

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 7th December, 1944.

The Council met at 12 noon, His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon Lethem, K.C.M.G., President, in the chair.

PRESENT:

The President, His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon James Lethem, K.C.M.G.,

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. W. L. Heape, C.M.G.

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

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

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

The Hon. J. A. Luckhoo, K.C. (Nominated).

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

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

The Hon. H. N. Critchlow (Nominated).

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

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

The Hon. J. B. Singh, O.B.E. (Demerara-Essequibo).

The Hon. Peer Bacbus (Western Berbice).

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

The Hon. J. W. Jackson, O.B.E. (Nominated).

The Hon. A. M. Edun (Nominated).

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

The Hon. C. P. Ferreira (Berbice River).

The Clerk read prayers.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Tuesday, 28th November, 1944, were taken as read and confirmed.

THE LATE LORD MOYNE.

The PRESIDENT: Hon. Members will remember the Resolution passed by this Council on the 7th of November touching the death of Lord Moyne. We have received a reply stating that the Resolution was forwarded to Captain Bryan Guinness who asked that the following message may be communicated to the Council in reply:—

"Deeply touched by the kind message of sympathy from the Legislative Council of British Guiana whose welfare my father had so much at heart — Bryan Guinness."

Members will remember that Captain Bryan Guinness accompanied Lord Moyne to this Colony on the occasion of the visit of the Royal Commission in 1939.

PAPERS LAID.

The COLONIAL TREASURER laid

Note on the Present and Prospective Financial Position of the Colony (1944).

Draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year 1945.

Supplementary Explanatory Notes on draft Estimates of Expenditure for the year 1945.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES.

ESTIMATES, 1945.

The COLONIAL TREASURER gave notice of the following motion:—

THAT this Council approves the Estimates of Expenditure to be defrayed from Revenue during the year ending 31st December, 1945, which have been laid on the table.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL gave notice of the introduction and first reading the following Bills:—

The Tax (Amendment No. 2) Bill 1944.

The Pensions (Amendment) Bill, 1944.
The Expiring Law Continuance Bill, 1944.

The COLONIAL TREASURER gave notice of the introduction and first reading of the following Bill:—

The Income Tax (Amendment No. 2) Bill, 1944.

CONTINUANCE OF RENT

RESTRICTION ORDINANCE.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL gave notice of the following motion:—

WHEREAS the Rent Restriction Ordinance, 1941, was enacted on the 3rd day of November, 1941, and came into operation on the 8th day of November, 1941;

AND WHEREAS section 16 of the said Ordinance provided that the Ordinance

but that prior to the expiration thereof it could be renewed for further periods of one year by Resolution of the Legislative Council;

AND WHEREAS by Resolutions dated the 29th October, 1942, 28th October, 1943, and 4th November, 1944, the said Ordinance was continued in operation during the year 1943 and until the 31st day of December, 1944;

AND WHEREAS it is expedient that the said Ordinance be continued in operation for a further period of one year;

NOW, THEREFORE, Be it Resolved that the Rent Restriction Ordinance, 1941, shall continue in operation until the 31st day of December, 1945.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

VISIT OF MR. T. H. NAYLOR.

The PRESIDENT addressed the Council as follows:—

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council,

I have one or two announcements of interest to make briefly and informally before we proceed with the agenda.

Before doing so I would just like to say that Government has been very happy to receive a visit from Mr. T. H. Naylor who is with me this morning, and who you know is one who can speak for the sugar producing interests in England. It is very welcome to us to have this opportunity of first hand authoritative discussion in the Colony with one of the United Kingdom principals, and I appreciate greatly the visit performed in war time when travelling is so little convenient and easy. Mr. Naylor is also able to speak direct to us on behalf of the Ministry of Food in the United Kingdom, and in particular reference to the maintenance of our exports in this difficult end-war and post-war period that lies in

NEW POLITICAL FRANCHISE.

Referring to those things which we noted last week, I would inform Members that I have telegraphed the Secretary of State in regard to the steps to be taken for bringing in the new franchise. I am under the impression that the Order-in-Council will probably deal with the matter of qualification of Members of Council, and that *our* Ordinance will deal with the whole matter as touching the electors and the elections, the qualifications of electors, the procedure and regulations under which elections will proceed, and so on. That makes a fairly simple line of discrimination, and it is my purpose to form a small Committee of three Members of this Council to get down to consideration forthwith of the Regulations and procedure which will be necessary by way of amendment or addition to existing Regulations. I hope that that procedure will assist us in getting on expeditiously.

APPROVAL OF CIVIL LIST.

I received by telegraph the concurrence of the Secretary of State in my proposal to assent forthwith to the Civil List, and that will bring us to the end of an old song, which we have been chanting now for something approaching two years.

The revised Pensions Ordinance, as I stated last week, is now published and will come before us very shortly.

I have now a number of items of interest touching development.

CONSTRUCTION OF AIRFIELDS.

In particular reference to those I mentioned last week I have a telegram from London indicating readiness to finance the construction of three airfields in the interior, and the Interior Development Committee will be meeting on Monday to confirm the

the objective is primarily transportation of freight with a view to the best economic use of the service, to provide communications to facilitate the delivery of supplies and even of machinery in connection with mineral and other economic development. I would like to express my appreciation of the expedition with which this matter has been handled in London.

The negotiations for the purchase of a dredger, which I mentioned also last week, and which will be invaluable in the economic and early prosecution of our drainage and irrigation prospects, is proceeding, and I hope for early word as to its completion.

DRAINAGE AND IRRIGATION
DEPARTMENT.

I observe that I should have recorded last week that during my absence from the Colony the proposal to set up a special Drainage and Irrigation Department has been approved, and the finance provided up to a total free grant of some \$400,000. That is, as I have often previously stated, an essential organisation.

THE CORENTYNE SCHEME

Now touching the schemes themselves. Since I spoke last week I have received a Secretary of State's despatch, written after my departure from London and arising from our discussions there, in regard to the Corentyne scheme in which he states that—I am quoting the despatch which I have in front of me—he would be

“prepared to seek Treasury concurrence.....to meet the cost involved
“at such time as may be desirable.....”

subject to the completion of certain investigations. The first of these is the planning of the utilisation of the land, and another is that we must make

the sugar estates in the area. Various questions are raised as to—I quote again—“a balanced farming” economy desirable with—I quote—

“sugar and rice as the main crops but
“with ample food production.”

There is mention of mixed farming, the form of utilisation of pasturage, fencing and water supply on pasturage, etc. I would invite the attention of Members to this phraseology, indicating the angle of planned agricultural economy from which this matter has been viewed.

