

# LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

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*Tuesday, 13th March, 1945.*

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The Council met at 2 p.m. 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. F. J. Seaford, C.B.E.,  
(Georgetown North).

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

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

The Hon. J. I. deAguiar (Central  
Demerara).

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

The Hon. F. Dias, O.B.E. (Nomi-  
nated).

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

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

The Hon. J. Gonsalves, O.B.E.  
(Georgetown South).

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

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. T. Lee (Essequibo  
River).

The Hon. A. M. Edun (Nomi-  
nated).

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

The Hon. A. A. Thorne (Nomi-  
nated).

The Clerk read prayers.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 2nd March, 1945, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### C.N.S. SUBSIDY

The PRESIDENT: I have three minor announcements to make. The first is that the subsidy to the Canadian National Steamships Service, in respect of which you have not been getting the full benefit in recent years, will be reduced this year, 1945, to £850 instead of £8,500.

VERGENOEGEN LAND SETTLEMENT  
SCHEME

The second announcement is in connection with the despatch touching land settlement in the Vergenoegen area which, I think, Members have seen. I have received a telegram today from the Comptroller for Development and Welfare in the West Indies saying that he has supported it *vis a vis* the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

FRANCHISE REFORM

My third announcement is, I have received the report of the Committee of Members of this Council on the steps to be taken touching the Franchise, of which the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member was Chairman. That report is now in the possession of the Government and will be considered in connection with that Bill which, I advised Members, is now in draft and which is exceedingly long and requires a good deal of work on it before we can bring it to the Council. Also the Secretary of State desires to see it before the Council proceeds to pass it.

PAPERS LAID.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Heape) laid on the table the following reports and documents:—

Report of the Director of Medical Services for the year 1943.

Report of the Director of Colonial Audit on the account of British Guiana for the year ended the 31st of December, 1942, together with the Governor's comments thereon.

**East Demerara Water Conservancy Board:**— Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st December, 1944.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES.

UNIFIED WEST INDIAN CURRENCY.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Mr. McDavid) gave notice of the following motion:—

That with reference to the Governor's Message No. 22 of the 27th January, 1944, this Council approves in principle of the early establishment of a unified currency note issue for the British West Indies and British Guiana to replace the existing separate currency note issues of each Colony. Such unified currency notes to be issued in denominations expressed both in dollars and in the equivalent in sterling at the existing fixed value of four shillings and two pence to the dollar.

This Council further approves of the unified currency note issue being controlled by a joint local board constituted by representatives of the Colonies concerned.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL

The PRESIDENT: With regard to the Order of the Day I should say that I have summoned the meeting one day earlier than originally intended in order to have the Controller of Supplies and Prices present when we take the motion on Subsidisation. Therefore I propose to take that motion early. We will take first the short motions dealing with compassionate allowance and special pension and then proceed to the motion on Subsidisation so that we can have the Controller of Supplies and Prices available, if necessary, as he is leaving the Colony tomorrow for Washington and Montreal in connection with supplies. I would, if necessary, proceed to sit this evening. I therefore call upon the hon. the Colonial Treasurer to move the first motion standing in his name.

*With the consent of the Council Item 2 on the Order Paper was taken first.*

COMPASSIONATE ALLOWANCE TO  
MRS SORTON.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I beg to move the following motion standing in my name on the Order Paper as No. 2 (a):—

That, with reference to the Governor's Message No. 24 dated 2nd January, 1945, this Council approves of the grant of a compassionate allowance at the rate of \$10.40 a month with effect from the 24th of April, 1944, inclusive to Mrs. L. E. Sorton, ex-Head Teacher of Dalgin Regulation 95 School.

The object of this motion is to secure the approval of this Council to the grant of a compassionate allowance to an old Head Teacher, Miss L. E. Sorton of Dalgin. This teacher has not got the necessary ten years continuous service in a fully-aided school which will entitle her to a statutory pension, but she has got 29 years' service in Regulation 95 schools of which 26 will count for pension. The remaining three years have not been served wholly. Government has already come to a decision to approach this Council to allow the statutory pension to be paid to Teachers in Regulation 95 schools, but unfortunately it is not yet possible to prepare the necessary enabling legislation. The Education Committee to whom this matter first went has advised that this teacher, on account of her satisfactory service, her age and that she is not in good health, may be granted a special compassionate gratuity equal to the amount of pension she would have got had the legislation to which I referred been enacted.

The amount of the allowance is very small—an allowance of \$10.40 per month—and this motion seeks to get this Council to approve of that amount being paid to her as a compassionate gratuity. I accordingly move this motion standing in my name.

Mr. SEAFORD seconded.

Motion put, and passed.

SPECIAL PENSION TO MRS. MURIEL GIBBS.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I move the following motion:—

That, with reference to Governor's Message No. 27 dated 10th February, 1945, this Council approves of the grant to Mrs. Muriel Gibbs, widow of Mr. E. Gibbs, deceased, late Ranger, Local Government Department, of a special pension of \$56.23 per annum to be paid from the 4th of October, 1944, inclusive, for her lifetime, or, if she marries, until the date of her remarriage.

The circumstances of this motion are unfortunate. Mr. Gibbs was appointed a Ranger in the Local Government Department on the 1st January, 1943, on the Fixed Establishment and, as a pensionable officer, he automatically came within the pale of the Widows and Orphans Fund. Steps were taken in March, 1943, to secure from him the contributions to that Fund by deduction from his salary. Nevertheless he did not and could not become a registered contributor to the Fund until he had passed the necessary medical examination. But from the nature of his duties he could not be in Georgetown except at infrequent intervals and it was not possible to arrange for his medical examination for some time. As it happened, the date was fixed for his medical examination in October, 1944, but he died as the result of a drowning accident just a few days before.

Though contributions were regularly paid by deductions from his salary, the Directors of that Fund are, however, unable to grant a pension from that Fund which should have been his widow's by right. Government, therefore, has thought it fit to come to this Council and ask it to approve of a pension equal to that which the widow would have got from the Fund being granted from public funds. That pension will be payable during the lifetime of the widow and will cease on her re-marriage. I think the circumstances are sufficient to justify sympathetic consideration on the part of this Council. The amount is \$56.23 per annum, and I accordingly move the motion standing in my name.

Mr. SEAFORD seconded.

Motion put, and passed.

SUBSIDISATION MEASURES.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I move the following motion:—

That, with reference to Governor's Message No. 28 dated 21st February, 1945, this Council approves of the incurrence of expenditure on subsidisation measures during the year 1945 and of the provision on the Colonial Estimates of a sum of \$1,000,000 towards this expenditure in anticipation of the receipt of financial assistance from His Majesty's Exchequer to cover the remainder of the cost.

