

# LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

*Thursday, 13th December, 1945.*

The Council met at 2 p.m., His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon James Lethem, K.C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

## PRESENT:

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

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

The Hon. the Attorney General (Acting) Mr. W. F. Holder.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

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

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River).

The Hon. A. M. Edun (Nominated)

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated)

The Hon. T. T. Thompson (Nominated).

The Clerk read prayers.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 12th December, 1945, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### TOWN PLANNING BILL

The PRESIDENT: I should like to express my thanks to hon. Members for getting through so expeditiously with the business at the meetings held yesterday, and particularly to those Members who were able to come in the evening when we had a good attendance and got through the business very rapidly.

### NO CONSTITUTIONAL FLAW IN BILL

I have an announcement of importance to make. This is touching clause 30 of the Town Planning Bill.

I have a reply from the Secretary of State giving the opinion of his legal advisers which confirms that expressed by the Attorney-General and myself, that there is no constitutional flaw whatever involved in embodying the cancellation of the licences in the Ordinance. Members will remember that the Attorney-General and myself said that it seemed to us inconceivable that after the provision in the Law had, as it has in this, case, passed the prior scrutiny of the legal advisers in London, and had passed this Council, and been assented to by myself and thereafter not disallowed by the King, there could be any constitutional flaw. The cancellation of licences by Ordinance therefore would be completely in order. We were reinforced in this opinion by the following quotation from a book on "The Doctrine of *Ultra Vires*," the author of which is Street, and which reads as follows:

".....It would seem to follow that no statute to which assent has been given can be *ultra vires* as an infringement of the prerogative, and it will make no difference whether the assent has been given by the Sovereign himself or by his authorised representative (d). The tendency of relations between the colonies and the Imperial Government being towards co-ordination, no principle, however old, will be permitted to restrict unduly the range of colonial legislation, and it is seldom that any colonial statute has been held to be invalid on the ground that it infringed the prerogative without express authority for excluding it."

That seems to me and the Attorney-General as conclusive and in accord with the principle of the ultimate sovereignty of the Legislature and modern tendencies

The Secretary of State further stated that he appreciated certain advantages and reasons for taking action by Ordinance.

At the same time he pointed out that the alternative procedure of cancellation by executive act of a

Governor could be followed, and that done simultaneously with the passage of the Ordinance, and I should have his approving authority for that action. In some ways it was suggested by the Secretary of State that this action may be preferable as it is the normal procedure in all colonies, whereas action by Ordinance might be an unnecessary innovation.

The matter is therefore one for this Council to decide. The clause is before Council and may be passed without any misgiving that there may be a constitutional flaw. If Council desire its inclusion in the Ordinance therefore that can be done. On the other hand if there is a majority opinion in favour of the other course I should undertake to cancel the licences synchronously with my assent to the Bill.

We will deal with the matter in due course when we resume the Committee stage of the Bill on clauses 4 and 30. I need say no more at this moment.

#### GRANTS FOR DEVELOPMENT PLANS.

Reverting to yesterday's proceedings I have had discussions with the executive officers on the points left open, and after placing the suggested solutions before Executive Council next Monday, will bring them forward for completion before the Committee stage on the estimates is finished.

I should like to record here one matter and again correct the entirely false idea that myself or this Government has been asking the Home Government for grants right up to the very large totals of our maximum development plan such as I tentatively and on invitation put forward last June. The statement was twice made to me yesterday. It is typical of the loose thinking and inattentive memory which is so common. I would like to quote the following passage from my address to Council:—

"It may be said without any hesitation even now that it is not possible to anticipate that finance of that order will be forthcoming as a free gift from outside the Colony, and it will be necessary to pick and choose which of the numerous projects should come first and which must be deferred in the hope of greater things becoming possible in a more distant future. Two points I should make clear. No attempt has been made to distinguish between what might be provided by free grant and what might be provided by loan. On some large items of capital expenditure a great deal may well be by loan, e.g., Housing costs are over ten million dollars in all but should be by loan to the extent of two-thirds. Nor have I attempted more than the most tentative suggestion as to the contribution that might be made from local funds i.e., our existing surplus and the loan now being raised. Firm recommendations on these points would be quite premature."

I would also quote the following:—

"How soon the total need can be met must remain a matter of complete speculation at this moment. The practical side of it is that we have a new Development and Welfare Act coming into effect next year with an apparently generous financial position of £120,000,000—but that is to cover the needs of some fifty colonies and a population in the total of which Guiana is a very small item. We will have to anticipate something by way of allocation within which we must work. That has not yet been indicated to me. It will be very clear that we cannot have everything, we must choose between priorities, we certainly cannot have it up to the champagne standard in every part of this country or in every service. It will be preferable to choose and do well those things which we do attempt."

"It will be the task of this Council initially in its forthcoming session and finally in the new Council to make the difficult discrimination between those projects which should be pursued in the next five years and those which must be deferred or postponed for later consideration, as being too extravagant or quite uneconomic or impracticable for immediate prosecution."

It is also relevant if I quote the following paragraph from my address on 3rd July which answers the suggestion that Government has now in December suddenly flung at the heads of the people of the Colony an utterly unexpected and alarming budget:—

"The responsibilities of the Council will be of the most difficult and onerous kind. As I see it we may regard them in two aspects. The first the carrying on of the administration of the country in the difficult post-war years, and the second the discrimination as to what major plans of Development and Welfare can be carried out in the first five or ten years. I will have a good deal to say on this second point as I have information of importance for the Council. On the first I need not here be long."

"The principal factor will be the reconciling of the cost of administration of the colony, the ordinary services which have increased alarmingly in recurrent cost in the last few years, and with a revenue probably falling. For example the annual costs of educational services have risen from under half a million dollars in 1938 to \$1,474,000 in 1945, the annual costs of Health Services generally have risen from \$616,000 in 1938 to \$1,555,000 in 1945, and these figures are apart from capital expenditure such as on buildings, etc. The increase in remuneration to Civil Servants, represents an additional cost of about \$700,000 per annum, and rising with annual increments. Our Police Force will probably have to be maintained at a figure perhaps 25% over that of the pre-war years. These are examples only. Some of the inflation expenditure of war-time we can no doubt drop but in other ways the transition from war-time conditions to peace-time conditions will mean expense, certainly for a period of years. I might mention only demobilisation and the expense of Transport and Harbours, which has been so heavily mounting up and in which if it has got to be got on to a proper footing may cost us much. It would be premature however, for me to speak at greater length on this matter."

While on the subject of Development and Welfare projects I would like to refer to one point and to a notable suggestion made by the Member for Western Berbice, I think in the informal meeting on Tuesday, when he said we would have to review schemes already approved. I agree. I went through the whole list last night and felt that we might have to discriminate between on the one hand those to which we are fully committed and in which we have made a substantial start, and those others which have not yet begun or, if begun, have not progressed very

far. While we should obviously make full provision on the budget for a year's expenditure on the former, we can perhaps usefully leave over provision for some of the latter altogether, or make a token vote or at the most, provision for the first quarter of the year up to 31st March, by which time we would have to review which of these particular schemes should go forward. That we will take up in due course when we come to them.

### ORDER OF THE DAY

#### ESTIMATES, 1946.

The PRESIDENT: Hon. Members will notice that we have in front of us some rather important supplementary estimates which we do not want to delay unduly. Perhaps we would take them at 4 o'clock or at half-past three, and if we do not conclude them then we could do so this evening.

Council resolved itself into Committee to resume consideration of the 1946 Estimates.

#### EDUCATION—SCHOOLS, INSTITUTIONS AND MISCELLANEOUS.

The CHAIRMAN: I have one question to ask the Director of Education with regard to sub-head 20—Salaries of 16 Teachers (Practical Instruction Centres), \$13,680. There is a substantial increase in this sub-head and I notice on the opposite page that increments are largely responsible for it. Then, there is a new Centre at Mackenzie; what is that?

Mr. L. G. CREASE: (Director of Education): The Management of the Demerara Bauxite Company has started a centre at Mackenzie and it is hoped that senior children from the Primary schools in the district will attend it. I think we ought to give some encouragement and inducement to those who take to the practical side,

The CHAIRMAN: Has it been started already?

Mr. CREASE: Yes, sir. At present it is being run by the Bauxite Company and they want us to supply the teachers.

The CHAIRMAN: The next point is on this item—Substitutes for Teachers on leave—\$600. How has that come about?

Mr. CREASE: We have three or four Trade Centres so it would be necessary to provide training next year for some headteachers and we have to pay for other teachers to act for them.

The CHAIRMAN: Is this a new item?

Mr. CREASE: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: This point was raised by a Nominated Member yesterday, and it seems to me that these figures have nothing to justify them. Are they really necessary?

Mr. CREASE: Yes. Then, owing to the War very few teachers have been on leave, but some of them would be going next year.

The CHAIRMAN: How would the Centres be carried on?

Mr. CREASE: We would have to appoint substitutes to carry on.

The CHAIRMAN: I have another question to ask you, with regard to item 24—Temporary War Bonus, \$2,949. Why should these youths who are being trained at the Kingston Trades Centre be paid War bonus? They are not Government employees, but I see an allocation here for War bonus.

Mr. CREASE: That is War Bonus for the teachers,



The CHAIRMAN: You have "Salaries of 16 Teachers" (at item 20); then you have "Allowances to Youths, Kingston Trades Centre" (at item 21), and then you have "Temporary War Bonus" (at item 24), which makes it appear that you give the boys who come in for training War bonus as well.

Mr. CREASE: All I can say is that they do not get any War bonus whatever.

The CHAIRMAN: Then why was it put down? Sub-head 21 covers the allowances. What I query is the giving of War bonus to these youths as if they were Government employees. Suppose we delete the item?

Mr. CREASE: The item may have been put on account of the fact that when these youths finish their course they are taken on by the Trade Centre and they make equipment or furniture for the Schools, receiving a weekly wage for this work.

The CHAIRMAN: These little additions will creep in all the time.

Mr. LEE: I would like to know whether this new Centre at Mackenzie is going to provide a combination of what is taught at the Carnegie Trade Centre and the Kingston Trade Centre.

Mr. CREASE: The Centre at Mackenzie is purely a vocational training centre. It was established by the Demerara Bauxite Company soon after they opened their school. There are two other schools nearby—at Wismar and at Christianburg and they want to send boys over to learn this work. The Bauxite Company has therefore established the Centre and they want us to supply the teachers.

The CHAIRMAN: I will withhold the items for the Allowances and the Substitution of Teachers until I have gone into these matters further.

Mr. SEAFORD: I would like to know how many students it is proposed to have at this Mackenzie Centre.

Mr. CREASE: It will take one hundred per week and they will attend in classes of twenty.

The CHAIRMAN: As regards the substitutes for teachers on leave at the Kingston Trades Centre, it is probably a case where these little additions are put in and then they become permanent. It is also probable that that is the reason why we have item (24) providing for trainees to get War bonus as if they were Government employees. Further, I would like to know whether it is necessary to have substitutes to carry on for such short periods.

Mr. CREASE: Yes. Then the time would come when all these trainees would be qualified. After seven years, every teacher who is qualified would be eligible for three months' leave and, therefore, we have to find somebody to act for him when he is on leave. The employees at the Carnegie Trade Centre which has been taken over by Government enjoy the same privileges with regard to leave. Some teachers are there now for about seven years.

The CHAIRMAN: What about giving War bonus to trainees on bursaries? These students are given bursaries and then they get War bonus on their allowances. It seems to me a little generous and I think we should hold it up.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: When the teachers are going on leave, do they go in accordance with the exigencies of the Service or do they just run off together? Surely the leave could be arranged so that one person could act for another.

Mr. AUSTIN: On pages 18 and 19 the amounts in this respect are very much larger.

The CHAIRMAN: We might get an explanation for them; the circumstances are different I think.

Mr. AUSTIN: Your Excellency remarked yesterday that the Education vote was dangerous and was killing the country. I think we should decide whether we are going to spend more money on primary education or secondary education. I cannot conceive that these Masters and Mistresses going on leave from Queen's College and the Bishop's High School, respectively, should have facilities in this Department which are not available in other Departments. This is the only Department which allows members of its staff to go on leave and provides substitutes for them. I think the full amount should not be granted on these two votes if permission for the leave has not been granted already by Government. I think the exigencies of the Service should be respected and the persons concerned should take their leave as opportunity arises.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chairman of the Carnegie Board is not here but I have just totalled the amounts up and they represent \$7,200 for substitutes for teachers on leave. Although it is not all new, I think a good deal of it is.