I have now received a further telegram from the Secretary of State, of later date than his despatch, and with immediate reference to the difficulties we are having in regard to gravity drainage in East Demerara. The Secretary of State says that, subject to the further examination of that, he would now consider that priority should be given to the prosecution of the Corentyne Scheme. I should like to make it quite clear that personally I feel it premature to speak in terms of priority of prosecution, which may depend on several things materialising between now and the day we start any big work—when we have the machinery and personnel requisite.

The two schemes differ greatly in character but are both of the utmost importance. The East Demerara scheme we had thought two years ago would be an economic proposition in itself. It may still be that considered as an irrigation scheme, but we have been forced to realise that there is another aspect and that is the absolute necessity of improving and cheapening drainage in order even to maintain in good state the whole agricultural economy between the Demerara and the Mahaica both of sugar and of every other kind of production. The Corentyne scheme on the other hand is of a developmental character with a wide opportunity, such as

What is in my view important is to have a decision that, as far as we can humanly foretell, ultimately the main works will be put through. As I said last week, it is necessary to have this assurance before we can plan confidently the constructive things we have in mind. These recent communications from the Secretary of State certainly give us a good deal of this assurance. The point applies very definitely to such internal drainage works as we have in hand, and I have been the more encouraged now to press for the financing of such works at Bloomfield, Whim, and at Lots 63—74 Corentyne.

FINANCE FOR RICE EXPANSION SCHEME

These last are primarily, as Members are aware, rice projects, and in that connection I have noted with pleasure the very substantial finance approved for the rice expansion scheme as a whole. The total recently approved, for rice mill and for mechanical drying for the Mahaica—Abarry area, for machinery and mechanical equipment, for padi, and for the visit of an expert in connection with these things, amounts to the large total of a free grant of \$324,000, and loans on varying terms of \$557,000.

LAND SETTLEMENT

I should also inform Members that I convened this week a meeting with the Land Settlement Committee. This was to consider the lines of a reply to the recent despatch of the Secretary of State, and as to what immediate project can best be initially submitted for financing. In the Secretary of State's despatch, one particular point the Committee felt should be contested, a suggestion that a good deal of experimentation is necessary before we can launch out on a larger scale. The reply will be that in our opinion we have already within this Colony a good deal of experience, and that while we may admit that certain things in our existing schemes require amendment in any new

other points put forward by the Secretary of State, such as the necessary relation of land settlement schemes to the major works, are of course completely accepted. The Committee has decided therefore to go forward with a definite application, first of all for the scheme in West Demerara, as to which all the important criteria are fully met, for example, that the area comes within the ambit of a major drainage and irrigation scheme, to wit—the Bonasika, that it is in a well populated area, that new land can be taken in, and that there is available cash-earning work for settlers to supplement income from their own land. The figures of finance are high but that has never been blinked in all discussions on this subject, and the view of the Committee is that we should not be deterred thereby. I am therefore awaiting the draft reply to the Secretary of State's despatch and the formal application to come forward to me to send on.

SOCIAL WELFARE SCHEMES

I take this opportunity also of recording the receipt of a telegram this week approving the free grant of about \$130,000 for the social welfare staff and schemes, the details of which I think are quite well known to Members of this Council.

There is just one thing I would like to say about Development and Welfare Schemes—the concern we have sometimes felt as to the limitation of period of the Act and as to what happens after five years. I should like to hazard the prognostication with some reason for my belief that action will be taken in regard to this matter—in other words, that legislation will come forward to the Imperial Parliament for the extension of the time and scope and perhaps financing of the Act.

BIRTHDAY CONGRATULATIONS TO MR. CHURCHILL.

I should finally like to add that in accordance with our resolution of last week, I immediately telegraphed our

warm congratulations to the Right Honourable the Prime Minister on the occasion of his birthday. I have no doubt that the Right Honourable gentleman has been overwhelmed by similar tributes from all parts of the world.

ORDER OR THE DAY

SUGGESTED PROCEDURE

We have come to the Order of the Day and I will call upon the Treasurer for his Budget statement. We have a great deal of work in front of us for these next three weeks, and we should consider carefully our procedure and how to get through. What I think we should do is that as soon as possible after the Treasurer has made his Budget Statement we should go formally into Committee and take the estimates of expenditure head by head. It should not be necessary to begin by formally debating the Budget or the financial position of the Colony, for which there will be ample opportunity after we have gone through the estimates and settled the actual figures. That will be my suggestion. After the Budget Statement we will proceed with other business on the Order of the Day, and when we have completed that I suggest that we adjourn for three or four days in order to give Members every opportunity to study the papers. When we come back again I suggest that we go straight into Committee to consider the estimates.

HOURS OF SITTING

Touching public business, the Executive Council is considering the hours of the Legislative Council. Hon. Members will remember that three years ago on my personal complaint that I could get down to routine business. The certain number of morning hours so that the senior officers of Government could get down to routine business. The present arrangement suited me personally very well, but I think it is not al-

together popular, and I would like to sound out Members about a change. Possibly the Executive Council may recommend sitting at night, which I personally favour, but before we come to any decision—I can see Members shaking their heads already, remembering that we sat until midnight in December last year—I will sound out Members. We will now proceed to the Order of the Day, and I call upon the Treasurer to make his Budget Statement.

BUDGET STATEMENT

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I move the suspension of Standing Rule and Order of the Council No. 11 to enable me to move the motion of which I gave notice this morning.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: As usual, before moving the motion I will proceed, with the permission of the Council, to read the Budget Statement, copies of which have been circulated to Members. The Statement reads as follows:—

In introducing the estimates for the year 1945 it is again not possible to furnish any review of the general economic situation which would be of value. The factors influencing production, exports and imports, must remain largely artificial while the War continues; and the statistics of external trade do not necessarily reflect any faithful picture of lasting achievement and progress. His Excellency the Governor has in his recent announcement in Council emphasized the urgent need for production, and still more production, both for domestic consumption and for export, and this must be the guiding principle and policy in the coming year.

In July last I prepared and submitted a memorandum on the present and prospective financial posi-

tion in an attempt to set out and clarify the situation as it has developed since the outbreak of the war, with an indication of a possible plan for adoption in framing the annual budgets of the immediate post-war period. This memorandum has been printed and laid on the table as Council Paper No. 22 of 1944. The plan therein suggested is that, in view of the reduction in the burden of the Public Debt, a local loan should be raised as soon as possible for the purpose of defraying in part the cost of war services since 1939, the object being to replace in Revenue an equivalent amount, thus correspondingly increasing the existing surplus balance so as to provide a Fund to be drawn upon to meet inevitable future annual budget deficits until more stable conditions materialize and economic benefits begin to be derived from measures of development now contemplated and in progress. In making this Budget Statement I propose to do no more than present in as brief and concise a form as possible such factual information of a general nature as will assist the Council in its consideration of the draft estimates for 1945 which have been laid on the table this morning.

