provide room for the better type,

That information was not given by the Forest Officer because he was not asked to give evidence. That bears out what was asked, whether consideration was given to different areas. Before this report was received by Government I paid a visit to the Essequibo Coast and made it a point to go to the Bush Lot Settlement and also to the pasture which Government has in that connection. I do not know if the hon. Member has been there recently, but I gather from him that he feels that the Settlement is a hopeless failure as it was flooded, and very few people are living there. I went there in January, but cannot remember whether the rain fell but there was no flooding and not a single cottage was empty. The condition was very satisfactory indeed; the place was very clean and well kept, and the people were growing as much as possible around their buildings, and they kept their stock at a nearby pasture. I went to the pasture and was informed by the officer in charge that the number of cattle was increasing. There were then, I think, 200 head, but that was due to the fact that it was only at the beginning of the year Government had taken control of the pasture again. Hon. Members will recollect that for many years past Government had been leasing it. It has accommodation for 500 head of cattle. I saw two calves as I entered the yard, and they were very different in size and appearance. I asked the man in charge where they had come from, and he said that one was born on the estate and the other had just come in for pasturage. They were born on the same day, and were about six months old, but one looked about one year old in comparison with the other. I saw the owner and asked him why he sent the calf in. He replied that it was because he had seen animals passing his way along the Coast looking in a fit condition and on asking where they came from he was told "from the pasture." That only shows the people were beginning to bring their cattle in for pasturage as the result of seeing the cattle it was turning out.

When the report came out I made enquiries to find out whether we would be able to utilize that same station, but I was satisfied afterwards that the amount of land available would not be sufficient, taking into consideration the estimate of cattle there, and that there were more to

go in. I thought we would leave that as a separate scheme and take another one in the neighbourhood of the Berbice River. I thought when the hon. Member for Berbice River was talking about that farm he had a knowledge of it. I can assure him that the farm in Essequibo is doing very well indeed. The hon. Member for Berbice River must recall that we have in recent years started a series of experimental stations—a timber experimental scheme, a rice experimental station and even a tobacco experimental station, to which the hon. Member referred yesterday.

The hon. Member for Western Berbice is displeased with the area chosen. The idea is to experiment on a very large scale so that we will be able to develop other industries in connection with it. If the hon. Member has any site to suggest Government would be glad to consider it. It is not a question of a "tilt" being brought into the matter at all. It is considered that this is the most suitable site. The whole of the site is Government land. We wanted 2,000 square miles and there are 1,500 square miles available now, and it is quite clear that the other 500 square miles required is not being profitably used. It is quite clear that it is not being used. It is not a question of carrying out the experiment for the benefit of any vested interests, but it is for the benefit of everybody.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: As a member of the Committee which recommended this proposal to Government, I think I should now offer my contribution to the debate. I would like to begin by assuring hon. Members who have so far opposed this proposal, that I occupied on that Committee the same position as most of them do to-day, but after a very careful examination of the whole question I was converted to the view that the scheme was a good one and there was every chance of its success. Most of the points that were mentioned here by hon. Members who have spoken in opposition to the proposal were mentioned in that Committee either by myself or the hon. Member for Berbice River, who still maintains the attitude he took up at the time.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I rise to a point of correction! I never was there.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I am sorry. I meant the hon. Member for Western Berbice. I must confess that I am not quite clear whether those hon. Members who have spoken in opposition to the scheme were in disagreement as to whether the development of the cattle industry in the Colony is desirable. I rather understood them to mean that the development of such an industry is desirable. If that is so, most of the objections this morning seem to be in respect of the site which has been selected for the purpose. There seems also to be some misunderstanding or confusion, that by selecting this site it would interfere with whatever development works are being carried out on the coastlands. As I understand the position, the main object of the proposal is the development of the beef cattle industry. When the project was mooted I am sure that hon. Members would agree that the acquisition of land for the purpose was a necessary adjunct to the scheme. As was stated by the hon. Member for Georgetown North when the question of the site was being considered, I was one of those who raised an objection to the proposed site. I felt as most hon. Members do this morning that the scheme should be carried out on the coastlands. I felt there was sufficient suitable land there for the purpose, but I was satisfied that in view of the cost of irrigating and draining the land on the coast, coupled with other reasons it was most desirable to keep away from the coastland for the time being at any rate.

So much has been said about the coastlands that I should like to mention that one of the objects will be that, as the cattle improve in this area, they will find their way to the coastlands, and in that case there must be some improvement in the breed of cattle on the coastlands. If that is so, then it seems that the main object behind this scheme is to assist the cattle-owners who are at present operating on the coastal areas. They will be able later on to obtain an improved breed of cattle from the station, and it is clear that their herds will also be improved. Here I am going to bring in my friend, the hon. Member for Berbice River, who referred to the question of committees. I have always understood him to be an advocate of committees, and I was somewhat disappointed when he stated that because it

was recommended by this Committee it should not necessarily be accepted by this Council. I probably misunderstood him in that remark, but I thought in this Council the same hon. Member has always advocated that matters of this kind should be considered by committees and their reports sent in to this Council. As a matter of fact the hon. Member has himself times without number moved in this Council for the appointment of Committees on the various activities of Government. It is true that he did not always agree with the views expressed by committees but he accepted the principle that the appointment of committees to assist Government in its work was a very desirable thing to do. I want to assure the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight) that the question of assistance to some vested interest was also considered. There is no question about that at all. There is no vested interest in this proposition either now or in the future. That point was very strongly mentioned and an assurance was given that there would be no question of paying for the land or anything else.

THE PRESIDENT: May I interrupt the hon. Member. Speaking about the acquisition of land, the position is that Government has resumed possession of the land. There is no question of acquisition.

MR. DE AGUIAR: I referred to acquisition when dealing with the coastal area. There is no acquisition of land in this proposal. I mention that to show hon. Members that there were very few points which were not considered by the Committee. The proposals were considered from various angles. We were told this morning by one hon. Member that we had the benefit of the views of Dr. Duthie and the Director of Agriculture, who were both present, and questions of all sorts were flying across the table that afternoon. After long and very careful consideration of the proposals the Committee arrived at its conclusion. As I said at the very beginning, I was one of those who, when I sat in Committee, felt rather doubtful as to the success of the scheme, and I went there with the intention of quelching it at once. I felt as some hon. Members did this morning that it was going to be a waste of money, but after going into it from various angles I was perfectly convinced that it was an experiment that was worth trying out. It is for

that reason I lend my support to the proposal.

