

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 22nd November, 1939.

The Council met at 10.30 a.m. pursuant to adjournment, His Excellency the Acting Governor, SIR JOHN WADDINGTON, K.C.M.G., O.B.E., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. W. A. Macnie, Commissioner of Labour and Local Government (Acting).

The Hon. J. Eleazar Berbice River).

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

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

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice),

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

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

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

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

The Hon. F. A. Mackey (Nominated Unofficial Member).

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

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River).

MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Council held on the 21st of November, 1939, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

PAPER LAID.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the table the following document:—

Report of the Directors of the Public Officers' Guarantee Fund for the year 1938.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

CUSTOMS DUTIES (AMENDMENT NO. 7) BILL.

Mr. D'ANDRADE (Comptroller of Customs): I move that "A Bill intituled an Ordinance further to amend the Customs Duties Ordinance, 1935, with respect to the Export Duties on Gold and Bauxite and the Import Duties on Petroleum Spirit" be read a third time and passed.

Mr. CASE (Director of Public Works and Sea Defences) seconded.

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

Bill read the third time,

ESTIMATES—1940.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and resumed consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure to be defrayed from Revenue during the year ending 31st December, 1940, which have been laid on the table.

AGRICULTURE.

Item 1 (2)—Deputy Director of Agriculture, \$4,320.

THE CHAIRMAN: Before we resume consideration of the item, I would ask Professor Dash to reply to some of the points raised in the debate under this Head.

Professor DASH (Director of Agriculture): Sir,—I crave a few minutes in order to deal briefly with one or two of the more important points raised yesterday in reference to this head of the Estimates. There are plenty of agricultural debates in Hansard, lengthy ones too, and I have no desire to add to these myself. I must confess it is a little disappointing that every year we go over the same old ground and very little new is forthcoming to make the subject interesting even to those outside Council.

With respect to the expenditure side—the total amount for the head is equivalent to 2 per cent. of the total expenditure of the Colony, an insignificant sum compared with the total value of your agricultural industries. During the last few years at least three new activities have been taken within the scope of the Department's work—I refer to Plant Breeding, Rice Grading and Co-operative Credit Banks—while the revenue directly earned is approximately \$10,000. When these facts and figures are borne in mind, I submit, it can fairly be claimed that the estimate must be regarded as the minimum at which efficiency can be maintained. After all, the stock in trade of any Agricultural and Scientific Department is staff, and this must therefore always appear as a relatively big item, compared with the estimate as a whole.

In connection with the post of Deputy Director, hon. Members of this Council must appreciate that efficient supervision and co-ordination of all the various phases of work are absolutely essential if progress

is to be ensured. Unless all these programmes of work are thoroughly co-ordinated and the work supervised efficiently, it is very little use having a Department of Agriculture at all.

The hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) confessed to some difficulty in following the estimate as drafted. I think, he rather suggested that it was prepared with the sole idea of confusing Council. (Voices: Hear, hear!) I submit that all the votes and all the notes—I am speaking of the items—are clear and fully explanatory. If any information can be supplied in detail when the Head is being considered, I will be very pleased to give it. He also suggested that there had been cuts in wages and pay to junior ranks. That, of course, is not correct. On the contrary serious efforts have been made to improve the position of juniors.

The hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) rambled along in his inimitable style and threw jibes at some Allotment Scheme for unemployed and others near Georgetown. I confess not being able to follow the kind of criticism he was indulging in. I think most hon. Members would welcome at this time this Allotment Scheme, and it is essential that some land be provided for casual employees and people of that type, who are willing to take garden plots.

The hon. Member for the North Western District (Mr. Jacob) adopted his usual misleading attitude with respect to production in the Colony's main industries. Leaving sugar out of the picture, the facts concerning which being well known, and dealing mainly with rice, I would ask any hon. Member of this Council if a case can be fairly stated by reference only to one or two years? Sir, the exact position is that, bearing in mind increasing home consumption and in spite of a low price level over a period of years, and in spite of consecutive adverse or unfavourable seasons, rice exports during the present decade have been three times as great as those of the previous decade. Those are the figures which count—not one year's at a time. The Autumn Crop now nearing completion will be one of the best ever harvested; the quality is excellent, and I can say the new regulations will give the rice-grower a better deal than he has

ever had in the history of the industry. I say that without fear of valid contradiction. Unfortunately, the trouble with the hon. Member for North Western District is that he is always inclined to view the rice industry from his own doorstep with little regard for the industry as a whole.

The position of coffee is dealt with in Your Excellency's Speech. Further, the report referred to by the hon. Member was duly laid on the table in this Council several months ago.

The hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight)—I am sorry he is not in his seat this morning—proposed a committee to study the various agricultural products of the Colony with a view to their exportation. That is precisely what the Board of Agriculture has been doing for some time past. It has studied every agricultural product we can think of. A memorandum dealing with this was recently prepared and forwarded through Government to the Colonial Empire Marketing Board for their views and assistance such as they can provide, and the report received from that Body just before the war was most disappointing and very discouraging. I myself find it very difficult to help the hon. Member. How does the hon. Member propose to deal with produce which cannot be disposed of? Great difficulty is experienced in marketing even our essential staples. The same factors that confront our staples confront these minor products, if anything worse.

In regard to committees in general, I would say that these are only useful after they have been formed if members attend, and I do not think the attendance record of some members is itself encouraging.

The same hon. Member also referred to the Essequibo Commission's Report with which I had the honour to be associated. I was Chairman of that Commission. He referred to the industries of the Coast. I think hon. Members of this Council are fully aware of the various recommendations made in that report and, therefore, I do not propose to go over them now. It is an old story. In that report which had the best brains on it, leaving myself out of the picture, it is clearly stated that Sugar, Rice and Livestock were those best suited ;

indeed, this is the position in reference to the Colony as a whole. Those are the main industries with which this Colony can be fully associated, and Government's policy takes full cognisance of this fact. This point has been made over and over again. It has been repeatedly preached both in this Council and outside that these three industries must be the backbone of the Colony.

I do not think there is need for me to say anything more at this stage. I am always glad to answer any questions about the work of the Department, figures, estimates and anything we have to do with.

Mr. JACOB: I support the deletion of this item and make the further recommendation that whenever a new officer is to be appointed the salary scale must be considerably reduced. I also desire to take this opportunity to reply to or comment on what has been stated this morning by the hon. Director of Agriculture with some amount of warmth relative to what I had stated yesterday. When a responsible Government Officer like the Director of Agriculture has the temerity to get up here and say that the figures quoted by me about low prices are misleading, I wonder what to expect from this Government when one of its advisers adopts an attitude like that. What are the facts? If I am going to be continually accused in this Council of giving misleading information, then I shall have to retaliate. I quoted figures from a report of the Department, and I protest against being accused of giving misleading information. If anyone is misleading, then it is the last speaker. I quoted figures here to show that the export of rice has declined by more than 50 per cent. during the last eight or ten years. That is in accordance with the report of the Director of Agriculture. I quoted figures of the value of rice taken from that report, and the figures are approximately the same ten years ago as they are to-day. What can be considered misleading about that is beyond my comprehension.

As regards the local consumption, why has the hon. Director not stated in his report what is the local consumption? Is it beyond the capacity of him and his highly paid officers to do that? I should certainly like to see the figures of the

local consumption of rice stated in the Department's report. I claim to know as much about the industry as anyone else in this Colony. Since my return to the Colony five days ago I have done nothing else but interviewing people concerning the industry, and I make bold to say that what I said yesterday has been confirmed by everyone who spoke to me since.

As regards the Estimates, I can place no reliance upon the estimates of the Department of Agriculture. I have been told recently that the export of rice for 1940 would be about 30,000 tons as compared with 14,000 tons this year. I am giving these figures because I propose later on to refer to them. If in 1932 the exports of rice were 29,000 tons valued at \$36.40 per ton, and in 1938 the exports were reduced to 12,888 tons valued at \$14.70 per ton—the time when there was this control—and this year the exports would not be more than 14,000 tons, it is beyond my comprehension to understand how in 1940 the exports would be about 30,000 tons. Those figures have been supplied to me by the hon. Colonial Secretary and also by the hon. Colonial Treasurer, who is now Chairman of this suggested Board or the Board in operation now. I want to warn Government against accepting those figures. They are absolutely wrong, and I would like to know how they have been computed and how this 30,000 tons is going to be exported next year month by month. That will put us nearer the solution. I have been on the Rice Marketing Board in an advisory capacity for six years, and the figures supplied by the Department are never found to be correct when gone into carefully. Let the estimates be gone into carefully and it will be seen that what I have stated is absolutely correct. I go further and say there is the habit in this Council among Government Members to confuse issues.

The hon. Director in his reply this morning stated that the expenditure of the Department is only two per cent. of the Colony's expenditure. It is most nonsensical to make such a comparison. It is clearly stated in the estimates of the Department that the total for this year is \$125,977, as compared with \$93,977 in 1929. That shows that expenditure on the Department has been increased by

\$32,000 within ten years. What justification have we got for such an increase in the face of decreasing exports in everything except sugar. As I stated yesterday, I do not want to enter into any controversy. Let those who are responsible give credit to the Department, but I will not. I want to make it perfectly clear that this Department has failed miserably. The officers are too highly paid and do not do the work they should. Something ought to be done to reduce the expenditure on it, and the taxpayers be not burdened with this increasing expenditure year after year. That is so far as item 2 is concerned.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: It would appear from the remarks that fell from the lips of the hon. Director of Agriculture that the mind of Government is already made up so far as the motion before the Council for the deletion of the post of Deputy Director of Agriculture at least temporarily is concerned. I have risen first of all to express my personal regret that Government sees no wisdom in the suggestion put forward. I would also regret if that decision was reached as the result of the fluent speech made by the hon. Director of Agriculture, which we are so accustomed to receive from him in reply to a debate on his Department. But I suggest that a closer examination of all that he has said certainly does not convince me. I do not know if it has convinced other hon. Members. He attempts to bolster up the expenditure of his Department by stating that the total expenditure under the Head represents only two per cent. of the Colony's expenditure. I would like to ask whether that is sufficient ground for the expenditure of this money. Would it not have been better if the hon. Director in making comparisons had stated that the Colony's exports, including all agricultural items, totalled \$13,000,000 and Government's expenditure represents \$6,000,000? When you put those figures alongside each other and try to compare them with the two per cent. that the hon. Director talks so much about, I am sure it would be agreed that he has not made out a case to justify the heavy expenditure on his Department. I rather expected him to say this morning that his estimates were considered by the Advisory Board of Agriculture and had been approved by

them. If that is so, perhaps, those members of the Board who are Members of this Council will probably support them. As far as I know, if these estimates had been considered by the Board they were not considered before they were presented to this Council. Therefore, if these estimates are now going to be considered by those hon. Members, it would be the views or recommendations of the Department itself rather than the views of the members of that Board. But further than that. The Board of Agriculture as it exists today is only advisory—and I would add my personal regret that this is so, because I am partly responsible for a Board functioning again. It was in the nature of a compromise that it was made advisory at the time. The Board, I have in mind, is the one constituted under Chapter 150 of the Colony's Laws. That is the Board I would like to see functioning and not the one in existence at the present time. I had hoped that the Government of the day would have seen the wisdom later on to reinstitute the Board as it existed under the Ordinance I have just referred to. But no, it was a "sop" at the moment, and I regret having accepted it. I had great confidence that something would have been done, but from all I have heard since the Board was constituted very little, if anything, has been done and certainly not what I had hoped for.