FINANCIAL POSITION, 1944.

The estimates for the current year as approved by this Council in December last provided for an expenditure of \$10,292,605 against revenue of \$9,448,064, with a resultant deficit of \$844,541. These estimates were incomplete and were subject to considerable variation as the result of decisions and action taken during the course of the year.

Supplementary estimates of expenditure for the first, second and third quarters of the year, the first and second having been already passed by the Council, will authorise supplementary expenditure to a total of \$1,859,112, while schedules of additional provision for the months of October and November totalling \$505,516 have also been

approved by Finance Committee. A schedule for December will shortly be presented to the Committee for consideration and will, when approved, be included with the schedules for the two preceding months in the supplementary estimate for the last quarter of the year.

The revised estimate of expenditure for the current year, as represented in the draft estimates for the year 1945, embodies approved supplementary votes and other items of anticipated excess expenditure reported at the time of its preparation. The total of the revised estimate is \$12,404,832, an increase of \$2,112,227 over the total of the original approved estimate. One item, Subsidization, for which no provision was made in the budget, accounts for \$1,000,000 of this increase. The total expenditure on subsidization for the year will be approximately \$2,000,000, the excess over \$1,000,000 being met by a direct grant from H. M. Government in terms of the undertaking previously given, which was accepted by this Council by Resolution No. XL of the 14th March, 1944. The prescriptions of Colonial accounting procedure may make it obligatory that the total cost of subsidization be included in the expenditure accounts of the year, with a credit to revenue in respect of the related grant from H. M. Government. This transaction, dealt with in this manner, would result in a corresponding increase on both sides of the Revenue and Expenditure account for the year.

With respect to Revenue, the variations in taxation introduced by legislation enacted after the passing of the estimates in order to give effect to the Budget proposals, were expected to produce a *net* increase in revenue of \$388,500. The revised estimate of revenue for 1944 has been placed at \$12,004,598, an increase of \$2,556,534 over the original estimate. Receipts from Customs Duties, originally estimated at \$3,080,000, are now expected to yield nearly \$1,000,000 more, while

revenue from Income and Excess Profit Taxes should exceed the original estimate of \$2,750,000 by \$950,000. The yield of the Rum Duty, the rate of which was increased this year, continues to expand, and it is anticipated that the revenue from this source will amount to \$1,730,000 in 1944, exceeding the estimate by \$430,000.

The figures of revenue and expenditure which I have just quoted exclude the self-balancing items of estimated receipts and payments relating to approved services financed from funds provided by H. M. Treasury under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act which are, however, embodied in the final totals of the colonial budgets. These were shown in the 1944 budget at a total of \$662,608 but are now, with the addition of the transactions in respect of several new schemes of a major character since authorised, estimated at \$1,500,000 for the year.

On the basis of the revised estimates of expenditure and revenue already stated, the transactions of the year 1944 should result in a deficit of \$400,234. Since the revised estimates have been prepared additional items of excess expenditure have arisen, for which supplementary provision must be made, but, on the other hand, the experience of the last few years has shown that the actual expenditure proves to be rather less than appropriated, because Departments properly seek to provide fully for all anticipated service requirements but are rarely able to carry to completion their annual programmes within the financial year, particularly in the case of public works. If, as appears probable, there are again substantial "savings" of this character in addition to normal savings the estimated deficit as shown may not eventuate and may, in fact, be converted into a surplus. Nevertheless, for the purpose of the formal Budget Statement it must be recorded that it is anticipated that the surplus balance of \$5,965,345, with which we

commenced the year, will be reduced to \$5,565,111 at its close.

The surplus balance includes the interest, free loan of \$1,000,000 made to H. M. Exchequer in 1943, which will be increased to \$2,000,000 before the close of the year in accordance with Resolution No. XII passed by this Council on 12th October, 1944.

The unappropriated balance at credit of the local Development Trust Fund is estimated at \$380,000 at 31st December, 1944, which may be regarded as an addition to the free and realizable liquid assets of the Colony.

The Funded Public Debt of the Colony at the 31st December, 1943, amounted to \$19,373,560 and remained unchanged during the current year. The value of the invested loan redemption sinking funds is estimated at \$3,650,000 leaving the *net* Debt at \$15,723,560.

BUDGET FOR 1945.

The draft estimates for the year 1945, as laid before Council, provide for an expenditure from Colony funds of \$12,142,332 against revenue of \$11,181,939, with a resulting deficit of \$960,393.

The estimates of expenditure include provision of \$500,000 for war services under the head "Colonial Emergency Measures", and of approximately \$1,000,000 for the continuation of the payment of temporary war bonus at existing rates to Government employees and pensioners, employees of the Transport and Harbours Department, and Teachers under a number of separate sub-heads. No provision has, however, been made for the continuation of subsidization measures and, as customary, it is proposed to introduce a separate motion on this subject. Council will be invited to approve in Committee of increased provision being made under certain departmental votes in respect of items, consideration of

which was concluded too late for their inclusion in the draft estimates. Amendments will also have to be made in respect of items affected by the Civil List (Amendment) Ordinance just enacted by Council.

The estimates of revenue have been framed on the basis of existing taxation and of actual experience during the War, but without taking into consideration the possibility of a serious shortfall in receipts as the result of any considerable reduction in the volume of imported commodities or of any major dislocation of our internal economy. Notwithstanding the recently announced unfavourable developments as regards the Colony's major mining industry, the revenue derivable in 1945 from direct taxation (income and excess profits taxes) will still be not much below the exceptionally high level it has attained in the last two years, because the full effect on revenue of these developments will not be felt until a year later when a severe drop may be expected. Some immediate deterioration is however certain to ensue in the receipts from other sources.

It will be recalled that last year some Members of Council criticized the revenue estimates as being unduly conservative and, in fact, alleged a deliberate intention on the part of those responsible for their preparation to present an unfavourable picture. One Honourable Member was under-stood to say in Council recently that he will judge the efficiency of the Colonial Treasurer by the degree to which these forecasts or guesses (for under prevailing war time conditions they are little more) prove to be accurate. But the gift of prophecy is rare, and extreme variations between the estimated and actual revenue results have been noted in the published financial statements of nearly all Colonial Governments during the present War. Notwithstanding these criticisms it may appear prudent

to most people in preparing a budget, whether of a personal, business or public character, not to overstate income and financial resources rather than the reverse.

