

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, 12th April, 1951.

The Council met at 2 p.m., His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, Mr. John Gutch, O.B.E., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT:

The President, His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, Mr. John Gutch, O.B.E.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. D. J. Parkinson, O.B.E. (Acting).

The Hon. the Attorney General, Mr. F. W. Holder, K.C.

The Hon. the Financial Secretary and Treasurer, Mr. E. F. McDavid, C.M.G., C.B.E.

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

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

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River)

The Hon. W. J. Raatgever (Nominated)

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated)

The Hon. G. A. C. Farnum, O.B.E. (Nominated)

The Hon. Capt. J. P. Coghlan (Demerara River)

The Hon. D. P. Debidin (Eastern Demerara)

The Hon. J. Fernandes (Georgetown Central)

The Hon. Dr. G. M. Gonsalves (Eastern Berbice)

The Hon. Dr. C. Jagan (Central Demerara)

The Hon. W. O. R. Kendall (New Amsterdam)

The Hon. A. T. Peters (Western Berbice)

The Hon. W. A. Phang (North Western District)

The Hon. G. H. Smellie (Nominated)

The Hon. J. Carter (Georgetown South)

The Hon. F. E. Morrish (Nominated)

The Hon. L. A. Luckhoo (Nominated)

The Clerk read prayers.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 11th of April, 1951, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

PAPER LAID

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: (Mr. D. J. Parkinson, Acting) laid on the table:—

The Annual Reports (Divisional) of the Department of Agriculture for the year 1949.

ORDER OF THE DAY

INCOME TAX (IN AID OF INDUSTRY) BILL

The Council resolved itself into Committee and resumed consideration of a Bill intituled—

"An Ordinance to encourage the establishment or development of industries in the Colony and to make provision for relief from Income Tax to persons establishing or developing such industries and for purposes incidental to or connected with any of the foregoing purposes; and to make provision for relief from Income Tax in aid of certain industries and the provision of workmen's homes".

Clause 45 — *Limitation of annual allowances.*

The ATTORNEY - GENERAL : Clause 45 was postponed yesterday in order to enable me to prepare a draft amendment, having regard to the comments of hon. Members in connection with the sum provided in the clause—not exceeding \$4,000. I have redrafted the clause and it has been circulated to Members. I do not know if they have had an opportunity of reading it, but it reads as follows:—

"45. (1) Such capital expenditure in relation to any building to be occupied as a residence shall, save as hereinafter provided, be limited to a sum not exceeding four thousand dollars:

Provided that where such building is so constructed as to include within such building more than one separate dwelling house, the capital expenditure in relation to such building shall be limited to a sum not exceeding two thousand five hundred dollars in respect of each separate dwelling house so constructed within such building.

(2) In determining such expenditure as aforesaid, there shall not be included the value of the building site and the curtilage attaching thereto, nor any expenses incurred preparatory to the erection of any such building, but the expenditure in erecting out-offices to be used in connection therewith and in the installation of fixtures shall be taken into account in determining such expenditure."

I hope that meets the points which were raised by hon. Members during

the debate yesterday. I beg to move that it be substituted for the clause appearing in the Bill.

Question put, and agreed to.

New clause 45 passed.

The Council resumed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: With the consent of Council I beg to move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING RULES AND ORDERS

Mr. FERNANDES: Sir, before we take the next item on the Order Paper, as I intimated at a previous sitting of this Council, I would like to have your permission to move the suspension of the Standing Rules and Orders in order to take item 12 on the Order Paper now. I do so in view of a certain news item which appeared in the Press, and which has been worrying many Members of this Council. I think that in the circumstances it would be well for you to permit the discussion of that motion now. I do not think it would take up much time. After its discussion and the voting thereon, Government would have the views of this Council on this matter for its guidance, if it needs guidance.

Mr. CARTER seconded.

The PRESIDENT: Are you prepared to go on with it now?

Mr. CARTER: I am.

Mr. ROTH: I rise to oppose the motion for the suspension of the Stand-

ing Rules and Orders for this purpose, for two reasons—(1) there are matters much more urgent and important on the Order Paper than the motion in question; (2) whatever decision this Council arrives at on this matter, and even if Government has already made up its mind to act in the way the Members stated, I do not think the decision of a majority of this Council would make much difference. I speak quite frankly. We all know the person to whom the hon. Mover of the motion is referring. If it is true, as is said, that Government intends the re-employment of that pensioner, Government is doing so for the best and can do nothing else. Therefore I oppose the motion for the suspension of the Standing Rules and Orders on the ground that there are matters of greater importance awaiting discussion, and for the other reason I have stated.

Motion put and the Council divided and voted as follows:—

For — Messrs. Luckhoo, Morrish, Carter, Smellie, Phang, Peters, Kendall, Fernandes, Wight, Dr. Jagan, Dr. Gonsalves, Capt. Coghlan—12

Against—Mr. Roth—1

Did not vote—The Financial Secretary and Treasurer, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary—3.

Motion affirmed.

Relevant Rules and Orders suspended.

RE-EMPLOYMENT OF GOVERNMENT PENSIONERS

Mr. CARTER: I beg to move the following motion standing in my name—

WHEREAS Ordinance No. 39 of 1944 amending the Pensions Ordinance of 1933 it is provided that the maximum age of retirement is 55 or 60 years, depending upon the exercise of the option;

AND WHEREAS such a retiring age has been fixed because it is considered that

having reached such an age, an officer shall have had sufficient years of service to earn a reasonable pension and gratuity;

AND WHEREAS the presence of officers in the Public Service after they have reached the retiring age is a hindrance to the initiative and ambitions of younger men, and tends to lower their morale;

AND WHEREAS a contented Civil Service is essential to efficiency;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable Council views with grave concern the practice of re-employing officers in the Public Service after they have reached the retiring age;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Honourable Council recommend to Government that this practice be discontinued.

In view of the slight opposition to the suspension of the Standing Rules and Orders to enable this motion to be taken, I shall endeavour to be very brief in moving it. But I should like to say that I am very happy that this motion has at last reached the Order Paper. I am not quite sure when exactly it was tabled by me, but I know it was some time ago. So no one can accuse me of tabling this motion for any particular purpose. I am very grateful to the hon. Member for Georgetown Central for having moved the Suspension of the Standing Rules and Orders in order that this motion be taken. I had hoped it would have reached the Order Paper some time ago. It deals with a certain state of affairs which had been taking place in this Colony, to which I objected, and other people took objection.

The motion is very simple and straightforward. There are four preambles, but if one reads Nos. 3 and 4 it will be seen what this motion is all about. I think there ought to be no need for a motion of this kind to be tabled and debated in this Council, because Government should know that it is a bad practice to re-employ pensioners, persons who have reached the age of retirement, and to prolong their employment with Government. It

is a bad principle because it tends to diminish the initiative of younger men in the Service, and it also tends to block the promotion of younger men in the Service. I can appreciate, Sir, in one or two exceptional cases, that there might be some need for the Head of a Department or some other officer of Government to be kept on after he has reached the age of retirement, but I think there can be no justification for this wholesale practice of keeping on various officers of Government after they have passed the age of retirement. In some cases officers who have left the Service for some time have even been brought back into the Service. I think it is a very bad principle, and it seems that this principle that men who retire at the age of retirement should not return to the Service is more honoured in the breach than in the observance. I think it is disgraceful to have men in the Service who are drawing pensions as well as salaries.

Mr. ROTH: To a point of correction! That does not occur. No re-employed man draws his pension and his salary *in toto*.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think there is one case in which a pensioner is drawing salary as well as pension.

Mr. CARTER: I am very grateful to the hon. the Colonial Secretary. What has been causing me a great deal of concern recently is the fact that so many young men who have done well at school, who have matriculated or got the London Higher Certificate and are very well qualified for the Service, find no place in the Service because there are no vacancies. I understand that the officers who are responsible for appointments have not even been holding the usual meetings for appointments, because of the fact that there are only two or three vacancies in the Service. Why should this be so when there are many older men in the Service who are past the age of retirement, have re-

tired and have continued to be in the Service of Government? I think the principle is a very bad one, and I am going to ask Members of this Council to support this motion which is asking that this practice be discontinued.

I want to say that while I move this motion I quite appreciate the fact that many of the men who retired and are back in the Service have done their bit in the service of Government. What I say does not detract one iota from the service they have given to the Government, but there is no justification for their prolonged stay at the wicket, bearing in mind there are many young people walking the streets today who are very well qualified to hold posts in the Government Service. There is no justification for Government pursuing this very undesirable practice.

Mr. FERNANDES: I have very much pleasure in seconding this motion. I also think that when a person reaches the retiring age he should retire and make room for others. When I say "retiring age" I mean the maximum age one is permitted to work in the Government Service, because it is possible under the present arrangement for any Government officer to go on to 60 years with the Governor's permission. I have no objection to any person the Governor sees fit to permit to go for that extra short period for which there is specific provision. What I am against is the wholesale employment of a large number of persons who have retired, and who, for one reason or another, are brought back into the Service at some period after their retirement. In their case, they had retired, had collected their lump sum, and gone out of the Service, and then they came back and started to work in the Service again. In the case of a person whose service is extended between the ages of 55 and 60, it is continuous service, and he does not collect that lump sum until he retires.

It is very regrettable that the instance to which I referred appeared in

the newspapers, because it stated that a retired employee of Government, who is a qualified mechanical engineer, was coming back into the Service in order to fill a vacancy. That vacancy has been on the books for a long time.