The hon. Director of Agriculture goes on to say that hon. Members should not expect results in one or two years. Well, sir, this Department was reorganised in 1926—thirteen years ago—and from the Comparative Statement of figures it would be seen that year after year—

Professor DASH: It was reorganised in 1928.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Eleven years ago, and year after year the annual vote of this Department has been rising. In 1929 it was \$93,000, and there had been a steady rise every year since then. In 1930 it was \$16,000, in 1931 it was \$112,000, and in 1932 when instructions were given to reduce expenditure at all cost it was \$108,000. Immediately after 1932, when the financial position of the Colony began to improve and we started to receive grants-in-aid, the amounts were \$112,000 in 1933, \$113,000 in 1934, \$119,000 in

1935, \$121,000 in 1936, \$118,000 in 1937, \$121,000 in 1938 and now \$125,000. It seems to me that the two years the hon. Director has asked for is long overdue, and one expects him to show us what progress has been made by his Department since its reorganisation in 1928. I must confess that hon. Members are not as wise in agricultural matters as the hon. Director.

One other point I wish to make, and it is this. The hon. Director has drawn certain conclusions from the remarks I made. I am glad he referred to them. There was a further inference in my remarks which he has omitted, whether purposely or otherwise I cannot say. The inference I was trying to draw the Council's attention to was that there was an increase, and I would ask the hon. Director to say definitely whether or not there is an increase under this head either in status, perhaps, or in salaries paid. That was the inference I wanted him to draw, and that is the inference hon. Members have drawn, but he only drew the inference of confusion. I may mention that I intended him to think that I was in a state of confusion. Now that he thinks that he has enlightened me, when the item is challenged later on he may give the desired information.

Mr. SEAFORD: I happen to be one of the members of this Advisory Board of Agriculture, but I was not in the Colony when the estimates of the Department were considered by that Board. I think it is only fair to state that when one sits on a Board of that kind and considers estimates from the Department, one quite naturally tries to do the best one can for the Department, but at the same time one has no idea of what the present finances of the Colony are like. Although one thinks a thing is possible and hopes to put it through when sitting as an adviser on a Board, when one comes to the Chamber here and sees what the real condition of the finances of the Colony is, I think, one is perfectly justified in changing one's opinion as regards any item which ought to be included or excluded. I am going to appeal to Government to reconsider this point. I do feel that in the light of the present crisis and the financial condition of the Colony the vote for a Deputy Director of Agriculture is

rather in the way of a luxury. We are curtailing expenditure in other ways which, in my opinion, are even more important than this. One of these, I have in mind, is the Pure Water Supply Scheme. I consider that is of far greater importance to the Colony—its health and its people—than the post of Deputy Director of Agriculture, though it may be necessary.

I am going to appeal to the hon. Director of Agriculture, if the members of his staff would only do a little more work and try to make up for the loss of this post of Deputy Director, it could be done without for the present. I do not think that a single soul in that Department will refuse to give the utmost help he can in the present crisis through which we are passing. We have got to rely upon ourselves and, I think, we should do our very utmost. I appeal to Government, if it can see its way for the time being to exclude the item.

THE CHAIRMAN: Perhaps I may say at this stage what the position is in regard to this item. The appointment of an officer to fill the post was referred to the Secretary of State for the Colonies some time ago, but I have not been informed so far that the post has been filled. I think that the post is a necessary one and that it will have to be filled. I do agree, however, that at the present time there is need for economy in every possible way, and I propose to suggest to the Secretary of State that for the time being the post be not filled, unless active steps have been taken already to that end. At the present time I cannot agree to delete the item from the Estimates, but I give the assurance to hon. Members that the post will not be filled at any rate at the present time, if the Secretary of State has not already taken action.

Mr. AUSTIN: In my opinion this Department is one of the Government Departments that need a Deputy Head. After all, the Head of this Department is only human; he is entitled to leave or he may get ill, and somebody has to do his work while he is absent from his desk. It may be said that we are crossing the stream at the moment and, I think, it is very unwise not to fill the post of Deputy Director in these particular times. We

who are connected with the sugar industry—although some people do not think so—come into very close touch with other agricultural industries, and the views I have heard expressed by many persons are that they are very much in favour of keeping the Agricultural Department up to its present strength. They contend over and over again that although they do not get as much as they expect from the Department, yet the Department is doing good work in the villages and outlying stations. I do not see how the hon. Director can carry on agriculture—a very important industry in this Colony—if he has not got someone to assist him and to carry on the work when he happens to be away. I feel that the Director of Agriculture along with certain other Heads of Departments, such as the Director of Medical Services and the Commissioner of Lands and Mines, do not move about sufficiently as they are kept too busy at their desks in Georgetown doing more or less secretarial work. They should be moving about the country advising and assisting the residents outside the City area. I hope that this item will be kept on the Estimates.

Mr. ELEAZAR: Your Excellency, I certainly thank you for the expression of opinion and promise you have made, and I know that Your Excellency will do what you say. It seems useless to press the motion against Government's desire, but I wish before I withdraw it to say that this Department has certainly outgrown anything that was contemplated when an attempt was made to appoint a Deputy Director. Nothing extraordinary has happened since, nor anything done to warrant its continuance. I cannot understand how hon. Members standing here can argue and expect other people to believe that this officer is indispensable. He is not. More than half the staff of that Department can be sent away with advantage to the Colony. I say that without fear of valid contradiction. With regard to the argument adduced about the Heads of Departments being at their desks, the Director of Agriculture is always at his desk. That is what you want a Deputy Director for, to sit at his desk and the clerks or other officers go outside.

With due deference to what Your Excellency has said, I know of my own knowledge an instance in which one

of your predecessors had sent to the Secretary of State for the appointment of two officers and subsequently thought he could appoint some person in this Colony who he felt was competent to do the work. He promptly asked the Secretary of State, who had already made the appointments, not to get two officers but only one, and that request was granted; one officer was sent out by the Secretary of State instead of two, and the person the Governor had in mind was appointed. In this instance we are asking the Government, now that it has not as yet heard from the Secretary of State as to what he has done in the matter, to tell him that the Elected Members at least consider that we can do without this officer.

In the present state of things, we should like to reduce our most necessary establishments, like the Colonial Secretary's Office and the Registrar's Office, but we cannot do so by telling the people who are there that we do not want them. It is also not fair at this juncture to reduce salaries, but where an appointment is to be made opportunity should be taken to introduce that reduction by way of retrenchment. Now that we have to find money for things of more importance, I appeal to Your Excellency in this matter. I am really pressing for the deletion of this item, with all due deference to what Your Excellency has stated. Government, I know, is in sympathy with the expression of opinion that at a time like this, when the War is causing additional burden all around and when we are thrown back on our own resources to find money which hitherto we looked to come from the Imperial Government, wherever retrenchment can be made without injury to anyone it should be made even though it means a little more inconvenience to any particular Department.

Mr. LEE: I would like to join in the appeal that this item be deleted. I have travelled about my constituency and, as far as I see, I do not know that this Department has done anything good for the people there. Everywhere I have been, I have not seen any progress or advancement made in regard to the activities of this Department. As the hon. Member for Berhice River has pointed out, there are many other things in the Budget for which we have to find money and which are of more impor-

tance than this item, and, therefore, the appointment can wait over until such time as this Colony can afford the expenditure. This Colony cannot afford it at the present moment, and before this money is spent to have a Deputy Director of Agriculture I would suggest that Government devote it towards feeding the children of the poor, who have to go without food. The money will thus be applied to a more useful purpose than in bringing a Deputy Director of Agriculture, who can be of little or no use, as his Department is of no use to the Colony at the present time.

Mr. WALCOTT: Your Excellency, I understand you to say that you have had no advice from the Secretary of State as to the post having been filled. If such is the case, I throw out the suggestion that you defer consideration of this particular item until you have found out from the Secretary of State whether he has promised anyone the appointment. We may then have a division on it. As regards the remarks made by the last hon. speaker, it seems such a pity to me that he does not think a good deal more before he speaks. I have seen questions which he has asked not only here but in other places, and I have pleaded with him that he should save money by not asking so many questions and thereby reduce the printing vote. He gave a solemn promise to do so, but I am surprised to find that within the last few days that promise has been broken.

Dr. SINGH: When I became a Member of this Council nine years ago, I cannot remember seeing the term "Deputy" appearing on the Estimates. Recently, however, it has been creeping up in nearly every Department, and I propose to oppose it wherever it occurs.

Mr. LEE: As regards the remarks made by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Walcott, I would like to say that I ask questions so as to bring to the knowledge of Government all the wrongs that are being done to the public. Perhaps, if he was a Member of the Executive Council he would know that the questions are asked because the wrongs are not remedied, and I would like the public to know about it.

THE CHAIRMAN: I can add nothing to what I have already said in this matter,

I have already told this Council what the position is and what I propose to do in the matter. I am afraid I can go no further than that.

Mr. SEAFORD: Except the undertaking from you, that if it is possible you would defer the appointment of this officer in the meantime on account of the present condition of things.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is what I said. I am prepared to wire the Secretary of State and say that if he has not filed the post he should defer it for the time being.

Mr. SEAFORD: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: But I am not prepared to delete the item from the Estimates. I think the post is a necessary one and may be filled later.

Mr. ELEAZAR: May it not assist Your Excellency if you take a division to show the feeling of the Council? What you intend to do will have the support of at least the Elected Section of the Council.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member has moved the deletion of the item, and I propose to put that to the Council.

Mr. SEAFORD: By putting that, if it is carried it would seem that we do not accept your word as to what you propose to do.

THE CHAIRMAN: The position is different. Certain hon. Members want the item deleted entirely, and that being moved it must be put.

Question put, and the Committee divided as follows:—

For—Messrs. Lee, Mackey, Jacob, Humphrys, Peer Bacchus, De Aguiar, Gonsalves, Eleazar, Seaford and Dr. Singh—10.

Against—Messrs. Jackson, Walcott, Macnie, Wood, Crease, Case, D'Andrade, Austin, McDavid, Dias, Dr. Maclellan, Professor Dash, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary—14.

Motion lost.

Mr. LEE: I do not know if it would be of any assistance to state, when cabling the Secretary of State, that the whole of the Elected Section voted for the deletion.

Item 1(4)—Veterinary Surgeon (\$2,880 to \$3,360 by \$120), \$3,000.