I shall now deal with revenue and expenditure separately, beginning first with revenue and indicating the variations in taxation which are proposed.

REVENUE, 1945.

VARIATIONS IN TAXATION.

The statutory enactments with respect to the Bill of Entry Tax, the Duty on manufactured sugar and the Surtax on Harbour Dues expire annually, but the continuation in 1945 of the last-named has already been authorised by Council. A Bill will be introduced in Council to authorise the continuation of the Bill of Entry Tax, but it is proposed to allow the Duty on manufactured sugar to lapse after the end of 1944. It will be recalled that this duty at the rate of \$1.00 per ton was imposed for the first time in 1942 in order to secure from the Sugar Producers out of the proceeds of the increase in the export price of sugar granted in that year, a contribution towards the cost of continuing and expanding subsidization measures. After careful consideration it has been decided that the present position of the Sugar Industry is such that the continuation of this impost is no longer equitable. The result of the waiver of the Sugar Duty on the basis of the current volume of production will be a reduction of \$140,000 on the revenue estimate for 1945 as presented to Council.

The rates of Income Tax imposed by the Income Tax (Amendment) Ordinance 1944, have effect only with respect to the year of assessment 1944 and a Bill will be introduced in Council to reimpose those rates without variation for a further year. As Honourable Members are aware, Mr. H. R. Howie, Income Tax Adviser, is now in the Colony and he has been asked to

consider and advise on the question of the appropriateness or otherwise of the rates and scope of the Income Tax as at present imposed.

It is further proposed to introduce legislation to increase the licence duties payable by cinema theatres in the Colony, and also to increase the tax payable on admission tickets to cinema entertainments. A final decision has not yet been reached as to the increase to be made on the latter, but the proposals now being examined should, if adopted, yield increased revenue of about \$30,000 in 1945.

By Resolution No. XXI of 7th November, 1944, this Council approved of an increase in the inland postal rates by the adoption of a new schedule bringing these rates into line with those in force in Trinidad and Barbados. It will not be practicable to introduce the new schedule of rates before the middle of next year. On the assumption that they will be brought into effect in July, 1945, the additional revenue which will be secured from this source in 1945 is estimated at \$13,000.

A further minor variation in taxation will result from the Bill published in the *Gazette* on 2nd December with the object of reducing the licence fee payable by Banks in relation to the issue of Bank Notes, the circulation of which has been substantially reduced from \$6,000 to \$2,400 per annum.

The net effect of the proposed variations in taxation which I have outlined will be a reduction of \$100,600 and, on the assumption that all the revenue proposals are accepted by Council, the total of the draft revenue estimates for 1945, as presented, should accordingly be reduced to \$11,081,339.

EXPENDITURE, 1945.

As I have already stated, the total of the draft estimate of expenditure to

be met from Colony funds, as presented, is \$12,142,332, inclusive of provision of \$500,000 for war services and of approximately \$1,000,000 for temporary war bonus to Government employees and pensioners, employees of the Transport and Harbours Department and Teachers but exclusive of any provision for subsidization. One new major item included in the estimate is \$256,000 for the cost of pensions and administration of the Old Age Pensions Scheme. Provision is also made for expansion of Government activities and public services in some other directions. The general increase in several departmental expense votes is a reflection of further increases in the cost of labour, materials, goods and services of all kinds.

The annual estimate for the first time reflects the cost of carrying into effect the various revisions of the salaries and wages of Government employees and teachers which have been under consideration and have been approved from time to time during the past eighteen months. The increases recommended in the salaries of senior professional, technical and administrative officers, as set out in the report issued as Council Paper No. 20 of 1944, have also been included in the departmental estimates for the consideration of Council as a convenient method of arriving at final decisions on the proposals contained in this report which, it will be recalled, were tentatively examined at a meeting of Finance Committee in September last.

The Council's attention is specially invited to the composite estimate for the general clerical establishment, as set out in Appendix K of the draft estimates. In last year's Budget Statement I referred to the fact that the staffs of several public Departments had become inadequate both in quantity and quality to carry out efficiently the services required of them. I explained that the additional functions arising as the result of war conditions and the increase in administrative work in

relation to the large number of new services and Development and Welfare Schemes, had cast heavy burdens on most Departments, with a resulting inter-departmental scramble to secure officers with training and experience. The number of clerical officers of all grades (excluding departmental executive posts) in the Clerical Service has increased from 373 in 1942 to 443 in 1944 and it has been necessary to provide in the draft estimates for a further addition of 34 to the permanent staff. These increases are inevitable if the work of Government is to be efficiently carried on, and those Members of Council who are members of departmental Advisory Committees will, I have no doubt, support this view.

The items under the Public Works Departmental and Works Votes have been sub-divided so as to show, under separate heads, all items relating to drainage, irrigation and sea defences as the initial stage in the establishment, subject to the approval of Council, of the proposed new Drainage and Irrigation Department. Council paper No. 4 of 1944 set-out a despatch dated 27th November, 1943, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in this matter, and notification has since been received that a free grant under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act has been approved which will cover part of the total expenditure involved over a period of five years. A Message setting out the proposals in detail will be presented to Council, and Council will be invited to give formal approval of the establishment of the proposed new Department to be established in due course on the terms stated. The total provision made in the estimates for expenditure to be undertaken in 1945 from Colony funds on public works (including drainage, irrigation and sea defences) is \$1,748,395, of which \$931,0550 represents extraordinary works, and \$816,390 maintainance.

With regard to the estimates of the Transport and Harbours Department the estimated subsidy required from

general revenue to cover the net deficiency of the railway, steamer and road motor services for 1945 is \$760,584, compared with \$754,794 in 1944. Additional sums required for capital expenditure in 1945 amount to \$112,500, bringing the total provision for these services in 1945 to \$873,084. The report of the Committee appointed to examine and report on the salaries and wages paid by the Department has been received, and is under consideration. Adoption of the recommendations of this Committee will involve a substantial increase in the expenditure of the Department, with a corresponding rise in the net deficiency. Consideration of proposals by the Board of Commissioners for increasing the tariff rates has been deferred by Government, but will no doubt be re-opened during the course of the enquiry into the working of the services by Mr. Rooke, the railway expert, who is expected to visit the Colony shortly.

The provision in the draft estimates for works in progress on Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes is \$695,603, with a corresponding credit to general revenue of an equivalent sum. The provision under this head will be considerably augmented from time to time as required in respect of new schemes since authorised, or for which applications for funds are pending. One such scheme not included is the construction of the air port at Mackenzie.

FINAL BUDGET POSITION.