Members will remember that some time ago I asked questions here about the employment of a properly qualified British Guianese mechanical engineer. When that person applied for employment he was told there was no vacancy, and when I spoke about it I was told that there was no item on the estimate. Now I find that there are two vacancies which have not been filled, and Government now finds itself in the unenviable position of having to consider the re-employment of an officer who retired at the head of his Department in a post a little lower down in the scale. I consider that a regrettable situation which should not have been permitted to arise. If, as a general principle, Government did not re-employ retired civil servants, this situation would not have arisen, and I am sure that these posts would have been filled before now.

We have a very full Order Paper before us, so I do not propose to say anything more except to ask Members to support in principle the non-employment of pensioners, or that the employment of persons after they have reached the retiring age should be cut down to a minimum. All we are asked to do is to express our opinion on this matter and let Government know how we feel about it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think it is desirable that I should speak very early in this debate so that Members may be aware of the true position as regards the question of the employment of pensioners. Of course the Administration, (which is a term I prefer to "Government" in this context), is entirely in agreement with the principle that pensioners should not be re-employed; but in view of the difficulty we have had in filling vacancies

of certain types it has been unavoidable. The hon. Mover and the seconder of this motion both referred to the "wholesale practice" of re-employing pensioners. Neither of them, however, made any attempt at all to justify the use of that expression — "wholesale practice"—and I do not think the facts support it. I have a list here of pensioners at present re-employed, and I will read it out so that Members may be fully aware of the position. I think this list has been given from time to time in the past in answer to questions in this Council. Well, this is the list—

Mr. C. G. Belmonte, clerk, Lands and Mines Department; S. C. Klass, and P. N. Cameron, supernumerary constables, Magistrates Department; Mr. C. G. A. Thompson and Mr. J. R. Farnum, Commodity Control, which is of course a temporary organization. One does not know how long commodity control will go on, and it creates difficulties if we employ a large number of permanent officers in such an organization. Then there is Mr. W. T. Sanders of the Currency Commissioners' Office, and there is Mr. J. R. Muss, Superintendent of Archives. I did suggest not very long ago that Mr. Muss should be retired, but there was considerable opposition from Members of this Council, and he is still employed. Then there is Mr. A. A. Abraham, Curator, Agriculture Department, who is actually on leave pending retirement. I believe he will be going at any moment. Mr. F. H. Allen, Resident Engineer for Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes, is leaving the Colony in a short time on leave to retire permanently. Mr. E. P. Niven, Land Settlement Officer, left the Colony last night to retire permanently. Then there are Mr. C. Lashley and Mr. G. C. Davidson, Currency Officers, Currency Commissioners' Office, Dr. L. R. Sharples, who is about to retire, Mr. Laing, Mr. Taitt and Mr. Pilgrim, Masters at Queen's College, and I do not think Members need be told again that there are seven, and possibly eight, vacancies at Queen's College which we have been unable to fill for a long

time. There is also Mr. G. F. Messer-
vy, Controller of Supplies and Prices,
and I doubt whether any Member
would suggest that we should dispense
with his services at the moment. Fin-
ally there is Mr. P. W. King, Exchange
Control Officer.

On that list I must put Mr. Goring
who, I think, is the person to whom
the seconder of the motion has refer-
red. He has actually signed an agree-
ment with this Government to come
back to the Colony for two years, prin-
cipally to help in the Mechanical Branch
of the Transport and Harbours Depart-
ment. There are in fact two vacancies
in that branch at present; there have
been for a matter of years. There is
a vacancy for an Asst. Mechanical
Engineer (Marine) and an Asst.
Mechanical Engineer (Loco). Both of
those posts require persons with spec-
ial qualifications. We cannot appoint
to either of them a person whose
experience is in civil engineering, and
I understand that the local candidate
has not the necessary qualifications.

Mr. FERNANDES: I would like
to name that candidate. I am refer-
ring to the gentleman who is now on
the staff of Voluntary Instructors at
the Technical Institute, Mr. Ewing-
Chow, who worked on the reconditioning
of the *Lukanani* and was largely
responsible for the building of the new
fire float.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I
am not in a position to argue on that.
I only know that he was considered,
and that we were informed that he had
not got the qualifications. The Chief
Mechanical Engineer, I am sure, would
not reject any assistance which might
be forthcoming, because he has had an
extremely difficult time during the past
years as he has had to carry on the
entire work of the Branch on his own
responsibility. The proposal to re-em-
ploy Mr. Goring was that he should
come in and assist the Chief Mechan-
ical Engineer on the marine side. That
was the intention. At the same time
it was also intended that he should, in
view of his experience, take over the
administration of the Department dur-

ing the forthcoming absence of the
General Manager on leave.

I am glad to have this opportunity
of saying that this arrangement in no
way reflects any discredit on the Chief
Mechanical Engineer, who is a senior
officer and would be considered to act
as General Manager, but in view of the
shortage in the Mechanical Branch, and
purely from the point of view of mak-
ing the most economical use of the
available manpower, it is proposed that
Mr. Mitchell should continue to carry
out the duties of that Branch in Mr.
Perkins' absence, while Mr. Goring
will temporarily act as General Manager
and be responsible for the general admin-
istration in which he has had consider-
able experience.

Those are the facts. We have only
made this appointment because we have
not been able to fill either of those
vacancies, and there is virtually no
prospect, as far as we can see, of our
being able to attract candidates by the
salaries we are in a position to offer
here. Hon. Members are aware of that
fact, which is not confined to the
Transport Department, and in view of
the serious condition of the vessels of
the Transport Department due to
arrears of maintenance which it was
physically impossible to carry out, it
was considered essential that some
immediate assistance be forthcoming.
I can only add that Mr. Mitchell has
done 14 years' service without having
had leave, and would probably like to
have some leave next year, and if we
have someone here, such as Mr. Goring,
it would be possible for him to go on
leave. Those are the facts as regards
the re-employment of Mr. Goring.

On the general question of the re-
employment of pensioners the Adminis-
tration entirely agrees with the princi-
ple involved, and we only re-employ
pensioners where we are compelled to
do so, or in the case of a temporary
organization, such as the Commodity
Control. Members should now be
aware of exactly whom we employ on
those terms. There are 12 others of
whom five have gone. There are 14
actually re-employed at the moment,
and having regard to the posts in

which they are employed I think it is unfair to suggest, as the mover and the seconder of the motion have done, that Government re-employs pensioners as a wholesale practice.

Mr. ROTH: This is, I think, the third occasion on which a motion of this nature has been moved in this Council during the eight years I have had the honour to be a Member of it, and on each of the two previous occasions the Colonial Secretary and the present Financial Secretary have made the same explanation and satisfied the Council that in each case it was a question of necessity. I think the third preamble of the motion is based on a wrong premise. It is not the essential function of the Civil Service to provide jobs for people, but rather to carry on the work of the Administration with the best instruments available, and if the best instruments are not found among the junior ranks I feel that Government is quite justified in going outside those ranks and re-employing retired officers.

I have always maintained that it is a wrong principle to have a fixed age at which an officer should be retired. Men vary in mentality as well as in their physical capabilities. Some can go to 80 years while others should be retired soon after they join the Service. It is known that in the U.S. Supreme Courts Judges sit on the Bench until they die. I am not prepared to say that that is the best thing, but it is my sincere view that the carrying out of this rule that, irrespective of their qualifications, qualities and experience, civil servants should retire at a fixed age is, to some extent, responsible for the present retrograde position of the Civil Service. There are men who have spent all their lives, accumulated vast experience and who know how to deal with the public, but because they are 60 or 55 years of age they are compelled to retire. It is not in the interest of the Administration.

As an instance of the necessity of re-employing pensioners there is the case of the Treasury where currency

notes are destroyed. Is it not essential that the officers who perform those duties should have the full confidence of Government? Should they not be men who are absolutely trustworthy and have vast experience? I need not remind hon. Members of the recent incident at the Post Office in connection with the destruction of stamps.

Mr. CARTER: To a point of order. I think that matter is *sub judice*.

Mr. ROTH: I apologize. I thought it had been dealt with finally. There is the post of Superintendent of Archives which may appear not to be a very important job, but it is one which is of a very confidential nature, because the officer has to deal with confidential files relating to retired officers and, in some cases, even serving officers. Is it right and proper that a junior officer should have access to those files?

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: They deal largely with people outside the Service.

Mr. ROTH: That makes my argument all the stronger. In view of the facts I regret I cannot support the motion, because I have every confidence that Government only re-employs pensioners when it is considered in the interest of the Service to do so.

Mr. WIGHT: In view of the fact that H.M. Government has declared that it is its policy to grant self-government, or near self-government to these Colonies while still keeping the bit on, I would suggest that this is an appropriate opportunity for Government to appoint a Committee to go into the question of the re-employment of pensioners, if at all, and on what terms. Perhaps I can draw a little support from the remarks of the hon. the Colonial Secretary who declined to consider the re-employment of pensioners as something which was done by Government, and suggested that it was more a matter for the Administration. Apparently, in these matters, although

part of the Government we do not claim any share in the Government. One can appreciate the hon. the First Nominated Member's point that there are certain appointments to which it may be desirable to appoint retired officers. I particularly refer to specialist appointments. I, however, do not think that members of the Judiciary or Law Officers, and perhaps one or two officers in other Departments of the Government, should be allowed to retire and go into practice.