Mr. JACOB: The division that has been taken shows that the Elected Members are unanimous for the deletion of the post of Deputy Director of Agriculture. I have in mind an undertaking given by the Secretary of State that if the Electives are unanimous on any occasion due consideration will be given to their request. I respectfully request that when cabling, Your Excellency will cause that fact to be transmitted to the Secretary of State.

As regards this item, while I have nothing against it I would like to be advised what was the nature of the services rendered in this Colony by the previous holder of the office, and whether Government is satisfied that the Colony gets benefit from the appointment. I have nothing against the officer concerned, but I am sorry to say that Government has not made proper use of the time of its Veterinary Surgeon. While there is some satisfaction to know that the present holder of the post is getting a smaller salary than his predecessor did, I do not know whether Government intends to utilize his services in the manner the services of the previous holder were utilized. I do not want to say anything against the present holder of the post as he is a "creole" of the Colony and, I hope, will devote all his services to the advancement and progress of this country. I had the pleasure of meeting him on the Dairy Products Committee, but I was extremely disappointed not only at the attitude he adopted there but with the figures and facts he submitted. I do not know where that Committee's report is, whether it is still in the hands of some member or with the Chairman, but I do hope something will be done in that important branch of this Colony's agricultural resources, and that it will be pursued with the utmost care and attention.

In this Colony we are importing from foreign sources dairy products such as butter, condensed milk, etc., and I am sorry to think that this Government had

not in the past made any attempt to let this Colony supply its own requirements and that of the neighbouring West Indian Islands in respect of those products. Jamaica, which is not a Colony like this, has started a condensery. I wonder if the hon. Director of Agriculture is not aware of what is going on in that Colony. I do not know how Government Officers work in this Colony. I am sorry to make these remarks, but I have to. This Colony has not progressed and will never progress under existing conditions. Dairy products are necessary in this Colony, and I hope that the Committee's report has been submitted and that something will be done.

Looking at the report of the Director of Agriculture, if this Department is not playing with the situation I do not know. We had in the past a Veterinary Surgeon who was paid \$3,360 per annum, but the present officer is now being paid \$3,000 per annum plus pension rights, lump sum bonus, leave and other allowances. What is this officer doing for that? He is only looking after three pure bred bulls at La Belle Alliance; two cows, five heifers, 9 bulls, one Holstein-creole bull, and another lot of bulls, heifers and calves at the Georgetown Farm. One would imagine that Government has a real Stock Farm for the services of such a highly paid officer to be used in a better way. I do want to make an appeal that the officers of this Department devote more of their time to their work, that these highly paid officers give all their service to the Colony so that the Colony may progress.

Mr. ELEAZAR: This is not one of the items I would like to see deleted. I feel that the Department should have a Veterinary Surgeon and a good one too. I have every reason to believe that this youngster, who now holds the post and who is full of energy, will give satisfaction. It is absurd to give a man \$3,000 a year to look after a few head of cattle. It is not good policy to engage such men if you have no work to give them. It is not good enough to engage a Veterinary Surgeon at this price only to look after thirteen head of cattle.

THE CHAIRMAN: Perhaps the hon. Member does not understand that the

officer is Veterinary Surgeon and not Stock Manager.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I appreciate that, but it does not alter the situation. A rose called by any other name smells just as sweet. I am not against the item. I see you are inclined to have it and, therefore, I will say no more.

Item 1(8)—4 Agricultural Superintendents, \$10,308.

Mr. JACOB: I think the number of these Agricultural Superintendents should be reduced by one or two. I do not think the Colony can afford to pay four of them such high salaries. I do not know what they do. They are supposed to submit figures or returns of cattle, rice, etc., and, as I have said before, the returns for rice planted, the acreage reaped and the production have been entirely unreliable. I do protest against this increasing expenditure and the services of these officers not being properly utilized. I think that the amount of the item should be reduced by half.

Professor DASH: I would like to say before the idea gets around that what the hon. Member has said is correct, that all the returns made to the Marketing Board and other Bodies interested in rice are worked out with very great care and are a very close approximation of the real thing. There is no difficulty in working closely on those returns to the Marketing Board. It is a very difficult task and the officers are doing it extremely well.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I am sorry the hon. Director got up to speak so quickly, as I wanted some information about this item. I desire to enquire whether it is the policy of Government that the post of Agricultural Superintendent should be fixed in future on the scale of \$2,160 to \$2,880 per annum as soon as vacancies arise. I would like to know whether the policy has been decided upon that the minimum should be reduced and the maximum retained. If that is so, Government will hear something more about it.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The general question has not been considered, but in this particular case the question came before Government for consideration

and it will be found that the appointment in this instance has been made at the lower scale of salary. As regards the future no decision has been arrived at.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: May I ask whether it was found possible to fix a lower minimum by reason of the fact that the present appointee is recruited from the Service? Is it a local appointment?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: No.

Mr. LEE: Looking at the 1938 Estimates I find there a vote for four Agricultural Superintendents. I notice now there are to be five of them. Is that the way to effect economy?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: To a point of correction. I do not quite see where the hon. Member gets "five" from.

Mr. LEE: I beg your pardon (laughter). Dealing with Agricultural Superintendents, I would like to ask Government that they pay more visits to the Agricultural Instructors in order to see that the work of the Department is being carried on properly.

Mr. JACOB: Do I understand that there are four Agricultural Superintendents at the moment, and that a new one is to be appointed?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: These estimates were framed before the appointment was made. There are four Agricultural Superintendents, the fourth having recently arrived in the Colony. I am sorry I did not draw hon. Members' attention to the fact, as the note to the item does convey the impression that there is a vacancy.

Mr. JACOB: Here we have a new appointment increasing the expenditure and burden of this Colony. I think we have expressed it quite clearly here within the last few days that we do not think there should be new appointments under existing conditions. There should be no new appointment unless it is absolutely necessary. Nearly every Elected Member would agree that their constituents are not at all satisfied with the work of this Department and desire that its expenditure should be reduced. I do ask that if

it is possible there should be no further new appointments.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Having raised the question, I would like to inform the hon. Member that I am satisfied with the explanation given. The appointment was made to fill a vacancy. I may remind the hon. Member that where the hon. Director has got away with the goods is that the number of Agricultural Superintendents was increased last year. We had a terrific debate in this Council over it. The increase actually took place last year. Since then another vacancy arose and a new officer was appointed. There will be a saving when new officers are appointed.

Mr. ELEAZAR: When the hon. Member said there were five Agricultural Superintendents, I heard a very loud "No." I am seeing "five" on the Estimates. I see four as item 8 and one Assistant as item 11. Putting the prefix "Assistant," does it not make that officer an Agricultural Superintendent? Your Excellency, the hon. Director should not be allowed to throw dust into the eyes of the Council. I have a recollection that at the time when the Committee of this Council decided there should be no more House Allowances, this Department one month later brought in these Superintendents and Government allowed each a House Allowance. There are four of them, and another has been added and called an Assistant. We have only three Counties, and if you divide Demerara into two placing one officer on the West Coast and another on the East Coast, you need only four Superintendents. What is the fifth, the Assistant, to do? That is how this Department has been growing from time to time. By a little bit of legerdemain and glib talking it gets things through. I am going to move the deletion of that item.

Item 1(9)—Agricultural Economist (\$2,400 to \$2,880 by \$120), \$2,880.

Mr. JACOB: May I enquire what is the actual work of the Agricultural Economist?

Professor DASH: I think it was explained at full length when the matter came up in the Council some years ago. This Council had agreed, on Govern-

ment's advice, to a programme of economic surveys extending over a period of years. The general view was to make a study of the economics relating to Agriculture not only in British Guiana but the whole West Indies. It was fully approved by Government and the Secretary of State, and this officer was engaged mostly on that work. I think it would be recalled that this officer carried out some very important studies in connection with the cost of living, did the cane-farming survey of East Demerara, the sources of revenue to the farmers, and is now engaged on rice surveys on the West Coast, Demerara, and live stock survey. These surveys are essential if we are to be able to rightly advise peasants how to proceed with general farm management. It is the common system in vogue in all up-to-date Departments, and the work is proceeding in that direction.

Mr. ELEAZAR: The hon. Member asked what it is, and I cannot understand what is the officer's real office. He asked for a definition and got none at all. I do not know what qualification he has. I do not know whether an estate driver at \$8 a month cannot do the same thing that he is doing. What happened years ago does not enlighten us on that point.

Mr. JACOB: I am not at all satisfied with the hon. Director's explanation. I want to know if it is Government's intention to keep the officer on permanently. I see great economies but in the wrong direction—economies in reducing exports, reducing local production even of food-stuffs resulting in increased importation of food which can easily be produced in this Colony. If that is the job this gentleman is engaged on and if Government did not make use of his advice—it cannot be denied that proper use was not made of his advice—then steps ought to be taken to abolish this post.

Item 1(11)—Assistant Agricultural Superintendent (\$1,680 to \$2,160 by \$120), \$1,985.

Mr. LEE: I thought I was mistaken, but now I find that I am correct. It will be found that in this year's estimates there are 22 Agricultural Instructors and Assistants, and last year there were only eighteen. I would like to know whether

the number has been really increased by four.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member can raise that when he comes to the relative item dealing with Assistants separately. The number is the same as last year.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I must take this opportunity to point out that this is where some confusion arises, and if the hon. Director had explained the point thoroughly at the beginning instead of referring to the confusion of my remarks this would not be. I would put the question quite straight to him. Is there an increase in the personnel of this Department for next year? That is what hon. Members would like to be satisfied upon.

Professor DASH: There is no increase. Most of these items on the Estimates have been there for many years, and it is surprising that more is not known about them. The only new arrangement is that we have succeeded in formulating a system to help a number of junior men who are paid from various votes by bringing them into a group under "Technical Assistants." It is only giving them a little more status. Their case came up before Government and had the fullest consideration, and it was felt that these employees, who had served so well, should be given a little more status in the new grouping.

THE CHAIRMAN: Perhaps I may explain that these posts to which the hon. Director has referred come under item 19, and if hon. Members wish to raise the point they can do it under that. Apart from that, there is no change at all.

Item 1(12)—Assistant Plant Breeder (\$1,440 to \$1,680 by \$120), \$1,680.

Mr. SEAFORD: While I was away on leave I was naturally interested in the Colony and with the starting of this Central Rice Mill in Essequibo, and I came in touch with several of the very large brokers and dealers in rice in the United Kingdom. We in this Council are very prone to criticise and, I think, if praise is due it should be meted out. Those gentlemen paid a very high tribute to the quality and standard of our loca

padi. They said that the padi produced here is the finest they had ever seen, the improvement in the last few years has been phenomenal and the people responsible for it are to be congratulated. I think it is only fair to the people who have been doing that work that it should be mentioned.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I am very glad for the statement made by the hon. Member for Georgetown North. I am glad to hear that the standard of our padi is such that, perhaps, some day it will warrant a better price of padi to the grower. If we are going to have these eulogies about our padi, I think, the producer should get some benefit. I regret I was not here earlier this morning but, perhaps, I can take the opportunity at this stage to mention a fact in support of the Committee I have suggested that Your Excellency in your speech to this Council has clearly indicated the necessity for its appointment. I have no greater authority in support of that Committee than Your Excellency's own words which, with your permission, I will read:—

While it is not yet possible to gauge the effect of the war on the import trade, it is clear that our export trade should increase, for the raw materials which the Colony produces are of vital importance to the struggle in which the Empire is engaged and the national interest as well as that of our local trade demands an extension of production.