In accordance with our past procedure no provision has been made in the Estimates for the year, 1945, by this Council for Subsidisation. We have given an undertaking each year in the past that this particular subject will be brought before the Council in the form of a specific motion in order that the Council will have full opportunity to consider and discuss the question. Hon. Members will recollect that the arrangement which was made last year and approved by Resolution. No. 40 of the 14th March, 1944, was that subsidisation measures will be continued in 1944 with expenditure to a maximum of \$3,000,000, on the understanding that \$1,000,000 of that sum will be borne by Colony Revenue and the balance by a free grant from His Majesty's Government. I would like to say that His Majesty's Government has loyally kept that undertaking and the Treasury was paid in advance \$1,000,000 some time last year towards the grant.

If hon. Members would turn to the back of Message No. 28 you would see a schedule setting out the cost of subsidisation measures in 1944. The total expenditure for the year was \$1,969,531. As I have said, \$1,000,000 has been borne by the Colony and \$969,532 has been charged against the advance of \$1,000,000 paid to us by His Majesty's Government. The small unexpended bal-

ance due to His Majesty's Government has been carried forward towards the current year.

You, sir, have already announced to this Council that subsidisation measures will be continued during the current year on substantially the same basis as last year, subject to certain modifications. Those modifications have already been made public and are in fact already in force. The modifications touch several important commodities. Those commodities are flour, milk (both fresh and condensed), margarine and two local products—cassava, and black-eye peas—which are not really being dealt with under the Subsidisation Account today.

As regards milk which is the most important, what the Government has attempted to do is to switch subsidisation and consumption away from the imported article to the local product which is now in greater supply than formerly. The price of milk has been reduced from 8 cents to 6 cents per pint with no effect on the producer, and as regards condensed milk the price has been increased from 12 cents per tin to 18 cents per tin. As some Members know, there is a considerable surplus of fresh milk coming into Georgetown which has not been used to the fullest extent, and it is hoped that much greater use will be made of our local product as the result of this arrangement. At the time the arrangement was made there was a very great surplus indeed, but owing to certain circumstances arising afterwards that surplus has temporarily disappeared. I have no doubt that condition will arise again. Government is meeting the loss on the sale of fresh milk and, I may say, it is hoped that before very long the milk trade will be able to stand on its own feet with a proper price both to the consumer and the producer.

As regards flour, the position is very well known. Hon. Members know

that as a special emergency measure last year the price of flour was subsidised down to as low as 3 cents per lb. That low price produced undesirable results. It increased the local consumption of flour at the expense of our own local products, which can reasonably be substituted therefor. So it is hoped that this small increase which has been effected of half a cent per lb. will have the tendency of reducing the consumption of flour and increasing the consumption of our own locally produced starchy foods.

I had mentioned cassava and black-eye peas. I am not going into any details about that because I said these articles are not subsidised under the general subsidisation account. The loss on the transactions resulting from selling at a reasonably low price while at the same time giving the producer a guaranteed price is borne directly by grants out of the Colonial Development grant for food production.

In Schedule 2 at the back of this Message is set out in detail the expenditure under each commodity which we anticipate will take place in 1945, and the total of that schedule is shown to be \$1,931,925, an amount just slightly under the expenditure for 1944, and it is again intended that this Colony should absorb \$1,000,000 of that total and that the balance of \$931,925 be met from a grant from His Majesty's Government.

I have not touched on the general policy as regards Subsidisation, because I do not think it is necessary to do so. The whole question has been debated on more than one occasion in this Council and, I think, it is generally realised that the policy of Subsidisation must continue. While it is true that we shall have to limit its scope and its extent as the war comes to a close, yet I think that in this year as in last year it is essential that we should continue that policy with its considerable effect

on our cost of living. I do not think it is necessary for me to say more. If hon. Members wish any details on the subject I am sure the Controller of Supplies and Prices is prepared to give them all the necessary information. I therefore move the motion standing in my name as No. 2 (c) on the Order Paper.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: In seconding the motion I would like to add that the Controller of Supplies and Prices has informed me that arrangements have almost been completed to supply condensed milk in the Interior at the old price. There will therefore be no increase in the price there. (Voices: Hear! Hear!!)

Mr. THORNE: I would like to say something on the subject. I quite appreciate the intention of the Government, and, I believe, I am speaking for a large number of working people. In the case of milk, however, I would like to say that it is unfortunate that just at the time when the change in the price of milk was made conditions arose which prevented fresh milk being available at the reduced rate and left the very poor people without cheapened milk, so that those for whom the subsidisation was chiefly intended did not at once benefit by it. Your Excellency, a tin of Milkmaid milk to most of the working people in Georgetown and in the country districts means a great deal. They use it as they feel they can afford to do so. In the case of fresh milk it is not so. As a Member of the Town Council I would like to say here and to repeat that it has been unfortunate that the control of fresh milk has not been sufficient to enable the people to get the benefit of the subsidisation. As far as I know of the purity of the milk, large numbers of people in Georgetown have unfortunately been drinking milk that bears the name of milk but certainly is not milk. I have pointed that out and there is very little doubt about it. This forced a number of people to resort to condensed milk.

To get the people to obtain the value of this subsidisation much more has to be done than merely bringing the milk into the town and giving it out to distributors. I am hoping that between Government and the Town Council some system of control may be devised by which the people who tamper with that milk will finally go out of business. There is no question that at the present time a good many persons are selling not milk but something looking like milk to the poor people who most need it for themselves and for their children. Were it possible, I do not know, I would like to make the suggestion that where circumstances arise similar to those which have just occurred—the downpour of rain for a period causing a shortage of milk for the City—it should be made possible to go immediately to the rescue of the poor people with subsidised “Milkmaid” milk until such time as the requisite supply of milk is available.

The quantity of milk that came into consumption on the recent change in the Order was exceedingly small, and a very large number of people went without milk altogether, as they could not afford to buy condensed milk at 18c. per tin and they could not get the subsidized fresh milk in the country. I would be failing in my duty if I did not make the statement, which is absolutely true, to Your Excellency so that it be taken into account. I suggest there should be a stand-by for occasions of that nature, which do occur in this Colony periodically when we get these excessive downpours. When that occurs we know there will be a shortage of milk. That is the very time when with such condition of weather the people, as far as I know, suffer more from colds and there is considerably more suffering from disease of the lungs. That is the very time when the children and the poor people need the milk considerably to help them.