Mr. SEAFORD: Are you referring to Queen's College, sir?

The CHAIRMAN: I have taken all of the amounts.

Mr. SEAFORD: I think I know a little about them—those for Queen's College and the Bishop's High School. If they do not come under this head and in this way it means that we will have to get an extra Master or an extra Mistress, as the case may be. If it is Government's policy to reduce staff and work with a depleted staff then these figures could be cut out.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: The only danger I find is that if we pass the vote for this \$7,200 the persons in charge of the administration of these

schools are not going to take the trouble to cut it down. If they had to come for a vote every time a substitute teacher was required, I think that would keep them in check all the time.

Dr. SINGH: As regards Queen's College, no Masters went on leave during the War and I think there was a saving of nearly \$10,000.

The CHAIRMAN: You have not answered my point about the war bonus.

Mr. CREASE: A small allowance is given to trainees and bursars by way of war bonus. I would, however, like some time to verify that.

Mr. WOOLFORD: In view of what was stated yesterday I would like to make a few remarks on this very important subject the Primary Education vote. Primary education in this Colony is governed by an Ordinance of 1876. That Ordinance imposes the duty on the parents of a child between the age of 6 and 12 years to educate that child, or to see that it receives what is called efficient elementary instruction. In other words, the obligation was put on parents to send to a primary school all children between 6 and 12 years, and primary education was made free and compulsory. That was in 1876. For 66 years that provision remained, but it was amended in 1942. It was a very important amendment because the school-leaving age was then altered from 12 to 14 years. In other words it allowed the admission into elementary schools in some parts of the Colony of children who had reached the age of 13 years.

In 1934 I made a motion and questioned the system by which Government allowed children up to the age of 14 years to attend primary schools in Georgetown, New Amsterdam, and Buxton only, while the children in the rural districts, who needed more efficient instruction, were left entirely out of the picture. It is not so much to call

attention to that discrimination that I have risen. The point is that up to that moment the Director of Education allowed children who were above the age of 12 years to be admitted into the primary schools, and when I spoke in 1934 I called attention to it and to the fact that it was then costing the Colony \$14,000 or \$15,000 per annum. I am speaking purely from recollection, but it means that from the time I spoke in 1934 until today a sum of about \$150,000 has been spent in this way. I have been authoritatively informed that children are now being admitted into the primary schools—I do not say with the cognizance of the Department of Education—up to 16 years of age. I would like to know if that is true. There is a law governing attendance at schools, and it was extended in 1934. I would be glad if Mr. Thompson would speak on this matter because it raised a storm of protest all over the Colony that I should dare to make such a suggestion—that children were allowed to remain in primary schools up to 14 in Georgetown, New Amsterdam, and Buxton, but only up to 12 years in other parts of the Colony because there was no provision for it.

We have to put a limit to some things. The school-leaving age in England is 15 years, and if children are to be allowed to go to school in this Colony until they are 16 where are we going to drift to? In making the proposal I said I was not against the principle of the school-leaving age being extended, but at the time I thought that within six years a child ought to get sufficient elementary education to pass into a technical or vocational school, and Government would have had the money to provide such schools. I want Members to address themselves to that and to prevent the age-limit being exceeded in practice. But for Your Excellency's remarks yesterday I would not have ventured to speak at all. I feel keenly about it and I know that my statements are true. I would like to know how

many additional scholars have been added to school registers between 1934 and the present time, because I am sure that if the community had realised that by extending the age-limit at that period by two years it would have involved such a considerable sum of money they would have preferred that at the age of 12 years their children should pass from the primary schools into vocational or technical schools so as to fit them for life in the community. That policy was permitted because of the prevailing idea that the longer a child remained in a primary school the greater its chance was of securing a Government scholarship. The point is that there was no use in having a compulsory age-limit and allowing it to be exceeded. That is my contention. I would like to be told quite plainly whether there are scholars attending primary schools up to the age of 16 years.

I make these remarks because I know personally, and every member of this community knows, that there are parents who would not mind paying a few cents per week in order that their children might receive the benefits of primary education, and if parents desire their children to remain in school above the age-limit they should be made to pay for it. In England Miss Wilkinson proposed that the school-leaving age should be extended by one year, and we know the reaction of public opinion there. The cost of the extension would run into millions of pounds, and there is a lot of opposition to the proposal. I would like to know the average cost per caput of the education of children who are permitted to remain in primary schools up to the age of 16 years.

Mr. JACKSON: I am satisfied that the Deputy President is confusing the issue. He has referred to the compulsory section in the Education Ordinance. Primary education was made free and compulsory, and any child up to the

age of 12 years in the outlying districts who did not attend school for a certain number of days in each month, was liable to be taken up and its parents charged with neglecting to send it to school. Subsequently it was thought that in Georgetown, New Amsterdam, and Buxton, where the need for certain children to work on farms and elsewhere was not pronounced, the age-limit for compulsory attendance at school should be extended to 14 years, but I think the Deputy President trod on dangerous ground when he suggested that primary education should cease at the age of 12 years. Some years ago an attempt was made in the old Court of Policy to introduce a system of education which would limit the compulsory attendance at school to 11 years, but such a hue and cry was raised that the proposal was dropped like a hot potato. Any attempt at the present time to limit the attendance at primary schools to the age of 12 years would cause confusion in this Colony. It is the custom to permit children to remain in school up to the age of 16 years if their parents so desire, but the compulsory attendance section of the Ordinance does not apply to children over 12 years of age in the outlying districts, and 14 years in Georgetown, New Amsterdam and Buxton.

It is a known fact that in other countries the school-leaving age is 16 years, and I do not see why any attempt should be made to fix an earlier age in this Colony. I am quite in favour of technical schools, farm schools and other vocational schools for the benefit of the children, but we cannot expect every child of the age of 12 years to go to a technical school. As a matter of fact we cannot have sufficient technical schools in this Colony to absorb all the children over 12 years of age, and I do not think the suggestion made by the Deputy President should find support in this Council. If there were technical schools dotted all over the

Colony, and the intention was to send children over 12 years to those schools, there could be no objection to such a system, but we must not limit the school-leaving age to 12 years.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I have not made that suggestion at all, and no remark of mine could have conveyed that impression. What I said was that the age-limit had been raised from 12 to 14 years by an amendment of the Ordinance, and that it was not applicable throughout the Colony. The hon. Member is only justifying it by saying that there would be no potential farmers in Georgetown.

Mr. JACKSON: When the Deputy President refers to limiting the ages does he refer to the compulsory section of the Ordinance? If he does then he is right. Parents may send their children to school after the age of 12 years without being liable to prosecution for failure to send them regularly.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I have much regard for the hon. Member's remarks, and in view of the limited opportunity we have had in speaking on this matter I hope he will pardon me for again interrupting. It is true that it is not compulsory for parents to send their children to school in the cases he refers to, but they do go and their presence in the schools means increased expenditure. The point I am making is that although their attendance at school is not compulsory they are not required to pay for their tuition which continues to the age of 16 years.

The CHAIRMAN: We are not getting on with the immediate business. Does the Director wish to make any comment?

Mr. JACOB May I be permitted to say something? I am a member of the Education Advisory Committee and I claim to be a little familiar with the subject. I understood the Deputy



President to say that he was merely making a statement. I deprecate very strongly these statements that are made by responsible Members of this Legislature in this Council and in other places. The hon. Member attended a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce and made certain statements which appeared in the Press and gave the impression that as a Member of this Council he was advocating that the parents of children between 12 and 16 years should be made to pay for their primary education. That was the impression made by his remarks.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I never made any such statement, and that was not the impression of the members, except it was the hon. Member's. I pointed out to the Chamber of Commerce that the increase of the Education vote was automatically dependent upon attendances. No one can deny that.

Mr. JACOB: Following upon that the natural corollary is that the expenditure has been increased, as the hon. Member says, by \$14,000 a year, and it has been a tremendous sum since then. This Council has made the point, and Your Excellency has emphasized it, that primary education is taking up too much money, and that the vote must be reduced. What conclusion can one come to but that every effort would be made to reduce the vote, and, if possible, the Government could reduce the age-limit from 16 to 10 years, and that this Legislature, constituted as it is, might give it majority support?

I have in my hand a statement supplied by the Education Department in 1943 which shows that 32 per cent. of the children of school age were not in school, and that 16 per cent. of the children between 6 and 12 years were not attending school. Only this morning a worker came to me with his 11-year-old son, a brilliant looking boy. I asked the boy what school he attended and he

replied that he was not attending any school. The father said he could not afford to send the boy to school. He lived on the East Coast where the nearest school was miles away. He was born on the East Coast and was 49 years old. His wife was 47 and neither of them had ever attended school. They had seven children alive—four girls aged 21, 19, 18 and 16 years, and two boys aged 11 and 7 years. Those nine persons have never been to school. What is the Education Department doing about it? What is Government doing about it? There is an Education Ordinance which puts the responsibility on Government to see that children are sent to school, and here is a family of nine, none of whom has ever been to school. The suggestion has been made by the Deputy President in this Council and at the Chamber of Commerce and other places, that children over 12 years of age should not be given free primary education.

Mr. WOOLFORD: Do you, sir, think it is right for the hon. Member to persist in saying something that another Member has not said? He attributes to me a statement made at a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce when he was not even present when I was speaking.

Mr. JACOB: I was present at the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. WOOLFORD: No person except the hon. Member could deduce from my remarks that I was advocating that the parents of children over 12 years of age should be made to pay for their education. Nothing that I have said can be so construed. What I said was that the age-limit for free and compulsory education had been extended to 14 years. That was all right, but before it was done in 1934 there was no authority for doing it. It only came into effect in 1942, and I merely said that I pointed out then that it was costing the Colony \$14,000

a year, an expenditure which should be devoted to vocational or technical training which would still be elementary education.

The CHAIRMAN: I think we should get away from this general argument.

Mr. JACOB: I think this is the only opportunity to make my point in this matter, and I crave your indulgence to do so. My point is that the Chamber of Commerce has suggested that the Education vote should be reduced.

The CHAIRMAN: When you are saying that you should not misquote me. You said that I said the cost of primary education was rising and must be reduced. I said it was rising alarmingly, and that if any Member would suggest how it could be met I would be grateful.

Mr. JACOB: I accept that correction. You say that the Education vote is costing too much, and that steps should be taken to limit it.

The CHAIRMAN: No, to meet it.

Mr. JACOB: I am not going to quibble over those words; I am a practical man. The only reasonable conclusion I can come to is that the expenditure must not be increased. I have mentioned a case and I am going to put it in writing and send it to the Secretary of State and to the Education Department. I also promise to raise it on the Advisory Committee on Education.

The CHAIRMAN: I think that is the right place. We are entirely out of order. There is no question before the Council. You have had half an hour's indulgence and I quite appreciate what you are trying to put across.

Mr. JACOB: We are discussing page 17 of the Estimates.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no question before the Council. I have not put one.

Mr. JACOB: Then I will move that the vote be reduced by one dollar.

The CHAIRMAN: We have passed the estimates for primary schools.

Item 38.—*Scholarships to Secondary Schools*, \$14,368.

Mr. EDUN: I see there is an increase of \$1,106 in this item and I want to move its deletion. Apart from the increase, I am actuated to move the deletion by the fact that I do not consider the scholarships which these students secure as being worth their trouble to secure them. Unfortunately, I was not present last evening when the Education vote, generally, came up before the Council, but I think I understand the views of the Deputy President on this question of education. Your Excellency yourself said just recently that the crux of the problem of education lies in the educating of children between the ages of 12 and 16 years. That was said very many years ago by other Administrators and this idea of vocational training between the ages of 12 and 16 years was mooted long ago but, unfortunately, except in the case of the Carnegie Trade Centre, I have not seen anything practical being done.

The CHAIRMAN: I think you should go to Anna Regina and see precisely what is being done there. That is a junior Primary school and there are advanced plans for the vocational training of children between the ages of 12 and 16 years.