That is why I made mention of the fact and, I am inclined to think, if Your Excellency's words are to be put into effect this Department may be increased. I would like to hear it definitely stated by the hon. Director of Agriculture whether there is a contemplated increase, because there is also the point that if extra burden is thrown on the Department and there is no such increase then the Department has not been working up to its full extent.

Mr. WALCOTT: I am rather surprised to hear the hon. Member for Western Essequibo suggest that people are not getting a much better price for padi now than three months ago.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: To a point of correction, I did not say that. I said, I hope that through the eulogistic remarks made by the hon. Member for Georgetown

North the people would in future get a better price for padi than they are getting now.

Mr. WALCOTT: Having improved the quality of the padi produced in this Colony to such an extent as to warrant its being appreciated in London by the experts, surely it must occur to the hon. Member for Western Essequibo that the fault now lies in the milling and the necessity for a Central Mill is more now than ever.

Mr. SEAFORD: I was going to point out to the hon. Member for Western Essequibo that they also said, although our padi is the finest our milling is the worst.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Perhaps the hon. Member was not present when I addressed my first remarks under this head. I regretted that the establishment of the Central Rice Mill has been delayed because rice is the only industry on the Essequibo Coast, and I further submitted that it was definitely stated by the hon. Director of Agriculture that rice alone cannot support the needs of a district.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: The discussion about the improvement in the quality of our padi is very interesting to me. I was hoping that I would not have overlooked the point I wished to raise under this item. The proposal now is to place this post on the Fixed Establishment which had hitherto been held under agreement. I have nothing to say against these particular posts, but I do want to say that I think it is bordering on a breach of faith to this Council. We have had several debates in this Council on the placing of the post of Plant Breeder on the Fixed Establishment. First of all we had an officer from the Colonial Development Fund who was sent out here for a number of years, and finally an attempt was made to place that officer on the Fixed Establishment. After a lengthy debate the post was allowed to remain as it was. The post subsequently became vacant and, if my memory serves me right, we had another debate and the Cane-Agronomist was then called Cane Agronomist and Plant Breeder. We were told that the salary of this officer was paid by the Sugar Producers' Association, and all we would have to do was to

put him on the Fixed Establishment. We would give him the extra job as Plant Breeder, and all we would have to pay was his pension. That officer was placed on the Fixed Establishment, and the Department got away with the goods on that occasion, as it were. Then, the Department wanted an Assistant Plant Breeder.

We were first of all told that the officer was going to be appointed under an agreement. In my opinion if we had a Plant Breeder we did not need another, but opinion was against me and it was thought that we should also have an Assistant Plant Breeder. We therefore got him. He was engaged under an agreement, and now it is sought to place him on the Fixed Establishment. Can the hon. Director tell me why in spite of criticism the expenditure of this Department keeps rising year by year? I do know why, and there is more I shall have to say about that. Here is an officer who has been engaged under agreement being put on the Pensionable Establishment and thus increasing our commitments when the time comes for him to retire. I do not want to oppose this item for one reason, and that is I happen to know the officer is a local man and I would be the last person to stand in his way. I do think, however, the method adopted in placing the post of Plant Breeder and that of Assistant Plant Breeder on the Fixed Establishment is one with which I can never agree.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I may explain, the three years' agreement in respect of the appointment of this officer expires in July, 1940, and Government is naturally anxious to know whether it is possible to make the appointment of this same individual continue on the same basis or pensionable. It is a matter for the Council to decide. Government is anxious to know now, as it is no good holding the matter over until July and then come back to the Council.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: May I ask the hon. Director to give details of this officer and to explain what duties he does actually perform?

Mr. JACOB: I do not think the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) has stated the case correctly, relative to the post of Plant Breeder.

It was clearly stated in this Council that as the services of the Plant Breeder were not available it was decided to appoint an Assistant Plant Breeder to work under the direction of the Sugar Agronomist. I think it is no breach of faith but only fair that if a person is appointed under agreement and it is a local person, after having given three years' service which is considered satisfactory he should be placed on the Fixed Establishment. My grievance in this matter is whether we get value for the expenditure.

Mr. ELEAZAR: It is making confusion worse confounded when one hon. Member gets up and contradicts another hon. Member as to what had happened, and considers it just that the officer should be placed above the line. Why should that be? Why should he not be put below the line? He is there by agreement with Government for a certain amount, and the agreement has not expired. Is he indispensable that he should be placed on the Fixed Establishment? Why not put him below the line as has been done in the case of a good many other persons? That is where the hon. Director is getting away with it all the time. He is continually increasing the Pension and other emoluments all along the line. I do not think that should be allowed. I am going to move that the post be placed below the line.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. Member is suggesting that Government should consider making the post a permanent one but placing it below the line. If that is so it is not possible, as towards the end of last year a resolution was passed in this Council that any officer receiving a salary of \$720 per annum is automatically placed above the line. If it is the feeling that the appointment should not be a permanent one and the agreement should be renewed, then the post will be dropped below the line.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: That is the point I wish to make. I wish to suggest that the agreement be renewed. The post of Assistant Plant Breeder is still new. I would like to support what the hon. Member said by quoting facts and figures. The emoluments of the Department on the Fixed Establishment amounted to \$30,000 in 1929 and in 1939 the amount is \$57,000—nearly 100 per cent. increase. That is

the grievance of hon. Members on this side of the Council. In that connection, I would invite the hon. Member for North Western District to review the records and he would find the sequence of events leading up to this post is correctly given by me.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I move that this officer be retained on agreement as in the past, since if he is taken on permanently he would have to be placed on the Pensionable Establishment according to what the hon. Colonial Secretary has said.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I suggest that it is necessary for the hon. Member to move the deletion of the item from above the line and its reinsertion below the line.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I move that the item be deleted from above the line as it now stands, and that it be placed below the line.

Professor DASH: I must say that I do not follow the arguments of hon. Members in connection with a post of this sort. I think what the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) said in regard to the post represents a fairly accurate version of it. Hon. Members are aware that this matter of the appointment of a Plant Breeder has been discussed very fully from time to time. The interests of the rice industry appreciate the fact that it is essential to have a permanent man engaged on the breeding of rice. If you are going to maintain your quality up to standard it is impossible to go playing hanky-panky with the post. When the officer has done three years' good work, it is not fair to say we should only renew the appointment. It is not fair to the industry. Hon. Members would recall that when the previous holder of this post was here and had returned to his native country on leave, the whole question came up as to his being permanently placed and this Council came to a unanimous verdict that he should be cabled to return as the post would be placed above the line. That officer appreciated very much the offer, but said that he had already got a new post and could not see his way to return. After some difficulty we have got a very excellent young Guianese holding the post who has done extremely good work during the last two years, and we

are now to be told that he cannot be placed above the line but must remain below the line. I do not think it is fair to the young man and to the industry. I appeal to hon. Members to bear in mind what is the nature of the post, the work entailed, the training entailed and the fact that the rice industry will need continuous attention, the direct work of the Plant Breeder.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I am going to appeal to my hon. friend, the Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) to withdraw his motion. There is no doubt that the rice industry appreciates the appointment of such an officer in the Agricultural Department. I think that he is the one officer of that Department who is more useful to the industry than most of the others in that Department, and it is only fair if he has given faithful service for two years that his appointment should be made secure. I am appealing to the hon. Member to withdraw his opposition, bearing in mind what has happened in the case of the Plant Breeder referred to by the hon. Director.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I do not need any appeal from the hon. Member as I have been already converted by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Dias. I must say, however, that I am not converted by what the hon. Director has said. Because we had tremendous trouble to get a Plant Breeder and gave the Cane Agronomist pension rights so that he should do the work of a Plant Breeder, we must now give his assistant the same rights? As I have said, the hon. Mr. Dias has convinced me that I should not oppose this item, and therefore I withdraw my opposition.

Mr. JACOB: The question of the quality of our padi has been raised as well as the price of padi. I have no doubt that our padi is as good as any but, perhaps, the sample sent to England was different from that sent some time ago. On the whole there is more room for improvement along the right lines. I was disappointed to find in the last report on the activities of the Rice Marketing Board that the qualities of rice are not enumerated. I have a recollection that in previous reports that was done. If those figures were available it would be interesting to know the quantity of No. 3 rice

milled now and say eight or ten years ago. While the price of padi is increasing—it is fixed at a particular figure now—I would like Government and this Council to realize that the cost of living has also increased tremendously. I do not think the grower of padi with the increased price of padi is in a better position now than probably six months ago. While the cost of padi has increased, the price of rice has increased as well. I would just like to remind Government so that it should not be lost sight of. I understand that those interested are not satisfied with the increased price suggested. As a matter of fact all the producers of rice who sold their padi before the figure had been fixed did so at a very low price, and there had been this increased activity in respect of the rice industry. Bearing in mind that the cost of living is increasing very rapidly, I do not know whether Government's action in controlling the increased price is proceeding along the right lines. I have heard very disturbing statements about it. A great deal of profiteering is going on.

THE CHAIRMAN: May I remind the hon. Member that the question of the price of rice does not come within the functions of the Plant Breeder.

Mr. JACOB: There are several items here relating to rice and, I think, I am correct in stating that. The hon. Member for Georgetown North raised the question of quality.

Mr. SEAFORD: I was justified in referring to it under the item "Plant Breeder."

Mr. JACOB: And the hon. Mr. Walcott raised the question of price as well.

Item 1(18 & 19) - Technical Assistants.

Mr. LEE: I notice there are twelve of these officers on the Estimates, and last year there were only eight. I would like to know if it is an increase, and why.

THE CHAIRMAN: If the hon. Member looks at the note on the right hand side of the Estimates he will see the information.

Mr. LEE: I see there is no increase. I thank you. (laughter).

Item 1(28)—Telephone Operator, \$180.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: May I ask if the

Department had no Telephone Operator during 1939, as I see the insertion of a new item "Telephone Operator"?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: A new Exchange has been put in that Department on very strong advice by the Government Electrical Engineer, and it is decided to insert this item so as to have a trained operator to handle the machine. The previous machine had been worked by a young man at a very low salary, and on inspection it was found to have deteriorated very rapidly. The Engineer has advised that a young man of that type could not be expected to take charge of such a valuable Exchange as has been installed. The money will be spent as the operator is being drawn from the Central Exchange.

This item will occur in many other places on the Estimates and, I may state, Government considers that it will be money well spent in all Departments having properly qualified operators to look after the machines. It is no good spending money on these machines and let them go out of order after a few months. I hope the hon. Member will appreciate that Government is acting on the advice of its Chief Electrical Engineer.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Surely a trained highly technical operator should receive more than the paltry salary of \$15 per month.