MR. PERCY C. WIGHT: I welcome this motion. I have reared cattle from my youth and have had a lot to do with cattle, I think, as much as the hon. Member for Western Berbice. What I do feel is that we come here with our minds charged with something—that somebody is getting profits or gaining by it. I do not see what inducement can make me come here and say that some person or company or syndicate is to be benefited by this motion. I consider it very advisable that this money should be spent on a proper experiment, but I am not in agreement that we should go 75 miles up the Berbice River to make it a success. I think it is an absurd proposition to put 100 head of cattle on an area of 2,000 square miles. The thing, to my mind, is only going to result in our feeding them for the tiger cats to get at.

MR. SEAFORD: The cattle area is going to be fenced in.

MR. PERCY C. WIGHT: The tiger cat is going to jump the fence. I think you can easily get land between Abary and Mahaica.

THE PRESIDENT: There seems to be a lot of misunderstanding as to the reason for the selection of this site. I have always been under the impression that the main object of this experiment is to find out where cattle can be successfully and properly raised in the interior savannahs. If you are going to do that, then you must put the station there. That, to my mind, was the main reason for the selection of the site.

MR. PERCY C. WIGHT: I entirely agree with you. I have had the good fortune to be associated with the Abary Cattle Ranch. We started with just a few cattle and developed until when Government gave the Rupununi lands to a big company in order to develop the cattle industry.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I may clear up the point. Government wishes the experiment not only to improve the stock but also to see what is the best kind of fodder that should be grown. The

object of the experimental station is to study—

- (1) The problems of the mineral deficiency of the intermediate savannahs in relation to the economical stocking of the grazing lands, the mineral deficiency in soil and grasses, the effects of supplementary feeding of livestock, cattle breeding and pasture management.
- (2) Diseases of horses of the Rupununi District
- (3) Any other problems arising in connection with the Land Settlement on the soil types of the area.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT : The Abary Cattle Ranch have been importing good cattle. They had bulls brought out here to improve the breed of cattle, and as a result of the mosquito and fly nuisance they had to abandon the project in less than twelve months. The cattle industry is one of the most paying industries for this Colony, but let us eliminate from it the idea of manufacturing condensed milk. Every man who sells condensed milk will tell you that it is sold in this Colony at a loss. We can never think of getting to such a state of wealth that we can manufacture condensed milk. What we want is a proper breed of cattle suitable to the Colony. That will encourage people to go in for it. No one who runs a cattle ranch here makes money out of it because when the drought or flood comes on he loses all his calves. I have seen some of the finest stock in the Mahaicony Creek district. You only want to put in a small stock in order to assist the small farmer, but this is a big experiment that you want to go in for, which is absurd. That money can be better spent if you select a site between the Mahaica and Abary Creeks. I know of land being available there which can be had for little or nothing. It is accessible and can be better utilized than going 75 miles up the Berbice River. Not one of the inhabitants is going to take the trouble to go and see the station there. I own an estate on the Berbice River and do not know where it is as I have never been there. If you are going to spend money, do so usefully. It is a very laudable project and one which I will support entirely, but let us go somewhere that the people can go and see what is being done. You have the Abary Cattle Ranch paying its shareholders dividends until it was taken over by a tremendously wealthy concern, people who know more about cattle

than anybody else in the West Indies. The late Mr. Murray went in for the industry in the early days, Mr. Shields and that class of person, and you had a man up in the Rupununi who opened ranches—

Mr. WOOLFORD : Mr. Melville.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT : The capital of that company has all disappeared. Now that it has been absorbed, the farmer-owners make a lot of money. All I am asking Government to do is to get something done within easy reach of Berbice, Georgetown, and Essequibo. The manufacture of condensed milk is out of the question.

THE PRESIDENT : There appears to be general agreement on the principle of the experiment, but there is some doubt as to the site. I can only go by the investigations of the people who formulated this experiment. It is an experiment merely to decide whether this 2,000 square miles of savannah can be made good use of. The experiment is to be carried out on the savannahs which are intended to be used.

Motion put, and agreed to.

SLUICES FOR EAST DEMERARA WATER CONSERVANCY.

Mr. CASE : (Director of Public Works and Sea Defences) : I beg to move—

THAT, with reference to Governor's Message No 24 of 21st August, 1940, this Council approves of a free grant of \$15,000 from the Development Trust Fund to meet the cost of constructing one of two 16-foot sluices for relieving surplus water from the East Demerara Water Conservancy.

Before the East Demerara Water Conservancy was formed, all the water from the watershed was discharged into the Mahaica Creek, but since the formation of the Conservancy part of it goes to Georgetown and part to the sugar estates on the East Coast. The completion of the new Conservancy Dam makes it absolutely essential that extra relief be provided for the Conservancy in wet weather in order to make sure that the East Coast Villages and Estates are not endangered by flood. In the past it has been the practice in very wet weather for numerous cuts to be made

in the Conservancy Dams. This, in my opinion, is a very undesirable practice. I think it would be far better to discharge the water where Nature intended it should be. In my opinion the construction of relief sluices will not result in increased flooding in the Mahaica River area. In the East Demerara Conservancy the average rainfall is 91 inches and it has been proved that 53 inches of that is lost in the ordinary way of evaporation. During the dry weather East Coast Demerara requires 118,000,000 cubic feet of water per day, and during the last drought the amount was 20,560,000 cubic feet. In order to remedy this condition a survey is now being made and is nearly completed with the view of getting water direct from the Demerara River at a point where the water is never salt. I have no doubt that the survey will show that this is possible. If such a canal was made the East Demerara Conservancy could eventually be abandoned and a water supply be always available without any danger of flooding from the Conservancy.

Mr. WOOD seconded.

Mr. ELEAZAR: What I am going to do is to oppose this motion. I do not think it is fair to ask me of all men to support a motion of this kind to relieve this Conservancy of surplus water because if that is not done the water would run over the dams and to prevent that they have to cut the dams at several places during the rainy season.