Mr. EDUN: I would like to see the school. I was not invited by the Director of Education to see what was being done at Anna Regina. I am prepared to support any measure for the education of children up to 14

years of age in the rural districts and it is up to the parents to pay for the education of their children after they are 14 years of age. I do not think any parent in the country districts would refuse to pay. That point, however, involves the question of accommodation, so that the whole thing lies in a vicious circle and the question of money comes up once again. I would also state that I think this Council acted very hastily with respect to the paying of better salaries to teachers. The new salaries have created anomalies—serious anomalies—in comparison with the Clerical and other services. There is much grumbling in the Civil Service over the new salaries voted for teachers and, sooner or later, I am going to table a motion for the reconsideration of the whole matter *vis a vis* the Civil Service. I know, as a matter of fact, that there are some female teachers who are getting more pay than Clerical officers and that has been a cause of great dissatisfaction. I read recently a letter in the Press relating to this complaint and I think I know the person who wrote that letter. I am sure he is a Government officer.

The CHAIRMAN: Has that got anything to do with Scholarships and Cash Prizes?

Mr. EDUN: I am speaking about the exorbitant salaries given to teachers.

The CHAIRMAN: It has nothing to do with Scholarships for Secondary Schools.

Mr. EDUN: I regret I could not bring up the matter.

The CHAIRMAN: You are going to bring a motion; isn't that enough?

Mr. EDUN: Very well, sir. I move the deletion of the item, however, because I think these scholarships are

too academic in nature and are not of much use to the children themselves. I think we should vote more money for vocational training because that is the kind of thing which would produce more agriculturists and the children would need more equipment for technical agriculture, artisanship and so on. I do not see how a small vote could provide these things and I think we ought to watch this vote, especially now that we are in the transitional stage between wartime and peacetime economy.

The CHAIRMAN: So you move the deletion of this item?

Mr. EDUN: Yes, sir.

Mr. JACOB: I am opposed to the deletion. I am in favour of increasing the scholarships, thus giving an opportunity to boys and girls of poor parentage to gain something. This Colony has benefited tremendously by the employment of several scholarship winners who are giving good service to Government at the present time. I need only refer to the Legal Draughtsman and to one or two other Government officers in this respect and I think it would be a great mistake to attempt to reduce this vote. I think the hon. the Fifth Nominated Member has moved the deletion of the item in order to show his disapproval of Government's methods but, as a matter of fact, I think more scholarships should be offered for the boys and girls in the country districts.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like to ask the Director of Education what his views are.

Mr. CREASE: A considerable portion of this amount would go in cash prizes. For some years now it has been the custom to give cash prizes to every candidate who passes the Cambridge Senior or the Junior examination, with distinctions, below the age of

16 years. These prizes are given as a sort of encouragement to these boys and girls and nowadays the number of candidates who qualify for them as a matter of course has been increasing from year to year. The Education Committee feels the time has come when these cash prizes should be discontinued and the money they cost Government should be diverted to the giving of additional Government County Scholarships. That is a matter before Government now and I think Government has agreed with the proposal and would amend the Regulations so that in 1946 these cash prizes would disappear. Every year during the last 10 years the amount has been increasing, due to the fact that a larger number of candidates qualify for the prizes every year.

The CHAIRMAN: Why not stop the prizes now?

Mr. CREASE: The position is that the candidates who sat this year would be entitled to get the prizes next year, 1946, if they qualify for them. It is usual when we contemplate a step of this nature to change the Regulations and give at least 12 months' notice. That is why it would be necessary to give the prizes next year, but after that they would cease.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: This is one of the occasions when I have to agree with the hon. the Fifth Nominated Member. Why should we continue to award the cash prizes? Surely those students who pass the examinations should be pleased enough to know that they have passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The vote has been increased because the number of successful candidates has increased.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Perhaps the number of successful candidates has

been increasing because Government recognises the Senior Cambridge certificate from persons seeking employment.

Mr. LEE: I am going to appeal to this Council not to do away with the cash prizes. I am sure that if the hon. the Fifth Nominated Member considers the question carefully he would withdraw his motion for the deletion of the vote. There are many students who have already taken these examinations and there are others who will take them in future, looking forward for something which the Colony feels they are entitled to and that is, if they pass with distinction below a certain age they would be entitled to receive a cash prize of \$10 each—a little more than the entrance fee paid. Therefore, the cash prizes are a sort of encouragement to these students—not necessarily the poor ones alone—and should not be discontinued.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it necessary to debate this sub-head any longer?

Mr. EDUN: In view of what has been said I am inclined to allow the item to remain, but I am very much concerned over this increased expenditure. Perhaps hon. Members would be glad to hear that Government is abandoning the idea of cash prizes. The education being given to students at the present time is too much of a theoretical nature and that is my grievance. We want something more practical.

Mr. JACOB: I notice that there is an increase of \$100 in the vote of \$600 for "Attendance Registers, etc. for Schools" under this very sub-head (38). The Deputy President is not in his seat, but I would repeat what I said just now when Your Excellency thought I was out of order.



The CHAIRMAN: Repetition is also out of order.

Mr. JACOB: I am moving the reduction of this item by \$1. The Deputy President has stated that the Director of Education, by allowing children to remain in the Primary Schools after the age of 12 years, was incurring an expenditure which cost Government over \$14,000 per annum. I would like Government to declare its policy and say whether or not it is prepared to increase the Education vote so as to have every child between the ages of five and fourteen years in school. If Government is prepared to limit the expenditure on children between those ages, I would say definitely that it would be taking a retrogressive and not a progressive step.

The CHAIRMAN: Government does not propose to take any retrogressive step. We have taken the view that we have to face our obligations, but let us cut out the frills and other unnecessary things.

Mr. JACOB: My views on education are well known. I would be prepared to vote all the necessary money—and find it—in order to have every child between the ages of five and fourteen years of age in school. After that age, if children want to get higher or University education their parents must give them. I think every effort should be made to get all the children between the ages of five and fourteen years in school. I have raised the point over and over again before the Education Committee, but have got practically no support from the other Members, that between 15 and 30 per cent. of the children between the ages of five and fourteen do not attend school and that Government is definitely callous about the matter. The same thing has happened in this Council; again and again Your

Excellency has emphasised—and the Chamber of Commerce too—that the Education vote is too high.

The CHAIRMAN: I have not said the vote is too high. If the hon. Member looks at what I said he would not find that. He constantly misquotes me — not only me, but everybody else.

Mr. JACOB: Perhaps I am too practical, but as a citizen of this Colony and of the British Empire I should seriously object to any attempt on the part of Government to limit the education of children between five and fourteen years of age.

The CHAIRMAN: Again, I say that there is no question of Government trying to limit the education of children between five and fourteen years of age.

Mr. JACOB: But Government has not provided the necessary accommodation for them.

The CHAIRMAN: Government is trying very hard to do so, but it would take a long time.

Mr. EDUN: Can Government not explore the possibility of having children between five and fourteen years of age in schools all over the Colony and see that those above fourteen years of age do not enter the Primary schools at all?

The CHAIRMAN: The Chairman of the Legislative Council Advisory Committee on Education (Mr. Woolford) will probably be back in his seat very soon and the hon. Member might take opportunity to make the suggestion then.

Dr. SINGH: There is a building shortage, and that answers the point. All the children would be given an opportunity to attend school when the additional buildings are put up.

Mr. JACOB: That has been going on for the last 50 years.

Item 38 put and agreed to.

#### EDUCATION — QUEEN'S COLLEGE.

The CHAIRMAN: My question here is why should there be this increase of \$1,000 in sub-head 1 (i)—Substitute for Masters on Leave, \$3,000?

Capt. H. NOBBS (Principal, Queen's College): We have had practically no one going on leave during the war and we are now faced with a staff of nineteen, two of whom want to get away as soon as they could. The result is that two Masters would be on leave during the first six months of the year and they would be followed by two others during the second six months. We therefore have to provide salaries for two Substitute Masters for the whole year and I think they should be allowed at least £300 each, which comes to £600 for both of them. That, as hon. Members would see, absorbs nearly the whole of this vote.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: There are three Acting Masters at Queen's College; is any of them going on leave next year? They are entitled to leave also, and I think it is true to say that they work very hard.

Capt. NOBBS: The Acting Masters would not go on leave next year.

Mr. AUSTIN: I have nothing to add to what I have already said, except to move that the item be carried out at the same figure as last year—\$2,000.

Mr. EDUN: I am prepared to support the item if the fees for Queen's College are raised. I think that if the fees are raised we can make the

College practically self-supporting. Whoever wants technical training should pay for it.

The CHAIRMAN: That is not precisely relevant to the item under discussion, but I would say that I have had a Schedule made out and have referred it to the Board of Governors of Queen's College with that object in view. I might also bring the matter up before the Executive Council very soon.

Mr. LEE: I would like to say that I am not in agreement with the suggestion to increase the fees.

The CHAIRMAN: It would come up in due course; it is not very relevant now.

Mr. LEE: I am supporting this vote, however. Government should not employ a properly qualified Master at less than £300 per annum. Good men must be paid and in that case they would remain.

Mr. SEAFORD: One feels in this case that these Masters have been going for a long time without leave and it is therefore due to them. If we are not going to appoint Masters to act for them, it means that the standard of work at the College is going to drop and that standard is very high at the present moment. I am not going to touch now on the question of fees. I would say, however, that only yesterday the results of the Higher School Certificate examination were received and they disclosed that of the 50 boys sent up by Queen's College, 38 passed and 23 gained exemption from the London Matriculation. I think the Principal of the College ought to be congratulated on that very high standard of proficiency.

Mr. GONSALVES: Is this vote exceptional, or is there likely to be a larger amount for 1947?

Capt. NOBBS: Allowing two Masters to be on leave throughout the year, the vote would remain at the same figure and I think we can say that it is a fair figure.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you realise that the cost of Queen's College is going up and up while the revenue is not? The revenue is only 16 per cent. of the expenditure; isn't it possible to reduce this item?

Capt. NOBBS: It is not, if we have the same number of boys and make allowance for the same number of Masters to go on leave every year.

Item Y (i) as printed put, the Committee dividing and voting as follows:—

For—Messrs. Thompson, Edun, Lee, Jackson, Dr. Singh, Critchlow, Seaford, the Colonial Treasurer, the Attorney-General, and the Colonial Secretary—10.

Against—Messrs. Jacob, Gonzalves, Percy C. Wight, Austin, Luck-hoo, and C. V. Wight—6.

Did not vote—Mr. Woolford—1.

Item 1 (i) passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I move the insertion of the item on the printed sheet—Salary part-time teacher, \$240. That item was discussed very fully and was included in a supplementary estimate for the current year.

Item agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: As regards "Other Charges" the expenditure in 1944 was \$3,121, and the approved estimate for this year is \$4,475. The estimate for next year is \$5,080. Why can't you keep within your total for last year?

Capt. NOBBS: We will find that prices of chemicals and apparatus have increased out of all proportion. They have been doubled and trebled during the last two or three years. The prices of stationery and other things have also increased. It is absolutely impossible to carry on at the present figure.

The CHAIRMAN: If there is an increase on one item why not make a reduction on another? I never see Heads of Departments attempt to do that. Why not cut out the prizes? Must Government pay for uniforms for the Cadet Company?

Capt. NOBBS: If we do not we would find that the whole thing would go. I think it is a feature of the school that should remain.

The CHAIRMAN: I am not trying to cramp your school but I am pointing out that the expenditure is going up steadily. I cannot remember ever seeing a suggestion from Queen's College that they would do with a little less on some particular item.

Capt. NOBBS: I think the reason for that is that we have cut these items to the limit. If we reduce any further we are going to cause the efficiency of the school to go down. The reason for the Library vote not having been fully expended is because books cannot be obtained from England. They are on order but we cannot get them. A library is absolutely necessary for an establishment that is catering for higher education. We cannot keep pace with the times unless we have an efficient reference library. I cannot see that any of these items can be cut without impairing efficiency.

The CHAIRMAN: Can't you increase your fees? They are the lowest in the West Indies. Are you prepared to try to increase your revenue? If

you do not why should we pay for a Cadet Company? That is a bit of a luxury.

Capt. NOBBS: I think that is a matter for the Board of Governors.

The CHAIRMAN: You are the Principal and I want your opinion.

Capt. NOBBS: We undoubtedly charge the lowest fees in the West Indies, and I think we shall have to put the fees up. I would rather see the fees go up than the efficiency go down.

Mr. JACOB: The increase of \$500 for educational supplies and apparatus is merely guess work. Nobody can estimate with any degree of accuracy what anything will cost, and I think at least that increase of \$500 should be taken off. How does the Principal of Queen's College know that he is going to spend \$500 more next year when he does not know the prices of supplies? My idea is that prices will not go up; they will remain stationary or go down a bit. That is the world trend at least.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I suggest to the Principal that he accept the views of the majority and take off the additional amount, on the understanding that if the prices quoted are higher he could come back to the Council for more money.