Mr. ELEAZAR: \$15 is a farce; it only shows that the excuse given by the Electrical Engineer is one to induce Government to put another person in the post. I cannot understand what the Department wants with a telephone exchange, and if the operator must be so qualified why pay a salary of only \$15 per month? A lad was there doing the work, but I suppose his voice is found to be so racuous that it is desired to get a girl with a nice soft voice, and so she is highly qualified by nature. I do not think this thing is justifiable. The Department has been getting on all the time without an expensive exchange and an extra clerk to do that work. It is a luxury which should not be allowed. If the hon. Director of Agriculture wants a luxury of this nature, then let him get it at his own expense. He is handsomely paid—I do not grudge him his salary—and plus that he is given a palace to live in and an office fit for a prince. The taxpayers have to pay all this money.

I am going to move the deletion of this item.

Mr. JACOB: I am inclined to support the last hon. Member but not in exactly the same strain. I do think this is not the time for it, probably if our finances were in order apart from the fact that there are probably several telephones in that Department which can be better utilized in other places. I do not know if there would be economies in this direction, but Government should not embark upon the wholesale establishment of exchanges in these Departments.

Mr. WALCOTT: I understand that the Central Exchange cannot provide enough telephones to go around, and instead of having a half dozen trunk lines one switchboard is being installed. It is certainly an economy to pay \$180 a year to a trained operator rather than to put in several lines to one Department as existed before.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think hon. Members are under a misapprehension in regard to this branch telephone exchange. The Agricultural Department has had one for four or five years. It is not a new installation. It is a question of having somebody trained in the Post Office Department put there as operator of the branch exchange in the Department on the advice of the Electrical Engineer. That is the only point involved.

Mr. ELEAZAR: The amount is so small that one should not quibble over it, but it seems to me that the Department should continue as in the past to employ boys from the age of fourteen to do that work and send them away at the age of eighteen. I would like some explanation.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: As regards the training, I would suggest to the hon. Member to pay a visit to the Telephone Exchange and get an idea of what the girls there have to do. This salary of \$180 per annum is the amount paid to all of them. I am sure that the Chief Electrical Engineer will be only too pleased to show the hon. Member around.

Mr. GONSALVES: It seems a pity there should be so much talk over a small item like this, which purports to find employment for one girl leaving school, when there is great unemployment among

boys and girls who leave school and cannot get anything to do. This is a provision for a girl to be employed as a telephone operator. If a girl is being taken on to displace a boy, that boy can be found a job somewhere else. I cannot see why there should be any objection. The hon. Members who spoke have got very little knowledge as regards what is meant by an exchange in a Department. Such exchange, as I understand it, is not for the purpose of connecting the clerks in the one building but the several places connected with the work of that Department. If you take the Agricultural Department, there are buildings away from the main offices with which the Director and other officers have to be in communication frequently, and apart from that there are other places with which they have to get into communication. I think the hon. Member for Berbice River should accept the invitation to visit the Central Telephone Exchange at McInroy's Building and also the branch exchange of this or any other Department, say the Transport and Harbours Department, and there he would find it is not a luxury. I do think hon. Members should accept the item as it stands and let us get on to other items. It is regrettable that both this item and the one for an Assistant Plant Breeder should be challenged, when they purport to give employment to Guianese, who are qualified and for whom we have always preached that when they become qualified they are not given employment by Government.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I appreciate the remarks made by the hon. Member who has just taken his seat in regard to the employment of our own, but I would like to know from the hon. Member if he conscientiously agrees that the paltry sum of \$15 per month is sufficient salary for a trained person, male or female, carrying on those arduous duties. I would expect that he would also move an increase of the amount. I am of the opinion that \$15 per month is not enough. The hon. Colonial Secretary has himself intimated that it is an arduous post.

Mr. GONSALVES: The question raised is one of principle and I do not intend to have a discussion on it. These appointments are made on the decision of Government, and we will have to deal with all items of a similar class.

Mr. ELEAZAR: The amount is small, but I do not think the talk about "qualified" matters anything. What I am wondering is how this thing used to be managed before? This is a new item put on the Estimates. Why should it become necessary to have this item? The Telephone Department has its own personnel, and if that Department sends someone somewhere, is it necessary to have this item? I am told all kinds of things, but is it not that some one will be transferred from the Post Office Department to do this work? How was that person originally paid? Is it not the same individual only in a changed place of work?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I can explain exactly what happened. The Engineer in Chief came to me and said that some time ago a considerable sum of money was spent by Government on a switchboard or branch exchange for the Agricultural Department, and he wished to advise me that if we want to save money Government must see that the machine is attended to and operated by a trained girl, otherwise it would deteriorate and soon be useless. In order to save money by not incurring avoidable expenditure on the machine, this item is put on the Estimates.

Question "That the item be deleted" put, and not agreed to.

Motion lost.

Item 1(26)—House Allowances and Office Rent, \$312.

Mr. LEE: Your Excellency, the appointment of the new Agricultural Superintendent should not carry with it any House Allowance.

Professor DASH: That appointment does not carry House Allowance. It has been decided upon that no appointments coming in should carry that.

Mr. LEE: In respect of the Grading Inspector, I have received a letter from Rice Agents informing me that since the Rice Regulations have been published in the *Official Gazette* there is very little business being done and there will result unemployment among the rice agents in Water Street. I understand that the Board is employing pensioners instead of

those people who know the rice business and how to grade rice and who have been thrown out of employment. I think they should be given the first preference in such employment.

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

2 p.m.—

Item 8—Experiment Stations, \$12,901.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I have observed the note in respect of this item, and the only comment I have to make is that only \$1,700 has been provided for Essequibo while in the case of Berbice and the North West District the amounts have been increased to \$2,000. I think hon. Members are fully aware of the various reports which have been laid on the table, and also of Sir Wilfrid Jackson's Speech to the Council on October 21, in which he stated definitely that there was necessity for fundamental economic reconstruction in Essequibo. If there is to be some incentive and progress with regard to the development of agriculture in that County expenditure on agriculture should be increased. If the amount for Essequibo is adequate I would suggest that the amounts for the other stations might automatically be reduced, or that the entire vote is inadequate. If there is to be progressive development on the Essequibo Coast, and if that development is to produce satisfactory results then I submit that there would be necessity for an increased amount to be expended on the Coast. It seems to me that where reconstruction is necessary further experiments should be carried out in order to supplement or give some impetus to employment on the Coast. I need not refer to the report of the Essequibo Coast Commission, of which the Director of Agriculture was Chairman, and in which he himself points out that there is immediate need for products other than rice which alone cannot maintain the people on the Coast. I would like to hear from the Director the reason for the discrepancy in the amounts provided for the various stations, and why the district which, presumably, will be used for a great deal of food production in substitution for imported foodstuffs, is to have a smaller sum expended on its Experiment Stations than in the case of the others.

Mr. JACOB: I have listened with a great deal of regret to the speech of the hon. Member. I have no objection to the hon. Member referring to the constituency he represents and asking that the sum provided should be increased, but I do not think it is fair to suggest that the amounts provided for Berbice and the North West District should be reduced. I think it comes with very bad grace indeed.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I do not think I suggested a reduction. Using it in argument I suggested that if the amount of \$1,700 was sufficient for experimentation in Essequibo then the amounts provided for Berbice and the North West District should automatically be reduced. I am not saying that I want a reduction. For this year we provided \$2,500 for Essequibo and \$1,500 for Berbice.

THE CHAIRMAN: In fact the hon. Member is suggesting an increase in the vote.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Yes, sir.

Mr. JACOB: In trying to make a comparison with the Essequibo district the hon. Member threw out the suggestion that the amount of \$2,000 for the North West District should be reduced. I should like to refer the hon. Member to item 20—Maintenance of Breeding Centre and agistment area at La Belle Alliance, \$1,403. That is an experiment, and when the amount is added to the sum of \$1,700 it makes a total of \$3,103. In that case I can successfully plead that the amount for the North West District should be increased to what it was this year. I am sorry to see the hon. Member carrying on a debate of this kind. It was not introduced by me and I think in future we should be very careful how we plead for our own constituencies. I think the hon. Member had an excellent opportunity to do something constructive instead of making the criticisms he has made.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I think the hon. Member must realize that I was not a party to the Dairy Products Committee's report. I was not in the position of the hon. Member, nor did I take a sojourn to the United Kingdom. I do not know whether that accounts for his signing the report. If the hon. Member had listened to the debate he would have observed that

I made some remarks about dairy products, and I was rather disappointed when the scheme did not come to fruition.

Mr. JACOB: If we are to increase production I do not think the amount provided for the North West District should be reduced. The North West District suffers from a very serious disadvantage which, I submit, no other district suffers. The lack of employment there has been tremendous. I do ask that the matter be reconsidered and the amount increased.

Item agreed to.

Item 10—Livestock, \$8,000.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I suggest that this item be carried out at the present year's figure—\$6,000. I do not think this is the time to buy fresh livestock.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: My views are entirely different from those of the hon. Member on my left. I am seeking a little bit of information. Here is an increase of \$2,000, and on the revenue side of the picture all that is hoped to obtain from that sum is \$2,700 as against \$2,400 this year. Am I to understand that Government is going to spend \$2,000 and only receive \$2,700?

I also want some information with respect to item 7—Purchase, Production and Distribution of Seeds and Plants, \$3,800. I would like to know how much will be spent on the purchase of seed and plants, and how much on the distribution.

Professor DASH: I will deal first with the livestock item which calls for an increase of \$2,000. I think the Council is fully aware of the developments which have been going on for the last few years in connection with the livestock programme. I think the Council will recall that we had a substantial grant from the Colonial Development Fund with which to increase our livestock activities. I think one or two Members did us the honour of visiting our livestock farm in its new setting at the back of the Experimental Station. That grant has been spent in introducing dual purpose bulls mainly for the improvement of peasant stock in the districts as well as in the vicinity of Georgetown, and to be able to supply a nucleus of bulls for pastures and districts generally. The expenditure of that grant

has brought about a considerable increase in the number of animals to be reared, and the maintenance of them cannot be met from the present vote.

The poultry industry too is expanding at an enormous rate, as I think most members are aware, and shipments are being made to Trinidad. We have resuscitated the Poultry Association, and in consequence of this increased activity there has been such a demand for breeding stock that we are behind in meeting those demands, both for eggs and cockerels. We are satisfactorily increasing our breeding pens and breeds, all for the benefit of the livestock industry, and the \$2,000 extra is being asked for in order to meet increased activities in this direction.

I can give some rough idea as to how this additional sum of \$2,000 is made up. Under Cattle we have to provide wages for 2 men @ 60 cts. per day, \$438; feed for livestock, \$562, making a total of \$1,000. Under Poultry we have to provide wages for 1 man @ 60 cts. per day, \$182.50, repairs to 6 breeding houses, \$70; replacing 2 growing houses for chicks, \$40; repairing and replacing wire netting and posts to 10 poultry runs, \$85; brooder house, \$90; breeding house and run, \$72; spares for incubators, poultry utensils, filling up, levelling and lining runs, \$60.50, making a total of \$1,600. At the outstation at Whim we have to provide wages of bull minder @ 72 cts. per day, and wages of grass cutter @ 24 cts. per day; \$348.44; grain, \$51.56, making another \$400 and bringing the total up to \$2,000. We are trying to increase our livestock exports and production generally, and regard it now as a very important matter.