I stated that the deficit on the draft estimates as presented is \$960,393, and that the variations in taxation proposed would, if adopted, decrease the revenue estimates by \$100,600, thus increasing the deficit to \$1,060,993. If it is assumed that subsidization measures will be continued at a cost to the Colony limited to \$1,000,000 as in the current year, the final outcome of the budget for 1945, on the basis presented, would be a

deficit of the order of \$2,000,000 which would fall to be borne by an appropriation from the surplus balance.

In conclusion, I should like to express regret that it has not been possible to present these estimates at an earlier date. It is proposed to invite Council to proceed to the examination of the estimates in Committee at once after a short adjournment, and not to remit them for preliminary examination by Finance Committee as customary, in order to allow of the passing of the estimates by Council before the end of the year. I therefore ask that the debate on this motion be adjourned until a later date.

The PRESIDENT: The motion is before Council with a request by the hon. the Colonial Treasurer, as I have endorsed in my opening remarks, that the debate be adjourned to an early possible date so as to give hon. Members an opportunity to study the Budget Statement. The earliest opportunity, unless we sit to-morrow, will be Tuesday in accordance with our usual practice and regulations. I take it, with the consent of Members, we will sit again on Tuesday and proceed with the Budget Debate. I therefore declare consideration of this motion adjourned until Tuesday next when it will be the first business before Council.

Debate adjourned.

OTHER BUSINESS OF COUNCIL

The PRESIDENT: We have several Bills which we can take with the suspension of the Standing Rules and Orders. We will not take the Expiring Laws Continuance Bill as we are advised by the hon. Attorney-General it should not be brought forward to-day. I can, I think, call upon the hon. the Attorney-General to bring forward any of those Bills standing in his name.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING RULES AND ORDERS.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that Standing Rule No. 11 be suspended in order to enable the second reading of the Bills standing in my name to be taken to-day.

Mr. WOOLFORD seconded.

Motion carried.

Standing Rule 11 suspended.

BILLS—FIRST READING.

The following Bills were introduced and read for the first time and notice given of the second reading at a later stage of the meeting:—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the Tax Ordinance, 1939, by reducing the annual licence fee payable by a Banking Company authorised to issue notes payable on demand."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance further to amend the Pensions Ordinance, 1939, with respect to the age of retirement and to the rate of pension."—(The Attorney-General).

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the Income Tax Ordinance by extending the time within which assessments, additional assessments and claims for refunds may be made in cases only where any such liability or right arises out of any payment or refund made under the Excess Profits Tax Ordinance, 1941."—(The Colonial Treasurer).

TAX (AMENDMENT NO. 2) BILL, 1944.

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the Tax Ordinance, 1939, by reducing the annual licence fee payable by a Banking Company authorised to issue notes payable on demand."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In moving the second reading of the Tax (Amendment No. 2) Bill which is very short and requires a short explanation, I may point out that Section 14 of the Tax Ordinance, 1939, provides that any Bank that has its place of business in this Colony and issues notes payable

to bearer on demand shall pay an annual licence fee of \$3,000 for that valuable privilege. For some months past it has been a part of the policy of Government in the Caribbean area that the amount of notes issued by the Banks should be reduced in these places and be replaced by Government currency notes. It means, therefore, that the Banks' income in that particular operation has been very materially reduced and it is only fair that the licence fee they pay annually to enjoy that privilege should also be reduced. At present they pay a fee of \$3,000 a year each. If that is reduced in the proportion of the notes reduced in circulation the fee should be \$1,200. The object of this Bill is to substitute a fee of \$1,200 for the existing fee of \$3,000. I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

Mr. WOOLFORD seconded.

Mr. EDUN: I saw just a few weeks ago that certain firms had secured drawbacks in terms of money from this Council and I thought that was the end of it. But I see now the Banks are asking for a reduction in their licence fee. In the Budget Statement Treasurer I see the Sugar Producers are asking also for relief of the sum of \$140,000. All these financiers and middle class firms are asking for a reduction in money value in their contribution to the revenue of this Colony. Where will it all end, especially when it is seen that there is a deficit in the Budget Statement of nearly \$2,000,000? The Banks are wealthy concerns, very wealthy indeed. The Water Street firms are all wealthy concerns. They should be patriotic enough to say "Why should we not pay to carry on the Government at this crisis," but what do we see? The Banks are asking for relief from the paltry sum of \$3,000. I am beginning to feel that this Government only pretends to say it cares for the working masses, as it will see that they pay one cent more on the postage of their

letters and will not ask the Banks to pay \$3,000 a year because it happens that the Government of this Colony is issuing currency notes. I consider it scandalous and the Banks should pay the fee. I will vote against the Bill as a protest to the tendency of Government in trying to foster the capitalist and the middle class at the expense of the producing masses of this country.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Sir, I am only at one with the hon. Member in his desire to maintain or expand the existing revenue, but I think all Members of Council will be anxious to see that it is done equitably. The licence fee is paid by the Banks in respect of a particular activity, the issue of notes. As the hon. Mover of the motion has explained, that activity has been almost entirely removed. I would ask the hon. Member when last he had seen Bank notes in circulation. They are very rare. Instead the issue of Government currency notes has been almost quadrupled since the outbreak of war. If the hon. Member looks at page vi of the 1945 Annual Estimates he would see that whereas in 1943 Government revenue derived from this source was put down as \$35,811, it is now \$90,000. That of course is money which might have gone into the Banks' coffers and is now going into public coffers. We are trying to be equitable, at the same time to withdraw that privilege and still maintain the tax. It is a matter of equity.

Mr. JACOB: I do not know if the hon. the Colonial Treasurer is correct when he states that the tax of \$3,000 is particularly for the purpose of issuing Bank notes. If that is so, then even the reduction appears to be far too great—from \$3,000 to \$1,200. But, sir, the hon. gentleman went on to ask when last did we see Bank notes either Barclays' or Canadian. I see them every day. There may be a reduction in their circulation, but I see more \$5 notes of those Banks than Government

do not see them, but there is still a great deal of \$5 Bank notes in circulation more than Government currency notes. I handled them only this morning. I cannot make that mistake. But, sir, the Banks do a terrific trade now. They have been doing it for a considerable time all during the war. All trading concerns are benefiting by the increased value in trade. The percentages at the Banks have not been reduced; they charge the same commission. While it may be necessary to reduce the amount payable by them as licence fee, I think the reduction is far too great.