I pass on to flour. I look forward to the Government coming to the rescue

the people in some such manner as this,—seeing that a large quantity of the cassava is made into flour—and making it compulsory for bakers to use a percentage of cassava flour mixed with wheaten flour and to sell the bread at a lower price for the greater benefit to the working man. It is no good bringing down the price of cassava and leaving it there. Unless Government sees that cheapened cassava is brought into use by the people whom it is intended to help, reduction in its price will not have the desired effect.

I want to say something that may seem outrageous, but I am saying what is true. If you like I can prove it by the Government Officer who assisted. About two years ago when we were very hard hit I got one of your Officers to teach certain women how to make tapioca and it was very much appreciated. I do think, sir, the Department of Agriculture should take steps to teach the people how to make tapioca. The people throughout the Colony should be taught how to make tapioca as they would use it. It would tend to reduce the cost of living. Two or three years ago when people had to fall back on cassava as there was no wheaten flour in the Colony, the price of cassava bread soared throughout the Colony and people made unreasonable profit out of cassava bread. But if those people had known how to make tapioca and farine, I think, a good industry could have been established. I think they should have been taught. I have been preaching for forty years that, as it occurs to my mind, it is part of the duty of Government to teach the people how to turn perishable vegetables as far as possible into economic products.

Now that we have the Carnegie Trade Centre for Girls,—a great deal of fine work is being done by that institution,—I think the cassava business should be taken up seriously from there and let the girls learn how to handle it. I am suggesting that the Education Department get a certain number of the girls from the Carnegie

Trade Centre to go out to the schools in the afternoons and teach the children how to turn cassava into tapioca, how to cook it and to make it a very useful food. Those are all the suggestions I would like to make, and I hope Your Excellency will not reject them.

Mr. JACOB: I rise to support Government's motion that \$1,000,000 be provided in the Estimates towards Subsidisation during the current year, and I shall like to impress on this Government the necessity to continue this method and to increase the amount promised to be paid by the Imperial Government. According to Your Excellency's Message, No. 28, the maximum amount to be spent on Subsidisation is \$3,000,000. That means if the Colony spends \$1,000,000 the Imperial Government would grant \$2,000,000; if the Colony spends more than \$1,000,000 the Imperial Government would continue to grant \$2,000,000 and so the expenditure can be increased to over \$3,000,000. But I am suggesting, sir, that the amount now suggested according to the Schedule at the back of Message No. 28—\$1,931,925—should be increased. It is not only now that I make this suggestion. I made it early last year at a Finance Committee meeting held one evening in this Council Chamber when the Controller of Supplies and Prices was present and several Members of this Council also. I have in my hand a statement on the estimated amount to be spent during last year on Subsidisation. The amount put down was \$2,408,496. I think the hon. the Colonial Treasurer will confirm what I say. At that meeting it was stressed not only by myself but by one or two other Members that advantage should be taken of the opportunity to get the necessary foodstuffs and materials so as to utilise the \$2,000,000 promised by the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

I have certain notes here that the Controller of Supplies and Prices stated that he agreed with the suggestion that there should be a reserve of \$500,000 to meet any unforeseen rise in prices. I pointed out in detail what articles should be subsidized to a great extent, and what articles should be imported, particularly agricultural implements and machinery, so that we might improve our production in this Colony, and I was given the assurance that that would be done. I am sorry to say that Government did absolutely nothing; in fact it did less than what was originally estimated.

What are the facts? It was estimated that the expenditure with respect to flour would have been \$1,152,000, but the actual expenditure in 1944 was \$973,796. The estimated expenditure on cornmeal was \$24,000; the actual expenditure last year was \$9,778, nearly \$14,000 less than the estimated amount. With regard to split peas the estimated expenditure was \$196,800; the actual expenditure in 1944 was \$132,431. I am not going to give any more figures except a figure which I consider very necessary, and I wish Government to take it to heart. I refer to agricultural implements, in respect of which it was estimated that \$2,400 would be spent. I asked that more money should be spent on that item and a promise was given, but the actual expenditure was \$1,644. I think the Colonial Treasurer said that everything would be done to import suitable machinery, not only for the purpose of increasing production of ground provisions, rice and so forth, but that everything would be done to increase local production. Government has not kept its promise made at a meeting of the Finance Committee.

For this year the position is just as bad. Government continues its policy on wrong advice proffered, not in the interest of the working people but against their interest, I am sorry to say. Why doesn't Government try to improve

and increase the use of agricultural machinery here? I understand that certain Members of this Council, or at least one hon. Member, went to Washington to look into these matters. What has happened? All kinds of promises have been made, but the plain fact remains that we have not got machinery, and for this year only \$5,000 is to be spent. When Message No. 23 was discussed on March 2 I made reference to the fact that it was definitely unfair to use \$162,000 of the surplus funds of the Rice Marketing Board for the purchase of mechanical equipment for the Mahaicony-Abary scheme. I said then that Government had opportunity to take full advantage of money granted by the Imperial Government, and that the surplus funds of the rice producers should not be used in that way. I urged on Government to take advantage of offers made by the Imperial Government so as to increase the production of every kind of food here by the use of agricultural implements and machinery, and not follow the old method whereby the workers depended upon ordinary cutlasses and forks to produce foodstuffs and could not compete with other parts of the world. Government is fully convinced that unless mechanical means are adopted we cannot increase production. What is Government doing about it? It proposes to spend \$5,000 in that direction this year. Can any hon. Member support Government on that principle? There may be one or two, but I cannot imagine Government pursuing such a policy.

I am certainly not in favour of the importation of condensed milk. I am in favour of producing sufficient fresh milk here, but when are we going to produce that milk? What is Government doing to increase the production of milk? We were told by the Treasurer, when he spoke on the motion just now, that Government's idea is to switch subsidisation from condensed milk to cow's milk. Of course Government can do it by talking. That is what Government has been doing all these years. Government has to do

something practical; it cannot switch it off by mere talk here or elsewhere. Government is not taking the preliminary step to switch consumption from imported to locally produced milk, and I urge Government to do that. I am not satisfied that there has been a surplus of locally produced milk to warrant this 50 per cent. increase in the price of condensed milk. I think Government has been very badly advised again. Government has increased the price of flour from 3 to 3½ cents per lb. retail. No one will grumble too much about such an increase, but certainly one will grumble when he has to pay a 50 per cent. increase on condensed milk. The Colonial Secretary tells us that proper arrangements have been made for condensed milk to be sold in the interior at the existing prices. If I know British Guiana and the people of the Colony I wonder how that is possible. It is absolutely impossible. How is Government going to do it with its present method of control and distribution? How is the Controller going to be satisfied that condensed milk distributed in Georgetown will all be used in Georgetown and not sent to the interior? He has not the machinery or the time to find out. Merely making the statement that arrangements have been completed—

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: To a point of correction. I said that arrangements have almost been completed.