Several Members have referred to the question of dairy products, and the matter of pickled beef is quite a burning topic. We are importing quite a large quantity, and we want to supply our own demands and export also. Those are matters which are receiving the careful attention of the Committee of the Board of Agriculture, and it seems to me a pity not to allow this development to take place. A certain amount of revenue will be forthcoming which will be accumulative. In the first year it will be small, but as we go on increasing in numbers our revenue will go up substantially until we may be fortunate

enough to make expenditure and revenue quadrate.

Mr. ELEAZAR: That might satisfy Government, but it certainly does not satisfy me. I have known the bull minder at Whim for some time. Is it suggested that he has not been paid all this time? He has been there the whole of this year. This sort of juggling with figures does not convince me. We want to know what the Department is going to do with this additional \$2,000. All the items mentioned by the Director are standing now; there is not an additional one. I move that the item be reduced to \$6,000, the present year's figure, which is quite sufficient for this experiment.

Mr. JACOB: If the statements made by the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar) are correct, then I think a further explanation is required from the Director. Apart from that I should be sorry to think that the hon. Member is serious in asking that the additional \$2,000 be deleted. I should like to see the item increased to \$20,000. I should like to see more bulls and more cows imported into the Colony to increase and improve the breeding of livestock. That is what I would call productive expenditure and constructive statesmanship. I am appealing to the hon. Member to endeavour to increase items of this kind and not ask that they be reduced. We have immense opportunities here for increasing our livestock, poultry and pigs. Immediately war was declared the prices of bacon and butter were increased. Great Britain is entirely dependent upon foreign sources for her supply of bacon, and there are immense possibilities here. Not only could we supply Great Britain but the entire West Indies, curtailing imports from the Argentine. I am asking Government to consider this matter on those lines. The Board is probably out of date. I think the entire Department needs reconstruction and reorganisation on modern lines.

Mr. LEE: I would be glad if Government could find it possible to increase this item. I know of several people who applied to the Department for chickens about four or five months ago, but up to now they have not got them. How can we improve our poultry unless the Department is able to purchase pure bred chickens from

abroad? The public is beginning to realize that it is to its benefit to have pure bred chickens.

Professor DASH: I do not think I can add anything to what I have said. I regard expenditure of this kind as being in the nature of an investment, and if we realize that the livestock industry must be put on a firm footing the only way to do so is to improve the breed and take other measures to get improved stock about the country. We have made a start at Whim, but it is not a very serious start, and it is proposed to extend the accommodation there to include pigs and poultry, and it may be possible also—I hope it will be—to do something at Tarlogie where there is a livestock centre. We cannot say how far we can go until we see how our expenditure works out. The estimate I gave was approximate.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I now move that the item be reduced by \$1,000.

Amendment put, and lost.

Item as printed agreed to.

Item 11—Grants in aid of Agricultural Assistants, Exhibitions and Competitions, \$200.

Mr. ELEAZAR: We lost money on the last show in Berbice but it was a very inspiring show. Money spent on propaganda work is money well spent. It is Government's duty to show the people how to make themselves rich. I would certainly have liked to increase this item to \$500, but having lost the amendment with regard to the previous item I shall content myself with giving the Director a meed of praise for the success achieved by the Department at the last show, in spite of the unfavourable circumstances. I think he must be content with that here. (laughter).

Item agreed to.

Item 16—Soil Surveys, \$400.

Mr. LEE: Following the discussion here on the question of the visit of a tobacco expert I wrote the Director of Agriculture asking whether he could find it convenient to send his soil expert to the settlement on the Denham Road to find out whether the soil there was suitable for tobacco cultivation. I was told by the settlers there that

the tobacco cultivation there was very good at a certain period, but on account of a certain pest it ceased. Before the tobacco expert comes to the Colony, or if he is here already, I would suggest that the soil expert be sent up there to examine the soil.

Mr. GONSALVES: I understand that depôts are being created about the country and various persons are being employed for the purpose of carrying out rice experiments. I do not know who is responsible for those appointments, but I understand that a good many persons who have already served the country and are in the receipt of pensions have been re-employed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Which item is the hon. Member referring to?

Mr. GONSALVES: I think it comes under item 12—Rice Grading Expenses, \$2,116. I wish to draw attention to the fact that I am opposed to the re-employment of persons in receipt of pensions to do work of this kind. There is serious complaint of unemployment at the moment, and there are many people earning nothing who have been left out and pensioners are being re-employed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Government naturally would not consider the employment of pensioners, except in cases where the employment is purely of a temporary character, and it is not possible to obtain suitable people to carry out the work. It is sometimes very necessary in such cases to employ pensioners, but Government strictly observes the principle of not employing pensioners, except in such circumstances.

Mr. JACOB: I think that as a matter of general policy it is admitted that it is not the best thing to re-employ pensioners. I understand that in my constituency, the North West District, a gentleman has been sent there to do legal work after having been retired from the Service.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. Member is referring to the post under the District Administration.

Mr. JACOB: I do not know under what head it comes. We do not know of these things until they appear in the newspapers, and sometimes we do not know of them at all.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is referring to the post of the acting District Commissioner.

Mr. JACOB: I think it is.

THE CHAIRMAN: If the hon. Member would bring the matter up under that head he would receive a reply.

Item agreed to.

Item 17—School Gardens, \$325.

Mr. LEE: I am asking Government to increase this item to \$1,000, the sum voted for this year. If the Agricultural Instructors give due care and attention to these school gardens this money will be well spent.

Item agreed to.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: After item 20—Experimental Banana Cultivations—I see a blank. Must I take it that the idea of banana experiments in this country has been given up entirely, or are we still to continue growing bananas?

THE CHAIRMAN: If the hon. Member would look at the note he would see that it states that the experiments have been discontinued.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Has the Director lost faith in the growing of bananas? I observe that the experiments have been discontinued.

Professor DASH: I have lost faith undoubtedly in the growing of the Gros Michel banana. I would like to feel that there will be an opportunity some time in the future for the Cavendish or some other banana with resistance to Panama disease, but at the moment I do not see it.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I do not know whether the hon. Member made that remark in order to draw the banana expert to his feet. I am very sorry to hear that the Director has lost faith in banana cultivation in this Colony. I have not yet. I am awaiting the results of some of the soil surveys, and one of these days I hope to return to the subject.

Item agreed to.

Item 23—Agricultural Economic Survey, \$800.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I observe that the vote has been reduced to half of what it was for this year. I would like to know whether this is the final stage of this survey. I think it has been running for a few years. The next question is how is the money being spent? Who is it paid to? Is it paid to the Agricultural Economist as a perquisite, or is it spent on labour and travelling?

Mr. JACOB: I would like to enquire whether sufficient data has not been obtained to make a start with the scheme to increase cultivation, the laying out of lands well irrigated and drained, and other facilities for the growing of crops. The Land Settlement Committee has reported, and we have been promised extensive developments in agricultural production. We should like to hear some pronouncement as to Government's attitude in this matter.

Professor DASH: Hon. Members will recall that this item was brought before the Council during the regime of Sir Geoffrey Northcote who was very anxious that full information should be gathered in respect of the general economics of the small agriculturists in the Colony. I think I referred to that this morning in my remarks in connection with the post of Agricultural Economist. It was suggested at the time that the sum of \$5,000 should be considered as a start, and that this should be in the first instance spent over a period of three years. We got a late start and in the first year we spent \$616. This year we spent \$1,600, which represents a full programme of work. I think I have already explained, and Members are aware of some of the work already turned out by that officer, which is, of course, most valuable in connection with our work in the districts. The sum asked for in this estimate represents half the programme, because in considering the position during 1940 it was felt that part at least of this work will probably have to be curtailed in view of the fact that many of the officers doing this work will have to be doing field work in connection with the grow-more-food campaign and activities in connection with the war emergency. So that it was felt that \$800 might be retained in respect of a full year's programme. The money is spent in two main directions. It is spent mainly in collecting information for which there are a number of enumerators who have to be paid, and there are forms which have

to be printed and filled up. Then there are supplies of one kind or another which all go to make up the bulk of the expenditure.

THE hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) of course brings up the wider issue of general agricultural development and land settlement. I cannot say how far that will be proceeded with this year, but I think the Colonial Secretary dealt with that aspect yesterday. What is certain is this: that this survey will form the basis of all advisory work in connection with peasant agriculture. Hon. Members will recall that the survey carried out in connection with the small cane-farmers' plots on the East Coast showed exactly how their farming operations were carried out, their sources of revenue, what sort of work they were doing, what help they needed as regards advice as to varieties and manures, and such information which is essential if we are to advise people in the various areas as to what they should do. The rice survey on the West Coast of Demerara is not quite complete, but some very valuable information is accruing from it. There is also a livestock survey in course of completion which is going to supply us with a considerable amount of valuable information in respect of the livestock industry in the Colony, especially in relation to the small people. That work is being done in close collaboration with the Government Veterinary Surgeon, and will be of extreme interest to the people of the Colony.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I have never been more disappointed in my life over a reply as with the reply I have just received to my question. I say that most feelingly, because I happen to be one of those who supported the suggestion put forward at the time that this survey should be made, and I expected that something material would have resulted from it. Now after listening to the Director's explanation as to how the money is spent I am very disappointed. I consider that we have wasted a sum of about \$2,000 out of the \$5,000 the Director spoke of so lightly. I have not yet heard who gets the money. I heard something about a number of enumerators and the collection of information. I am afraid that is not sufficient information with regard to the expenditure of this money, and I am alarmed to think that the same

answer would have been given if the amount was \$1,600. What work do these people do? Who are they? I am so disappointed that I feel inclined to move the deletion of the item because, frankly, I am not satisfied with the information. What are the agricultural officers in the districts doing if it is merely to collect information? What is an enumerator?

Mr. JACOB: I too feel a little bit disappointed with the explanation which has been given. I will not say that I feel it as keenly as the hon. Member who has just taken his seat, because we are quite accustomed to being told that wonderful things are being done. When this economic survey was undertaken we were told it would be the means of starting real active development works. We were told that the Director of Public Works was largely responsible, and that he would give us a tremendous amount of valuable information in connection with the level of the land. It is now practically three years and we are still collecting information. It is time we made a start in some direction. If it is a question of funds I suggest that the Colonization Fund should be utilized. I think that roughly \$500,000 was appropriated from that fund for social services. There is still a large sum of money left, and why it is not utilized for agricultural development I do not know. It is time that something was done, even if it is for the purpose of providing work for the unemployed. I share some of the views of the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. De Aguiar) even though I do not agree with him entirely.