I agree that I have spoken very strongly on the question of increased postal rates. These Banks are not going to be hit by the increased postal rates, as there is a provision in the amendment that the commercial houses will pay the same postal rates as hitherto. The poor man, however, must pay more for the postage of his letters. I do not think this Government is therefore justified in bringing forward such a huge reduction. Constituted as this Government is and supported as it is by Elected Members this Bill will go through. Any Government measure, especially Bills, will go through every time. I just want to remind hon. Members who have spoken on the Civil List and said that amendments can be brought forward. I want them to think it over and see whether any amendment of the Civil List can be brought forward by hon. Members, particularly Elected Members, and it will go through. I do not think Government is justified in doing what it is doing now. The Banks can certainly afford to pay the duty they are paying now, and if any reduction is to be made it must not be to such a large extent.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The two hon. Members who have spoken on

can well afford to pay \$3,000 per annum. each. That is not the point. I am not denying that they are wealthy. The point is this: The Banks pay this licence for the right to enjoy that specific benefit which is clearly defined in section 14 of the Ordinance—to issue notes payable on demand. Merely because the hon. Member sees more Bank notes than currency notes he must not suppose that this Council is being misled when the Treasurer says that the number of Bank notes in circulation is very greatly reduced. That reduction took place as a result of Orders-in-Council made throughout the Caribbean area, and the total number of Bank notes in the area is carefully controlled by Order-in-Council. It is an absolute fact that that reduction has taken place. There is no doubt about that. It is suggested that because the Banks are wealthy they should not have their licence fee reduced even though their rights have been curtailed. Surely that argument is ridiculous.

Mr. JACOB: I did not say because the Banks are wealthy.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. Member was not the only one who spoke. The point is that the hon. Mr. Edun said that the Banks are wealthy, and why should we reduce this fee? It is a licence fee for a specific purpose. If you are wealthy or poor and you have two dogs and one dies, would you say that the rich man should continue to pay licence for two dogs in spite of the fact that he only has one? If the Banks are making the large sums of money attributed to them, well Government gets its share by another method. If hon. Members want to take a larger share of the income of the Banks they must move a motion when that other method comes before the Council.

The PRESIDENT: This tax is quite specific, and as the Attorney-General has rightly said, why tax a rich man who only has one dog when

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

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

The Council resumed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move that the Bill be read a third time and passed.

Mr. WOOLFORD seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

✓ PENSIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1944.

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance further to amend the Pensions Ordinance, 1933, with respect to the age of retirement and to the rate of pension."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I think a short explanation of this Bill will suffice. In the first place the Bill has been drafted on the instructions of this Council. Hon. Members will remember that in September last year a resolution was passed requesting that these amendments of the Ordinance should be made. The amendments made in this Bill follow faithfully the terms of that resolution. For that reason alone it is unnecessary for me to say very much about the Bill. There is also a second reason, that owing to its late publication I realized that hon. Members had very little time to consider the Bill in detail, and for that reason the Objects and Reasons are somewhat fuller than usual. In fact there is nothing which I can add today.

I should explain that I am only asking the Council to take the second reading and not the Committee stage today, because in clause 6 there is a blank where a date has to be filled in.

filled in until I have had a consultation with the Treasurer, and I really could not worry him during the few days immediately prior to the Budget to decide what date should be put in there. I refer to the date on which officers at present in the Service must exercise their option of retaining their present rights or of accepting the terms of this Bill. For officers in the Colony it is quite easy to fill in the necessary date, but there are members of the Civil Service serving with the armed forces in all parts of the world, and we have to give them time to notify their option in the matter, and it may well be that two dates will have to be fixed—one date for those in the Colony and another for those serving overseas. In that case it will be necessary to reword clause 6. For that reason I am only asking that the second reading be taken today.

The PRESIDENT: The Bill is of some importance but the principle has already been fully discussed on a resolution brought forward by the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight).

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL gave notice that at a subsequent meeting of the Council he would move that the Council resolve itself into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

INCOME TAX (AMENDMENT NO. 2)
BILL, 1944.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I move the suspension of Standing Rule No. 11 to enable me to move the second reading of the following Bill:—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the Income Tax Ordinance by extending the time within which assessments, additional assessments and claims for refunds may be made in cases only where any such liability or right arises

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The object of the Bill is extremely simple. Hon. Members will remember that at the last meeting the Council passed the Excess Profits Tax (Amendment) Ordinance which empowered the making of assessments and the granting of refunds on re-assessment in the case of excess profits within a period of five years after the expiration of the chargeable accounting period. As Members know, excess profits tax is a deduction from income for the purpose of income tax. Similarly a refund granted in respect of excess profits tax is chargeable to income tax. Under the income tax law, as it now stands, reassessments and additional assessment can only be made within two years of the expiration of the year of assessment. Therefore, as a consequence of having passed the Excess Profits Tax (Amendment) Bill to which I have referred, it is also necessary to amend the Income Tax Ordinance in order to admit to charging any refunds granted under the Excess Profits Tax Ordinance, or of allowing any refunds or of granting refunds accordingly. This change applies strictly and only to actions taken under the Excess Profits Tax Ordinance. It does not extend the period in which income tax assessments can be made generally. That remains at two years. It only applies to action taken under the recently enacted Excess Profits Tax Ordinance. It is, therefore, purely complementary to the Ordinance recently enacted. I formally move that the Bill be read a second time.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I do not propose to indulge in a debate on income tax today. I have merely risen to

of Government, now that the Income Tax Adviser is in the Colony, not only to revise but to consolidate the various income tax laws which have been passed from time to time? I think this is one further amendment to be added to the long list we have. Possibly there will be another one coming very shortly, and it has occurred to me that we might take the opportunity of bringing our income tax laws up to date. I would add that perhaps even some of our old legislation in that respect might also be revised and brought up to date. I make that suggestion because I think there is no doubt that the stage has now been reached where income tax, as a form of revenue in this Colony, is going to be the main source, or one of the main sources at any rate, and we cannot naturally look upon it in the same way as we did before. It seems to me that what this Colony was willing to accept then in the form of legislation, whether framed on a model Ordinance or otherwise, is probably unsuitable to-day. I personally would be very grateful if an opportunity were afforded us to examine the whole question in the form of a consolidated or revised Ordinance, so that we could have the whole question put on a proper footing for the future.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Of course I welcome the suggestion by the hon. Member. What he has asked for is a consolidation of the many Ordinances passed since the original Income Tax Ordinance was enacted, but that is as far as I can go. If the hon. Member means to suggest that the consolidation should take the form of sweeping away the model on which the original Income Tax Ordinance was passed then, of course, I must join issue. In so far as the Council is concerned that, of course, is a matter for the Law Officers. I believe it would be a very difficult matter to do. I think it is entirely the function of the Attorney-General, and perhaps he might consider

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

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

Clause 2.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I thought the Treasurer had invited the Attorney-General to say something on the point I made, but I observe that there has been silence about it. I have merely risen to enquire whether the suggestion I have made will receive some kind of support from the Treasurer, and that the Attorney-General will be able to prepare the necessary Bill at an early date.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I have no doubt that, arising out of the visit of Mr. Howie, a fresh Income Tax Ordinance will in fact be brought before this Council.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I hope Mr. Howie will not be allowed to put forward a Bill for the consideration of this Council unless it can be done when he is present, because certain points may arise during the debate on that Bill on which we may desire further advice from him. I would not like to be told that the income Tax expert has put up the Bill and we must just accept his recommendations.