Mr. JACOB: I forgot the word "almost." Those are the things we get—misleading this Council and the public. Almost completed. You cannot complete any arrangement; how can you? I think the Controller of Supplies and Prices, a practical man, knows that it cannot be done. It is impossible to do it. Government may be able to supply a certain percentage of the milk to the interior at the low price, but again I do not know what is meant by "the interior". I do not know whether Government

appreciates the fact that within five miles of Georgetown there are no proper roads to transport milk, and that five or eight miles from Georgetown condensed milk is a boon to the working people as compared with cow's milk. Is that "the interior?" What about the Berbice river? Take my constituency for instance. How is Government going to arrange for condensed milk to be sold there at the old price of 12 cents per tin? It is hopelessly impossible. In order to bolster up this grave mistake Government says it is going to take steps to have condensed milk sold in the interior at the old price. Government should admit at once that it has blundered, and should be manly enough to reduce the price of milk to 14 or 15 cents per tin—that is if it is necessary to increase the price at all. But all this hypocritical talk about the welfare of the poor I have seen in black and white every day during the last few years is sheer talk and nothing else. It is well known that milk is one of the staple foods of the people of this country, particularly the children, and when Government started by subsidizing milk everybody felt happy about it. Now Government says that it has done sufficient and people can afford to pay 18 cents for a tin of condensed milk. If they cannot get condensed milk they must use cow's milk.

The estimate of \$144,375 for the subsidisation of fresh milk in 1945 is hopelessly out. I do not know why one million dollars has been put down for subsidisation. Government should have put down two million dollars and so take advantage of the Imperial Government's offer. I say in all seriousness that this Government is very badly advised on most matters, and the time has come when, if Government wants to maintain the confidence of the people, it should seek advice elsewhere. I am not satisfied that the increase in the price of condensed milk is

really intended to decrease subsidisation. I think other considerations weighed with Government, or at least the suggestion was made so that other people should benefit by the increased price of condensed milk. Perhaps other brands of milk will be imported into the Colony, or milk substitutes will be imported so as to compete successfully with condensed milk. As a matter of fact it has already happened that other kinds of milk are being sold at prices below that of condensed milk, and certain people are benefiting by the increased price of condensed milk. That is a fact. If Government wishes it can investigate and it will find out that what I am saying is definitely true. Of course it will be twisted to say that it is negligible.

To make the whole thing ridiculous the price of flour has been increased by 16½ per cent. I do not see why the prices of split peas and salt fish should not be increased as well. Condensed milk, a staple food has been increased by 50 per cent., but the prices of other articles like pickled beef and fresh beef, not used by every section of the community, remain the same. That shows Government's sincerity regarding the welfare of the poor working people of the Colony. I do not wish it to be understood that I am against subsidisation; far from it. I repeat that every effort should be made to utilize the two million dollars offered by the Imperial Government, and steps should be taken to increase the subsidy on all kinds of agricultural implements and machinery so as to increase local production and cut down importations.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I would just like to inform Members with reference to the statement made by the hon. Member, that some promise was given at a meeting of Finance Committee at which I presided early in 1944. I left the Council Chamber in order

to get the minutes of that meeting. With your permission, sir, I will read the conclusions at that meeting as recorded in the minutes. They are:—

“The final conclusions were that the present scheme of subsidisation should continue; that it was desirable that it should be extended as circumstances arose, but it would be unwise to commit Government to any substantial extension very early in the year, and the goal might be left at 2½ million dollars with \$500,000 for reserve.”

Mr. LEE: I have left my work to come here to plead for those people who work in the interior, but I observe that the Colonial Secretary has forestalled my argument in that respect. I cannot agree with my friend that Government is not capable of controlling the distribution of condensed milk in the interior so that the people could benefit. Human brains can devise means whereby it can be done, but Government must go further than that. The interior alone does not absorb all the condensed milk. I am a member of the Milk Producers' Association, and I have inquired minutely into the question of milk distribution. Many people receiving monthly salaries were in the habit of crediting their milk from the distributors in Georgetown when there was no milk control. Today they cannot get such credit, and their only alternative is to buy condensed milk.

The Georgetown Town Council has been trying for some years to devise means whereby a supply of good milk might be assured to the people of Georgetown, but no means have yet been found. What are the sanitary inspectors of the Government and the Municipality doing? Members of the Town Council cannot come to this Council and plead as an excuse that the milk supply is not good. Certain persons are preventing the sanitary inspectors from taking samples of milk for analysis in the country districts as well as in Georgetown. At Mahaicony a prosecution was withdrawn although the certificate of the Analyst showed that there was a per-

centage of added water. It is not only in Georgetown that cow's milk is used. The people in the country districts also use it, but because the greater portion of cow's milk is being sent to Georgetown the people in the country districts have to resort to condensed milk. The increase in the price of condensed milk would make it impossible for those people to give their children the quantity of milk they require. The question therefore arises: what is meant by the word “interior?”

With regard to agricultural implements I have a grouse from the rice farmers. Many of them have approached the Control Board for permits to purchase plough blades and cutlasses, neither of which could be had at one time. The excuse was that there was none to be had, but for what purpose is this subsidisation scheme if we cannot get these things? Government is providing on paper an amount for subsidisation of agricultural implements when they cannot be got. Can Government say that subsidisation will benefit the people?

There is another point about these agricultural implements. I know of the case of a person who went to the Rice Marketing Board to hire a thresher and a mechanical plough and was turned down. I was told by a mechanic that the thresher was lying at the Mahaicony police station exposed to sun and rain, and that the bushings, which were made of wood, were bound to go bad in a few months. I think the engineers in charge of these machines should protect them from the weather. If a farmer, no matter how small he is, applies to Government for assistance in reaping his crop he should be given help and not turned down.

With regard to fresh beef I do not know what control is going to be exercised in the country districts. At present the only control in the districts is as regards prices, but the people are

not getting the benefit of fresh beef which is being sold in Georgetown. I feel that the subsidisation should be extended to the country districts.

With regard to salt fish I know of an application which I personally forwarded to Government about 9 months ago on behalf of a man who simply asked Government to subsidize him in respect of the duty payable on the gasoline he used and grant him priority in respect of supplies of salt. He proposed to start an industry in the Essequibo river for the purpose of salting fish. Yesterday I received a letter from Mr. Case, who is the Chairman of a Committee dealing with the fishing industry. I think Government should help a local industry for the salting of fish which would be better than the imported salt fish.