Mr. SEAFORD: To a point of order! I do not think that statement is correct. The reason why this money is being voted is to put up sluices because Government is going to make use of a sluice and canal at the present moment at Friendship for irrigation and drainage purposes so as to make lands available on the East Bank, Demerara.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I do not know which is the correct explanation I have got, the hon. Member's or that the hon. mover of the motion gave us here.

Mr. SEAFORD: One sluice has been constructed by the Conservancy and paid for by them. There are two sluices being constructed.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am asked to vote

\$15,000 for one sluice, and I invite the hon. Colonial Secretary to say if that is not a fact, when for the sake of an expenditure of \$500 or less for a koker the whole of a small village about eight miles from New Amsterdam has been allowed to be flooded out by the tide. The koker there was blown out, and I wrote Government and also consulted the hon. Colonial Secretary over and over again about it. The place has two floods every day but nothing is done about it. The last thing I was told was that this thing needs an engineering survey before anything can be done. That survey is not yet made, and nearly all the houses there have fallen down and all the fruit trees which have been growing there for years have entirely disappeared because of the want of this \$500 koker. If I were a member of the Public Works Department staff I would say \$250 and then come back for another \$750, but not being so I say \$500. I do not think the koker which was blown out had cost as much as that. The koker at Ithaca, a thriving village of farmers, also requires to be done for another \$200. The most comforting reply I got to my representation is that it needs an engineering survey. Can it be said that a paternal Government can stand and see a settlement which has been established for years and years washed out like that and make no attempt at giving assistance?

The Council adjourned for the luncheon recess until 2 p.m.

2 p.m.—

Mr. HUMPHRYS was present.

Mr. ELEAZAR (resuming): When the Council adjourned I was about to make the point that while Government was willing to spend \$1,500 on a koker it allowed a village to be wiped out for the sake of a few hundred dollars. I agree that Government cannot accept responsibility for river defences because rivers are of tremendous length and there is no proper defence anywhere, but I think it is good statesmanship and sound commonsense to do something where the safety of a public road is involved. If Government refused to put in a koker and the people would not provide one it might cost Government \$5,000 or more either to save a road or deflect it. Not very long ago the river dam at Edinburgh gave way, the villagers lost their crop and Government was put

to considerable expense in deflecting the public road at considerable length. To stick to the letter of the law that it is not sea defence but river defence sounds all right, but where is the wisdom in that policy? Will Government allow about a mile of public road to go, or abandon a part of the country eight miles from New Amsterdam? I am sure Your Excellency will not allow such a state of affairs to continue because it must do harm to your *regime* as a statesman.

THE PRESIDENT: I am not quite clear what the hon. Member is talking about.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am talking about this koker.

THE PRESIDENT: Is the hon. Member opposing the motion? If he is talking about something quite different he is not in order.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I need not necessarily oppose the motion to speak on it. I may be supporting it.

THE PRESIDENT: Is the hon. Member supporting or opposing it?

Mr. ELEAZAR: By the time I get to the end of what I have to say—

THE PRESIDENT: I ask the hon. Member that question because it seems to me that he is speaking on an entirely different subject.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I am speaking on the subject of this large sum of money which is asked for to build a koker at a particular point, and I am saying that if Government expects one to support such a motion I cannot see any justification for the same Government refusing a sum, infinitesimal in comparison, for work which would benefit a much larger number of people. I am pointing out the inconsistency in that policy, and I can only do so under a heading of this kind. Government is asking the Council to vote \$15,000 for the erection of a koker for a small area while it is allowing another area to go abegging for the sake of the expenditure of a very much smaller sum. In doing so Government

is involving the public in the expenditure of hundreds of dollars to repair a public road which it could save for \$500. That is what I was going to say. I say that Government is not being well served because when one makes these complaints here the District Commissioner looks around and tells Government just what Government wants to hear—that there are only a few stragglers living in the district and it is not worth saving.

THE PRESIDENT: I am absolutely not prepared to make any statement on that subject. It is not before the Council and I am not prepared to make any statement about it.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think the hon. Member really knows the position with regard to this koker, but I could quite easily remind him of it. He has had many discussions with me on the subject, and I was taken by him to see the koker to which he is referring not many months ago. He has already been told that the Director of Public Works is surveying this area, or about to do so shortly, and it may be necessary to declare the area referred to by the hon. Member a drainage area. Government has received reports to the effect that there are few people in the district and very few people use the road. It will require 18 new bridges as well as large expenditure on road surface; not a few hundred dollars. When the report of the survey is received Government will consider how much money should be spent on the road to keep it going, and whether any assistance should be given towards putting in a koker. I do not think there is anything more Government can tell the hon. Member. The hon. Member keeps on referring to an estimate of \$500, but I have before me an estimate of \$4,000.

Mr. ELEAZAR: That one koker if taken in hand will save a long stretch of road.

Mr. CASE: I would like to point out that the koker which the hon. Member is constantly asking Government to replace is privately owned.

Motion put, and agreed to.

RE ORGANIZATION OF P.W.D.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I ask leave to defer consideration of the next motion in my name. (Motion for re-organization of the Public Works Department). A good many Members are absent this afternoon and it is a rather important motion. If the Council grants leave we can proceed with the Bills.

Motion deferred.

STOCKDALE PENSION BILL.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that "A Bill be intituled an Ordinance to make special provision for the payment of a pension to Sir Frank Arthur Stockdale in respect of his service in the Colony" be read the first time.

Mr. D'ANDRADE (Comptroller of Customs) seconded.

Motion put, and agreed to.

Bill read the first time.

Notice was given that at the next or subsequent meeting of the Council it would be moved that the Bill be read the second time. (Colonial Secretary).

POOR RELIEF (AMENDMENT) BILL.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that "A Bill intituled an Ordinance to amend the Poor Relief Ordinance, Chapter 90, by increasing the number of Poor Law Commissioners and by increasing the number which shall form a quorum at any meeting of the said Commissioners" be read the first time.

Mr. D'ANDRADE seconded.

Motion put, and agreed to.

Bill read the first time.

Notice was given that at the next or subsequent meeting of the Council it would be moved that the Bill be read the second time. (Colonial Secretary).