I am not saying that I am entirely against the re-employment of pensioners outside the Service, because in some cases their pensions are so small that they are compelled to seek employment elsewhere, but there is danger in that. I cannot recall the particular instance, but there is danger in members of the Judiciary or Law Officers who were intimately connected with Government's policy, leaving the Government Service and accepting employment in large concerns. There are dangers and limits to that form of employment. I have particularly in mind the case which occurred in a neighbouring Colony. In 1934 I had the honour and privilege of acting as Asst. Attorney-General or Solicitor-General, and for two or three weeks I did the Attorney General's work, but I was not allowed to hold that post because of the objection that as a member of the Executive Council I would have obtained certain information with which I would eventually have gone back into private practice. There is something to be said against persons in high positions, administrative or otherwise, leaving the Service and joining firms, or starting business on their own, and perhaps using their knowledge gained in the Service. Perhaps it would be wrong for me to say that. I should say that they would draw on their experience of the past. That seems to me to be a matter which might be considered by the Committee if Government sees fit to accept my suggestion.

There is another point which materially affects this motion. If

Government finds it difficult to fill appointments, steps should be taken to fill them as soon as possible. I know the answer will be that Government has advertised but cannot get candidates from the United Kingdom because they would not accept the salaries we offer. Nobody blames them for that; but my view is that if we have not qualified Guianese to fill those posts and we cannot get people from the U.K. without offering increased salaries and benefits, we should make an attempt to see whether we cannot get suitable people from friendly countries. By "friendly countries" I do not mean those countries which appear to be friendly but at the same time harbour envy. We have done it in the case of the Medical Department, and I think we should have done the same thing with regard to other Departments. His Excellency the Governor has often referred to the difficulty in filling these posts. There are certain posts which were reserved entirely for candidates from the U.K. At one time it was very difficult for a locally born person to obtain employment as an Engineer in the Public Works Department. One of the most brilliant creoles, and one who has sat as a Member of this Council, was offered a salary of, I think \$80 per month, for a job in the Public Works Department on his return to the Colony as a Bachelor of Science some years ago. Consequently local men have not qualified with the object of obtaining employment in that Department. Similarly, there were restrictions up to a few years ago in the Administrative Service, but that situation has also been remedied.

With regard to the remark by the hon. the Colonial Secretary that the Commodity Control organisation is a temporary arrangement, of course that is a matter of interpretation as to the exact definition of the word "temporary".

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: To a point of explanation. There is a very definite distinction between a post on the Pensionable Establishment and one

that is not on the Pensionable Establishment. The hon. Member is fully aware that none of the posts in the Commodity Control is on the Pensionable Establishment, and to that extent they are temporary posts.

Mr. WIGHT: I think that also needs some amount of consideration because, if a temporary post is one of 10 years' duration, and after 20 or 30 years the officer concerned is not put on the Pensionable Establishment, we may find ourselves (I may not be here) in the position of having to consider an *ad miseris cordiam* plea from the officer on retirement for a gratuity or annual allowance in respect of long service in a Government-controlled organization. I think hon. Members will agree with me that it is very difficult to contemplate commodity control being removed in this Colony for some time to come. Perhaps we might have better competition if control were removed, and it might have the effect of reducing the cost of living, because in certain cases control tends to inefficiency and the protection of certain persons who, but for control, may not be able to exist in their present spheres of activity. I think Government might consider that aspect of the question. There is a motion on the subject which is at present lying dormant, but since that motion was tabled Government has to some extent relaxed our currency control.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: We have not relaxed in the slightest. We may have been more generous in the quantities of currency we allowed.

Mr. WIGHT: My friends on my right are undoubtedly very quick. They do not give me a chance to finish what I want to say. I was referring to currency control and the control of imports of certain commodities which are cheaper than those imported from the U.K. I also wish to say that I remember when I was quite a youth (I think it was some 20 or 30 years ago) the pres-

ent Financial Secretary was in the Transport and Harbours Department when the Income Tax Bill was introduced in this Legislature as a temporary measure.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: I helped to draft the Income Tax Bill, although I did not actually move it.

Mr. WIGHT: The Financial Secretary will be able to correct me if I am wrong in saying that the Income Tax Ordinance was introduced as a temporary or emergency measure, but it is now a permanent, secure and fruitful part of our Statute.

Mr. LEE: I observe that the hon. the Colonial Secretary has drawn a distinction between the Administration and this Council, and I want to warn the Government that if that distinction is being drawn, and this Council is being blamed in connection with the re-employment of certain retired officers, I absolutely agree that the public should be told where the responsibility lies. I am not saying that this Council should interfere with the Administration, but we must realize that there are boys and girls coming out of school who can be employed. I am not saying that in the specialist branch or otherwise they do not get employment. The specialist branch of the Service is a sort of reserve, if I may term it so, and as the hon. Member for Western Essequibo has remarked.

Mention has been made of Mr. Goring being re-employed by the Administration. I would like Government to enquire as to how, during the time he was General Manager of the Transport and Harbours Department, that Department was conducted, and whether it is such a credit to him that he should be re-employed as a retired officer. If he is being re-employed as a retired officer for a specific specialist job in the Transport and Harbours Depart-

ment, let him be so employed, but not as General Manager. During his time as General Manager of the Department the service was not managed in a proper manner, and to put him back as General Manager for another six months, especially when our boats are in a defective condition, it is not the best thing in my opinion. I sincerely hope that Government, having accepted this principle, will find a way by which this Council can be taken into its confidence in the re-employment of retired Government servants, even specialists.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: To a point of explanation! I should have said earlier that in drawing a distinction between the Administration and Government I was not unloading responsibility, but merely referring to a personal preference in the use of those words.

Mr. WIGHT: I did not for one moment think the hon. the Colonial Secretary was unloading his responsibility on this Council. I was merely making a suggestion, as coming from the other side, that we should have self-government. Therefore, if we are to have self-government on the other side, let us have it from here too. It is not that the Administration was unloading any responsibility on this Council.

Dr. GONSALVES: I am supporting the motion, and in doing so I would just like to add a few words of explanation. I would like to borrow the language of my friend, the hon. Member for Western Berbice, to say how very refreshing it was to get the explanation from the hon. the First Nominated Member (Mr. Roth), when he said that eight years ago the explanation was given and today it is the same as then. It was very refreshing too when I heard that the Commodity Control organization is considered to be very temporary, even though it has existed for ten years. It is for the very same reason that I am going to support the

motion. If we, as Members of this Council, are to accept the responsibility and the brickbats we must not be afraid to express our views so that the public might understand what we mean. If we are to accept the responsibility, then I do think we should have our views recorded once and for all.

The first thing is, if it is not customary to employ people who have already been employed and have served their period by reaching the age, which, perhaps in certain countries, may be different from what it is here, I have one question to ask, and if it is satisfactorily answered it will determine whether I should change my view. That question is: what would be the position if the man who is to be re-employed should die? Would the Service go to pieces for want of such a qualified man? I cannot subscribe to that. I feel it is only wise and proper that appropriate steps be taken to see that our young men are properly trained. If we are going to say that the young men are too young to delve into the mysteries and policies of Government, remember that when we make that statement in one breath, in the next breath we say we want to give the young men a chance. We say they are not as experienced as Socrates and should not enter into the *sanctum sanctorum* of Government, but it is the people's government, a democratic government, and as long as the men are trained to take their place in that government, I believe they should be given that place, provided they are properly trained, and that training can only come through apprenticeship.

If the Manager of the Transport and Harbours Department had to go on leave, that should have been known a long time ago and his understudy prepared to take his place, instead of someone being brought in from outside to take his place. It is the people's government and the people must look askance at such action and ask why is it that such and such a person can get

a job while this person who has already worked and retired on pension is brought back because there is no one capable to do the work? I cannot help supporting this motion as the principle is a correct one. I have nothing against the men who are re-employed. I do not know them, nor do I want to know them. I think that once and for all this Council should place on record that that principle is wrong and will not be tolerated because we, Members of this Council, have too long been blamed for allowing such things to slip.

Mr. LUCKHOO: It is certainly refreshing to have this debate after the rather heavy Bill which we have been considering for the past two days. But, sir, I feel that out of it, maybe, much good can come. As a motion expressing the feelings of this Council on a question of principle, it has my unreserved support. I can see that much good can come from consideration of it, because several matters, not directly affected, might indirectly be brought up on occasions such as this. I believe there is a system in the Service to encourage officers to acquire more knowledge and to equip themselves for higher posts. If there is such a system, as I believe, that can be accentuated and more heed paid to that system, because I know of the view that we have in this country young men with sufficient ability who can occupy the highest offices with dignity and efficiency, provided they are afforded the opportunity. That is what they require, and that is why I am glad to see, in a limited way, Government is going out of its way to provide scholarships and other ways of help for youngsters to go abroad and acquire the necessary technical knowledge. I should be the first to admit that you must also require experience of these youngsters, and that experience is not something that can be acquired by means of mere theoretical study, but if the system is so arranged that you are looking forward to the future and you are keeping your eyes on the

young men who are trained at present, and you see that they are making full use of the advantages which they have, and they are given an opportunity to equip themselves further, then, sir, with an eye to the future those very young men can be trained to fill the very highest offices in our Service. That is why, in certain respects, one feels a trifle disappointed when one considers maybe the selection of these youngsters is not always one which meets with approval.