I would support the motion if the Imperial Government are going to assist us. They hold a portion of the Colony's finances and that is why they have offered that if our subsidisation scheme costs three million dollars they would contribute two million dollars. I think this Government should take full advantage of that offer.

Mr. EDUN: I am going to speak on this motion on a very broad basis. I consider Subsidisation to be the only solution of the problem during this war, and I see in it a worthy attempt to decrease the cost of living to the working masses. But, sir, I want to say this much: I wish that this control on the very lives of the people will go by the board within six months. The people have all become fed up with the restrictions on their lives, and it is questionable whether by going through this sacrifice anything tangible will come to human nature at all. It is a very imperialistic policy and we here can do absolutely nothing about it. We are simply talking and wasting time. Subsidisation has come from the top, the head of things, and all we can do is to say something about it. We can hardly move a motion against subsidisation.

But, sir, what hurts me sometimes is to make people believe that all these sacrifices are being gone through to get the millennium, perhaps, after peace. Viewing things as I do, all I see accruing the common man, although he has been making sacrifices, is more and more restriction on his liberty. What I want to see this Government embarking upon is production, and here I cannot understand the mentality of those Members who say "decrease the price of condensed milk and do not give protection to fresh milk at all." What sort of economics is that, blowing hot and cold at the same time? One Member said "All we want is to produce our own salted fish." Why do you subsidize salted fish? Other Members say "What is the use you talk of getting fresh milk? There is no need to protect ourselves from the foreign product at all." I surely cannot understand the mentality of that kind of argument at all. But, sir, what I am serious about is this: Has Subsidisation benefited anybody? At best I know it is a measure, but I know what it has done is this: It has given the industrial firms a lot of latitude to sleep and not do any work as they have the Commodity Control to do their jobs. They are not losing money today. Perhaps they fear they may have to lose a little out. Who are making money? Let us have a review of the situation.

The industrialists, the commercial firms, the banks, the shopkeepers, pedlars, all are making money out of the war but the common man is making the sacrifice. There is not an instance of bankruptcy yet seen on the commercial horizon. I know Subsidisation has benefited the merchants more than anyone else, and yet people still want us to believe it is such a wonderful measure and that we have to laud the Commodity Control office to the sky for doing this little piece of job of rationing scarcities.

I want to direct attention to the schedule. Why on earth edible oil has

not been subsidized? Why is it left out? In the 1944 Estimates \$8,925 was put down for edible oil, but it is definitely left out of the 1945 Estimates. I want an explanation in respect of that. Coming back to this idea of Commodity Control, I want to be very frank. Commodity Control has been stinking in the nostrils of good men. It was suggested that all over this Colony there were scarcities of certain items. You could not procure them in the market, but strange it was when the fire took place in Georgetown all sorts of goods hidden in the vaults and corners of stores could have been seen being brought out in an effort to save them from God's own vengeance perhaps. There were no tyres, no tubes for bicycles. Thousands and thousands of applications for tyres and tubes have been made. Applications have been made for them in order to carry on the legitimate work of the Trade Unions. But they could not be had because some hireling in the office wants to think he can rule this country. I am not going to stand for that sort of thing, it does not matter who the person is. I am prepared, and I have told the Trade Commissioner so, to scrap the Trade Union agreement as I cannot move simply because I cannot get four tyres and four tubes for a car. It is not convenient for the Commodity Control office to attend to us. This kind of thing—

The PRESIDENT : The hon. Member is getting a little bit irrelevant. Tyres and tubes have nothing to do with Subsidisation!

Mr. EDUN: Very well, sir, I think if you look between the lines you would find tyres and tubes are linked with Commodity Control. I do not see where you can draw the line between Commodity Control and Subsidisation. I do not agree with you, sir, with all due respect. But I want to make this very clear. I wish the war will soon come to an end when all these restrictions will go by the board, so that

the common man can get to live his life without restrictions. But, as I have said at the beginning, I am prepared to support this measure until after 1945, and, if I am still in this Council I shall endeavour to my utmost to see to it that in the event of a new Council coming into being subsidisation is not made a kind of plank to carry on this machinery of Government. After all it is an emergency measure and, I think, there are sufficient brains in this country that we can get out of this idea of paying for charity. More or less we have been reduced to a kind of charitable institution in trying to feed people by subsidising their food. That is not the kind of business I expect to see done in a statesmanlike Council. I expect to see protection—protection in every sphere. I expect to see protection of our local products against foreign goods. I expect this Government to tell us something about that.

The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Thorne, said something about using our local products for manufacture, but strange enough we have not been able to explore that avenue at all. Sir, I would like before I sit down to be told why is it edible oil has been left out from this Subsidisation policy for 1945. Is there some very good reason for that, or is it that edible oil which the common man eats as against cooking butter should not be subsidized? Looking at the schedule I see the expenditure in 1944 on cooking butter was \$77,837.69 and on edible oil \$8,925.64. In 1945 the amount for cooking butter is \$75,000 and not a cent for edible oil. But strange enough edible oil is a local product. We can protect fresh milk and, as the hon. Member for Essequibo River said, let us protect dried fish with a little bit of salt, but why no protection for edible oil, no subsidisation for edible oil? Is nothing being done about it? Why is it left out? These are things that tend to give one the feeling that something is definitely wrong. With

those few remarks I would say nothing more. I am supporting this motion with the suggestion that edible oil be included.

Mr. ROTH: Sir, to refer for a moment to the question of condensed milk, I was very pleased to hear the hon. the Colonial Secretary's assurance that machinery is almost ready whereby the price will be brought to its former level to the consumers in the interior. I trust that machinery will also be used to give a refund of the extra six cents per tin paid by those people between the period of the coming into effect of the previous Price Control Order and the day when this machinery commences to function.

Mr. de AGUIAR: At one time this afternoon it looked as if this motion would have received a silent passage and in such an event I was not prepared to rise because, I think, my views on this subject are very well known. But in view of the vocal support that has been given to these proposals I feel it my duty once again, even if I am alone, to raise my voice in protest. It is all very well for Members to get up here and pat Government on the back for introducing measures of this kind in order, as they say, to reduce the cost of living to the poor man without seriously considering what the likely effect on the Colony's finances now and in the immediate future will be. I wish to invite them, sir, to consider the fact that at the Budget session this Council accepted and finally approved of estimates of expenditure which in the final analysis resulted in a deficit. The deficit that was shown at the time did not include these proposals, and so it will be correct to add to that deficit the sum of \$1,000,000 which is included in this motion today. I know I will be told that we have a surplus, the money is there, let us use it. That was the answer given to me, strange enough, about this time in the same month in 1942 when I used those

words. I wish to warn Government to be very careful and to guard the surplus balance that we have now. We are all very happy about it, although some of us feel that taxation is exceedingly high. I repeat that warning to the Government today. I would be the last person to say that some effort should not be made to assist what is commonly called here and elsewhere "the poor man." I have been poor myself, although some people think I have money today. I certainly know what poverty means. I was poor once. I admit that and I know what it means, but, sir, these proposals before the Council today are in the same form as when they were first put here.