SUPPLEMENTARY (APPROPRIATION) (1939) BILL.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that "A Bill intituled an Ordinance to allow and confirm certain additional expenditure incurred in the year ended the thirty-first day of December, 1939," be read the second time. This Bill covers an amount totalling \$205,514.77, as shown in the schedule.

Mr. D'ANDRADE seconded.

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

The Council resumed.

Notice was given that at the next or a subsequent meeting of the Council it would be moved that the Bill be read a third time and passed. (Colonial Secretary).

MOTOR VEHICLES AND ROAD TRAFFIC BILL.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr. E. O. Pretheroe, M.C.): I move that "A Bill intituled an Ordinance to make provision for the licensing, regulation and use of motor vehicles, the regulation of traffic on roads and otherwise with respect to roads and vehicles thereon" be read a second time. In doing so I wish to refer to previous legislation in the Colony dealing with the same subject. First in the line of Ordinances was the Motor Car Ordinance, 1912, followed by Ordinances of the same name in 1918, 1925 and 1929. Then in turn came the Motor Vehicles Ordinance, 1932. Down to that date all those Ordinances. I have just named, five in number, dealt, as their titles show, with motor cars and motor vehicles. They made no reference to other users of the public roads, being limited strictly to motor vehicles. As far as other users of the road were concerned there were minor provisions under section 156 of the Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) Ordinances, but apart from that there were no means of controlling traffic on the roads other than that of motor vehicles. That was a most unsatisfactory state of affairs, and in due course it was considered necessary to control users of the road other than motorists. Therefore, in 1937 the Summary Juris-

diction (Offences) (Amendment) Ordinance was passed which provided a number of things in connection with the use of the roads by cyclists and the drivers of carts.

In 1937 the position was that motorists were controlled by one Ordinance whereas other road users were controlled by a second Ordinance. That gave rise to a number of anomalies. A motorist and a donkey cart driver would do exactly the same thing at the same place and at the same time, but one would be guilty of an offence while the other would not. Again in the same circumstances one would be liable to one penalty and the other to a different penalty. That led to dissatisfaction, and in 1937 His Excellency the Governor appointed a Commission of nine, of whom three were Members of this Council, to inquire into and report upon the matter. The Committee considered the matter during the better part of two years and its report was laid on the table on the 31st December, 1938. It is a rather remarkable report in one way, that with one exception every recommendation of the Committee was unanimous, and there were 19 major recommendations and 7 minor ones. The one exception, quite a minor one in itself, was made by a Member of this Council, and no doubt he will defend his view before this Council. The fact remains that the Committee was unanimous in 19 major recommendations. One of the major recommendations had reference to street lighting in Georgetown, and I understand that the Town Council on its own initiative has adopted that recommendation. Anyhow that is not a matter which should be included in a Road Traffic Bill. All of the other recommendations are included in the draft Bill now before the Council.

As far as motorists are concerned the last Ordinance, passed in 1932, which is now in operation, has proved fairly satisfactory, and the Committee made very few recommendations concerning amendments of the provisions of that Ordinance. Most of its recommendations are concerned with people other than motorists, though there are provisions as regards motorists.

Having referred to that piece of history I pass on to the present Bill. The draftsman was faced with several problems. He was the Assistant Attorney-General. In

the first place he had to adopt as much of the existing law as had proved satisfactory in working. Secondly, he had to bring into the Bill certain provisions which appear in the Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) Ordinance; thirdly, he had to incorporate the recommendations made by the Committee, and fourthly, he had to make consequential changes necessary as a result of incorporating those provisions. The result is that the Bill is rather of unusual length—it has 91 clauses—and I do not propose to comment on all the clauses. Instead I propose to go through the Bill and point out two classes of provisions. In the first place there are new provisions though many of these have existed in the laws of other Colonies for a great number of years. I think there is only one provision which does not appear in any other Colony. The second class of provisions is existing law which has been amended in some way. I shall not comment in any way on any clauses in which the provisions are the same now in this Bill as they are in existing Ordinances.

Going through the Bill, itself, clause 2 is the definition clause. "District" is defined as a police district. The reason for that will be seen in a later clause. If any hon. Member is in doubt as to the boundaries of a police district he can refer to the *Gazette* of the 6th July last. Other definitions which are new are "road authority," "traffic," and most important of all, "vehicle." "Vehicle" is defined as meaning "a vehicle of any kind used on a road." I think that is perfectly clear. A vehicle of any kind includes motor cars, buses, hand carts, donkey carts, bicycles, perambulators—in fact any form of conveyance, and it is very important, because in Part VII of the Bill, which deals with the regulation of traffic, hon. Members will find that the word used throughout is "vehicle." If this Bill is enacted cyclists, donkey carts, vans, carts and other forms of conveyance will be subject to precisely the same law as motorists have been during the last 12 years.

Clause 3 is new. Up to now the registration and licensing of motor vehicles have been in two hands. The Police are responsible for the registration and the District Commissioners for the licensing. There is no central registration, and the result is that when any information is

required about cars reference has to be made to at least two officers. In every country in the world, as far as I know, the registration and licensing of motor cars is in one authority, and the Committee very strong and unanimously recommended that in this Colony, as in every other Colony, the Commissioner of Police should be the Licensing and Registering Authority. Clause 3 therefore provides for that.

Clause 4 contains nothing new except one small change in the second line of sub-clause (1) in which it is provided that "a separate register shall be kept by the licensing officer in each district as directed by the Licensing Authority." Sub-clause (2) provides that "every licensing officer shall forward to the Licensing Authority a copy of every entry made in the local register kept by him." The object of that is to secure central registration, so that by reference to the Police headquarters details of any car can be ascertained. Clause 5 is new and is consequential upon the change in the system of registration.

Clause 6 is new. It provides that no person shall be registered as the owner of a motor vehicle unless he is of or above the age of 17 years. He can be the owner but cannot be registered as the owner of a motor vehicle until he is 17 years. The reason for that is because of the difficulty which arose a short time ago in Essequibo. The owner of a motor bus was charged with permitting his bus to be on the road to the danger of the public. In fact a serious accident occurred. The Police summoned the owner to appear in Court and when he appeared he was found to be a boy not yet 6 years old. It was obvious that the case could not proceed. The object of the new provision is to have somebody responsible for the motor vehicle even if he does not own it. "Owner" is defined as the person registered as the owner. Therefore throughout the Bill, except in one case, "owner" means the registered owner.