The Council resumed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I move that the Bill be now read a third time and passed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: ended.

Question put, and agreed to.

**EXTENSION OF RENT RESTRICTION
ORDINANCE, 1941.**

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL I move the suspension of Standing Rule and Order No. 11 to enable the motion standing in my name to be taken to-day.

Mr. WOOLFORD seconded.

The PRESIDENT: May I take the consensus of Members as to whether there is any objection to our proceeding with the motion to-day? No strong objections having been voiced, I call upon the Attorney-General to move his motion.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL I beg to move:—

WHEREAS the Rent Restriction Ordinance, 1941, was enacted on the 3rd day of November, 1941, and came into operation on the 8th day of November, 1941.

AND WHEREAS section 16 of the said Ordinance provided that the Ordinance should continue in force for one year but that prior to the expiration thereof it could be renewed for further periods of one year by resolution of the Legislative Council;

AND WHEREAS by Resolutions dated the 29th October, 1942, 28th October, 1943, and 4th November, 1944, the said Ordinance was continued in operation during the year 1943 and until the 31st day of December, 1944;

AND WHEREAS it is expedient that the said Ordinance be continued in operation for a further period of one year;

NOW THEREFORE, be it Resolved that the Rent Restriction Ordinance, 1941, shall continue in operation until the 31st day of December, 1945.

When the Rent Restriction Bill was before the Council there was opposition from certain quarters and ultimately the compromise was arrived at whereby the Bill was made to operate for one year only, but provision was made that before the expiration of that year the Ordinance could be continued in opera-

tion for a further period of a year, and so extended from time to time. When it was about to expire this year it was decided at a meeting of the Council which was called at short notice, to continue it until the last day of December. It is now before the Council and it is proposed by this motion to continue the Ordinance until the last day of December, 1945.

As to the merits of the case, I think it would be a sheer waste of my time and that of hon. Members to state any reasons why it is necessary for the Ordinance to continue in operation. I think it is perfectly apparent to everybody here that if that Ordinance were allowed to expire the rents of a great number of properties in Georgetown and the other parts of the Colony to which the Ordinance applies, would jump up 100 or even 200 per cent. overnight. I think there is not the slightest doubt about that. The shortage of housing accommodation is such that landlords could get double the amount of rents they now get, and if the Ordinance were allowed to expire at midnight on December 31, on the 1st of January we would find scores of tenants having their rents increased 100 per cent.

I may explain that at the recent emergency meeting of the Council it was decided to extend the Bill only for a short time, in view of the fact that Members who live out of Georgetown had not had sufficient notice of the meeting. The motion is therefore before the Council today in order that those Members may say anything they desire to say about the Ordinance.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I beg to second the motion and there are one or two remarks I would like to make about the operation of the Ordinance and its effect on the community in general. I think that before the Ordinance is renewed some protection ought to be secured to the landlord who finds himself in the position that he is unable to effect the necessary repairs to his

property against the consent of his tenant. In other words a landlord ought to have the right to enter his own premises to effect repairs. The present law does not give him that right. There are cases—I cannot say how many but I have been engaged in one or two and there are other practitioners in the same position—where tenants have prevented landlords from entering their premises at all. In a case in which I was engaged, a tenant, instead of using the communal bath, bathed her children in the kitchen of the house, with the result that the entire floor became very bad. Of course that led to altercations and the Municipal authorities prosecuted the owner for not having a kitchen sink and things of that kind—all due to the attitude of the tenant.

There is another case in which recovery of possession by the landlord becomes impossible where there is no failure to pay the rent, and where the property is not required for the use of the landlord. In a particular case I know of the tenant pays a rental of \$9 per month which easily reflects the kind of accommodation provided. I do not wish to call names, but the original tenant consisted of a man, his wife and their children who were not more than two or three, but under the protection of this Ordinance there are now 19 adults in that small cottage as a result of sub-letting. That, of course, should not be permitted. As the law stands, the owner of the property is being exploited by his tenant who is sub-letting and earning a considerable sum of money while the property is being ruined. During the interval of the continuance of the Ordinance there should be some examination of its provisions in order that landlords may be given some opportunity to improve the living conditions in their houses. Some restrictions should be brought to bear on tenants who do not seem to value public health at all. The Municipality of Georgetown ought to be in the position to prevent the occupancy of houses like that by 19 adults. We

know that in almost every tenement room in the City, numbers of adults and children sleep on the floor. I raise it at a time when there is a General Election in the City, and I see more than one prospective Mayor present in this Council. It seems to me that it is a form of Municipal activity, and I think some action ought to be taken by the Municipality.

I would also direct attention to the number of empty spaces in the City on which some temporary structures or rooms should be erected. It is no use saying that the landlords would not permit it. A landlord must be made either to occupy such spaces by putting up buildings, or some authority ought to have the right to do so. Such structures could be erected within two or three months and the congestion we hear so much about could be put an end to. Are we doing the proper thing by merely renewing this Ordinance? If those unused lots can be occupied I do not think that landlords (and I think I know all of them) would increase their rents in the manner suggested, when they know that tenants could find accommodation on the lots I am speaking about.

Mr. JACOB: I think this Council has a good deal of work to do, and it would facilitate matters if legislation of this kind is made like practically all other legislation to remain on the Statute Books, and if amendment or repeal is required that can be done. Not only this one but several Ordinances now which must be renewed year after year should be made permanent. I think that practice is bad and the time has come—it is overdue—that we should discontinue this method of reviewing legislation year after year. I suggest that to the very careful consideration of Government.

So far as the Rent Restriction Ordinance is concerned, I can see no reason to anticipate, as rightly said by the hon. the Attorney-General, that if this Ordinance

is allowed to lapse properties will not go up in value possibly two or three times the original figure. I suggest then that the last few words in this motion—"until the 31st day of December, 1945"—be deleted. I think those words can be conveniently left out. That will mean it will remain on the Statute Book and if it becomes necessary to amend or repeal it that can be done.