One hon. Member in the course of his remarks stated that it was something sent by the Secretary of State for the Colonies or by the Imperial Government. I would like, perhaps, to be a little stronger than that. I would like to say these proposals have been thrust upon us by the Imperial Government. I wonder what will happen when the time comes, as I feel sure it is bound to come, that this Government can no longer submit proposals of this kind before the Council. I wonder too what would be the position if such a decision had to be taken immediately. That is to say, if on that particular occasion it was found that this Government could no longer carry these subsidisation proposals and it was imperative to remove them and to abolish them at once, I sit down very often and wonder very seriously what would be the reaction. We are not subsidizing to the extent of \$1,000,000 we are only paying \$1,000,000 and, as far as I know, our subsidisation bill is even more than the \$1,000,000 as stated here. But whatever the figure is, the hard and cold fact remains that these proposals represent a substantial sum of money, and I repeat I wonder what the reaction would be if the decision had to be taken to remove them and that at one single blow. I had hoped, sir, that time would have been taken

by the forelock and Government's proposals on this question would have been modified. But I am mistaken in that idea. It seems to me that the policy is to carry on.

The hon. Mover of the motion in his remarks said he was not going to deal with the general policy because the views of the Government were well known, except to say that it (Subsidisation) must continue. Well, sir, that is a very broad statement to make. "It must continue." Let us hope the Government will be able to continue with it indefinitely, because if that is possible then, perhaps, my fears would not be realized. We must not hide facts at all. Facts are peculiar things. Subsidisation generally was introduced here as elsewhere in order to curb the spiral that the whole world was being threatened with. I think that most of the Authorities that expressed that view when the war began must know, if they are honest to themselves and to the cause, and admit that it is a fallacy, a definite fallacy, to curb any spiral by artificial means. What has been the result even in our little Colony? If when Subsidisation was introduced it was intended to assist in curbing this spiral, then we have failed ourselves. Government has had the experience also and not only trade and industry. As the result of extreme pressure Government has had to appoint several committees from time to time to make enquiries and make recommendations in regard to the salaries and wages of the Public Service. At one time it was thought the position could be met by the introduction of a War Bonus in order to meet the increased cost of living. From time to time what was the plea about that? The rate was continuing to increase. I think it started at 10 per cent and gradually found its way up, until now we have a scale rising to 25 per cent. When we got there we found that could not do. That was a failure.

But, sir, War Bonus remains. We have begun to appoint committees and hon. Members of this Council know the results, and so I need not relate them. The substance of the recommendations was modifications all around, and I agree with them. I have never disagreed with them at all—general improvement in the working conditions of the workers in the Civil Service. But, sir, the proposition I am making is this: We began on certain premises on this subsidisation policy with the intention of curbing or controlling to some extent the spiral that appeared to be looming on the horizon. We must now say whether we have succeeded or not. My own view is that we have failed. We have gone around and done just the things we did not want to do, perhaps. Nevertheless pressure was there, the arguments for were very sound and those improvements came about. Yet even now at this stage we want to continue with this policy. Sir, it cannot be done. Both theories cannot be right. Either the theory of controlling the spiral was right—and we know it was wrong—or we did the wrong thing in trying to carry out general improvements in the Service. My view has always been that Subsidisation should not be carried out. I have said it before and I say it again even if I stand alone. Time, however, will tell as to which of the theories that I have been propounding is found to be correct.

I could not help experiencing a certain amount of amusement when I heard one hon. Member actually had the effrontery to suggest that the vote should be increased. Increase it to what and for what? It is nearly \$2,000,000, the figure stated. Must we increase it to \$4,000,000 or \$5,000,000? Who is going to pay it? Are we going to go on asking the Imperial Government with hat in hand to contribute the difference between \$1,000,000 and the actual sum that some hon. Members may have in their

minds? Is that a spirit of independence? Is that the type of government that Members of this Council would like to see continued? Are we going to continue begging for alms?

Mr. LEE: To a point of correction! I said up to \$3,000,000. The Imperial Government will pay \$2,000,000 if we stand \$1,000,000. We should accept that offer.

Mr. de AGUIAR: The hon. Member is not the hon. Member to whom I am referring. He made the definite statement of \$3,000,000 when he referred to that. He did say that the original proposal came out from the Imperial Government. The hon. Member is right. I was referring to the hon. Member who said the figure should be increased without stating to what figure it should be increased.

Mr. JACOB: To a point of correction! I think the hon. Member is always vague and will not say who it is. I was the one who said advantage should be taken to increase it to \$3,000,000.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I can quite appreciate the anxiety of the hon. Member to try and make less of the point I am endeavouring to make, but nevertheless the hard and cold fact remains that even if it went up to \$3,000,000 we would still have to go to the Imperial Government for \$2,000,000. I shall ask the question, "Is that the way we hope to maintain our independence?" We go to the Imperial Government for welfare money, for development funds of one kind or another, and in the same breath we talk about aiming at Federation and Dominion status and Self-government. I do not know what else. I do not know how in the name of heaven we can ever hope to achieve those objects, if we have to keep on going to the Imperial Government hat in hand and soliciting alms. As a colonist—I was born here, I grew up here and I expect to die here—I protest most sol-

emnly against that principle. I protest because I am a colonist, and I protest because I have great sympathy for the English taxpayers in the same way as I have sympathy for the Colony's taxpayers.

The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Edun made the statement that subsidisation benefits the merchants. I listened to him very intently and I think he might have given this Council the benefit of his knowledge as to the manner in which the merchants receive benefits from this subsidisation policy. What I would like to tell him is that if he says that control restricts the liberty of the subject, the merchants are part of the subjects he refers to. They do not like control or subsidisation. There is only one Bible they work by, and the hon. Member knows it. If he does not know it I will tell him—they work by the law of supply and demand. I would like to assure the hon. Member that the merchants would welcome the removal of those restrictions, most of which have been imposed as a result of the war, but from my seat here I could not honestly advise Government to adopt that course. As a merchant I say "Give them their freedom"; as a colonist, legislator and public man I would most strongly urge Government against adopting that course.

The hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) referred to some application by some client of his who wants to carry on a fishing industry in the waters of this Colony. The hon. Member knows that the matter has now reached the stage when full consideration will be given to his application. I am not saying that it will be granted, but I am prepared to tell him that full consideration will be given to it. I am sure he will agree that it was essential that enquiries had to be made, and now that this Council has made it possible for action to be taken along the lines of the application to which he referred he should be assured that the application will be considered. As he has himself stated, he has received a formal reply from the Chairman of the Committee.

I have spoken on many occasions on this question and all more or less in the same strain, but I thought it was only right and proper that as vocal support was given to the motion I should say something, otherwise I was prepared to allow it to receive a silent passage.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO: The same fear that has been created in the mind of the hon. Member on my left (Mr. de Aguiar) exists in my mind. I wonder what would happen if there was an immediate cessation of subsidisation—how the working man would be able to bear the blow? It seems to me that one of the answers that might be given is the suggestion made by the hon. the Sixth Nominated Member (Mr. Edun) that we should see about producing more foodstuffs in this Colony, so that we might be able to give those in need at a lower price than they can obtain foodstuffs imported from abroad. The policy of Government, at least for this year, is to continue to subsidize those articles mentioned in the second schedule of Your Excellency's Message, to the extent of nearly two million dollars, and I am not saying that Government is not justified in continuing that policy, but I think the time will come when we should not ask or lean upon the Imperial Government for aid to the extent which they willingly offered us. As a matter of fact I think it would be inconsistent with our cry for self-government and something equal to Dominion status. We ought to endeavour to be self-supporting rather than seek the aid of the Imperial Government, the burden of which must fall upon the heavily taxed British taxpayers who are suffering great hardships, and if we have to suffer a little of those hardships I think we should be content to do so rather than lean upon them and seek alms.

I do not think any Member of this Council ought to complain about the list that has been drawn up, because I think it contains articles which are not used by those who are wealthy—if there are

any wealthy persons in this Colony; probably there are a few—but articles which are in use by those whom this Government has always endeavoured to help in order that they might live happy and contented lives. I do not think the debate on the motion ought to be longer delayed; we should pass it as it stands.

Mr. SEAFORD: I rise to support the motion, and in doing so I must say that I consider that Government has been well advised in bringing it forward. Government knows the condition of things in this Colony and also the condition of things in other parts of the Empire, and practically the whole world today. I hope that the majority of Members of this Council also know the condition of things in this Colony and abroad. In view of that I think Government is well advised to endeavour, if possible, to reduce the importation of foodstuffs which are so urgently required in other countries, especially when we know that in the case of milk a good deal of our cow's milk has been thrown away because there has not been demand for it, and instead we are importing condensed milk which other parts of the Empire and our Allies in Europe so greatly need, and their children are starving for, while we are throwing away the milk that we produce. That is a disgraceful state of affairs, and had Government not stepped in it would have been accused of criminal negligence. I agree that it was the first step for Government to take. I listened with a great deal of displeasure to the speech by one hon. Member who remarked on how disgraceful it was that Government should increase the price of condensed milk, and I almost wondered whether that hon. Member was an importer of condensed milk.

I must say that the same applies to the importation of flour into this Colony. I think the majority of Members know that the amount of flour imported into the Colony today is greater than it was in pre-war days. Is that a situation that any Government can allow

to continue and to look upon with equanimity? I should like to congratulate the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Thorne, on his very fine speech, but it was a speech which had a certain amount of criticism from which Government and the people of the Colony can derive benefit. There are certain things we can do here which would help to a great extent to increase our production of local foodstuffs, and the sooner they are done the better for all concerned. I hope I am able to assume from what the hon. Nominated Member has said, that the Town Council is very soon going to take steps to control the milk supply in Georgetown. It is a thing which has been in the air for a very long time. It is known that some of the so-called milk is not milk at all, and the sooner steps are taken to safeguard our milk supply the better it would be, especially for the poorer people of the City.

Government has also been criticized for not obtaining machinery and agricultural implements, and I think it was pointed out that it was only by the adoption of modern mechanical means that we can increase our production. Hon. Members have been told more than once in this Council that Government has been using its very best endeavours to obtain every bit of machinery necessary to put its schemes into effect and to improve agriculture in this Colony as much as possible. The hon. Member knows (I think I have stated here two or three times myself) that we are not allowed to get what we would like to get (not only Government but individual importers), as the amount of machinery is very strictly rationed. I think you, sir, heard only a few days ago from the Colonial Supplies Mission in Washington that it was absolutely impossible to get any new machinery at this time, and we have had experience of second hand or rebuilt machinery, and I for one advised Government not to touch it. Private firms have paid for that experience. We know what war production is. We know that every available man, every available bit of machinery

is needed for winning the war today, and to think that we should get priority, or that we are likely to get machinery shows that we are living in the clouds.

I must say that I deplore the suggestion that this Colony should approach the Mother Country at the present moment and ask for alms. The Mother Country, although in a very difficult position, has been extraordinarily generous to us. We have been told that if we subsidize to the extent of a million dollars they are prepared to subsidize up to two millions so as to enable us to maintain our existing standard of living, or maintain the cost of living index. The hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. deAguiar) said that subsidisation has had no effect. I disagree with him entirely. I maintain that when Government undertook to subsidize on the big scale it has done it did it in order to maintain the cost of living index, and I submit that that has been achieved. It was with that object that the Mother Country offered to help us with subsidization up to two million dollars. If we can maintain our subsidisation with one million dollars I think we ought to be very grateful indeed. In this Colony we are too apt to live in a very narrow circle and to look at our own boundaries and not beyond them. We must think of other people a little bit more, think how they are suffering, how extraordinarily fortunate we have been in this Colony, and then we would realize that we have a million dollars and what it has meant to the poor taxpayers in the United Kingdom who are paying heavily today.

I regret that I cannot agree with the general remarks made by the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. de Aguiar) on subsidisation. I am afraid we shall never see eye to eye on that subject. The hon. Member asked us to bear in mind that we started this year with the Budget Statement showing a deficit. I would remind that hon. Member that we have had the same prospective deficit for the last three years, but we finished with a very big

surplus. It is suggested, and I agree, that I am terrified at what might happen at any moment, but at the same time we have a surplus, and if anything does go wrong we are in a position to face it. Let us maintain the situation as it is now by providing this amount of money in order to maintain the cost of living index. I cannot agree with the hon. Member that we should abandon subsidisation. I maintain that if we abandon it we are bound to get that spiral of inflation, because the cost of foodstuffs and other things is bound to go up. The cost of production is bound to go up. I claim, although I know he does not agree, that the spiral of inflation would have gone up almost to ceiling level but for the policy of subsidisation Government has so wisely adopted in this Colony.