There is a small change in clause 7 (1). In the last line of paragraph (a) reference is made to "dealers' general licences." Previously dealers had no licences; they were given a number plate, and of course there is no method of tracking them if dealers duplicated or triplicated those

plates by manufacturing them. In one case it was discovered that a dealer actually had five plates. Section 21 provides that on the issue of a dealers' general licence the dealer will be assigned different identification marks in respect of the number of vehicles specified in the licence.

Clause 8 (2) is new. Anybody leaving the Colony is required to notify the licensing officer in writing of the name and address of the person in whose charge or possession his vehicle will be left. Clause 9 is new. It introduces the English law on the subject. Sub-clause (1) deals with the transfer of registration. If you exchange or sell your car you transfer your certificate with the car, and that certificate of registration is amended by endorsement by the Licensing Authority. If a car changes hand otherwise then sub-clause (3) applies and a new certificate is issued.

The last part of clause 10 (2) is also new. I have already dealt with the question of dealers' identification marks. Sub-clause (3) of clause 12 deals with that matter. Clause 16 is new, but the rates of fees prescribed are not new. These appear in the schedule and I will draw attention to any changes when I come to the schedule. Clause 17 is new as far as this Colony is concerned. It deals with the rebate of a licence fee paid, and provides that a person who takes out a licence for a motor vehicle for a whole year and does not use it during the last half of the year is entitled to a rebate of half of the licence fee on payment of a fee of \$1. A similar provision is made with respect to the licence fee for one half of the year, on payment of a fee of 50 cents. I do not quite know why provision is not made for a rebate of three-quarters of the licence fee if the vehicle is not used after the first quarter of the year. The idea of these provisions is to encourage people to take out annual licences. It saves a great deal of trouble. Later in the Bill hon. Members will find that provision is made for taking out licences for a shorter period. Having changed the Licensing Authority, clause 18 is new. The same remark applies to clauses 19 and 20.

Sub-clause (8) of clause 21 is new. It provides that licences shall continue in force until the 31st December in the year in which they are issued. In other words

they will be annual licences. Sub-clause (1) of clause 22 is existing law, but sub-clauses (2) to (7) are all new. They are designed to meet the very special circumstances which exist in this Colony. A great number of motor cars and buses apparently are purchased on the hire-purchase system, and it is usual for persons to get a car on payment of a small deposit and hope to use it long enough to be able to pay the licence fee. When they are caught by the Police one of two things happens. They are either fined and given a long time to pay the fine, or the owner of the car or bus seizes it, and Government does not get the licence fee. It is now provided in sub-clauses (3) and (4) that the Police may take the same step as the hirer of the car, *i.e.*, they may seize it until the licence fee is paid. That is rather drastic but it must be remembered that the Bill makes provision for quarterly licences. It is considered that more drastic action is justified against owners of cars and buses who use their vehicles without a licence and, because they are given time to pay, continue the offence indefinitely. Many cases have arisen in which fines were not paid at the end of the year until the new licence is due. It is to meet that particular case that these clauses have been inserted.

The next new clause is clause 24 (1) (b) which provides that if a person is the holder of a driving certificate in any other part of the British Empire the Police will accept it and issue a licence to him. Clause 25 provides for the issue of provisional licences. Anybody who wishes to learn to drive a car, instead of having to take out an annual licence as at present, will take out a provisional licence. There is nothing new then until we come to clause 33. The clauses between 26 and 33 reproduce sections of the present Ordinance, although the wording is slightly altered. At present any person from 19 years upwards is entitled to drive a bus or lorry, but this Bill fixes the age at 21 years.

The next amendment is clause 39 which prohibits riding on the outside of a motor vehicle. That is a very old provision in most countries. There is a slight change in clause 40 (1) which provides that only one trailer shall be drawn, and one person in

addition to the driver shall be carried on a vehicle for the purpose of attending to the trailer. Clause 41 is new. It provides limitation of time during which a person may be permitted to drive a commercial vehicle such as a motor bus, lorry or tractor, subject to certain provisos.

The next new provision is in clause 46 (a) which deals with the classification of roads into major and minor roads. That recommendation is made very strongly by the Committee, and has been made many times by the B.G. Automobile Association and by many other persons. Clause 47 is also new. Strange though it may seem, no road authority has power at the present moment to close a road which is under repair or reconstruction. Clause 48 is also new. It provides for the erection of notice boards and is in keeping with the Committee's recommendations. There are in fact notice boards now, but this is the first time the necessary legal provision has been made. Clause 50 is new. It provides penalties for neglect of traffic directions given by a police officer in uniform, and applies to all vehicles and not merely to motor vehicles. In other words, if a policeman holds his hand out you will not have a cyclist dashing under his arm or a donkey cart going across the main traffic. The effect of this clause is to make every user of the road liable, and compel him to obey the same signals as motorists are made to do now.

Clause 51 is new as far as this Colony is concerned, but very old in most parts of the world. In cases of extraordinary or abnormal congestion of traffic a police officer can give directions then and there in order to relieve such congestion. Clauses 56 and 57 are new. Clause 56 deals with the careless use of vehicles on the road. Clause 57 makes the leaving of vehicles in a dangerous position on a road an offence.

Clause 58 is also new. For the first time the pedestrian comes in. It provides that if any person wilfully loiters or remains on any roadway in such a manner or in such circumstances as to be likely to cause danger or obstruction to vehicles on the road he shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a fine not exceeding \$5. At present a pedestrian can stand in the middle of a road with impunity, and it is

proposed that he shall come into line with all other users of the road.

Part VII of the Bill is quite new. It introduces road service licences. There comes a time in all countries when, owing to the increase in traffic, steps have to be taken to control that traffic. There are many ways of controlling it, such as giving exclusive rights to certain people to use certain routes, arranging time-tables for buses, and many other ways. I hope that in this case hon. Members will look ahead a little and not oppose or reject any of the proposals merely because they are a little in advance of the present time.