Mr. THOMPSON: We have been complaining for some time that the College was not doing its best, and I think it is only fair that the Principal should be given the means of maintaining the standard of the school. I am prepared to support these items because I would certainly like to see the efficiency of the College maintained. We have been saying for a long time that our educational system is not giving satisfaction. We cannot expect progress with a cheeseparing

policy. We should give the Principal every opportunity to maintain the standard of the school.

Mr. LEE: I am prepared to support the suggestion that the extra \$500 be taken off on the understanding that if the quotations for supplies are higher this year we would vote the sum required on supplementary estimate. I also agree that the Principal should be given every means to maintain the efficiency of the school.

Mr. GONSALVES: I was going to support the item in view of the note I see on the opposite page, which says:

"Due to increased cost of school stationery and apparatus; the numbers on the School roll have also increased."

If that explanation had been given a good deal of this discussion might not have taken place. If the number on roll has increased it follows that there must be more stationery and everything else, and there should be increased revenue on the other side.

Mr. SEAFORD: The hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) said that the cost of materials has gone down and will continue to go down.

Mr. JACOB: I said that quotations have not been got, and it is impossible to say what supplies will cost. Therefore the increase of \$500 is mere guess work.

Mr. SEAFORD: The hon. Member went on to say that prices had not gone up, and that the tendency was for prices to go down.

Mr. JACOB: I said so.

Mr. SEAFORD: The tendency is to go up. Invoices which have come within the last few days show that prices are up about 40 per cent.



Item passed as printed.

#### BISHOPS' HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS.

The Headmistress (Mrs. F. H. Allen) was present.

Mr. JACOB: I am sorry to have to make the remarks I am about to make, but I find that the Bishops' High School is not teaching Latin. It is one of the compulsory subjects for the London Matriculation Certificate or exemption if we are going to remain British. From my point of view French is of no practical value, and I would much prefer that my children be taught my own language—Hindustani. I am surprised and I have had to pay very dearly for some of my children not taking Latin and getting the School Certificate. They found themselves barred from a University on that account, and one of my sons has to take a course in which Latin is included. I consider it disgraceful that a school like this should not have someone qualified to teach Latin. I deplore it very much and I hope arrangements will be made to have a qualified Master or Mistress to teach that very desirable subject from now on.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the Principal please reply to the hon. Member's point?

Mrs. ALLEN: The answer is that we do teach Latin. (laughter).

Mr. JACOB: This is no laughing matter. (laughter). I have a daughter there and I asked her a few weeks ago how she was getting on with her Latin. "I am not being taught Latin," she replied. Will the Headmistress say why my daughter is not taught Latin when I arranged with the previous Principal that she should be taught Latin as one of her subjects?

Mrs. ALLEN: She could have it tomorrow if she likes. You have not

had any communication with me on the subject.

Mr. JACOB: I have had communication with the Principal.

Mrs. ALLEN: I am the Principal. We have taken Latin up for the Higher School Certificate.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Item (i)—Temporary Assistance, \$150—is a new item. I take it that that has nothing to do with the substitutes for Mistresses on leave.

Item 1 (c)—7 *Assistant Mistresses Graduate* (\$1,440 x \$120—\$2,160—\$14,040.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It is proposed that this item should be increased to 8 Mistresses with the addition of \$960, bringing the total of the item to \$15,000. The reason is that on the completion of the reconstruction of the school it is anticipated that the new Form IV will require an additional Mistress. One such Mistress has been secured and it is anticipated that she will arrive about May next year. The item will provide her salary for about 7 months.

Item as amended agreed to.

Item 1 (g)—*Substitutes for Mistresses on leave*, \$2,880.

Mr. AUSTIN: There are 19 Masters at Queen's College where \$3,000 has just been voted for substitutes. At the Bishops' High School there are 13 Mistresses and \$2,880 is required for substitutes, a difference of \$120 in favour of Queen's College. Surely that much difference needs some explanation, and I move the reduction of this item to this year's figure—\$1,440.

Mr. JACOB: I would like the Headmistress to say how many pupils are being taught Latin at the present time.

Mrs. ALLEN: I cannot tell the exact number, but every child in the school can take Latin up to Form IV A. A great many ask to be allowed to drop it, and if we think it desirable they do. Quite a considerable number do not take Latin. Those who do not do Latin do English or French. It is a matter of choice.

The CHAIRMAN: But quite a considerable number do take Latin?

Mrs. ALLEN: Much more take Latin than not.

Mr. LEE: I would like to know whether the Headmistress knows that Latin is one of the principal subjects at the University examinations.

The CHAIRMAN: I accept your information. (laughter).

Mr. LEE: It should be compulsory and not a matter of choice.

The CHAIRMAN: I think you are possibly overstating the matter. Quite a number of Universities are not demanding Latin for the entrance examination.

Mrs. ALLEN: Latin is essential if a student wants to get his Intermediate on the Arts side, but it is not essential in everything. If a girl is likely to need to take the Intermediate Arts examination I try to persuade her not to give up Latin.

Mr. JACOB: At the last examination 21 out of 22 girls passed. May I inquire how many passed in Latin?

Mrs. ALLEN: I cannot say off-hand because I have not the list here.

The Committee divided on Mr. Austin's amendment for the reduction of item (g) from \$2,880 to \$1,440. The Chairman requested those Members who were in favour of the item as printed to vote "For."

For—Messrs. Thompson, Jackson, Critchlow, Seaford, Woolford, the Colonial Treasurer, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary—8.

Against—Messrs. Edun, Lee, Jacob, Gonsalves, Percy C. Wight, Austin, Luckhoo, C. V. Wight and Dr. Singh—9.

Amendment carried.

The CHAIRMAN: I thought this would have been the one historic occasion when I would have used my casting vote.

Item (i)—*Temporary Assistance*, \$150.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I move the deletion of this item. I propose to introduce a lump sum item at a later stage.

Item deleted.

#### ESSEQUIBO BOYS' SCHOOL.

Mr. B. P. Bayley, acting Senior Welfare Officer, was present.

Item (c)—*Schoolmaster* (\$720 x \$60—\$1,920), \$840.

Mr. WOOLFORD: This schoolmaster is in a different position from that of other schoolmasters in the Colony. His duties are not confined to education; he works every day, even on Sundays. I think his case is worthy of consideration. He does not come under the Education Department.

The CHAIRMAN: I know of the special circumstances.

Mr. SEAFORD: What is the number of boys in the institution?

The CHAIRMAN: It is a little over 100 now.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: Yes, but it is going up.

Mr. BAYLEY: There are about 102 boys at the moment.

The CHAIRMAN: What is this temporary assistance in item (j)—Temporary Assistance, \$360?

Mr. BAYLEY: That is to engage temporary officers when officers go on leave.

Item 8—*Bakery*, \$3,000.

Mr. LEE: Does the institution still supply the Hospital with bread.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, and gets revenue on the other side.

Item 14—*Maintenance of Stock Farm*, \$770.

Mr. SEAFORD: Is this a new undertaking?

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: This is a new item. It is to encourage the boys in animal husbandry.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I may say that that question has come up and that I have asked the Director of Agriculture to arrange for assistance to be given. A few days ago I sent the file to him on the question.

The CHAIRMAN: Have you purchased this radio as yet?

Mr. BAYLEY: No; it has not yet been purchased. It is felt that there is very little recreation for the boys at the school particularly on wet days and that a radio set would not only provide recreation for them, but would also be of some educational value. The Visiting Committee recommended it and I think it is an item that is very desirable.

The CHAIRMAN: I think there is a good deal to be said for it.

Item passed.

#### FIRE PROTECTION.

Mr. JACOB: There is an increase under the item "Fire Brigade", but perhaps it is necessary in view of the frequent fires we are having.

The CHAIRMAN: There is a point increase of \$300, I see.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Then there is a normal increase for increments.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: There is an increase also on page 23, relating to Georgetown, but this amount would be recovered from the Georgetown Town Council.

Head passed.

#### FOREST DEPARTMENT.

The CHAIRMAN: There is only one item of any possible controversy under this head and that is at sub-head 1 (b)—1 Senior Assistant Conservator of Forests (\$3,744 to \$4,320 by \$144)—\$4,320. It is proposed to put a station in the North West District, so we have to carry this vote.

Mr. SEAFORD: I understood some years ago that there was such a thing as a Forest Trust in this Colony. I would like to know whether it is still in existence.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: If my memory serves me rightly, I would say that it met the other day while I was in England and put some concrete proposals to Government which are being considered. Since my return to the Colony, I arranged a meeting of the Forest Trust but had a great deal of trouble in getting members from New Amsterdam and the country districts

to attend. His Excellency then decided otherwise and the meeting never took place. I can assure hon. Members that I am going to revive the Forest Trust and I would also ask the members to meet more regularly.

Head passed.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: At this stage, I beg to move the following motion which represents item 3 on the Order Paper:—

THAT, this Council approves of the Schedules of Additional Provision for October–November, 1945, required to meet expenditure in excess of the provision made in the Estimates for the year, 1945, which have been laid on the table.

Hon. Members, I should think, have the Schedule to which I am referring. It is a very formidable cable. There is one Schedule with a total of \$1,913,463 and another Supplementary Schedule with a total of \$184,340. I should like to explain that of the total in the first Schedule, \$1,057,000 is for Development and Welfare items which are being financed from local funds. The general Budget items total \$623,528 and there is an item under Colonial Emergency Measures for \$213,000. That rather large item of \$326,000 is based on a number of smaller items and these alone total \$529,000. There is an item to cover the increases recently approved for Subordinate Medical Employees—\$58,000; an item for the refund of Income Tax and Excess Profits Tax—\$55,000; an item for Pensions and Lump Sum Payments—\$56,000; then a formidable item under Transport and Harbours—\$275,000; an item for Sea Defences—\$23,000; and an item under Public Works Extraordinary—\$35,000. The other small items come up to only about \$1,000.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: With regard to item 2 under the head Legislature in the first Schedule — Travelling Expenses and Subsistence Allowance of Members of the Councils whilst engaged on the business of the Councils, \$500—I cannot help observing that these three Members are costing us quite a lot for the use of motor cars.

Mr. JACOB: I asked for details relating to this item and I was given some figures which showed that the expenditure up to October 31, 1945, amounted to \$1,375. I am not making any further comment, but I think there is something wrong.

Item passed.

#### LABOUR DEPARTMENT.

Mr. LEE: I see from sub-head 1 (h) — Temporary Clerical Assistance, \$474—that there is an increase in the number of Temporary Clerical Assistants in this Department. May I ask whether the additional clerks were taken from another Department or have just been brought into the Service?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It is just possible that temporary employees from another Department were sent there.

Mr. JACOB: This Department is like the B.P.I. (Bureau of Publicity and Information). It is a new creation and I am disappointed to see how its expenditure is going up. Apart from salaries for the clerical staff, the expenditure is far too high, to my mind. I will refer more fully to it when we get to the Estimates.

Item passed.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

Item 2.— *Transport and Travelling, \$2,500.*

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I beg to move that this item be increased to \$4,000.



Amendment put and agreed to.

MEDICAL—HOSPITALS AND  
DISPENSARIES.

Item 1 (13)— *Nurses and Servants*,  
\$58,000.

Mr. LEE: I would like to point out that there is some discontent with regard to the increases recently recommended by Government for these Subordinate Medical Employees. Salaries of \$15 per month have been increased to \$16—an increase of 7 per cent. roughly—while there is a bonus of 25 per cent. on the total salary, but when this total increase of about 33 per cent. is compared with the increased cost of living, it would be seen that it is very inadequate. I do not know whether the Labour Department has lost sight of the fact its own records have disclosed that the cost of living has increased by over 60 per cent. These Subordinate Medical Employees have been getting very small salaries and I think that if their case was carefully considered by the Labour Department—in the light of the very high cost of living—that Department would have given Government better advice. I do not think the wages paid by employers other than Government should have been taken seriously into consideration in order to decide what salaries should be given to the employees in question and I would ask Government to reconsider this matter as soon as possible. I think the increase of the basic rates should be equivalent to the increase in the cost of living, even if it was given as a War Bonus. I do not know how Government could expect \$12 or \$15 per month to provide a worker with food, lodging and clothing, to say nothing about the wives and children who are dependent on some of these employees. It is also to be noticed that Government has increased the salaries from January 1, 1944, with free uniforms, but has not made any allowance for the uniforms that were not supplied since 1944. It is hoped, there-

fore, that apart from the retrospective increase in salaries, some allowance would be paid to these employees with respect to uniforms.