Professor DASH: I am sorry that the hon. Member did not quite follow all I said, or what I said was not quite clear. It is rather a difficult thing to explain fully in Council a matter of this kind. What I would like him to do is to come up and see the details required in connection with a survey of this kind, and I am certain he would feel satisfied that the money is being well expended. There is nothing wrong with the work, and the results we are getting are of great interest and of great value. It is almost impossible for me from my seat to explain the full details of the work of an economic survey, which is a technical matter.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I accept the invitation of the Director with pleasure, but I

am still not satisfied. Government has a number of agricultural officers in the districts, and if the work that is entailed is merely the collection of information and the issuing of forms there is no necessity to employ enumerators. That is the sum total of what I want to tell the Director. Surely the Agricultural Superintendents and Instructors can issue those forms. I am strongly of the opinion that this item should be deleted, and I voice my disappointment that this work was ever begun. I did not know at the time that the work involved was the issuing of forms and collecting information, which should be done by the officers stationed in the districts. I move that the item be deleted.

The Committee divided on the motion, and there voted :—

For—Messrs. C. V. Wight, Walcott, Peer Bacchus, De Aguiar, Eleazar and Dr. Singh—6.

Against—Messrs. Lee, Jackson, Jacob, Gonsalves, Macnie, Wood, Crease, Case, D'Andrade, Austin, Seaford, McDavid, Woolford, Dr. MacLennan, Professor Dash, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary—17.

Motion lost.

Item 24—Purchase of Dennis motor mower, \$600.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I move the deletion of this item. Using the words of the explanatory memorandum it appears that the lawn mower in use in the Botanic Gardens is "nearly worn out." We are not told how long the mower is likely to last; it might last a year. While one appreciates the beauty of the Gardens and the fact that they are a landmark throughout the West Indies, the question is whether it is necessary to purchase a lawn mower at this time for \$600? Surely if it can last another six or eight months the Department might be able to hire a mower from somebody for the remainder of the year.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I am supporting the deletion of the item, but not on the same ground. My reason for supporting it is that I rather think the estimate for this mower was prepared early this year when a quotation of \$600 was obtained,

but we know what has happened since then, and perhaps we might postpone it for a year. I think Government might have to pay \$1,200 for a mower now. I suggest a postponement of the order, provided the present mower will carry us through until then.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. Member's proviso is the important point. That is just what we do not know. The expectation is that the mower will break down this year. Hon. Members would be quite right in criticising Government if it did not make provision now and came forward with a supplementary estimate for something which might have been foreseen.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: If there is a fear that the mower will break down, and there is an assurance that the order for a new mower will not be placed until the present one shows signs of breaking down I will withdraw my opposition.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is the position.

Mr. SEAFORD: I would be inclined to place the order at once. If we wait for six months it will cost more than \$1,200.

Professor DASH: This item concerns the Botanic Gardens, and we always want to keep them up to the best state of maintenance. The mower was bought some years ago second hand, and it has rendered yeoman service. We are constantly having to replace spare parts, and it is feared that it has not got very many more months of usefulness. That is why the item has been put on the estimate.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I have some experience of lawn mowers; we have one in N Amsterdam (laughter), and I know what we spend on it. In view of the fact that the Gardens are our show ground, and if the Director says he wants a mower he really wants it and he should have it. The Gardens are a credit to the Department and the Colony.

Item agreed to.

ANALYST.

Item 19—Allowance to officers for analysis of milk on Sundays and holidays, \$350.

Mr. LEE: I would like to know from Government whether samples of milk taken on Sunday cannot be analysed on Monday. This allowance is given to the officers for overtime work, and if it can be saved I see no reason why it should not be.

Dr. MACLENNAN (Director of Medical Services): I am afraid I am not quite in a position to answer that question, but I think that if you are going to carry out a chemical analysis of milk you want to do it fairly quickly, before it goes bad. The same thing would apply to a bacteriological analysis. These things should be done almost immediately.

Mr. JACOB: I wonder if the Department has information as regards the quality of milk produced in the various parts of the Colony. If it has not I suggest that additional work be undertaken in order to obtain it, but I think it should be arranged in such a way as to have the milk from the various districts kept separately. I would like to know whether milk from Essequibo is not of a better quality than that obtained in Demerara. I have a distinct belief that milk produced in Essequibo is far richer than that produced in Demerara. I would like to be assisted by the Department with data of that kind, and if it has not got it it should endeavour to collect it.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Dr. Maclemian is not responsible for this Department. He has replied to the previous question merely from his special knowledge.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I will endeavour to get that information from the Government Analyst; it may be in his report.

Item agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move the insertion of a new item 7—Purchase of typewriter, \$95. The typewriter now in the possession of the Department has been condemned by a Board of Survey.

Item agreed to.

AUDIT DEPARTMENT.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I observe that in this Department there is a reduction in

the ranks of the higher branch of the Service and a corresponding increase in the number of officers in the lower branch. That is to say that a Class III. officer has been substituted for a Class II. officer, and a Class II. officer has taken the place of a Class I officer. I make this observation because I regard the Audit Department—in fact all auditing work as very important work, and the question Government should consider is whether there is a sufficient number of responsible officers in the Department. The proposal is to reduce the number of Class I officers to one. I do not know whether a Class I officer has been seconded to do special work in the Colonial Secretary's Office. I hope that any special work required to be done by a Class I officer in this Department will not now be allotted to say a Class II or Class III officer. I am not casting any reflection on any officer. I think there must be a sufficient number of senior officers required. If it is the view of Government that only one Class I officer is required then the point I am making falls to the ground. All I am asking is that the work of the Department should not be endangered. I do not think in a Department like this officers of the very lowest grade should be expected to carry out the responsible duties of a certain section of the office.

Mr. JACOB: I support the remarks made by the hon. Member. I think much more can be said but a good deal would be better left unsaid with regard to this Department which has great responsibilities. I think Government should consider well whether the Department is sufficiently strong to be able to resist what is apparent in certain directions in the Service. I think clerks who do auditing work should be well paid and thoroughly reliable and responsible officers of Government. I am not saying they are not; I am not casting any reflection on the officers. I do not know them and I do not care to know them either. What I do know is that if stricter audits were carried out the revenue of the Colony would benefit tremendously.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I appreciate the remarks of hon. Members. Those are points which are kept very clearly in view when the Promotions Board are considering promotions, and also when their recommendations are sub-

mitted to Your Excellency. I do not think the Auditor would have appreciated a Class II clerk being brought in from another Department as a Class I clerk when the post became vacant. He prefers, naturally, to have his clerks promoted in his Department. A vacancy for a Class I clerk occurred, and the officer deserving of promotion was at that time serving in the Secretariat, and rather than transfer the officer—although it might have been possible to re-transfer him here—the proposal was that he should be promoted. The position is being carefully watched, and when an opportunity occurs to replace a Class I clerk in the Audit Department that will, I am sure, be recommended by the Promotions Board. I think in this particular case the action taken by the Board and Government was the best in the circumstances.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Did I understand the Colonial Secretary to say that the reason why a Class I officer was not put in the Audit Department to fill the vacancy that arose was because the Promotions Board had something to do with it? That is exactly what I am trying to guard against. The Audit Department should be a closed Department. If there is a vacancy in the higher branch the Auditor is quite right in preferring to promote those who have worked with him for a number of years. It is a dangerous practice to reduce the number of senior officers in a Department like this, and I know what I am talking about. It is definitely in the interest of Government to see that certain posts in this Department are maintained. I know a little bit of what an audit clerk has to do in the course of his duties, and I know just how much to expect from a clerk of less experience than another. The matter should be considered later on.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will see that the percentage of senior clerks in this Department is higher than in any other Department.

Mr. McDAVID (Colonial Treasurer): I would like to remind the hon. member that this is really the result of the re-grading scheme which took place in 1930 when the Audit Department had rather fewer senior clerks than it has now. It is a little better off now so far as seniority is concerned. I fully agree that it is most

important that seniority of officers should be maintained in the Audit Department.

COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I would suggest to Government that a Committee be appointed to investigate the work and re-grading of the entire Civil Service. There are considerable anomalies, and I think in view of the high cost of administration at the present moment something might be done. One does not like to go into too many details in matters of this kind. It might be thought that you are getting at certain individuals. I have already mentioned in this Council the question of personal allowances and emoluments. Surely there are several Departments to which officers who are entitled to increased pay might be transferred. I am not suggesting for one moment that that should be done in the case of Heads of Departments, but there are certain cases in which personal allowances can be eliminated and the officers promoted to other Departments. There are also anomalies in regard to the scale of pay drawn by certain officers. Some officers may or may not be getting too much, but I will leave the matter at that at present. I suggest that the matter be investigated.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I would like to say a word with regard to personal allowances. The hon. Member is no doubt aware that Government's policy is to do away with personal allowances wherever possible. During the year there have been cases in which officers have been transferred and it was decided to absorb their personal allowances in their salaries. One such case has occurred within the last few days to my knowledge.

Mr. LEE: I would like Government to enquire into the position of the assistant clerks in the Magisterial Department. Although Government gave an assurance some time ago that they would be eligible for transfer to other Departments, I know of certain of those clerks who have been overlooked while probationers have been appointed to other Departments. I would like Government to enquire into the matter and see that seniority is the ruling principle.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: There is an increase of one clerk on the Fixed Establish-

ment, while under item o there is a reduction of \$940 in respect of temporary clerical assistance. I would like to know whether we can hope that that reduction will be permanent. If so there will be no opposition from me with respect to the increase above. I had always understood that the temporary clerical assistance engaged in this office was for the purpose of providing assistance for other Departments. Then that was changed, and I now understand it is all used in the Colonial Secretary's Office. It is proposed in future that this item should be carried out at \$500 instead of the old figure?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: A footnote has not been attached to the item because it was explained fully under supplementary estimates a few months ago. I said then that in future each Department would have to bear the cost of its temporary clerical assistance. The money provided under this head is solely for the Secretariat.

With regard to the additional clerk, I realize that it is difficult for hon. Members to follow the notes. I find it difficult myself sometimes, but in this particular instance there has been no increase in the Secretariat. Two increases were approved by the Council under supplementary estimate earlier this year. On this year's estimate there were nine clerks, and later in the year two more were added. Nothing more is being asked for now than was approved by the Council several months ago.

CUSTOMS.

Mr. JACOB: I desire to make a few general observations with respect to this head. This is the greatest revenue collecting Department of the Government, and I think some stress should be laid on the manner in which the work of the Department is carried on. It is very difficult for one who is not familiar with all the ways of Government to be able to find out things unless one probes into them. When I attempted to probe into the calculations of royalty on bauxite, to put it mildly I was astonished at the way in which the quantities were being checked, and when I raised the question yesterday the Comptroller said that if I was not satisfied nothing more could be done. I do not think that was

the right attitude to adopt. I do not think that is the way Government should treat hon. Members of this Council.