Clause 69 is new. It provides special powers for the Georgetown Town Council. In fact I believe effect has always been given to it in the past, but now it is being legalized. Clause 70 is new and provides for the granting of exclusive licences. This is one of the few countries which has not adopted the International Convention for Motor Traffic held in Paris in 1926. Most countries have adopted that Convention, but this Colony has not. In Part IX of the Bill power is given to the Governor in Council to do certain things, if and when this Council adopts that Convention. It affords many privileges to the users of motor cars if they go to other countries with their cars, but only if we adopt the Convention. Clause 74 is new, but it merely extends what has always been done. Clause 75 is new.

Clause 76 is quite new. The existing law says that when you approach a main road you must sound your horn. This clause gives power to the Licensing Authority to declare silent zones. The whole of England is a silent zone after 11 o'clock at night, and a motorist cannot sound his horn. There are many examples of silent zones outside hospitals. Clause 77 gives the Governor in Council power to make regulations. In paragraph (ix), (xi), (xii) and (xvii) the words "other vehicles" are included. Paragraph (xvi) is new. Cases occur in which huge loads are carried on carts drawn by donkeys or mules. There was a recent case in New Amsterdam in which a cart so loaded swept away an electric lighting post and broke down a bridge. Power is given to control the length of loads which may be carried. Paragraphs (xix), (xx), (xxi) and (xxxvi) are new.

In the Committee stage I will move an amendment giving power to require owners of motor vehicles to instal the device known as a suppressor. Perhaps I may explain why it was not put into the Bill. It is not only motor vehicles which cause interference with radio sets. Any internal combustion engine, I believe, does the same thing, and I believe many electric contrivances, such as sewing machines, cause interference with radio sets. It is obviously undesirable that we should differentiate against motorists and compel them to incur the expense of fitting suppressors and not compel others. A Bill is in course of preparation for submission to the Council requiring all such machines to be fitted with suppressors. It is pointed out that a definite undertaking has been given by the Council that the use of suppressors would be provided for, and for that reason temporary provision will be made in this Bill. When the special Ordinance is passed the provision which I propose to introduce in this Bill will be repealed in due course.

Clause 78 is new. Clause 80 is also new and is slightly different from the ordinary criminal law provision. Clause 83 is new. It puts on the owner the onus of proof as to the use of a motor vehicle. There is great difficulty in all motor legislation in knowing when a car is kept for use on the road. Unless it is actually found on the road it is difficult to prove that it is being used on the road. Therefore clause 83 provides that a car shall be deemed to be kept for use unless the contrary is proved. Clauses 84 and 85 introduce the same provisions in regard to offences motorists are guilty of as exist in other forms of legislation. For instance, if a motorist is charged with manslaughter he can be convicted of dangerous driving. Clause 88 is new. It provides that certain clauses will not apply to motor vehicles while being used for fire brigade, ambulance or police purposes. Clauses 89 and 90 are new. Clause 90 merely provides that the provisions of this Bill shall prevail over those of any other Ordinance.

The items in the First Schedule are identically the same as those at present existing, with the exception of item 4. This Bill makes reference to trailers for the first time, therefore item 4 provides for fees to be charged in respect of trailers.

There is a small change in item 7, proviso (2) which says that "the licence fee for any vehicle not exceeding 14 horse power, Royal Automobile rating, used by a huckster for the carriage of goods anywhere in the Colony shall be at the rate of \$120." That provision is new and is a limitation of a huckster's van to 14 h.p. There is an error in this Schedule. Opposite section 21 the fee of \$20 for a dealer's general licence is a mistake. The fee should be \$50.

In the Second Schedule the only change is item 7 which is one of the recommendations of the Committee. The Third Schedule needs no comment. I think I have mentioned every new clause and every change in the law as it stands now. One or two errors have crept in, and there are a few amendments which I shall move in Committee. I move that the Bill be read the second time.

Mr. AUSTIN seconded.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I wish to congratulate the hon. Attorney-General on the effort he has made to provide this elaborate Bill to control the number of vehicles using the road, and the manner in which those vehicles are used so that they might be operated without danger to the community and to one another. There is only one phase of the Bill with which I am not in agreement, and that is the change in regard to the licensing of motor vehicles. When one is accustomed to a system he does not like to shake it off. In the majority of cases the fees are the same, but it is now proposed that the Police should be the Licensing Authority instead of the District Commissioner. At first view it does not seem to me that this new system will work any more satisfactorily than the existing one. It seems to me that the District Commissioner's office is in a better position to issue licences, and that the Police should register all vehicles. Apart from that I do not see very much in this Bill to complain about. Speaking generally about motor vehicles I think that some drivers have become almost reckless, and something should be done to keep them in check.

The proposal to compel the use of suppressors is very welcome, because it is very annoying when one is listening in to an important bit of news on the radio to have

it blotted out by a motor vehicle or a sewing machine. Some people have been reasonable enough to put in suppressors, but others have not. I think it is a matter for congratulation to the Attorney-General who, newcomer as he is, has grasped some of the things which really require looking into here, and has taken them in hand. Even if in going through the Bill clause by clause we find anything to complain about I am sure he will take it in good part. I congratulate him from the bottom of my heart, even though I cannot excuse him for the Petroleum Bill. This Bill is well timed and is a very noble gesture indeed.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I desire to congratulate the Attorney-General on having brought forward this Bill. It quite obviously has involved a considerable amount of work and must have caused the draftsman a good deal of labour. Except for a few amendments I support it whole-heartedly. I desire particularly to express my gratitude to Government on its intention to make it compulsory for suppressors to be put on motor vehicles, and that it is also proposed to introduce a Bill to compel users of electrical devices to put suppressors on their machines. I need not describe to Your Excellency the nuisance which owners of radios have to put up with, and I think when the use of suppressors becomes general Government will have no difficulty in collecting licences for radio sets.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

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

Clause 2—Interpretation.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: With regard to the definition of "vehicle" I wish to ask the hon. Attorney-General whether he has considered the definition of a hackney carriage, and the reason why it has been omitted, because as he is aware there are several Acts in England dealing with hackney carriages. I quite appreciate that the task of the draftsman was a difficult one as regards the definition of "vehicle." In a certain clause to which I will draw

attention there is definitely some conflict in the offing between the word "vehicle" as defined in this Bill, and what is known as a hackney carriage: There are similar provisions on a much smaller scale in the Georgetown Town Council Ordinance, Chapter 86. While dealing with that I wish to point out that clause 90 of this Bill says:—

90. Whenever the provisions of this Ordinance are in conflict with the provisions of any other Ordinance relating to the control of vehicles and road traffic the provisions of this Ordinance shall prevail.