Let me explain what I am getting at. For example, without getting into personalities, you have the Police Force. Efforts were made to train certain officers so that they might acquire technical knowledge of such things as fingerprints, etc. Certain selections were made and those officers were sent to New Scotland Yard to acquire the necessary information and knowledge. As most persons going from British Guiana, they acquitted themselves very creditably and obtained the highest honours. They returned to the Colony, but in the case of those officers what happened? After their return within a matter of six or eight months they were transferred from this Colony elsewhere. They were not originally Guianese and, as such, their interests were not bound up with the Colony. One cannot blame them for that. They received promotion outside the Colony and went away. A void was therefore created, and that void still remains. We have now lay persons attempting to acquire that knowledge locally, which cannot be done. The point I make is this: If you have these lay persons who are Guianese—I know corporals who are doing good work and are giving evidence in fingerprints—doing specialized work. They should be sent abroad so that they may obtain the necessary qualification and return to occupy the posts as specialists or persons with some specialized knowledge in a particular field in which they may occupy that position in the future. The point I make is that not only on this system must we keep

our eyes but the Government or Administration must keep its eye on the youngsters who are showing promise, and provide them with the opportunity to equip themselves. There should be some selection exercised so that we could give these opportunities to persons who are likely to remain in the Colony and to benefit the Colony. I say, sir, that as a matter of general principle I am in hearty approval of the motion.

Mr. SMELLIE: I would like to deprecate most strongly the suggestion made by one hon. Member that yet another Committee should be appointed on this subject. The hon. Member who made the suggestion, I always understood, served on more Boards and Committees than anybody else in this Council. I do not know why he wants another one. The trouble about these Committees is that very often their reports are never published, never written. I think the Constitution Commission was fairly staggered when it learnt of all the Committees on which Members of this Council sat.

With regard to the motion, if I heard right, the hon. seconder ended his speech by saying that he recommended that the practice be cut down to a minimum. That is something quite different from what the hon. proposer of the motion has said, and that is, he recommends that the practice be discontinued. As the motion stands now I cannot support it. I think the hon. the Colonial Secretary explained the matter to my satisfaction.

Mr. MORRISH: Generally, I am in sympathy with this motion, but, like the hon. Member who has just taken his seat, I think that probably there are occasions when there should not be such a hard and fast rule. During the debate that has taken place a particular name has arisen, and I have heard it suggested that there are others in the country who may be con-

sidered entitled to that particular post. I wonder if it is remembered that that particular appointment is connected with ships and shipping. It may be—I do not know, I am merely seeking information—that the requirements of the particular post call for a man with a First Class Board of Trade certificate. I do not know if that is so, but I think that is probably the case.

Mr. FERNANDES: To a point of information! It is obvious that the hon. Member is referring to the remarks I made. I would like to say that the present holder, the Chief Mechanical Engineer, does not hold a Board of Trade certificate. The point I was making was that a qualified mechanical engineer with the degree of Bachelor of Science (Engineering) of McGill University, applied to Government for employment, and even though Government admitted in answer to my question, that there was no engineer in the Service with that qualification, there was no employment for him. My point is that if he was employed then he would have had sufficient experience to relieve the Chief Mechanical Engineer to act as General Manager of the Department.

Mr. MORRISH: I did say I was asking for information, and I wondered whether the appointment did call for a First Class Board of Trade certificate which is not easily come by. First of all it calls for very long apprenticeship. I think I am right in saying it is five years. On the other points I am reminded also of a conversation which I had within the last week with a very eminent engineer who is in the Colony at the moment and who, I believe I am right in saying, held the position of such importance as Adviser to the Viceroy of India. One of the comments that gentleman did make to me was how much knowledge had been lost to India by the unprogressive rule that men must retire as soon as they reached the retiring age, and how much valuable knowledge was sitting down in

little farms and similar places in the countryside in England which would have been of inestimable value had those men been able to continue even in an advisory capacity for a longer period. While I say that I do not wish to stand in the way of the young men in gaining promotion, but I do suggest that it is a point worth considering and remembering before making it automatic, that as soon as a man reaches the retiring age out he goes.

Capt. COGHLAN: Sir, the principal objection, it appears to me, is that officers who have already retired and have been given their lump sum bonus are subsequently taken back into the Service and not employed in the capacity in which they had been serving when they left the Service. For instance, take the case of one District Commissioner I know. He retired as a District Commissioner because it was considered that he had outlived his usefulness in that capacity, but notwithstanding that he was re-employed in a capacity in which he was drawing £300 more a year than what he drew as a District Commissioner. There is another retired District Commissioner who is employed in the Commodity Control. There are others who are not re-employed in the capacity in which they had spent their lives in the Service, but in a very different capacity. I am sure there are men in the Service at the moment who (I know some of them) are efficient, conscientious and painstaking in the discharge of their duties in which they betray talent, courtesy and tact.

Therefore the real objection by most people outside is that the privileged few are taken back into the Service, and those retiring in the lowest groups have to go to the Alms House. If they were being re-employed, no hon. Member of this Council would object. What is referred to is the wholesale taking back of Government pensioners into the Service. There has even been a case of

one retired officer being taken back when he was over 65 years of age. That same officer had been expelled from the Service; he was taken back and given a position when there were certain other young men in the Service who had all the qualifications to fill that position. What I am referring to is what is spoken of generally outside. You hear it all over the place, and in fact in his charge to the Clergy some time ago His Grace the Archbishop referred to it as nepotism and corruption. You may say that he did not refer to the Civil Service, but it is very extraordinary if he referred to those in the ordinary commercial life only.

Mr. ROTH: To a point of correction! Those remarks by the Archbishop were in reference to the jury system.

Capt. COGHLAN: I thought they were of general application. It does not follow that because he had been talking precisely of the jury system that that particular remark of his should apply only to the jury system. The question of the Mechanical Engineer was raised. It is well known that the gentleman to whom reference was made is a very highly qualified mechanical engineer; he is a man who knows his job thoroughly. There is no doubt about that. It is well known that he does not care for an administrative post, and when he was Head of the Transport and Harbours Department it was a very sore point with him, as he wanted to apply his ability and experience in the direction in which he had spent his life's training. Colonel Teare was not an engineer, notwithstanding which he was a very able administrator in the Transport and Harbours Department. In the Medical Department, not only here but in the United Kingdom, we have gentlemen appointed to high administrative posts; they are not medical men, but they still make very fine administrative Heads. Taking that into account I think myself that it is a great mistake to ask or to

have a contract with this gentleman to serve in a capacity in which his ability, his experience and his professional qualifications are not to be utilized.

Mr. ROTH: I ask definitely: would the hon. the Colonial Secretary say whether the gentleman is being employed as a Mechanical Engineer or as General Manager.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: He is being employed as a supernumerary executive engineer, but he will act as General Manager for the period of six months during which Mr. Perkins is on leave.

Mr. RAATGEVER: This motion has my full support. It is well known that this Council has nothing to do with appointments or re-appointments. But this Council has full control of the purse strings of this Colony, and Members can refuse to vote the salary of any officer or official on the Estimates presented to them annually. If appointments are made, with which Members disagree, the remedy is in their hands. All they have to do is at the end of the year to refuse to vote the salary, and the officer is automatically dismissed. Therefore the Government of this Colony must take into consideration what Members say in regard to employment, and in regard to other matters discussed in this Legislative Council.

With so many of our young people leaving school every year I think it is a disgrace that the Administration should be re-employing people who have left through old age and have got lump sums, and who should be sitting quietly in their homes enjoying the evening of their lives. If the Water Street firms adopted an attitude of that kind it would mean that there would be no employment available for the children who are leaving school. I am warning Government that if this attitude is continued it is going to lead to serious trouble. It seems to me that after a motion of this kind was tabled for dis-

cussion in the Legislative Council the Government of this Colony had no right whatever to appoint any pensioner to any post, because by so doing Government has flouted the authority of this honourable Council, and it is for the Members of this Council to speak in no uncertain tone when the question of remuneration for Government employees is brought before them at the end of the year.

Mr. KENDALL: I am supporting this motion. It strikes me that there are times when, in dealing with principles, we forget some of the main issues that confront us. I think that when the suspension of the Standing Rules and Orders was moved it was mainly because of the announcement in the Press that Government was re-employing a retired officer. I think the Chief Mechanical Engineer is automatically second in command of the Transport and Harbours Department, and if the General Manager is to go on leave and Government considers it expedient to bring someone out of retirement to take charge of the administration of the Department there must be something wrong in that Department which should be investigated. That reminds me of a young man who has been in that Department for many years, and has qualified with the hope that some day he would be placed in his rightful position, but because of the attitude of the Administration that young man, in spite of his qualifications (I believe he has similar qualifications to those of the Chief Mechanical Engineer) is still placed in a very low grade. This is the time when he should be given an opportunity to fill the position for which he is qualified, not only theoretically but through long practical experience in that Department.

It is because of that fact that I am supporting this motion. If Government continues to bring pensioners back into the Service it will reduce the incentive to young men to obtain the necessary

academic qualification for the Service. I think it is time that Government adhere to the wishes of this Council on this matter. I agree with Members that when anything happens it is the Legislative Council and not Government that is blamed. We hear all over the street that we are not doing anything. There are many things we would like to do but we are choked by the attitude of the Administration. Every Member of this Council is against the decision of Government to bring Mr. Goring back into the Service, and I think Government should realize that it is the feeling of the public that it is a wrong step, and one that is stifling the initiative of young men in the Service who are prevented from gaining promotion in spite of their qualifications.