Mr. ROTH: I quite agree with the suggestion of the hon. Member for North-Western District, but at the same time I must express very great surprise at his remarks about having legislation reviewed year after year. I think I heard him during the debate on the Civil List Ordinance object to its being a permanent law and to say it should come up for review every year. Evidently he has changed his mind in that respect.

Mr. JACOB: My hon. friend did not understand me. In fact I do not believe he heard me. I said it should not be on the Statute Book at all, but if it is there it should be permanently.

Mr. CRITCHLOW: I am supporting the hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Woolford). Personally I would be very glad if Government could do something to relieve the congestion in the City. There are many persons who want houses in the City and cannot get them. About ten to fourteen persons have to live in one room, not a cottage, so as to obtain accommodation. Many workers from the Bauxite Company Concession who have come to the City have to be huddled with their children in rooms. You have a lot of property-owners in the City with waste lands on which houses can be erected. I think Government should do something in that direction. It is true that some people may argue that building materials cannot be obtained, but years ago when we were advocating for a house-building scheme in this Colony the property-owners said they had not the money to carry it out; now that

have not the materials to build. I think Government should consider this question and do something to relieve the congestion. I now understand that Kitty is included in the operation of the Rent Restriction Ordinance, but even in Kitty without conveniences tenants have to pay whatever the landlord charges. I think the Ordinance should be extended to certain streets in Kitty.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I am not going to support the hon. Member for New Amsterdam. It is the first time I have heard him talk to advantage, but what I do not understand is this: I have vacant land in Kingston, is Government to erect ranges there next door to me because the land is vacant? I am not going to suffer that land to be utilised by Government to erect tenement rooms on it. Those people do not pay their rent and it is impossible to get the money. I happened to have been in the Mayoral Chair when Lord Moyne's Commission visited this Colony and he asked me particularly to show him around the slum areas. I have seen slum conditions as bad as you can want in Albouystown. We visited there and also a section in Kingston. The most I have found there in a room were eight persons—six children and the parents. I did find thirteen or fourteen persons in one room, but that one instance certainly does not make it universal. I strongly protest as a property-owner having vacant land against any Government telling me that it will take my land and erect tenement rooms on it to relieve congestion in the City. The thing is too absurd for words.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I did not indicate the hon. Member's land or any particular land in the immediate vicinity of the Elites. I said open spaces, and I mean open spaces. If the hon. Member would delight me with his company I would take him to those open spaces—one in Queenstown Ward and not in the vicinity of a residentship. The hon.

remarks I have made that I am referring to that class of tenants who would not pay their rent or would be a nuisance to their neighbourhood.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: It is very interesting to hear hon. Members who have a considerable amount of experience in the administration of the City. While on the one hand one hears reckless statements by pseudo-Councillors, ex-Councillors and Councillors-to-be about having playfields for children, on the other hand you have the hon. Member for New Amsterdam saying "Take away the playing-fields and erect houses on them!" I do not know if the hon. Nominated Member on my left (Mr. Critchlow) supports that. Are we going to have playing-fields or open spaces? I welcome the company of both the hon. Member for Georgetown Central and the hon. Member for New Amsterdam as, perhaps, they will be able to elucidate the question and let me know what to advocate on the City Council.

The PRESIDENT: The matter having been considerably ventilated I call upon the hon. the Attorney-General, if he wishes, to reply.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Actually, I think, the Mayor and the Georgetown Corporation should be the people to deal with that matter as they are the people concerned. I understand that after the City has settled down to a more placid life, the hon. Members will submit their views upon it to the local Town Council. I can reply to one or two things. I will take the point by the hon. Nominated Member (Mr. Critchlow) first. The hon. Nominated Member suggested that it would be a good idea if the Ordinance could be applied to certain streets in Kitty. It does apply to the City of Georgetown and the areas three miles around Georgetown, and Kitty is not three miles from Georgetown. That is a case where the Ordin-

The hon. Member for New Amsterdam knew that the two suggestions he made have nothing to do with the Ordinance—the washing of children in sinks and the erection of buildings on open spaces belonging to property-owners. The Rent Restriction Ordinance does not allow anyone to wash children in sinks whether it is his landlord's or his neighbour's. It only says the landlord shall not charge more than a specified amount. The hon. Member knows that as well as I do, but he only took it up so as to get one over somebody. In spite of what the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Critchlow, says that is not a matter for Government, but if it is I do not know anything about the subject, someone else may have to speak about it. Speaking to the Controller of Supplies this morning he assured me that even for vital priority it is almost impossible to obtain timber supplies. If you cannot get timber to replace a roof on an existing house, it does seem a problem to get timber to erect houses to accommodate 800 people in Georgetown. However it has nothing to do with me, and I do not think it has anything to do with Government. I have no doubt that the remarks of hon. Members will be noted, that 800 people need housing accommodation in Georgetown.

As far as I am concerned I quite agree with the amendment. I would like to see a permanent Bill, but as it is admitted that one or two alterations have to be made when supplies become available, I suggest it will do no harm allowing it to continue as a temporary Bill for one more year, by which time the problem will solve itself and we can amend it and have a permanent Bill at the end of next year. That is presuming that the war in Europe will be settled by that time. I agree with the amendment entirely, but before the Bill is made permanent there are two major

Mr. JACOB: I accept the suggestion.

Motion put, and carried.

SITTINGS OF THE COUNCIL.

The PRESIDENT: We have now come to the end of the agenda, and the next step is to adjourn the Council to Tuesday next at 12 noon unless hon. Members would like me to adjourn the Council to tomorrow. It is suggested that every Member should write to the Colonial Secretary and say which hours of sitting of the Council they prefer and the Executive Council would then be prepared to have something done. I think that is a good suggestion and it may easily be followed.

Mr. JACOB: If hon. Members have to come here at noon and remain until 4 o'clock without a break for several days, I think it is not only hazardous

but very inconvenient. I suggest therefore that we revert back to the Standing Rule for the sitting of the Council—10.30 or 11 a.m. 12.30 p.m. and 2 to 4 p.m. Far better still I think that evening sessions will suit the majority of Members. I am inclined to support evening sessions; from any time after 8 o'clock will suit me admirably. We can go on to 11.30 or possibly 12 o'clock.

The PRESIDENT: The volume of opinion favours night sittings but some hon. Members are definitely opposed to it. I therefore invite hon. Members to communicate with the hon. the Colonial Secretary the hours of sitting they prefer, and in the meantime the Council stands adjourned to 12 noon on Tuesday next.

The Council adjourned accordingly to Tuesday, 12th December, 1944.