Another point I desire to raise is that the Medical Committee is reported to have recommended a raise in the status of certain posts, with increased salaries, but Government has refused to approve of the recommendation. It must be presumed that the Committee went carefully into the details and, therefore, Government had no right to turn down the recommendation. I am sure that if Government reconsiders the whole matter carefully, it would be seen that there are certain inequalities in the present salaries and the employees concerned are anxious to have them remedied. I should also state that the employees intend to make further representations in the matter.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. Member has implied that with the high cost of living wages should be brought up to date, but I do not think he is quite right. There is this important point I want to make: The actual cost of living today, according to the index figures collected, is less than it was in 1943, when there was no great increase in wages. The hon. Member has also said that War Bonus was paid in order to meet the cost of living, but I would submit that War Bonus was never up to the increased cost of living. One never pays up to the increased cost of living; the increased cost of living, is partly the burden of the community and I just want to make the point that the index shows that the actual cost of living now is less than it was in 1943.

Mr. JACOB: I rise to support the hon. Member for Essequibo River in his plea for better wages for these employees. I have been stressing in this Council time and time again that Government must pay their employees a living wage. Recently, a Circular was issued increasing the wages of

certain Government employees from 32 to 48 cents per day, and I want to refer to this 48 cents per day rate. I think it is a shame to pay that to nurses and other servants in Public Institutions where they are liable to contamination by contagious diseases and things like that. It should be remembered that some of them eventually become skilled employees and that we should keep these people physically and mentally fit to do their work. I think the minimum wage for them should be \$25 rising to \$40 per month. A minimum wage of \$12 rising to \$16 per month has been fixed for certain other workers, but I think the minimum should be \$20 per month—an average of 80 cents per day for 26 working days. We must not forget that this money remains in the Colony, since these employees use it for food, clothing, etc., and Government gets it back in some shape or form. I deprecate this idea which is existing in the Crown Colonies to keep wages down as much as possible, and I will speak very strongly on the matter whenever I have an opportunity to do so. It is time for the people at the Colonial Office who administer the Government here to realise that workers should get a living wage. No one can live properly on 80 cents per day and when the cost-of-living figures are investigated it would be found that some 1,400 families are living on less than \$6 per week each. If the expenditure by these families could be increased, the benefit to the Colony would be far better. Even the 80 cents per day for which I am pleading now is not a living wage; it is merely a kind of existing wage.

Mr. CRITCHLOW: The main reason for dissatisfaction especially among the Mental Hospital workers, is that even before the War their basic wage was too low. I hope they would get an opportunity to meet representatives of the Labour Department or some other Department concerned and put up their case for consideration. I have seen the figures relating to the increases and I

repeat that the basic wages of the Mental Hospital workers was too low even before the War. I hope some further consideration would be given to these workers.

Mr. LEE: In reply to the Colonial Secretary, I desire to say that the cost of living between 1939 and 1943 was the same as in 1945, but what I would stress is that the basic pay of \$12 per month was too low even before the War. That is what Government should seriously consider. In Government's housing programme it is proposed that a house with a living room, a bedroom and a kitchen should be rented at \$10 per month and one could easily see that if this amount is taken from a salary of \$16 very little would be left for the worker to live on. I therefore feel certain that Your Excellency would give sympathetic consideration to the case of the workers concerned.

The CHAIRMAN: Government's main object was to make this money available—to give the matter legislative sanction. I know we will pass the item and I will consult with the hon. Nominated Member (Mr. Critchlow) to see what particular channel we should pursue.

Item passed

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

Item 16 — *Refunds of Revenue*  
*Income Tax, \$45,000; Excess Profits Tax, \$10,000.*

Mr. EDUN: This question of Income Tax has now become a permanent machinery for the collection of internal revenue and I think Government ought to consider the advisability of holding open Courts for inquiry into Income Tax matters. In the United Kingdom such Courts are held and I do not see why they could not be held here also, especially as we have to get people Income-Tax minded.

The CHAIRMAN: Not open Courts; I do not think it would be advisable to hold them here.

Mr. EDUN: I mean for Income Tax appeals.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Income Tax appeals in this Colony are heard in Chambers and the results are made public if it is considered necessary to do so. I do not think the actual hearing should be made public.

Mr. EDUN: The Income Tax machinery is permanent machinery since this tax will be collected for all time in this Colony, and there is no reason why open Courts could not be held for the hearing of appeals locally as is done in the United Kingdom. This is a small community and there is no necessity for anyone to know everybody's business. There are no wealthy people here.

The CHAIRMAN: We will take notice of what you have said. So far as Government officers are concerned, we are the sitting prey.

Mr. EDUN: I have received Income Tax papers but do not even know how to read them; I have to get assistance from an expert.

Item passed.

Council resumed.

The PRESIDENT: I want to express my gratitude for the progress achieved. We will meet again at half-past eight tonight.

Council adjourned accordingly.

#### NIGHT SESSION.

8.30 p.m.—

The Council resumed.

#### PRESENT:

His Excellency the Governor.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.

The Hon. the Attorney-General.

The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer.

The Hon. E. G. Woolford, O.B.E., K.C.

The Hon. F. J. Seaford, C.B.E.

The Hon. H. N. Critchlow.

The Hon. J. B. Singh, O.B.E.

The Hon. M. B. G. Austin, O.B.E.

The Hon. Percy C. Wight, O.B.E.

The Hon. J. Gonsalves, O.B.E.

The Hon. Peer Bacchus.

The Hon. H. C. Humphrys, K.C.

The Hon. C. R. Jacob.

The Hon. J. W. Jackson, O.B.E.

The Hon. T. Lee.

The Hon. V. Roth.

The Hon. T. T. Thompson.

The PRESIDENT: I am very grateful to Members for being so good as to attend to help us through tonight. We will move into Committee to resume consideration of the Supplementary Provision under Head XXVII — Pensions and Gratuities.

#### COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and resumed consideration of the Schedules of Additional Provision for October-November, 1945, required to meet expenditure in excess of the provision made in the Estimates for the year 1945.

Items under Pensions and Gratuities passed without amendment.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

Mr. LEE: I understand that on more than one occasion the officer who makes up the pay lists for the Boerasirie-Bonasika scheme was authorized to make payments. I do not know whether it is true but it was brought to my notice and I felt it my duty to bring it to the attention of this Council, because it is not a method by which proper checks can be kept. I am asking Government to inquire into the matter and see that it is not repeated.

The CHAIRMAN: I will bring it to the notice of the Director.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT—  
DRAINAGE, IRRIGATION AND SEA  
DEFENCES—ANNUALLY RECURRENT.

Item 2. — *Maintenance of Kettings*  
\$1,800.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I would like to be supplied with information as to how many kettings are being maintained under this vote.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think Government would like to have notice of that question.

The CHAIRMAN: You have asked a rather delicate question. In the meantime may we pass the comparatively small provision?

Item agreed to.

PUBLIC WORKS—EXTRAORDINARY.

Item 2. — *Roads and Bridges—  
Reconditioning of Issano Road.* \$35,000.

Mr. LEE: I would like to know whether the officer in charge of these roads has reached the age limit, and what action is Government taking in the matter.

The CHAIRMAN: The officer in charge of the work is now engaged on a special contract and is not a member of the regular establishment. If you are referring to the officer in charge up there, I believe he is substantially above the age limit, but I do not think he is on the Fixed Establishment. He is on a temporary engagement without the rights of a public officer.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I would like to inquire whether all the lorries of the Transport Department are being used. I see a provision here for the purchase of seven lorries. Some of the lorries of the Transport Department might be transferred to the Public Works Department.

The CHAIRMAN: Conditions are so bad at Issano that we have to be quite sure of the type of lorries we use. We have to send up lorries in good condition. I think I would be right in saying that none of the existing Public Works lorries is being used.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I am thinking of the fleet of lorries kept at Bartica.

The CHAIRMAN: Those are lorries of the Transport Department. I think the Public Works Department has one or two small lorries used on the road service, but these lorries were specially purchased for the work.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: Have they been purchased already?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I went to the Public Works Department and had a look at them. They are special six-wheeled lorries, the bodies of which are now being fitted by the Public Works Department.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I am under the impression that some of the fleet of lorries being used by the Transport Department at Bartica are



short of tyres and are not being used. In view of the curtailment of the service some of these lorries might be used for other purposes elsewhere.

The CHAIRMAN: The actual reconditioning of the road is being done by the Public Works Department and the proposition was that we should get lorries upon which we could rely. That was mentioned by me in Council as a matter of emergency expenditure. That is why they have been purchased and some of them have already been put into use. It was a matter of desperate urgency. We either had to close down the service and revert to the dangerous and very expensive river service, or go on with the work. The Director of Public Works is going up specially tomorrow morning to inspect the work.

Mr. LEE: I do not know whether Government has considered the possibility of some saving by amalgamating the two services.

The CHAIRMAN: They should be. For many years it has been the Transport and Harbours service, whereas the Public Works Department merely looked after the maintenance of the roadway. I believe that many years ago the road was maintained by the Transport Department but that responsibility was given back to the Public Works Department as a better arrangement. On the whole I think it is better.

Mr. LEE: It was pointed out to me that one of the advantages to be gained by amalgamating the two services is that the lorry drivers are familiar with the various parts of the road which require repair so as to save the springs of the lorries, and report them to the Road Transport Officer. If the two services were co-ordinated the Road Transport Officer would be able to direct his attention to those

particular spots, whereas the officer now in charge of the road could ignore any request if he cared to do so.

The CHAIRMAN: You suggest that the two services should work together. I directed last Monday that when the Director of Public Works was going up he should take the Road Transport Officer along with him, and that is being done. They are going together tomorrow.

Mr. ROTH: The hon. Member has apparently not studied Mr. Rooke's report. The officer in charge of the road goes over the road quite regularly and is in a position to know the bad spots—even more so than the drivers of the lorries.

Mr. SEAFORD: What the hon. Member is suggesting now was the practice years ago but it was found unsatisfactory. That is why the present method has been adopted.

#### COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE SCHEMES.

##### Item E6.—*Housing of Teachers in Rural Areas, \$6,000*

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: Will the grant for the housing of teachers come under next year's allocation?

The CHAIRMAN: The position is that the grant is approved, and if we care to go on spending money up to the total amount we can, but it will be charged up against our future allocation. On the other hand, if we like to stop it we can save the money.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: Will this be taken into account in connection with the 2½ million dollars allocation?

The CHAIRMAN: No, it will be paid under the 1940 Development and Welfare Act which will be operative

until the end of March next year. None of these things will be charged against next year's allocation.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: On schemes which are now in progress, any money which has not been spent on the 21st March, 1946, which is the day before the new Act comes into force, will be charged against the new allocation. We expect to spend this money before the 31st of December.

The CHAIRMAN: There will be further provision next year, at any rate for the first three months, which will not be charged against the new allocation but will be paid for out of the old. The same applies to primary schools.

#### INTERIOR DEVELOPMENT.

Item I.D.I.—*Interior Airfields Experimental Work*, \$16,800

Mr. JACOB: May I ask where these airfields are being constructed, and when will they be completed?

The CHAIRMAN: One is at Manari and is in use now. A second is at Mahdia near the Potaro River, of which a survey is completed, but the actual work has not been begun, pending the return of the engineer, Mr. Harris, of the B. G. Consolidated Goldfields, Ltd. A third is at Baramita in the North West District, where a waterway is being prepared for seaplanes to land and take off. The fourth is in the Cuyuni at Aurora where the Cuyuni Goldfields Co. are operating. In addition there are about five landing strips.

Mr. JACOB: Is Government satisfied that the one at Baramita will be of much use to the North West District?

The CHAIRMAN: If it is a success it will make a great difference to gold working in the district. I flew

over it about three weeks or a month ago and I saw the place where we have already begun to build a dam across the creek to form a waterway big enough to land a small plane. If that is done then we will have quick transportation from Georgetown or from Morawhanna right into the goldfields. There are four separate organizations working within a few miles of Baramita now. It would be of great value but I cannot guarantee that the work will be successful. It is an experiment which will not cost very much. If we can keep the water below the landing place the next step would be to construct a land aerodrome.