Mr. PETERS: I am certainly in agreement with the spirit of the motion but I have a strong feeling that it is too categorical. I am inclined to agree with the view of the seconder, that the practice of re-employing pensioners should be reduced to the minimum. We all realize that whatever we do here—and we must assume that whatever Government or the Administration does is done in the interest of the Colony—there are times when a man's unique ability is such that it would be a grave loss to the Colony if it were dispensed with absolutely. I am not going to be one who will say that if in certain circumstances it becomes apparent that Government would be better off in utilizing the ability of such a person, it should be told categorically that it must not make use of such ability. If the mover will accept the amendment suggested by the seconder, that the practice should be reduced to a minimum, I would be prepared to register my vote in favour of the motion as amended.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: I have listened very carefully to what has been said, but I must confess that I found this debate completely unrealistic. The hon. Mem-

ber who moved the motion was good enough to indicate in his opening speech that it was not directed at anyone in particular, and I was very glad to hear that. I want to ask the Council to examine the form in which the motion has been put up, because I find great difficulty in either understanding the sequence between the preambles and the resolve clause, and also because I think that some of the statements in the preambles are not in accordance with fact. The first paragraph of the preamble begins this way:

“Whereas by Ordinance No. 39 of 1944 amending the Pensions Ordinance of 1933 it is provided that the maximum age of retirement is 55 or 60 years depending upon the exercise of the option;”

That is not in accordance with the position at all. The Pensions Ordinances (there are two of them which are extant) provide that on attaining a certain age Government may require an officer to retire. There are also provisions in both Ordinances which permit an officer to retire voluntarily on attaining a certain age. Let me examine the position more carefully. Under the Pensions Ordinance, Chapter 204, which is the Ordinance under which I and some of the older officers serve, we have the right to retire voluntarily at 55, whatever may be the state of our health, and the Government may (it has the right if it wishes to exercise it) call upon us to retire at 60. Under the Pensions Ordinance of 1933 and its amending Ordinances, an officer may retire voluntarily at the age of 55, and the Government may require him to retire also at 55. There is another provision in that Ordinance which permits either side, in certain circumstances, and with the approval of the Secretary of State, to retire at the age of 50.

I want to say here that the Civil Service Association has been very keen, notwithstanding the fact that the age at which officers may be required to retire is 55, on extracting from Government

(and I think it is known to this Council) an undertaking that normally officers will be permitted to carry on to 60 years. I state all this just to show that the statement in the preamble that the maximum age of retirement is 55 or 60 years is not quite correct, because those words imply, to use the words of the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Morrish, an inflexible rule of law that an officer shall retire at that age. It is something which is in the discretion of the Government, and which the Government does exercise in some cases where it is in the public interest that an officer should carry on after the normal retiring age. Here I may say at once that it is very rare that the Governor does wish an officer to carry on after 60. The most recent case is that of Mr. Laing. I am sure that every Member of this Council would wish if it were possible for Mr. Laing to carry on for another two years. He is going now, not because Government has compelled him to go, although he is over 60 years but at his own request, because he feels that his physical strength does not permit him to carry on any longer. I hope I have made the position very clear—that there is no legal inflexible rule which says that an officer must retire at a particular age. Let me pass on to the second preamble which says:

“And whereas such a retiring age has been fixed because it is considered that having reached such an age an officer shall have had sufficient years of service to earn a reasonable pension and gratuity;”

Where do we find any such implication? The ages fixed in that Ordinance were not fixed by reference to what a person may or may not earn as pension. I agree with the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Roth, that the position as regards a civil servant is that he serves the Government and the people. It is not the other way around. It is not that the Civil Service exists so that there may be opportunities for employment and promotion. A civil servant is a servant of the people of the Colony, and the Administration is right in

employing its servants in the best interest of the community.

I come now to the third preamble which states:

“And whereas the presence of officers in the Public Service after they have reached the retiring age is a hindrance to the initiative and ambitions of younger men and tends to lower their morale.”

I have no quarrel with that because, if it were true, and if those were the circumstances, then such a complaint would be quite valid. Here I come back to what the Colonial Secretary has taken care to detail in his speech. What is all this complaint about? First of all there are only 14 persons left, and I am going to detail them again, and I would like the hon. Member in his reply to tell the Council who, among the re-employed officers on this list, should leave in order that we may have a contented Civil Service—in order that some younger men should not lose their morale? We have Mr. Belmonte, to whom the Colonial Secretary referred first. He was not really a retired officer at all. He was retrenched as long ago as 1932, during the retrenchment campaign, and a few years after, when officers who had been retrenched were offered an opportunity of re-employment, he was taken on again. He was at that time a very young man.

Then we have two supernumerary constables. Are they keeping the morale of the younger men down? Then there are the three gentlemen of the Commodity Control. Let me say at once that the reason for employing senior persons in that Department is, as hon. Members know, because of the very great responsibility which is connected with the operation of that organization. We have had the greatest difficulty in staffing it. It has to be staffed at the top level with men of experience and integrity—men whom the public will trust in operations which are extremely difficult. Let me recount the men who ran the Commodity

Control organisation. We had Mr. Stoby and Mr. King. At one stage we went outside the Service and we had Mr. Dummett. Then we had Mr. Fletcher who everybody believed was the right man in the right place. Of course he is also a pensioner, although not of this Government. We have had Mr. Messervy there for years during the earlier period when he acquired great experience in that difficult operation. We have also had Mr. Macnie. At the present moment, if Mr. Messervy were not there, I do not know whom we would have put in charge of that very difficult organization. The other two officers in that Control organization, Mr. Thompson and Mr. Farnum, are in a junior capacity but, nevertheless, they undertake very responsible work which, to some extent, brings them into the commercial arena where, I daresay, it would be difficult for junior men to apply the discretion which is granted under the control powers under which they work. Those are the three men in the Commodity Control, and I again ask who is being kept out? Who are the people whose morale is being lowered because these three retired officers have been put in positions of high responsibility in an organization which started during the war and is continuing during this post-war and cold war period?

Now I come to three persons with whom my Department is particularly connected. We have three pensioners in the Currency Commissioners' Office, and I have said this in this Council on about ten different occasions. These retired officers are re-employed because of the very nature of their duties. They are the people who count, destroy and certify the destruction of currency notes. If we did not employ pensioners we should have to employ well-paid junior men. The work is not burdensome; it is responsible, and in a number of Colonies the procedure is to employ retired public officers on that job. I want to tell the Council that in connection with the new unified Caribbean currency notes, which will shortly come into existence

in this Colony, we shall employ at least two or three more pensioners. It will be their formidable task to call in all the notes which are now extant in this Colony, and replace them by the new notes. The utmost care will have to be exercised in collecting, counting, and destroying and certifying the destruction of the notes which are withdrawn, and replacing them by the new notes we have in stock now. That is a job which obviously calls for men of integrity, responsibility, and great trust. I am not for one moment saying that we could not get junior men with those qualities, but if we did we would have to pay them larger salaries than the job is really worth, apart from the responsibility.

Let us come down the list. We have Mr. Allen, retired Executive Engineer, Public Works Department. Why was he re-employed? He was to take charge of special public works under the Development and Welfare Schemes, and was responsible for the building of the New Queen's College. Do Members think it was a wrong thing to use Mr. Allen's experience in that way? Unfortunately, he will be leaving next month. Then we have Dr. Sharples. What is wrong about employing him on the Courentyne after he has reached the retiring age?

Hon. Members have heard about Mr. Niven. I daresay the hon. Member for Demerara River (Capt. Coghlan) was referring to him. He was a District Commissioner and was re-employed as Land Settlement Officer. I think Mr. Laing explained the circumstances of his employment in Finance Committee. However, Mr. Niven left the Colony on Saturday night and will not return. Then we have Mr. Laing himself, and I have already dealt with him. Then there are two Masters at Queen's College -- Mr. Taitt and Mr. Pilgrim. Do Members really feel that their services should be terminated at this period of crisis at Queen's College? Lastly, in my

office we have Mr. P. W. King, Exchange Control Officer. On a previous occasion I explained that this is a post which requires the utmost discretion and tact, because it is in his hands to decide and determine the issue of exchange according to priorities. It is not a duty which can be lightly carried by a junior officer. If we did not have such an officer it would have to be carried either by myself or my Deputy, but we are quite unable to do it. We were very glad to have Mr. King's services for this particular post, for so long as it is necessary to have Exchange Control under these post-war conditions.

Now we come to Mr. Goring. I know him very well. I worked with him in the Transport Department, and no more brilliant engineer has ever served in this Colony. I met Mr. Goring abroad on two occasions and I was always dissatisfied to think that a man of his capacity should sit still—enjoying himself right enough, but it is a pity that a man of such versatile talents should stay outside this country when we were in desperate need of a man of his capacity to help us out in our difficult times at the Transport Department. At the moment there is the dangerous and difficult question of acquiring a fleet of steamers. We were told two years ago that we would have to spend \$2 million in buying new ships. I do not think we have \$2 million to spend on new ships, but something has to be done about the fleet. I can think of no one better able to plan a programme of renovation and see it carried through in two years and, if necessary, to plan new ships. There is no Marine Engineer in the Department at the moment, and I was very glad indeed when he did accept this temporary appointment. It is true, as one Member says, he does not like administration. It is perfectly true. He really accepted the job of General Manager with the greatest reluctance, and his reason for leaving was because he knew he could not carry on in a post which he did not like. At that time we had the report of Mr. Rooke, and we were going to put the General

Manager in supreme charge of the Department. Mr. Goring left the Service in order that that should be done, and we got Colonel Teare.