I do not know whether that is a covert way of making this Bill prevail over the provisions of the Town Council Ordinance, or the right of the Town Council to make by-laws which conflict with the powers of the Licensing Authority as set out in this Bill. If we are to have this Ordinance defining "vehicle" in one way then the deduction is quite possible that when a hackney carriage is referred to the word "vehicle" would cover it.

There is also section 215 (c) of the Town Council Ordinance which gives the Town Council power to regulate traffic. I do not know whether that has escaped the notice of the Attorney General.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: With regard to the definition of the word "vehicle" the hon. Member says that some clause in this Bill is in conflict with what is known as a hackney carriage. If the hon. Member will be good enough to raise the question when we come to the particular clause I will be able to consider it. On the face of it the word "vehicle" is intended to include all vehicles and not exclude hackney carriages. If this Bill becomes law it follows that the Town Council cannot make by-laws which conflict with the provisions of this Bill. If they do they would be *ultra vires*. To that extent their hands will be tied.

Mr. WIGHT: I suggest that the Attorney-General look at section 215 (c) of the Town Council Ordinance which gives the Town Council power to do certain things. If clause 90 of this Bill is enacted it would mean that any regulations made by the competent authority under this Bill would over-ride the provisions under the Town Council Ordinance otherwise we would have regulations made

by the Town Council running side by side with regulations made by this Council.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I have read the clause and there is nothing in it which need cause the slightest conflict between the Town Council's by-laws and this Bill. The Town Council is given power to do certain things in respect of hackney carriages and carts plying for hire. If the Town Council keeps within the four corners of this Bill there need be no conflict at all, but if it goes outside of it its regulations will be *ultra vires*.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I do not wish to be facetious, but I would like to ask the Attorney-General whether roller skates used on the road come within the definition of vehicle? During the last few months the use of roller skates on the road has fallen off considerably, but I should like to know whether they come within this definition.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: This morning I looked up to see where perambulators came in. My personal opinion is that a roller skate is a vehicle.

Mr. ELEAZAR: The definition of "traffic" does not seem to me to be very happily worded. It says "traffic" means "vehicles of every description, pedestrians and all animals being ridden, driven or led."

THE CHAIRMAN: It does not mean the vehicles but the movement of those vehicles. It is a very difficult thing to define. The definition is not very graceful, I admit.

Clause 2 put, and agreed to.

Clause 3—Licensing Authority.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I am supporting this clause but I wish some information as regards the working of it. I would like to enquire whether it is proposed to augment the existing staff in the Traffic Branch of the Police Department in order to carry out the provisions of this Bill, and whether it is proposed to appoint an expert or a special officer to deal with traffic and traffic regulations generally? My reason for asking that question is because I feel (I hope my suspicions are wrong) that a very large department is about to be created, and we

are going to be saddled with the expense of a highly technical administrative staff to deal with traffic regulations. I do not suggest that an officer with traffic experience should not be added to the staff. It may well be that we have such an officer at the present time. What I am hoping is that a special department will not be created.

Mr. JACOB: The hon. Member has anticipated me. What will be the cost of the operation of this clause?

THE CHAIRMAN: There are no definite plans made in connection with this Bill. The question of a traffic officer has been raised since, but no decision has yet been come to.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: We all welcome this Bill; it is long overdue, but it seems to me that we do not want to increase the burden on the Colony. My own view of the matter is that I think at the present time there is an officer in the Police Force who is capable of controlling traffic, but like the car and eye expert who was stationed at Bartica some time ago, this officer is stationed out of the City. I am concerned about the additional expenditure.

THE CHAIRMAN: After all, if more officers are asked for Government will have to come to the Council and make an announcement, but I do not think it would be reasonable to throw this Bill out now unless something of that kind is attempted.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Hon. Members have been told over and over that they had accepted the principle of a Bill.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will go as far as this: I do not think this Bill ties the Council's hands. What hon. Members are asking me to do, and what I am not prepared to do, is to give a definite pledge that proposals will not be made to establish a traffic branch or anything of that kind. I should be very sorry to give that pledge because every large police force I know of has a traffic branch.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: There is some sort of traffic branch now.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, I agree.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: We do not want a

large staff to be the result of the passing of this Bill.

THE CHAIRMAN: I dislike giving a definite pledge on a matter of that kind, because it commits one for a very long time. This Bill was not drafted with that in view; it is not part of the plan.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I can see that the idea is to remove this branch of the work from the District Commissioners to the Police Department, but it seems to me that Government is bound to augment the Police Department. It cannot be done otherwise. If the Police have to collect licences that must entail an increase of staff, and on the other side Government will not dismiss anybody.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Police Department might want some clerical assistance.

Mr. ELEAZAR: The Police Department will be a revenue-collecting Department, and an important one it will be too. It will need a highly technical staff.

Mr. JACOB: Records will have to be kept at the police stations in Georgetown and in the country districts.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I will read what the Committee says in its report on the matter. Paragraph 10 of the report states:—

10. At present in this Colony the licensing and registration of motor vehicles is carried out by two separate departments; the District Commissioners are responsible for the former and the Police Department for the latter. We consider that both functions should be performed by the Police Department. In Trinidad the Inspector-General of Constabulary, aided by such licensing officers and inspectors as he may appoint with the approval of the Governor, is the Licensing Authority for the registration and licensing of all motor vehicles, and we recommend that a similar provision be incorporated in the new Traffic Ordinance.

THE CHAIRMAN: Was that what the hon. Member for Central Demerara was referring to?

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Yes, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: It goes a little further than what I said. There may be some increase of staff, but there is no plan in the Ordinance that there should be an elaborate Department.

Clause 3 put, and agreed to.

Clause 4.—Register of motor vehicles to be kept.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Clause 4 (1) provides that a separate register shall be kept by the licensing officer in each district. If a dealer in Georgetown sold a car to a man in Berbice the present practice is that the registration would take place in Georgetown. I am not quite clear whether under this clause the registration will have to be made in Berbice. If that is so there will be overlapping of work.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If you apply for a licence in Berbice the registration will be made there, and the Police there will forward a copy of the registration to the Licensing Authority in Georgetown as part of the police routine. The licence fee can be paid at any police station at the convenience of the public.