Mr. JACOB: How will people from Morawhanna get there; will they travel by plane?

The CHAIRMAN: It will be quite easy for a plane to get there in half-an-hour but transportation is, of course, by river.

Mr. JACOB: Would it be practical for people to go from Morawhanna to this place? Wouldn't the cost be very prohibitive?

The CHAIRMAN: The actual cost of running one of those small planes is quite small. The consumption of petrol will be small. Of course the economics of the service will have to be considered and charges made accordingly. The Cuyuni Co., for instance, charters planes and pays whatever the rate is. We will not have a regular schedule as we have in the Mazaruni, unless we knew that the volume of traffic offering would be substantial enough.

Mr. LEE: Will the service be restricted to passengers, or will cargo also be carried?

The CHAIRMAN: Ultimately it will be principally a freight service. That is the general intention. Freight

will be more important than passengers but still there will be a passenger service. It depends largely on the type of plane we are able to use. A small hydroplane cannot take very much freight, but once we get land planes and a bigger landing field we would be able to take much freight and machinery.

Mr. LEE: This is in the experimental stage, and so also is the prospect of the area.

Mr. ROTH: I rise to a point of correction. That area has been worked for gold during the last 20 years.

The CHAIRMAN: The existence of gold in that area is quite well known. It is only a matter of providing facilities to work it.

Mr. LEE: It may be known to certain people but it is not yet developed. What I am concerned about is that if development of the area is not carried on when the work is completed shrubs would take over the whole Station, and the money being expended would have gone with the wind. I am suggesting that as these fields are open Government might see its way to convey passengers and freight at reasonable rates in order that the area might be developed immediately.

The CHAIRMAN: Of course the answer is "Yes," but I will not give a guarantee.

#### FORESTRY

Item F 1.—*Forest Division, North West District, \$600.*

Mr. JACOB: May I ask where this Station will be situated?

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot tell you yet. A surveyor is going up there specifically to select a site.

Mr. JACOB: I trust it will be of practical value. If we are going to spend \$8,000 over a period of years I hope it will not be like many other projects in the past.

The CHAIRMAN: I trust so myself.

Mr. ROTH: I can assure the hon. Member that this matter has been given very careful consideration by the Interior Development Committee. The hon. Member should himself know the conditions in the North West District. The forests there are of a different type to those in the rest of the Colony, and are being exploited in a manner not beneficial to the country at the present moment. That is the main reason why it has been decided to establish this Station in the North West District. It will be of the greatest economic value to the district.

Mr. JACOB: My friend knows all about it. I am only taking the precaution to see that the money to be spent will be of some value. I have seen a chart or some estimate prepared by the late Conservator of Forests showing that we have millions of dollars' worth of timber in this Colony, and I think some people believe that we have practically all our wealth in our forests. That estimate was prepared about 20 years ago. We know there is wealth in our forests but the trouble is to get at that wealth economically. The Forestry Department should have been run on a paying basis but it has not been. We should benefit by past experience. If we attempt to do anything we should make reasonably sure that we spend money on a profitable basis.

The CHAIRMAN: I quite agree with you.

Mr. ROTH: In view of the remarks of the last speaker may I ask Government to consider seriously the publication of the recent report of the

Assistant Conservator of Forests on the various industries in the North West District? It would set the hon. Member's mind at ease and would be of great value otherwise.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member says that we type and circulate too much.

Mr. JACOB: I think one hon. Member suggested that a loan should be raised on the strength of that, but those who know the value of money thought it just so much nonsense. The hon. Member knows that if we are going to spend \$40,000 we do not only want to get paper value but actual value.

The CHAIRMAN: We all agree with you. (Laughter).

Item agreed to.

#### TREASURY.

##### Item Tr. I.—*Rice Production Development*, \$735,554.

Mr. JACOB: May I inquire what is the present state of affairs? Has all this money been actually spent on the Abary Rice Cultivation Scheme? I see the sum of \$307,000 for the purchase of a rice mill, etc.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Not all of the money has been spent. This is a proportion of the expenditure now in progress. The hon. Member may have heard that the mill has already arrived in the Colony, or parts of it, and buildings are being erected now. We are taking the opportunity to put as much on this estimate as we think necessary to cover expenditure up to the end of the year.

I have to apologise to hon. Members with regard to this particular vote. It really has nothing to do with the Treasury; the intention was that it

should be put under the favourite Department of the hon. Member—the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. JACOB: I am not concerned about the Department under which the item appears; what I am concerned about is information relating to this mill.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: All this was gone into when Resolution No. XXX. of March 2, 1945, was passed. This expenditure was based on the terms of that Resolution and this Council voted all the money.

Mr. JACOB: I am not in a position to offer any criticism—constructive or destructive—at the moment. All I want to know is, where is the mill, when would it be erected and when would it begin to mill rice?

Mr. SEAFORD: I can say that practically all the machinery is in the Colony now. The difficulty is to obtain sufficient machinery to erect the building that would carry the machinery. When this building would be erected depends entirely upon when the materials could be got. The mill would be near the site of the Mahaicony-Abary cultivation.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I may add that the construction engineer arrived in the Colony last month and is now engaged in checking final supplies for the erection of the machinery.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I do not follow the whole thing. One hon. Member has explained that the building for the machinery cannot be completed unless they get materials. Why then has this item been put on the Estimates?

Mr. SEAFORD: The work is in hand and it would not be long before the building is completed because they would get priority for the materials. Only the woodwork remains to be done.



Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: That does not satisfy me. Is it necessary to spend any money between now and the end of the year? I would like to know how much of this money has been spent already.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: This money has been put to cover as much of the expenditure as has been or would be incurred to the end of the year. As has been already stated, the machinery has arrived in the Colony and that is a very expensive part of the business. These bills have already been paid by the Crown Agents. If this money is not spent it would go over to next year and I hope to spend as much as possible by March 31.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I would suggest that if all the materials are not supplied by March 31, we should still pay for them once the order is accepted.

Mr. SEAFORD: They will be supplied.

The CHAIRMAN: We will get as much as possible by March 31.

Mr. JACOB: So you are going to pay for the materials before you get them?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I did not say so.

JACOB: I take it that a portion of this money is intended to meet any deficit for 1945. Am I right in coming to that conclusion?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No.

The CHAIRMAN: This is a covering vote.

Mr. LEE: Why was it not put under Treasury?

The CHAIRMAN: The Colonial Treasurer has said that it would look much better under Agriculture.

Item passed.

#### COLONIAL EMERGENCY MEASURES.

Item 1—*Miscellaneous, \$230,000.*

Mr. JACOB: I do not think any emergency exists now. I was not present when Your Excellency gave hon. Members of this Council certain information relating to this matter at an informal meeting. I understand that this Colony has been paying for all these Colonial Emergency Measures and I think the time has come when there should be drastic cuts in this expenditure. I do not know if there is any Colonial emergency now, but rice expansion and other necessary schemes should be tackled so that we could have some kind of development here. I think some of the action taken by those responsible under this head has been very irritating. I do not know if it has merited praise, but I am going to ask that the bulk of this vote be removed.

The CHAIRMAN: We are going to bring the matter up on the Estimates for next year and we have already made a reduction of about \$250,000. I think another \$40,000 might very well come off as other items are cut down. We will have an opportunity to discuss the matter then.

Mr. JACOB: The original amount was \$500,000 and I take it that by next year we would have already spent this further \$230,000. This is a large sum of money and Government should take opportunity to get rid of some of these people whose work is of very little value at present, although it may have been work of value at some stage. This expenditure would be of no real value to the community or the Colony as a whole. The most that can be said is that the money would be of some use to those who receive it and that it would remain in the Colony, but it is wanted to do things that are

constructive and therefore drastic steps should be taken to reduce the expenditure to practically nothing.

The CHAIRMAN: We would undertake to reduce it very considerably next year. If we had not taken certain action under this head, this Colony would have been in a very bad and critical position.

Mr. JACOB: I am—.

The CHAIRMAN: I am sorry, but you must allow me to speak.

Mr. JACOB: I thought you were finished.

The CHAIRMAN: Whatever criticism is to be offered fundamentally, the Colony has had supplies distributed through the Commodity Control which otherwise it would not have had. The organisation has made good progress and we are all reluctant to see it go.

Mr. JACOB: I am in favour of price control to some extent, but I am not in favour of what is going on here. I have had much experience in business over a long period of years and I would say that those responsible for the distribution of articles do not know their business—do not know what they are doing. Whenever one officer is asked about something, he would put you on to another officer and in the end one fails to get the information wanted. This is what is going on all the time and I think this money is being actually wasted.

The CHAIRMAN: There is an old proverb which says: *Errare est humanum*.

Item passed.

#### SCARCITY OF INSULIN.

Mr. ROTH: Under the head Medical I just want to say that it has been brought to my notice that it is impos-

sible to get insulin in the Colony at the moment. There are one or two unfortunate people who could only exist through the continued use of this drug, but it is not to be obtained locally. One particular friend of mine, fortunately, obtained permission to import some privately, but I think that in the interest of the public Government should take steps to obtain some.

The CHAIRMAN: Have you told that to the Director of Medical Services?

Mr. ROTH: No, sir.

Mr. SEAFORD: Who usually supplies this individual—the Medical Department or a private firm?

Mr. ROTH: My information is that it is not obtainable in the Colony at the present moment.

Mr. SEAFORD: That might be so, but there are many other things that are not procurable because of world shortage.

Dr. SINGH: A private drug store supplied the party in question. What is imported by the Medical Department is only for use by Government.

The CHAIRMAN: If the private drug store cannot get it, then we cannot do anything.

Council resumed.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES— OCTOBER-NOVEMBER, 1945.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I beg to move that this Council adopts, formally, the following motion standing in my name as item 3 on the Order Paper:—

THAT, this Council approves of the Schedules of Additional Provision for October—November, 1945, required to meet expenditure—in excess of the provision made in the Estimates for the year 1945, which have been laid on the table,

Mr. SEAFORD seconded

Motion put and agreed to.

ESTIMATES, 1946.

The Council resumed consideration in Committee of the Estimates of Expenditure for 1946.

LABOUR DEPARTMENT.

Item 1 (a) —*Commissioner of Labour, \$5,760*

Mr. LEE: I desire to ask Government to consider the votes relating to this Department very carefully and to see that nothing is done that would be regarded afterwards as an oversight on the part of Government. If I remember rightly, when the salary of the Commissioner of Labour was being voted—before he arrived from England—it was stated that there was no officer in the Colony who was qualified to render the necessary service in that respect. It was realised that the Commissioner of Labour had to perform very important duties and after the salary was voted the Imperial Government sent Mr. Colin Fraser, a highly trained officer, to this Colony in order that the Labour Department should be carried on in the manner required by the Ministry of Labour in England. Mr. Fraser rendered very valuable service indeed, and I do not think anyone who came into contact with him regretted the fact that a salary of £1,200 per annum had been voted for the post. This officer went away rather unexpectedly, however, and a new Commissioner of Labour has been appointed at the same salary. It is my opinion—and also that of other Members of this Council—that this officer should not be paid the same salary as his predecessor who was a highly qualified man. The salary is higher than that received by several heads of Departments who have greater responsibility to carry and with all due respect to the present holder of the

office, I think a reduction should be made in the salary of the Commissioner of Labour. I think comparative reductions should also be made in the salaries of the Deputy Commissioner of Labour and the Inspectors of Labour. There are in other Departments officers who went to England and other places and obtained qualifications after years of study, and yet they are not being paid salaries as high as those set out under this head.

Mr. SEAFORD: I do not want to interrupt the hon. Member, but I would like to know what are the qualifications he referred to when he said other officers went to England to obtain them?

Mr. LEE: Both academic and otherwise—in Law, Medicine and other studies. Some of them have obtained the best possible qualifications and whether that was done at the expense of this Government or otherwise, they spent time and money in order to advance themselves and to be of better service to this Colony. Here, for instance, we have the Deputy Commissioner of Labour at a higher salary than a Magistrate on page 34. A Magistrate's salary is \$2,400 rising to \$3,600 per annum, whilst the salary of the Deputy Commissioner of Labour is \$3,600 rising to \$4,320. I cannot conceive how Government, knowing the conditions which exist in this Colony, could permit such salaries to be paid to unqualified persons in this Labour Department.