Apart from bauxite I am not at all satisfied with the Customs tariff, the manner in which amendments were made recently, and the general tariff of the Colony. I think the time has arrived when the whole tariff should be revised, and I should like to hear what is Government's idea about it. About mid-year, when the duties were increased on certain products, we saw the mess that was made of it. On the occasions we met to increase certain duties mistakes were made. On the whole I am not satisfied with the working of the Department, and I think more revenue can be collected by it. Therefore I would suggest for the careful consideration of Government that ready-made clothing should be taxed in order to assist the making of clothing in the Colony and provide employment for women and girls. That, of course, would necessitate a revision of the tariff. I raised that question some time ago but it found no favour. I raise it again and ask Government to give it earnest consideration. I cannot see why this country should import such large quantities of ready-made clothing. I think that in one or two other colonies there is a tariff against imported clothing. Personally I feel that no shirt can be made here suitable to my taste, but if we can get suitable work done here for the ordinary people I think the tariff should be so fixed in order to provide employment for the people of the Colony.

This Colony can and should be made self-contained in every possible way. We have been too long a burden on the Imperial Government. I think we have sufficient resources and population to make this Colony an assistance rather than a burden to the Mother Country. I refuse to believe that we cannot do these things. This Colony and the West Indies should be able to give assistance to the Mother Country, and it is through the Customs tariff that we can make this Colony what it should be. I urge Government to consider this matter again and have the whole tariff system gone into and revised with a view of providing employment for the people.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: It would appear to me that this Department is

understaffed, and if that is so I do not think it is benefiting the taxpayers at all. According to the Civil Service List for 1939 overtime fees drawn by officers of the Customs Department amounted to \$8,673. There are 75 members of the staff of whom two-thirds are drawing overtime fees to the extent I have stated. Therefore the taxpayers have not benefited if this Department is understaffed. Sufficient money has been spent in overtime fees that could have paid half a dozen more officers and reduced the number of unemployed in the Colony. We have young men leaving school from year to year with Higher School Certificates and no avenues for employment. Can I presume that in 1940 the overtime fees will be reduced to such a considerable extent? If the Department is understaffed I am asking Government to consider seriously the question of having it adequately staffed.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I do not deal very much with the Customs Department, but I know that the Comptroller is a very hard-working officer, and this is a case in which I particularly want to make reference to his personal allowance. His personal allowance of \$240 is an anomaly. I can mention other officers who are drawing as much but have not the same responsibility. The Comptroller of Customs is a member of nearly every Committee and Board, and has a tremendous amount of responsibility. Be that as it may, I support some of the ideas of the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) as regards the Customs tariff. I have laid before the Council a motion for protection which I think is correlated to the general question of the Customs tariff. At this moment it is very difficult to protect oneself externally or internally against certain products manufactured within the Empire, but the motion might be modified to such an extent that we could adopt some form of protection which would not affect the industries of the Empire. I think Government might consider the appointment of a Committee to consider the question of developing our exports. At some later stage I will move a motion which might meet the question of Customs revenue generally.

Mr. SEAFORD: What does the hon. Member mean by internal and external protection?

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Internal protection is exemplified in a small way by the power taken by Government to control prices. External protection is the fixing of a higher rate of duty on foreign articles.

Mr. De AGUIAR: I wish to draw Government's attention to the fact that this Department is now required to do a lot of work arising out of the war, such as the issuing of import and export licences, and things of that kind. I hope that the question of staff will not be overlooked because, judging from experience in my own business, I know what it means. I have had to engage extra assistance in order to cope with Government's requirements as regards the making of applications alone, and if the Department has to deal with all of those applications with its present staff I can picture the Comptroller of Customs finding it difficult even to breathe properly. We are quite prepared to put up with a little bit of delay here and there, but I hope the necessity of increasing the staff of the Department, especially at this time, will not be overlooked.

Mr. D'ANDRADE (Comptroller of Customs.): With regard to the question raised about overtime fees and the shortage of the Customs staff I wish to explain that even if the staff was doubled there would still be overtime payments which are made by the merchants for the services of officers out of official hours in the loading and discharging of vessels. The question of additional work in the Customs Department as a result of the war is at present receiving the consideration of Government, and a new branch will shortly be established to deal with those applications. It is, of course, absolutely impossible for the present staff to cope with the work. The cost of the special branch will be charged against the general vote in connection with war expenditure.

THE CHAIRMAN: I would like to tell the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) that the question he raised with regard to ready-made clothing has received the very close attention of Government from time to time, and some action was taken in regard to it not very long ago. The general issue raised is not a very easy one, which I think the hon. Member must realize himself. It is the

aim of Government as far as possible to assist local dress-makers and shirt-makers. It is a matter which continues to receive attention.

Mr. JACOB: That is satisfactory to a point, but I think it is enforced in some of the West Indian islands, and I think it can be brought into force here. It would mean keeping money in this country which is going out of it, and it would solve our unemployment problem to a great extent. I realize the difficulties but I do not think they are insurmountable. I think further consideration should be given to what I have urged.

Item (m)—Crown overtime, \$1,350.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move that this item be increased to \$2,200. The additional provision is required to pay Customs officers and watchers proceeding to Mackenzie on board ships going up the river to load bauxite. At present they are paid so much per trip, and the cost will be met by fees paid to Government by the Demerara Bauxite Co. for Customs services.

Item as amended agreed to.

EDUCATION—EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I would like to move that this head be taken *en bloc* and passed. Earlier in this year a Committee, of which I had the honour to be a member, made certain recommendations with respect to the payment of teachers. Government acceded to the Committee's suggestion and the Secretary of State has approved of the proposed increases. For educational purposes I should like to see much more spent, but the country cannot afford it.

There is one phase of the matter to which I would like to refer, and that is the question of grants to private institutions. I am of the opinion that Government has had no control over public funds paid to those private institutions, and I think Government should have some voice in the expenditure of public funds given to those private institutions for educational purposes. Things have occurred which are not very pleasant, and Government had nothing to say about them. The public has growled, and in some cases the matters have been remedied, but in other cases they

remain very much the same. I think Government should consider the advisability of having some voice in all institutions to which Government contributes such large sums.

I think the Education Department should concern itself more in secondary education than it is doing. I know a secondary school in Georgetown which sent up 26 boys for the Senior Cambridge Certificate at the last examination and 21 of them were successful. That school is not getting one penny from public funds. Another secondary school receiving a large grant from Government sent up about double the number and less than half were successful. The school receiving a Government grant apparently took things easily while the other worked seriously. Although the one school is doing such good work Government will not assist it. Now that the war has come Government cannot do what it would like to do for Queen's College. There is lack of accommodation, and Government has had to restrict admissions, with the result that people have had to find other avenues for their children. So long as Government cannot afford to provide accommodation for the number of students who desire to enter Queen's College I think those secondary schools which fulfil the regulations dealing with secondary schools, and have produced the results I have mentioned, should be considered if they apply to Government for assistance.

Mr. JACOB: I did not quite follow what the hon. Member said, but I understood generally that he is asking for an increase under this head. If I understand him rightly I am going to support that application. It would be what I call productive expenditure. The number of children of school age who are not attending school is alarming. I do not know if Government knows about it; I do not know if the Director of Education is really conversant with what is going on. I had the privilege of going around the country recently, and I found a very alarming state of affairs. There has been neglect in this Department for a considerable period, and I do not think Government should rest content without trying to do something to put primary education on a better footing. There is the question of staff, and there are other things to be done, but I do urge

upon Government to consider this aspect of the question very carefully and spend as much money as possible in educating the children of the Colony. Every child should be able to read and write some language, and if its parents are unable to give it secondary education it would know something and be able to improve itself later on. I am not saying that our system of primary education is perfect, but I do not agree with a general condemnation of it as being bad. The system of education between the ages of 6 and 14 is probably as good as can be expected, and while there may not be accommodation in the various schools, and not a sufficient number of teachers, I do insist that children should go to school and get whatever education they can, and when conditions improve more schools can be built and more teachers employed.

In the meantime I suggest most earnestly that the number of Attendance Officers be increased. It was the late Sir Gordon Guggisberg who reduced the number to two. It is ridiculous to have only two Attendance Officers. I have investigated this matter very carefully. I happen to have been connected with the B.G. East Indian Association for 20 years, and I have been the President for the last two years. We have investigated the matter very carefully and submitted a comprehensive memorandum to the Royal Commission. We have submitted figures to Government year after year and quite recently, and we propose to see you, sir, or Sir Wilfred Jackson on his return, to see if we could get something done. The point of view of the East Indian is not appreciated in this Colony, and I do not think Government should be satisfied to know that 42 per cent. of the child population is not in school. We have taken the figures from the report of the Director of Education for 1938, calculated the number of children going to school, and taking into account the birth and death rate we worked it out mathematically and found that 42 per cent. of the East Indian children of school-going age are still not attending school. It may be considered economy but I think it is false economy, and recent events have shown conclusively to Government and to others, I respectfully suggest, that it is the best thing to have children of the Colony educated so that later there might be less difficulty in

getting them to appreciate what is right and what is wrong.

For years the Association has asked for an increased number of Attendance Officers and more Government schools, and we have been told that the matter is under consideration. We have been told that for the last 20 years. I am willing to give Government every possible assistance, and I am willing to convince Government that it is a very unsatisfactory state of affairs. I intend to interview the Director of Education, the Governor and the Colonial Secretary about it, and the Association intends to co-operate as much as possible in order to reduce illiteracy in the Colony. East Indians are not the only people in the Colony who are illiterate, but they form the largest number of our illiterates. It is alarming to find other people who are illiterate. While I stress the point about East Indians I do not wish it to be understood that I am not advocating the appointment of more Attendance Officers for the whole Colony. The sooner Government realizes that all children should go to school and get some sort of education the better it would be for all concerned.

Mr. LEE: I wish to endorse the remarks made by the hon. Member for Berbice River (Mr. Eleazar). In view of the fact that Government cannot at present erect a new Queen's College building it is absolutely necessary, I think, that some provision be made to encourage those secondary schools which cater for the surplus from Queen's College, whether by way of a subsidy or some system of payment by results, in which case Government should have some supervision over those schools.

With regard to primary education I would like to stress the point that if a school is inadequate to accommodate a large number of children it is false economy to say that children should go to that school, because their health would be impaired. In addition to that there would be too many children in a class. In my constituency I find that there are two schools which are overcrowded and the children have to be put under the Rectory. In other schools there are not sufficient teachers because the schools are in an outlying district, and the cost of upkeep is

too much. I appeal to Government to assist those teachers who have taken those posts. It is quite nice of the Director to say that the teachers are there to educate the children, but I feel it is Government's duty to send teachers there and to provide the necessary increase of salary.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I think I should say once and for all that whenever I speak on education I speak for all sections of the community. I do not like the insinuation that East Indian children are illiterate

because somebody is at fault. I have a distinct recollection that the Association of which the hon. Member is now President, got behind the Governor of that time when it suited them and insisted—

THE CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. member finish his sentence?

Mr. ELEAZAR: It is past the hour, sir. That sentence—(laughter).

The Council adjourned until 10.30 a.m. the following day.