The hon. Member also suggested that this policy of subsidisation was forced on us. I simply cannot agree with that. It was suggested to the Government by certain members of the community at the very beginning of the war, and it was a long time before Government actually adopted it. It was not forced upon us by anybody, not even the Imperial Government, because I am also satisfied that there are several other Colonies which have not adopted that policy, and if it was forced upon us it would have been forced upon them too. In small places conditions vary, and people seem to be able to carry on. At any rate it has been done with our eyes open. We have got advice from the Imperial Government, I admit. I think they said they had found that it was the only means of controlling prices, maintaining the standard of living and keeping off the inflation spiral. Economists throughout the world, I know, have condemned that, but with all due deference to the hon. Member and his business abilities I challenge him on the views he holds on the question. I grant that it is a big question, and that we are all entitled to our views, but I cannot agree with him. I congratulate Government on bringing the motion forward.

Mr. EDUN: I rise to a point of correction of the last speaker. It is not true to say that this measure was not imposed upon us.

Mr. SEAFORD: I think I am correct in saying that this measure was suggested to Government long before by the Chamber of Commerce. It did not come from the Imperial Government in the first instance.

Mr. EDUN: I have seen the despatches.

The PRESIDENT: I think we may succeed in disposing of this motion before the hour of adjournment after a very few words by myself, because the Treasurer has intimated to me that he does not desire to reply to the debate. What I would like to say is that this degree of subsidisation which has been carried on for about two years is one which we began in a state of very considerable and serious emergency. That was the thing that was impressed upon us more than anything else, and that has been the reason why we have had in mind a total figure of three million dollars as possibly necessary to keep the position stable. It has also been the reason why we have gone to the point, which might easily be criticised, of having such artificial price fixing, as for example, of flour. That extreme emergency, such as we had in the latter part of 1942 and early in 1943, has passed, and it is time we should try to get back to a better footing, and get away from the excessive artificial position that has been maintained during that period of almost two years. We have got to act now on the supposition that subsidisation should continue for some time in some degree, being altered from time to time as circumstances may dictate as necessary, but with something in mind as to the long-view policy.

As has been said today by several Members, that long-view policy should be much more price-supporting and, if necessary, price-guaranteeing for

articles of local production, and for the marketing of all such things as we can produce locally reasonably, and at a reasonable price. But it could not be for those things for which local producers are going to demand too high a price. We are, unfortunately, a high cost producer in too many things, and that is going to be one of our difficulties, but for such things as we can produce reasonably our policy should be to guarantee prices. And with that is almost bound to continue some degree of control of imports as I see it. However, I will take a later opportunity to expand that as a general policy for the future. If, of course, that is impossible — if we find our local production is completely uneconomical then we have to throw that policy completely overboard and completely free our imports, lifting many of our Customs duties.

I would like to comment on one or two matters of detail which have arisen in the debate. One is that I think Members should remember that in this matter of subsidisation we are governed by practical politics. It is not so easy to subsidise this or that thing when that thing is in short supply. We have to have the supply first, and we cannot subsidise an article we would like, if we are not going to get sufficient supplies. It was this that drove us in 1943 to this artificial and excessive subsidisation of flour which we are trying to get away from now.

Then, as the hon. Member for Georgetown North said, there is the question of supply. It is so easy to say that we should bring in agricultural implements, machinery and all those very desirable things. What is the use of saying that when we know we cannot get them? As the hon. Member said, the members of the Supply Mission from Washington gave a very pessimistic picture. It may be three years before we are going to get the amount of machinery we need for drainage, public works, or agricultural works. To give you an example of the small chance we have of getting all those things — the

island of Malta which, as you know, has been smashed to pieces and is in sad need of certain mechanical equipment to clear up that destroyed island, stands thirtieth on the list of demands for tractors. If Malta stands thirtieth, where do we stand?

A good deal has been said about milk, and I have had a good deal to do with that myself, going back to August, 1942, when I asked the then Mayor, the present Mayor, to take the question up with the Town Council. I am very grateful to them for having put up certain recommendations to Government which were embodied in the present system of control in a simple form — not a permanent arrangement. If Members will throw their minds back they will remember the situation in Georgetown with not 1,000 gallons of fresh milk coming in per day, with the price up to 12 cents per pint. In spite of all the criticisms you may make now we have up to 2,800 gallons per day coming to Georgetown now, and on the first day of the new price I think the supply was 2,665 gallons at 6 cents per pint. That is something by way of achievement. It is not perfect by any means. The distribution wants a lot of attention, and I am glad to hear of what may be achieved by the Town Council in conjunction with Government.

As regards edible oil the position is rather special. It figures on the 1944 list of subsidized articles, and certain steps of a special character were taken whereby we were to keep it at a price just below that in the West Indies islands, but as far as I know the subsidisation of that article is not necessary for that purpose in 1945.

I would also like to comment on the question of the total cost. It was in 1942—43 that this outside figure of three million dollars was suggested that might be necessary for subsidisation to keep things stable. That emergency has passed, and it would be surely quite unconscionable on our part to attempt

to screw the full two million dollars out of the British taxpayer when we are carrying on quite reasonably just about what we have done over the last twenty months—in fact slightly better. I do not think there can be any good reason whatsoever to ask for more and press the point still further when we have done fairly well during these last twenty months. I now propose to put the question.

Motion put, and agreed to.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

The PRESIDENT: I think Members consider it unnecessary to sit tonight. We will therefore adjourn until tomorrow and come to what should have been the first item on today's Order of the Day.

There is just one thing I forgot to say at the opening of the session, and that is that I am going to ask the

Deputy President, in view of what I have announced before, to ask the Unofficial Members to meet him and see if they can work out some practical measure touching the Finance Committee.

We do carry that under our present procedure, but we have slowed up a good deal more than is necessary. Either we must have a number of Unofficial Members or have an actual meeting of the whole Council. My proposal has been, as in 1941, that Members elect from among themselves five or seven and make it a real active Finance Committee to which Government can refer quickly and get a quick decision when it is really desirable. I would ask the hon. the Deputy President to arrange that after to-morrow's session. We will then ask a reasonable number of Members to be present and give their attention to the business.

The Council adjourned until 2 p.m. on the following day.