Further, if we look around we would see that several of these officers are not carrying out their duties in the spirit intended when this Department was being created. The spirit intended was that the officers should endeavour to work in harmony with the people all over the Colony and to see that employers do not take undue advantage of workers, whether on the estates or the wharves, or in any other sphere of

activity. If one looks around, however, he would find that many workers are very much afraid of their employers and while I would not say that all these workers are efficient, I know that some of them are and that there should be a better relationship between workers and employers. The workers should be educated as to how they could become more efficient, and that is one of the duties of the Department of Labour. Even as regards the inspection of working hours and other conditions, it would be found that the Labour officers have failed in their duties and I sincerely hope that Government would look into this matter. As a matter of fact, I am inclined to feel that the money being paid to these officers is just being wasted and that it would be better to scrap this Department, leaving the workers to fight for themselves.

Mr. GONSALVES: I have listened to the remarks of the hon. Member who has just taken his seat and what has struck me as being amusing, or perhaps, interesting and unique, is that he—a Labour leader—should be attacking the salaries proposed for officers in the Labour Department. One should have thought that the hon. Member would have asked that other salaries and wages be increased, rather than suggesting that the salaries of these Labour officers be reduced. That is a rather incongruous way of tackling the matter, and if I were the hon. Member I would have raised my argument in a different way and when we came to the head "Magistrates" I would have urged that the minimum salary of a Magistrate should be \$3,600 because the minimum salary of the Deputy Commissioner of Labour is \$3,600. I would also have used the argument that a Magistrate who is a qualified lawyer should not receive a lower salary than the Deputy Commissioner of Labour. If the hon. Member had adopted such a course, I would have supported him.

Mr. LEE: I appreciate the views to reconsider the position, otherwise I had taken the trouble to find out as I have done that these Labour officers are not carrying out their duties efficiently, he would not have agreed that we should pay them the salaries proposed here.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you wish to move a reduction?

Mr. LEE: I am asking Government to reconsider the position, otherwise I would move a reduction of the items. I think the maximum salary of the Commissioner of Labour should be \$4,800 per annum.

Mr. JACOB: I am rather amused at the remarks of the hon. Member for Georgetown South. Whether a man is a Labour leader or any other kind of leader, he should desire to see fairplay—justice to all concerned. This Council decided to import a Labour Commissioner trained in Trade Union methods and so it was decided that a salary of £1,000 per annum should be offered for the post. Your Excellency would recollect that it was subsequently intimated to hon. Members at an informal meeting that it was impossible to secure the services of a trained man from the Ministry of Labour for £1,000 and that the Secretary of State had said we could get one for £1,200. It was not a question of money, but of creating a better relationship between workers and employers, and I think every one is fully satisfied that Mr. Fraser did his best and that he served this country well before he went away. I do not think Government can say that the gentleman who now fills the post is equal to Mr. Fraser in ability or in other respects. We have now an officer who is not specially trained—academically or otherwise and—

The CHAIRMAN: On the contrary, Mr. Bissell is a professional trade unionist.



Mr. SEAFORD: Wasn't Mr. Fraser trained also?

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Fraser was an employee of the Ministry of Labour—a Government official. Mr. Bissell is not a Government officer, but he is trained in Trade Union methods. He is an expert trade unionist.

Mr. JACOB: I have some knowledge of this matter.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: What His Excellency has said is true. The hon. Member should know that the Commissioner of Labour has gone through the very hard school of Trade Unionism in Scotland and in the United Kingdom. He knows the whole of Trade Unionism and you cannot beat him.

Mr. JACOB: I don't think the present Commissioner of Labour knows anything about Transport House and the Labour people in London proper. I know that as a matter of fact, but I would not argue about individuals at all. I do not want personalities brought into matters of this kind. Let us take the Commissioner of Police; he gets £1 000 per annum, but is it going to be said that his post is not more important than that of the Commissioner of Labour? Then, let us take the Director of Education who also gets £1,000 per annum, is the post of Commissioner of Labour more important than his?

The CHAIRMAN: You are dealing with salaries on the Civil List. Why compare these officers with a Trade Union expert such as is required for the post of Commissioner of Labour? In the case of the Labour Department, we do need officers who would come here and give entire satisfaction. Both Mr. Fraser and Mr. Bissell are qualified men. Mr. Fraser was seconded by the Ministry of Labour to come out

here, while Mr. Bissell who is a trained and experienced Trade Unionist has had to give up all his prospects and his rights to promotion at home in coming here. In other words we have to go into the open market and get a man and pay him what we have to give this officer in consideration of his age, length of service and prospects. Your comparison with the ordinary Civil Service, particularly the Civil List Department, is not a valid comparison at all in my opinion. The only comparison is the time we have to go out of our way to get some special officer and pay the market price for him. That is the position, I think, in the Labour Department.

Mr. JACOB: I respectfully submit that all this does not apply to Mr. Bissell at the moment, because he came out here as Deputy Commissioner of Labour and his salary was \$3,840 per annum. He found it convenient to accept that salary and come out here. No one grudges giving him a substantial increase but I think Government ought to know that it is causing some amount of heart-burning in the Service.

The CHAIRMAN: That is because of the extraordinary petty-mindedness of the Government Service, but I personally pay no attention to it. I am surprised that Unofficial Members take up that extraordinary pettiness of mind on behalf of Government servants.

Mr. JACOB: I am concerned with the economical management of this Colony. I term it management because I look upon the Government as something like a business concern. We cannot have officers of the Government Heads of Departments for that matter, —feeling dissatisfied.

The CHAIRMAN: The remedy is perfectly clear—they can resign, and I will tell them so.

Mr. JACOB: Perhaps that would be one remedy, but I think it is the duty of this Council to sit here dispassionately and go into these matters and offer suggestions. If Government is not prepared to accept a recommendation from this Council then the matter rests with Government which must bear the responsibility. I respectfully submit that it is my duty to make these comparisons. This Department is just like the B.P.I., and I suggest that Government take the matter back to the Executive Council to reconsider the whole scale of salaries in this Department and submit a scale more comparable with other officers of Government.

The CHAIRMAN: That will be done.

Mr. JACOB: I claim to know something about this matter and Government knows that I know. I have had intimate knowledge of labour conditions in this Colony extending over a long number of years. I say no more since Your Excellency has promised to reconsider the matter in Executive Council. The Colony cannot afford to pay these high salaries to officers who do very little work.

Mr. LEE: As Your Excellency has indicated that you will reconsider the whole head in Executive Council I withdraw my amendment.

Mr. CRITCHLOW: I would not like to see this matter referred back to the Executive Council, for the simple reason that the Labour Department serves a very useful purpose. I can assure this Council that since this Department has been established we have had less trade disputes in the Colony, and there is more co-operation between the employers and the workers. The Commissioner of Labour has a lot of work to do. I am not in agreement with my comrades. We must have trained men from Great Britain to do this work. When I was in England I was asked by members of the Labour

Party whether we were satisfied with the work of the Labour Department in this Colony. At the time Mr. Fraser was Labour Commissioner, and I can assure hon. Members that in Mr. Bissell we have a worthy successor as Head of the Department, and we should not grudge him this increase of salary.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I would like to say on behalf of Government that I absolutely disagree with the hon. Members for Essequibo River and North-Western District. I think the Labour Department performs extremely useful work. I have the very highest admiration for Mr. Fraser and Mr. Bissell, and I see both sides of this question. Hon. Members will probably know that the job of the Labour Commissioner and his officers is to form good judgment of matters in dispute and to help trade unions. If hon. Members think that the Labour Commissioner and his officers should adopt only the views of employees they are entirely wrong. They would fail in their purpose if they did so. We have been very fortunate in having the Labour Department in matters in which the present Commissioner has been concerned. I have received fair and forthright judgment from him. I strongly resent the remarks of the hon. Members for North-Western District and Essequibo River that the officers of the Labour Department are not doing their work. I cannot say that I have had personal experience of the work of some of the junior officers of the Department, but so far as the Commissioner of Labour is concerned I would like this Council to know that I could not wish to serve with a better Commissioner.

The CHAIRMAN: I said I would consider the matter in Executive Council, but I would like to point out that in a general way it would only be applicable in the future, because the present holders of the posts are on con-

tract with Government which we cannot break. Hon. Members must realize that.

Mr. JACOB: Aren't they on the Fixed Establishment?

The CHAIRMAN: That is the same thing. If you are on the Fixed Establishment you have a contract with Government.

Mr. JACOB: But after a time the terms of their engagement would be reviewed.

The CHAIRMAN: No, I could not undertake to do that. If you reduce it, it would not be effective for a long time. Would the Commissioner like to make any comment?

Mr. BISSELL (Commissioner of Labour): Sir, my only purpose is to defend my staff. What this Council does about my salary is a matter for the Council to decide, and I have my own remedy. Where the matter touches me personally I am not concerned, but for one year tomorrow the Department of Labour has been struggling with a very short staff. We have been two executive officers short since the 14th December, 1944. Every member of the staff has complained bitterly of the amount of work he has had to carry. My staff consists of a Deputy Inspector of Labour, who was born in the Colony, three Inspectors of Labour, and three Assistant Inspectors of Labour whom we are trying to train in the work of a Labour Department. If the staff is not yet up to the mark it is rather a pity that sons of the Colony should be criticized in the manner they have been by the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) who does not know the first thing about the duties these men have to carry out.

I resent it bitterly because I have driven these young men as they have never been driven before. In my view they have acquitted themselves exceedingly well, and I am proud of them if the hon. Member is not.

Mr. JACOB: I did not speak of all the persons employed in the Department, I can—

Mr. BISSELL: I know what you said.

Mr. JACOB: I would ask the Commissioner to address his remarks to the Chair and not to me personally.

Mr. BISSELL: The hon. Member claims to know something about the Labour Department and the basis upon which the Imperial Government decided to recommend that this Department should be set up. I suggest to him that he read the Secretary of State's despatch or Circular on the subject at the time when Mr. Malcolm Macdonald was Secretary of State for the Colonies. I would also advise him to read Mr. Orde Browne's recommendation in connection with these matters. He is, I think, Labour Adviser to the Colonial Office. The hon. Member will find it laid down by Mr. Orde Browne that the officers of the Department of Labour should not be paid less than a District Commissioner. That was the guide laid down by Mr. Orde Browne, but perhaps he also did not know anything about Labour matters in the Colony. I have nothing more to say because I think I have said all I want to say. I do resent the criticism which has been levelled against my short staff who have worked exceedingly well.

The CHAIRMAN: I am going to put the whole head. As I have said, I will discuss the point raised in Executive Council, but that cannot have the slightest effect on salaries which we are bound to pay next year. I am sure the Council appreciates that the work

of a Labour Department in this Colony is exceedingly difficult. There are years to come before we get things on a sound footing, and it is extensively hampered at this moment by the personal pride and jealousies of a number of individuals who, I am convinced, are looking more to individual interests than to the common interest. I think the Council would be agreeable to my putting the head as a whole.

Mr. JACOB: No, sir. I am not going to touch the salary of the Commissioner of Labour in view of what Your Excellency has said about his contract, but as regards the Deputy Commissioner of Labour, who is a local man promoted from another Department, I move that his salary be carried out at \$3,000, a reduction of \$672.

The CHAIRMAN: He has come from the Local Government Department. Had he remained in that Department he would have been on precisely the same salary. Had we not put him on this salary we would most certainly have had to send him back to the Local Government Department, to the great loss of the Labour Department. I now put the question that the item stand as printed.

The Committee divided and voted:—

For—Messrs. Thompson, Roth, Jackson, Humphrys, Peer Bacchus, Gonsalves, Austin, Critchlow, Seaford, Woolford, Dr. Singh, the Colonial Treasurer, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary—14.

Against—Messrs. Lee and Jacob—2.

Did not vote—Mr. Percy C. Wight—1.

Item passed as printed.

Item 1c — *3 Inspectors of Labour* (£2,880 by \$120 to \$3,600), \$10,177.

Mr. LEE: May I inquire whether these posts have been filled?

The CHAIRMAN: I believe the three vacancies are now filled, but I have not the names of the officers who have been appointed in England, possibly, from the Ministry of Labour. They are now attending certain courses.

Mr. LEE: If that is so I would move that the item be amended to 2 Inspectors of Labour at £600 each.