I omitted to refer to another officer, the Archivist, and I entirely support the views of the hon. the First Nominated Member (Mr. Roth). The Archivist should always be a man of some age and experience, and we should not lightly appoint anyone to that post. It is not onerous but it is particularly responsible work, and as was said by the hon. the Colonial Secretary, when the matter came up in Finance Committee I invited Government to retain Mr. Muss's services for another period, and in response to the desire of Finance Committee I pleaded with him that Mr. Muss should be retained for another year. I did that because it was the general feeling of the members of Finance Committee that it should be done.

I wish to end on a personal note. I said just now that I serve under Chapter 204, consequently I am eligible to continue to serve until I reach 60 years. That is to say that Government may at that time call upon me to retire if it so pleases, but this month I propose to exercise the option to come under the provisions of the latest Pension Ordinances, 1933 and 1944, which make me liable for retirement on or after attaining the age of 55. I have just turned 55, consequently, when I sign that notification, I should become liable to compulsory retirement. I really want to ask Members of this Council whether they think it would be in the public interest that I should thereupon either retire voluntarily or be called upon to retire and sit down and draw half of my salary for doing nothing, because that is what it would amount to. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Raatgever, spoke of the disgrace of keeping in the Service a number of civil servants who ought to be retired and sitting peacefully in their homes. Well, I will be one who will go in a year or two. I do not know whether he feels happy about being compulsorily retired from his

present position; I would not myself. I wish to go in my own time, when I think it would be in the public interest and my own to do so. I do sincerely suggest that the idea that there should be an inflexible ruling that people must go at a certain age is quite wrong. I agree with the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Morrish, that it should be elastic. People talk about principle, but there is no question of principle in the matter now before us.

I now come to the first resolve clause of the motion. I just do not understand how, with these preambles, we get to this resolve clause which says:

"Be it resolved that this Honourable Council views with grave concern the practice of re-employing officers in the Public Service after they have reached the retiring age;"

There is nothing in the preambles about re-employment of pensioners at all. What is in the preambles has something to do with keeping officers in the Service after they have reached the retiring age, but my remarks covered both aspects.

As regards the last resolve clause, which suggests that the Council recommend to Government "that this practice be discontinued," I hope that what the Colonial Secretary and I have said has made it quite clear that there is no practice which ought to be discontinued. What we are doing is to employ pensioners in responsible jobs where it is urgently necessary to do so, and where those posts cannot be filled otherwise by officers within the Public Service, and I am sure that from the list I have referred to, Members will see that that is indeed the practice, and no other.

The PRESIDENT: Before I call upon the mover to reply I would like to suggest to hon. Members that, leaving aside the present case on which there appears to be a difference of opinion, there is really no basic difference on the question of principle between the official view and that which has been expressed

by the majority of hon. Members, and I think that the majority of Members who have spoken will agree that the motion in its present form, leaving aside the preambles, is far too categorical, and even if accepted by the Council it would be quite impossible, as we gathered from the speech of the Financial Secretary, to implement it.

I think there is a great deal in the suggestion which was first of all hinted at by the hon. Member who seconded the motion—that it should not be so categorical—and this suggestion was put in a more concrete form by the hon. Member for Western Berbice who, I see, has now left his seat. I would like to suggest to the hon. Mover that he amend his motion in that sense—that the re-employment of pensioners should be kept to a minimum or, perhaps, that it should be restricted to cases where such re-employment is essential in the public interest, or something of the kind. Then, I think, this Council as a whole would be able to adopt it, possibly without a division.

Mr. CARTER: Sir, I am very grateful for any support this motion may receive in this debate. I want to say first of all that the hon. the Colonial Secretary, in speaking on this motion, suggested that as there were only 18 or 19 persons who had actually reached the age of retirement, and who are now employed by Government, there could be no justification for the remarks made by me and the seconder of the motion that there was the wholesale practice of re-employing persons who had reached the age of retirement and had in fact retired. It is one thing to take the number of persons so employed at a particular period, but it is another thing to look over a period of four or five years and see the number of persons who had retired and had been re-employed. I have heard rumours of cases where Government had actually contemplated bringing back into the Service persons who were on the eve of retirement, and it is that more than anything else that prompted me to table this motion, because not only those

persons who are re-employed but, I understand, there are other persons whom Government is contemplating to re-employ on their retirement.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Am I right in thinking that in moving this motion the hon. Member stated that he had no particular case in mind?

Mr. CARTER: I said I had no particular case in mind, because it was suggested that this motion was designed to deal with the case of Mr. Goring. What I had in mind, however, was the principle of re-employing persons who were about to retire, so as to continue the practice of employing persons who have retired. Of the 19 persons mentioned I am sure that 15 of them can be struck off as persons whose presence in the Service cannot be regarded as indispensable, and I am alarmed to think that if any of those persons should die to-night we would be unable to continue tomorrow. I do not see any names here which can be regarded as indispensable. The hon. the First Nominated Member said that this is not the first occasion in eight years a motion of this nature has reached the Council. I am a little alarmed that, although motions of this nature have reached this Council before now, this practice of bringing these old men out of retirement has been continued. That Member, and the hon. the Financial Secretary and Treasurer, have suggested in this Council that only men advanced in years are trustworthy.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: I rise to a point of correction. I did nothing of the sort. I said particularly in the case of the Currency I was not inclined to the view that junior men could not be obtained who were completely trustworthy, but in that case they would have to be paid large salaries. We cannot pay that same small salary to them as to the retired men.

Mr. CARTER: I think that after my statement, the hon. the Financial Secretary must have realized the absur-

dity of the statement, and he qualified it subsequently. The hon. the Financial Secretary and Treasurer has drawn quite a number of red herrings across the trail. He discussed at length the Ordinance and the purpose of the Ordinance with which, I say with great respect, I am not concerned, nor do I believe Members of this Council are concerned. Whether the Government compels an officer to retire at 60, or whether the officer exercises his option it is his business. The point is whether such an officer should be re-employed by the Administration after he has retired, or when he is being retired.

If it is felt that the motion is too categorical, then I can suggest that in the last resolve clause the words "except in cases of the utmost emergency" be added. But I feel that before an appointment is made the contemplated appointment should be declared in Finance Committee, and Members of this Council should approve of the action of Government in Finance Committee, because it is clear that if Government is going to bring someone out of retirement into the Service, it is to be presumed that Government can justify every such case—either that it is a case of the utmost emergency or it is in the interest of good government. Bearing that in mind I move the amendment that the words "except in cases of the utmost emergency" be added to the last resolve clause.

Mr. ROTH: Will the hon. Mover delete the first resolve clause?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I would ask the hon. Member what he means by "emergency". It has a particular connotation in the light of war.

Mr. FERNANDES: I second that amendment.

Mr. WIGHT: May I be permitted to say a few words on the amendment? We have in the amendment now suggested cases of 'emergency, but the hon. the Sixth Nominated Member (Mr.

Morrish) suggested that there should be no difference. If the Council does not desire that, it is a matter entirely for hon. Members, but I feel myself that if those hon. Members who support the motion feel, as some have so expressed, that the practice has continued and not discontinued, then it seems that the expansion of the motion will not achieve the desired effect, whereas certain terms of appointment have the effect of saying that no one be employed except on such conditions as are accepted by this Council. Further, when we turn to the question of emergency I have always been under the impression that civil servants are not entitled to leave as a right, but it is dependent on the exigencies of the Service. One case has been mentioned.

The PRESIDENT: I cannot allow the hon. Member to make another speech.

Mr. WIGHT: I was speaking on the amendment in regard to emergency. I was dealing entirely with that, but if the Chair says I am not allowed to speak on the amendment I beg to take my seat.

The PRESIDENT: Very well.

Mr. WIGHT: I was dealing with the question of emergency. I was always under the impression that the question of leave to civil servants is not one of right, but it is a question of the exigencies of the Service. If the Government finds itself in the position of not having anyone in the particular Department to act for the General Manager of the Transport and Harbours Department, his leave should be postponed until such time as that person is available.

The PRESIDENT: If hon. Members agree I will put the motion.

Motion, as amended, put, and the Council divided and voted as follows:—

For—Messrs. Luckhoo, Morrish, Carter, Smellie, Phang, Kendall, Fer-

nandes, Debidin, Farnum, Raatgever, Lee, Wight, Dr. Jagan, Capt. Coghlan, Dr. Singh—15.

Against—Mr. Roth, the Financial Secretary and Treasurer, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary—4.

Motion, as amended, adopted.

DENTAL MECHANIC REGISTRATION COMMITTEE REPORT.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I rise to move the following motion standing in my name on the Order Paper—

“That this Council accepts in principle the recommendations in the Report of the Dental Mechanic Registration Committee, which has been laid on the table.”

Hon. Members will recall that this Committee was appointed as the result of a debate in September, 1949, on a Bill which was introduced for a special and particular purpose. That purpose has now been fulfilled, and I think that matter has been settled. In the course of the debate a more general question was raised, and Mr. Heape, who was then presiding, agreed to consider the appointment of a Committee. That Committee was subsequently appointed in March last year, and consisted of the Director of Medical Services as Chairman, the Hon. the Deputy President of this Council, the Hon. Dr. Singh, the hon. Dr. Gonsalves, Mr. P. W. King and Dr. Lee as members. The Committee's report was submitted in September of last year, and has since been awaiting debate. The terms of reference of the Committee were:

“to consider and report on the desirability or otherwise of further amending the Colonial Medical Services (Consolidation) Ordinance Cap. 186, as amended by the Colonial Medical Service (Consolidation) (Amendment) Ordinance, 1939, for the purpose of extending its provisions to enable dental mechanics who have acquired the necessary skill and com-

petence to be registered as dentists and thereby be permitted to practise dentistry."