Mr. JACOB: The point is that at present the fee is paid at the District Commissioner's office. If this Bill is made law the fee will have to be paid to the Police, and that will create new machinery.

THE CHAIRMAN: Not necessarily new machinery.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The Police collect fees now for the examination of motor vehicles.

Mr. ELEAZAR: If these fees refer only to motor vehicles I do not think we have much to complain about.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I would like to revert to clause 3 (4) (a) to suggest that the word "usually" be substituted for the word "normally" in the second line.

THE CHAIRMAN: What is the difference?

Mr. WIGHT: Very little difference, except that lawyers might go into Court and be able to argue that it is abnormal. I think the word "usually" would prevent quibbling and splitting of hairs.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I do not object to the amendment suggested by the hon. Member.

Mr. WIGHT: I move that the word "usually" be substituted for the word "normally."

Amendment put, and agreed to.

Clause 4—Register of motor vehicles to be kept.

Mr. De AGUIAR: I was hoping that the Attorney-General would have convinced me about this clause. I interpret it to mean that if a dealer in Georgetown sells a motor vehicle to a man in Essequibo that vehicle will have to be taken to the nearest police station in Essequibo to be registered. That would cause great inconvenience to dealers generally. If the intention is that when the registration takes place in Georgetown the Department will forward a copy of such registration to the district police station concerned then my point will not arise.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: When you buy a new motor vehicle in Georgetown, for example, you have the choice of one of two things. You can either register it in Georgetown, or alternatively you have seven days within which to take it down to Essequibo and register it there. It is at the option of the purchaser. After the licence fee is paid the Police themselves make arrangements for the registration without reference to anybody. The central register in Georgetown is quite distinct from the local register which you can fill in at the time of registration. A single registration in Georgetown or elsewhere in the Colony is all that is required.

Clause 4 put, and agreed to.

Clause 7.—Exemptions from need for registration and from payment of registration fee.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: Clause 7 (1) (b) says:— "any motor vehicle the property of or used by the Governor for his official or personal duties." I suggest to the hon. Attorney-General that the words "for his official or personal duties" are rather ambiguous and should be deleted. I do not know what the personal duties of the Governor may be.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not know where it has come from. It is a rather curious expression.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It has come from Trinidad

THE CHAIRMAN: I am quite sure that the Governor has a great many personal duties but I do not know what they are.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I do not like the words "property of or used by the Governor . ." They are not very elegant.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Most Governors do not possess their own private cars. It is intended to cover any car which the Governor uses.

THE CHAIRMAN: Some cars are not the property of the Governor at all

Clause as amended put, and agreed to.

Clause 9 (2) (i)—Transfer of registration.

Mr. ELEAZAR: On the death of the registered owner of a motor vehicle it is provided in this sub-clause that the person in custody of the vehicle shall give notice of the fact to the licensing officer within seven days. Why should he be compelled to do so within seven days?

THE CHAIRMAN: How long do you suggest?

Mr. ELEAZAR: I think it should be deleted.

THE CHAIRMAN: We must put the responsibility on someone.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I think the hon. Member is suggesting that seven days is too short a period. Speaking subject to correction I think the point was successfully argued in another case and it was extended to one month.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: There is no particular merit in limiting it to seven days, and it is not compulsory for the new owner to go to the licensing officer; he can send a note. If any Member moves an amendment I will support it so long as the period is not too long.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I move that "one month" be substituted for "seven days."

Clause as amended put, and agreed to.

Clause 14.—Certificates of fitness.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I cannot find any other reference in the Bill to these certificates of fitness.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You will find it in the next sub-clause. Every vehicle must be certified as fit for use.

Clause 14 put, and agreed to.

Clause 16.—Licence duty for motor vehicles.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: The proviso to this clause says that in the case of a half year's licence the fee payable shall be 55 per centum of the full annual fee. I would like to know if after paying 55 per centum for the first half of the year a person would pay 45 per centum for the other half of the year?

THE CHAIRMAN: No, he pays a little more.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: This is something new. At present I am one of those who take out a half year's licence.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not know what is the practice here, but in another Colony where I have been, if you take out a licence for a quarter or a half year you pay a little more than just a quarter or a half, as the case may be.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I am afraid that I misunderstood the position here. I was thinking of the case where a person elects to pay his licence in two instalments:

THE CHAIRMAN: In that case he was liable for the whole year's licence, but now he would not be liable.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: We are penalizing a person who takes out a licence for a whole year. At the present time he is permitted to pay his licence in two instalments. Now he is told he must pay a year's licence. That is something new.

THE CHAIRMAN: What the hon. Member says is quite true; he cannot take out a full year's licence and pay in two instalments.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: We are extending it to a half-year in this Bill, but it seems

to me that the intention is to penalize a person who intends to use his car for a whole year. Apparently the intention is that when he applies for a licence he has to pay for a full year instead of in two instalments. He is being deprived of the convenience of paying in two instalments as at present. Government is giving with one hand and taking away with the other. As a matter of fact when a man takes out a licence he has to pay 5 per cent. for the accommodation.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The privilege of paying a year's licence in two instalments has caused so much trouble that it has been deliberately omitted from this Bill. After a man pays the first instalment and gets his licence it is extremely difficult to get the second instalment. In view of that it is provided in this Bill that he can obtain a licence for one quarter or a half year, but he cannot get a licence unless he has paid the face value of it.

MR. DE AGUIAR: I regret to have to say that this provision is bordering on

class legislation, because I know that at the present moment the practice of paying in two instalments obtains not only with respect to motor licences but several other licences. A man with a donkey cart can go to the District Commissioner's office and pay a half-year's instalment on his licence, and at the end of the half-year he goes back and pays the remaining instalment. We must either make it a general rule that all licences shall be paid on the annual basis or continue the present practice of paying in two instalments.

THE CHAIRMAN: What are the other licences which are paid in two instalments?

MR. LAING (Commissioner of Labour and Local Government): All licences exceeding \$6 can be paid in two instalments.

THE CHAIRMAN: This will need some thinking over. I think it would be well to stop at this clause.

The Council resumed and adjourned until the following day at 10.30 a.m.