I think the members of the Committee are to be congratulated on having produced both a lucid and fair exposition of the facts, and also a constructive and valuable attempt to provide a solution to what has been a long-standing and undoubtedly highly controversial problem. The situation arises from the shortage of dentists in the Colony, and particularly in the rural areas. The figures given in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the Committee's report speak for themselves. There were actually 28 registered dentists at the time of the report, but there may have been some additions since. Of those registered dentists actively engaged in their profession in the Colony 20 are practising successfully in Georgetown, five in New Amsterdam, and three only in the rural areas. As I have said, these figures speak for themselves, and it is obvious that the rural areas are very inadequately served.

As Members are aware, as the result, presumably, of this shortage of qualified dentists, the practice has arisen for certain people having some knowledge—and that knowledge is limited, as it would appear from the report, to the mechanical side of dentistry—to practise dentistry in the country districts, practising of course illegally, as the law stands. The history of the law on the subject is set out in detail in paragraphs 30 to 36 of the report. The Committee has recorded in paragraph 15, on the subject of this illegal dental practice, that the extent of such practice, both in urban and rural areas, has within the last ten years assumed very substantial proportions.

Sir, this is the principal problem and the source of the controversy—whether these people who have been practising dentistry undoubtedly illegally have been in fact serving a useful purpose; whether they have been doing

some good to the community, or whether they have been doing greater harm than they have been doing good. The Committee has considered this question and gone into it very thoroughly, and the appendix to the report shows that evidence was heard from the organizations particularly concerned, and also from independent witnesses. The Committee has come to the conclusion that these dental mechanics, as they are popularly known — although I do not think there is any particular official basis for the title—in fact the vast majority of them have had no real training in dentistry, apart from certain mechanical procedures; some of them possibly have not any experience of chair-side practice—if that is the correct technical term used by the Committee—no experience of working under proper supervision actually on the mouths of patients.

There are some of them who have apparently been practising dentistry illegally over a period of years, and have no doubt acquired a rough-and-ready experience. But it is clear enough from the report of the Committee that they have not got proper experience, and, furthermore, that their activities are a potential source of very dangerous damage to the health of the community. That conclusion, as I said, has been reached after very careful examination of the evidence heard, and of what the dental mechanics themselves had to say on the subject. The Committee has reached the conclusion that it is not safe to condone this practice, but that some other solution must be found. The first of the Committee's conclusions to be found on page 20 of the report is—

"That the time has now arrived when only dental graduates from approved Dental Colleges should be eligible for admission to the Local Dental Register."

Conclusion (2) reads:—

"That it would be neither desirable nor practicable to create a special dental registration category enabling locally trained dental mechanics to practise as dentists in prescribed non-urban areas."

Those are the first two conclusions of the Committee. It is realized, however, that these dental mechanics, if given proper training under the supervision of graduate-dentists, can make a useful contribution towards the dental work in the community, and the Committee has accordingly recommended in its third conclusion—

"That legislative steps should be taken to establish a register for dental mechanics as such, and to provide for their training and examination."

That is at least a step which would enable such of these mechanics who really have the experience and the necessary basic educational qualifications, to be registered, and hon. Members will see from what the Committee has said in paragraph 44 of the report, that the evidence suggests that there are very few of these dental mechanics who have the proper basic educational qualification. However, it would give them an opportunity, if action is taken on the lines of Conclusion (3), to provide for the registration of dental mechanics who have had training under a qualified graduate dentist.

Having reached the conclusion that the present system is doing more harm than good—this present system of illegal dentistry, which in practice is difficult to control—steps should be taken to stop it; and the question arises as to what alternative can be produced; what alternative is there to this present system of illegal dentistry. If, of course, the practice of illegal dentistry is doing more harm than good, it is perfectly logical to suppress it even if you cannot find an alternative. However, the Committee has made a suggestion, but before I come to that there are certain factors I think I should mention. I have said already that the figures of the shortage of dentists in the rural areas speak for themselves, and I am not going to pretend that that situation is satisfactory. But there are particular factors which must be borne in mind. One of these is, I am told, that the only real type of

emergency work likely to be required in dentistry is an extraction. I stress the word "emergency" which is used in a rather different sense from that in which it was used in our discussion a little earlier. The professional Members of this Council will be able to correct me if I am wrong. The fact is, the law already provides for Medical Officers and a registered dispenser to carry out extractions. This is referred to in paragraph 47 of the report which says:

"... Moreover, the existing law already provides for the performance in rural areas of urgent extraction procedures by Government Medical Officers also by registered sicknurse-dispensers, chemists, and druggists, provided that, in regard to the last-mentioned categories, no anaesthesia is used".

It is therefore possible for someone in need of urgent dental treatment to obtain that treatment within the law in the rural districts. I do not say it is readily available, but it is a thing to be borne in mind. There are also Government Dental Clinics which make a limited contribution. There are such clinics at Bartica, Mabaruma and elsewhere, in addition to New Amsterdam and Georgetown. Finally, one may hope that other dentists in Georgetown and New Amsterdam may follow the example of one dentist at least who has already set up clinics in rural areas. It seems to me that it is a helpful contribution to the problem, and other dentists may well see if they can follow that example. Government would naturally try to facilitate that type of service within its means. I mention these considerations merely to point out that it is not absolutely impossible to get dental treatment in the rural areas—dental treatment of an emergency nature. The report suggests that a great part of the work done by these illicit practitioners is not in fact of an emergency nature, but more often work such as providing gold crowns and that sort of work which is by no means emergency treatment which people can get done by going to a centre where dentists are available,

The Committee has made another suggestion, summarised in Conclusion 4 on page 20 of its report—

"That at least three Mobile Dental Units staffed by dental graduates, should be provided for itinerant work in rural areas; the services rendered thereby to be made largely self-supporting by the levying of moderate charges."

The Committee also recommended that coincident with the provision of Mobile Dental Units a dental educative campaign should be conducted among the public generally, and with special reference to children of school age. The suggestion that Mobile Dental Units should be set up seems to me a very good one, and I think it should be supported. The cost is roughly estimated at \$12,000 each. No detailed proposals have been produced yet, but if this Council accepts the report of the Committee in principle we will go into the matter and work out details of the scheme generally. It will depend on getting dentists in the first instance.

As is mentioned in the report, the prospects for the future are rather brighter than they have been. Hon. Members will see from paragraph 11 of the report that there are at present in the U.S.A. and Canada 53 Guianese dental students, most of whom may be expected to return to practise in the Colony. So there is a possibility that we shall have more dentists available here shortly. Where they will choose to practise, of course, is not a matter over which we have any control but, presumably, according to the law of supply and demand, Georgetown will eventually reach saturation point, and some of them will obviously have to seek to establish themselves outside the City. The number of dentists returning has recently accelerated. We have had 16 back during the last 10 years since 1941. So the prospects for the future are a little brighter. Meanwhile, I suppose this recommendation must be regarded as an emergency measure. It will not, of course, solve the problem. There is no real solution other than

getting more dentists. That is the only real and final solution, but it will do something towards providing people in the rural areas with some qualified and experienced dental service which they so badly need. Whether the number will be subsequently increased will be a matter for consideration, and of course the financial aspect cannot be overlooked. However, in view of the seriousness of the problem, the expenditure of \$36,000 does not seem excessive.

The report speaks very largely for itself. Hon. Members have had plenty of time to study it. I do not think I need speak at much greater length. There were three members of the Committee in Council this afternoon, but I am afraid one has gone. There are two present, and I imagine the debate will continue tomorrow when they will no doubt be able to supply additional information if hon. Members want it. I commend to the support of this Council the report of the Committee which does seem to provide—not a solution to the problem, because I have said that there can be only one solution, but at least go some way towards relieving the situation. I think that in the light of what is said in the report, one must agree with the conclusion that the present illegal practice of dentistry by unqualified persons without any training and little basic education in most cases, is in fact a danger to the community and must be stopped. I formally move the motion.

The ATTORNEY - GENERAL
seconded.

Mr. PHANG: I have received a telegram from the Chairman of the Morawhanna Local Authority and other influential residents in the North-West District requesting me to urge Government to reconsider this report. It seems to me that provision has been made in the Ordinance for dispensers to practise dentistry of a sort. Dental mechanics, by reason of their experience, are able to do extractions and dental practice. In the North-West

District, where there are 8,000 souls and two dispensers 100 miles apart, there is dire need for these dental mechanics who, by reason of their experience, can serve a useful and merciful purpose in taking care of the needs of the people there. Until Government can provide a proper dental service I think the mechanical dentists should be allowed to practise dentistry in rural areas. It is my considered opinion that it is wrong to deny them registration. I have heard that there are 28 qualified practising dentists in the Colony—one to every 15,000 of the population. I have also read the Committee's report, and from a casual reading it strikes me as being biased. In view of the shortage of qualified dentists I feel that dental mechanics should be allowed to practise dentistry in the remote areas.

Mr. LUCKHOO: I regret that I have to strike a note of discord in respect of this report. I do not feel that there is very much in it upon which I can congratulate the Committee. It seems that the report lays itself wide open to justifiably strong criticism as being devoid of imagination and a non-appreciation of the realities of the situation. I listened with great interest to what the hon. the Colonial Secretary has said in his remarks concerning this report. He opened by referring to the Committee's terms of reference, the main portion of which was that the Committee was charged to consider and report on the desirability or otherwise of further amending the law relating to the practice of dentistry "for the purpose of extending its provisions to enable dental mechanics who have acquired the necessary skill and competence to be registered as dentists and thereby be permitted to practise dentistry."

As a result of a careful study of the Committee's report it seems to me that it was more concerned with the academic training and qualifications of dentists, the irregularities practised in the profession, and more concerned with the law applicable to the practice of dentistry than the desirability of ex-

tending the provisions of the law. It would take a little time for me to go into it, but I would wish that the Council would give it the consideration which I feel a matter of this importance deserves. The first aspect I would like to consider is that which relates to the law. A very careful analysis was made of the position, and the facts set out are correct, but with the conclusions reached I beg to differ.

The position appears to be this: Before 1908 anyone who cared to put up a notice board or to have a chair ready could practise as a dentist. Then in 1908, by Ordinance No. 15, a register was opened for graduates—persons who had been abroad and qualified and desired to be registered as dentists—but there was no prohibition against an unregistered or unqualified person practising dentistry. Thus we find that those persons who, prior to 1908, were practising dentistry, continued to do so. There was nothing against such practice in the law, and those persons continued to serve a useful purpose. I repeat those words—"continued to serve a useful purpose"—because I think they are very pertinent. Then in 1924, by Ordinance No. 18, we find that the register was maintained, but for the first time there was a prohibition against the practice of dentistry by unregistered persons, and those persons who were practising up to that period, except they were qualified graduates, were no longer permitted by that Ordinance to continue. There were certain provisos, one of which permitted the performance of minor dental work under the direct personal supervision of a registered dentist. It seemed to create an undue hardship on those persons who had been serving from, say 1908 to 1924, practising as dentists, but were not permitted to be registered as such because they were not graduates.

In 1939, Ordinance No. 39 was passed, the relevant section of which provided that persons who in 1924 were 23 years of age, and who were at that

time practising as dentists, could be registered as dentists, but the fly in the ointment is that those persons who, subsequent to 1924, utilized the proviso which permitted them to do minor dental work under the supervision of a qualified dentist, were precluded. The group of dental mechanics who, according to the Committee's report, have admitted that a good many of them had been practising under the supervision of qualified dentists, and had been doing minor dental work from 1924 until 1939, were precluded from being registered as dentists. Only those who had been practising prior to 1924 were encompassed by the Ordinance of 1939.

At this stage it might well be asked what was meant by "minor dental work"? It was not defined in the law, but in 1928 the Medical Board issued a circular (referred to on page 13 of the Committee's report) in which minor dental work was defined thus:

"The term 'Minor Dental Work' has been ruled by the Board to include only mechanical denture or laboratory work, not connected with actual operation on the mouth in any way."

An attempt was thus made by means of a circular to define "minor dental work" which, I contend, can have no effect of law, and one is strengthened in that opinion by the open practice of dentistry by the dental mechanics during the period 1924 to 1939. The basis of that definition of "minor dental work" seems to have been the English enactment which the Committee has set out on page 17 of its report as follows:

"165. In 1922, the Minister approved conditions under this subsection for the performance of minor dental work in the School Medical Service by persons other than registered dentists. The conditions were as follows:—

1. The approval of the Board of Education must be given to the employment in the School Medical Service of the person concerned, and such approval shall not be given unless the local Education Authority undertake that the work shall be limited to cleaning and polishing,

applying or removing dressings or temporary fillings, charting, recording of work of light responsibility."

Clearly that allows very much wider scope than that which the circular to which I have referred attempted to set up. So much stress has been laid in the Committee's report on the legal aspect of the matter that I approached it first from that angle. It seems to me that those dental mechanics who have been practising during the period 1924 to 1939 are left without redress in this report, even though during those years, the law did not provide any penalty for practising, but rather permitted it as long as they were operating, as they claim they were, under the supervision of a registered dentist. That is in so far as the law is concerned. It seems to me that this report certainly sets it out very clearly, but the Committee has not arrived at the conclusion which, I venture to suggest, an impartial observer would have reached—that a hardship has been created, and that efforts should be made to see how it might be remedied.

I speak as one who has a profession. There is no doubt at all that if there were the requisite number of dentists in the Colony that would have been an ideal situation, and as the hon. the Colonial Secretary has said, that is the only solution of the problem. I am one of those who feel that, all things being equal, only qualified persons should be permitted to give service of this kind to the community, and not those who have only acquired local experience. But there are extraordinary occasions when extraordinary measures must be adopted. In perusing the report of the Committee I have made the observation that there is one dentist to every 15,000 of the population. It is stated that in Georgetown there are 28 dentists, and according to figures given me by the B.P.I. there is a population of 102,000 in Georgetown and Greater Georgetown. In New Amsterdam, with a population of 10,000, there are five dentists—one to

every 2,000. It may be preferable to have more dentists in both Georgetown and New Amsterdam, but the present number can be regarded as adequate. But in the case of the rural areas what do we find? In a population of 324,000 there are only three dentists, or one to every 108,000 persons. Surely something should be done for those people in the rural areas who are entitled to receive a certain amount of protection and care in respect of their health.

It has been suggested that three mobile dental units should be provided, but that would be a mere drop in the ocean. That is why I say that the Committee has not taken cognizance of the realities of the situation. How are those people being served now? They are being served by those very dental mechanics—persons who are illegally or otherwise practising dentistry, and who have acquired their skill and knowledge over a period of years. If the report of the Committee had shown that, as a result of the practice of these dental mechanics, the public was suffering, or that there had been cases in which people's lives have been endangered—

Mr. WIGHT: To a point of correction. I feel sure that the hon. Member has available a volume of the evidence which was taken by the Committee. There have been cases in which people's lives have been endangered. Evidence to that effect was given before the Committee.

Mr. LUCKHOO: I can only speak on such information as has been made available to me. I have not seen any record of the evidence. No mention is made in the report of any such cases, and that is the reason why I have made the point. I do not wish it to be construed that I am advocating that dental mechanics should be given an open licence or *carte blanche* to foist themselves on the public. I have been endeavouring to point out that the suggestion that mobile dental units should be provided is only a temporary solution, and that some effort should be made

to afford those dental mechanics an opportunity to practise as dentists in rural areas after they have passed some qualifying examination.

The Committee's report may be divided into the professional aspect, service of the rural areas, qualification of the dental mechanics, and the moral aspect. In respect of the professional aspect, there would be no competition if the limited number of dental mechanics were permitted to qualify themselves locally, and allowed to practise in the rural areas because, for with only 43 registered they could not offer any competition or constitute any threat to what must be a rather lucrative practice enjoyed by the registered dentists.

The second aspect is the service to the public in the rural areas. I have heard the view expressed here very often, I think by Your Excellency yourself, that everything should be done to prevent people from the country districts gravitating into the City, and that amenities should be provided in the rural areas where they may be able to live in a certain amount of enjoyment and a certain amount of protection. Those people who live in the country are entitled to the same care as those who live in the City, and should be afforded the same measure of treatment in the villages as others are in the towns. If there are not sufficient registered dentists in Georgetown to give the benefit of their services to people in the country districts are we to have a state of things, such as I can well envisage from the Committee's report, in which the people in the towns are catered for while the people in the country districts would be deprived of even the little service they now enjoy? That, Sir, is the particular point I desire to make on this aspect of the report—that if there are not enough qualified dentists to serve the people in the country districts, and if the mobile dental units would not provide the necessary relief, the people should be allowed to make-do with the service they have at present, while op-

portunity is afforded the dental mechanics to qualify themselves at some local examination to enable them to serve the needs of the people in the rural areas.

The hon. the Colonial Secretary referred to the fact that extractions can be performed by sicknurses and dispensers and persons of that ilk, and that it is not necessary for them to be registered, but there is a proviso which is referred to on page 19 of the Committee's report in these words:

"Moreover, the existing law already provides for the performance in rural areas of urgent extraction procedures by Government Medical Officers as also by registered sicknurse dispensers, chemists to the two last-mentioned categories, no anaesthesia is used."

In other words, they are not permitted to dull the sense of pain in the patient. I know that there are in the country districts today chemists and druggists and mechanical dentists who do extractions and are capable of administering a block injection or whatever injection is necessary to deaden pain which a patient would suffer if extractions were made without anaesthesia. Like the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Phang) I have been approached by means of petitions and letters from the country areas, even from his own area, and the cry is that if the mechanics are not permitted to give them some

relief will Government provide dentists in those areas? It is not an easy matter, and one can well see why the Committee has spent so much time in considering it. I say that with respect. I do not say that there was bias. All I say, with every respect, is that I cannot accept the conclusions arrived at by the Committee.

There is yet another aspect. The report admits that dental mechanics do work as such for dentists, and it is notable that the Committee recommend that a technicians' register be established after the style of that in use in South Africa, and that steps should be taken to provide for their training and examination. But in the report the Committee do not adopt the provision of the South African Dental Mechanics Act of 1945, which they cite, in respect of the registration of dental mechanics, because under the South African Act a person who was a dental mechanic at the time of the passing of the Act automatically became a registered technician. But it would seem from this report that even the dental mechanics who are recognized as such would have to pass some qualifying examination in order to be placed on the technicians' roll. I think that is another aspect of the question which should be reconsidered.

The Council was then adjourned until 2 p.m. the following day.