The CHAIRMAN: I have no doubt that the Secretary of State has appointed these officers at salaries he thought fitting, but I have not been informed what they are. It would therefore be wise on our part to make reasonably adequate provision. I am sure it is quite useless to suggest that the items be put at the minimum of £600. Government would have to telegraph the Secretary of State, and the immediate result would be that we would lose both of the officers.

Mr. LEE: If I were satisfied that public funds are properly spent in the appointment of these officers I would not have suggested that we should reduce the salaries. There have been instances in which they have not fulfilled their duties as Labour Inspectors.

The CHAIRMAN: Those two men abroad? (laughter).

Mr. LEE: No, not the two; at the particular moment one.

The CHAIRMAN: Why get at the two?

Mr. LEE: I feel that when the two come they will fall into line. (laughter). It is so in the Government Service. That is what I want the people's money to be protected against. That is why I am drawing Government's attention to it, and if they do not fulfil their



duty I shall move a motion in this Council and specify the particular occasion on which they have failed in their duty.

The CHAIRMAN: Your reasoning is peculiar, because the only result would be that we would not get any more Inspectors of Labour. Still I am prepared to put your amendment.

Mr. JACOB: I am a little bit confused. From the remarks of the Commissioner of Labour I gathered that he is training three men.

The CHAIRMAN: There are three Assistant Inspectors of Labour.

Mr. JACOB: Yes, he has been training three Assistant Inspectors of Labour for two years, probably three. Are they capable of filling the Inspectors' places?

The CHAIRMAN: Not yet.

Mr. JACOB: I consider it most unwise to go to the United Kingdom to secure two other Inspectors of Labour when we have such a highly trained and qualified Commissioner of Labour already. If the officer is so highly trained and qualified, as the Colonial Secretary has stated, haven't we got the material to fill the subordinate posts?

The CHAIRMAN: Not yet.

Mr. JACOB: I think it is most unwise and I am against it. We have men to fill the post of Commissioner of Labour.

The CHAIRMAN: In time, I have no doubt. In the meantime Government, after considerable consideration, has decided that the best thing is to have the two posts filled by men from the United Kingdom, and I have no doubt that the Assistant Inspectors of Labour who are being trained will

measure up to the standard. We are not prepared to put them in those posts at the present time.

Mr. JACOB: The emergencies are all over, but if it is thought that this Department has been responsible for the harmonious relations that exist at present Government is very sadly mistaken. Sooner or later something will be done to make Government realize that it must give local men preference, and that we must have confidence in our own people.

The CHAIRMAN: If there is anyone who has given local people their chance it is myself, and everyone knows that. If, on the other hand, I happen to come to the conclusion that they are not fitted for particular posts, and I have to go outside for suitable men, I am prepared to do so.

Mr. JACOB: I am not saying that you have not done so, nor have I suggested that you are the sole dictator. I am suggesting that Government must take the people into its confidence and must realize that we have ability in this Colony, and should not go to England for Labour Inspectors. Government has patted itself on the back that we have done wonderfully well.

The CHAIRMAN: There appears to be an idea in these Colonies that anything is good enough so long as it is local.

Mr. LEE: I do not like that remark, sir. In one breath you say that these men who have been appointed are undergoing training in England now, and in another breath you say that local men are not up to standard. What is wrong with our young men?

The CHAIRMAN: They are not up to it. Certain people say that I said that our civil servants are all mediocre. I have not said any such thing. I said there were some excellent officers in

the Service but there was also a great deal of mediocrity. There are a number of officers who are not fitted for the jobs they are holding. I am not referring to this particular Department.

Mr. ROTH: Why stick to the Civil Service? Is it not possible to find suitable material outside the Service?

The CHAIRMAN: If we could have found it we would have appointed it. We tried for a period of many months but failed to find anyone to measure up. Is that not so, Mr. Commissioner?

Mr. BISSELL: Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN: When the Department was created we advertised and received an immense number of applications which were gone through with the most meticulous care. As far as I remember one was chosen, but had to be rejected on account of bad health. We chose some but it was not easy to find those who measured up.

Mr. GONSALVES: The hon. Member for North-Western District has lived up to his reputation of being inconsistent. He complained about local men not being put into these jobs, and yet he was strongly opposed to the salary of the Deputy Commissioner of Labour who is a local man. He says he is not worth his salary.

The CHAIRMAN: There is far too much personality and personal feeling. As I have said before, it is a most difficult business to get this Department going, and it is immensely handicapped by the personal prejudice of a certain number of individuals. I will put the question that item *c* stand as printed.

Item agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: Would you like to reduce the salaries of the Assistant Inspectors?

Mr. JACOB: No, sir.

#### LANDS AND MINES DEPARTMENT.

Item 1 (4)— *Clerical Establishment*, \$18,909.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like the Commissioner of Lands and Mines to explain why the vote for the Clerical Establishment has gone up by \$4,578. No doubt it is partly balanced by a reduction of the estimate below the line of \$1,790.

Mr. RAY GREEN (Commissioner of Lands and Mines): It is due to ordinary increments, and I believe that two officers have been promoted to a higher grade.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, but you have an item below of \$1,790 which leaves a substantial balance.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: There is no real increase. The salaries are worked out on normal increments, but the allocation of the staff remains the same. If Your Excellency looked at the appendix you would see that there is no increase in the number of the staff.

The CHAIRMAN: It is a big jump up by \$4,578. I want the Commissioner to come here armed precisely to say how that has occurred.

Mr. RAY GREEN: There are two officers who have been promoted.

The CHAIRMAN: Can you give us the figures?

Mr. RAY GREEN: No, sir.

The CHAIRMAN: You ought to have come with it at your finger's end. I will take your word for it, Mr. Treasurer.

Mr. LEE: A grant was given to Phoenix village, Leguan, for the purpose of raising the river dam so as to

prevent the water from flooding the land. The people of the village were asked to contribute towards the cost of a river survey and they have done so on my advice, as requested by the Department of Lands and Mines. Up to the present, there is no surveyor in the Department who is available to do this job. The money has been voted already to make the dam and, luckily, the people reaped their crops this year before the river began to come in. I would ask Government to give some attention to this matter as early as possible.

The CHAIRMAN: You want a surveyor from the Lands and Mines and not from the Public Works Department?

Mr. LEE: Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN: I will ask the Commissioner of Lands and Mines to make a note of it.

Mr. LEE: I understand that this officer is to leave the Colony shortly, in order to take up his promotion abroad.

The CHAIRMAN: He might be leaving within the next three or four or five months. We have to get an officer in his place and we shall have the greatest difficulty in securing one. It is absolutely essential, particularly in view of the possibility of serious mining development, that we should get an officer fully experienced—with practical knowledge and experience in mining — and not only surface mining which has been so common in this Colony, but underground mining as well. Therefore, I have asked the Secretary of State to search for such an officer — one primarily experienced as an engineer and with a knowledge of minefields.

Mr. JACOB: Is it Government's intention to go in for mining?

The CHAIRMAN: No; but we do require an officer of experience and with a knowledge of mining laws which is an extremely difficult subject. I think the most difficult questions put before me in this country—and I cannot say that I was at home with them—were related to the very extensive areas held by the Bauxite Company, and we do require an officer with experience and administrative ability—particularly experience in mining laws and mining administration, especially as we are now going in for underground mining.

Mr. LEE: Here it is, we want an experienced and qualified officer to fill this post for only £900 per annum, and yet the Commissioner of Labour must get a higher salary.

The CHAIRMAN: If you are prepared to offer a higher salary, why not move a motion?

Mr. LEE: I am not an adviser of the Government. If I was, I would have said: "Give the Commissioner of Lands and Mines £1,000 per annum and let us get a proper man to fill the vacancy."

Mr. GONSALVES: I observed in the Press, recently that the present Commissioner of Lands and Mines would be leaving the Colony shortly. He is about the third Commissioner to fill the post since we have been preparing to have a revision of the Mining Regulations and now that he is leaving I presume we would have to await the stage when the new Commissioner knows something about mining in this Colony before tackling the question of revising the Regulations. It is well known that what is called "claim jumping" leads to a number of mining appeals in this Colony, and the Deputy President who has appeared in his capacity as a lawyer in many of these appeals has also advocated, from time to

time, the revision of the Mining Regulations but that has not yet been done. I would suggest therefore, that whatever notes the present Commissioner may have made in this respect, he should leave them in the Colony and not take them away with him as his personal property.

Dr. SINGH: I was asking whether we could not retain the services of the present Commissioner, as he is acquainted with conditions in the Colony and is a very competent man. I think that if his services could be retained it would be a very good thing.

The CHAIRMAN: Why do you think the Commissioner should spend an unlimited time in British Guiana when he has the attraction of another world to conquer? That is where we fall down, for he is going to a Colony where he would get free leave passages for himself and wife, a free house and perquisites.

Mr. LEE: What would be the addition to his salary?

The CHAIRMAN: There would be an addition. He has very fine prospects including leave passages for himself and wife. That is one of the conditions which do not exist in this Colony.

Mr. LEE: I was wondering whether we could offer anything to retain the services of this officer.

The CHAIRMAN: It would have to be a free house, passages to England every 18 months for himself and his wife, and free medical attention. These, are perquisites which are not so small, because at present they have gone up immensely. I would be very glad indeed if Members of this Council are prepared to face up to the liability of leave passages for senior officers.

Mr. LEE: As the hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo has said, we would be losing an efficient officer and if it is

a case of paying a few pounds more in order to retain his services, I think we should do it.

The CHAIRMAN: It is not a few pounds at all; it is a few hundred pounds.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Perhaps I should take opportunity to thank hon. Members for bringing up this subject of the retention of the services of the Commissioner of Lands and Mines. I am confident in feeling after what the hon. Member for Essequibo River has said, that I would certainly get support in the provision for leave passages.

Mr. JACOB: I think it would be difficult to do anything at this stage. I do not disagree with the Commissioner of Lands and Mines for going to a better place where he can get all these perquisites.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes; he is going to a better place and that is one of the difficulties which tend to dissuade officers from coming to this mudflat in British Guiana.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: What I want to point out—and I am sure the Commissioner of Lands and Mines would bear me out—is this. There is a very serious matter going on in the Colony at the present moment, and it is time for Government to pay some attention to it. I refer to the question of claim raiding in these mining areas. When a mining dispute is pending the Department issues an order to all the parties to stop work on the claim or claims concerned, but very often the claims are raided by other persons before the dispute is determined. Recently, there have been two or three cases of such raids and the Commissioner of Lands and Mines can tell Your Excellency about them. It is not in any way the fault of the Department of Lands and Mines, since it simply



does not get sufficient protection from the Police for those areas. I should like Your Excellency to have a talk with the Commissioner of Lands and Mines as to what should be done in the matter.

The CHAIRMAN: Doesn't that come under the mining laws?

Mr. HUMPHRYS: Yes. When a dispute arises over a claim — as to who made the first location—the parties concerned have to leave it and come to Georgetown in order to have the dispute heard. While this is being done, however, other people go in and raid the claim.

The CHAIRMAN: The remedy should be to have Inspectors properly equipped with personnel around and with power to hear complaints on the spot. Isn't that the remedy?

Mr. HUMPHRYS: In many cases it would not be possible to hear the disputes on the spot because the parties concerned always want to engage a lawyer — on each side. Unfortunately, some Wardens are not trained enough to settle such disputes. I can give an instance where thousands of dollars were lost by several parties through raids which were carried out within the few weeks that the dispute was being heard in Georgetown. I cannot see any solution to the problem, except more Police protection in the mining districts.

The CHAIRMAN: I think myself that the problem could be solved if you provide a number of Inspectors—men with power to settle disputes on the spot. If we are to become a serious mining country, we would have to step up our mining legislation a great deal.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: There is much room for that. The hon. Mr. Roth who is on my right has had a good deal of experience in mining areas, as an officer of the Lands and Mines Depart-

ment. I know of a case where claims were raided and something like \$300,000 worth of gold was taken out by parties who were not in the dispute at all.

Mr. ROTH: As the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara has just said, I have had a great deal of experience as a Warden and also as a Surveyor in mining districts. It seems to me that the idea of settling disputes on the spot is a good one, but it would be expensive to Government. The original idea was that all claims located should be registered early and not at the last possible moment. This is the basis of nearly all disputes and I think the best solution of the problem would be a larger staff of Surveyors and junior Sub-Wardens in the various districts to make rough surveys, so that as soon as a claim has been located they could go to the spot and make a record of it. I do not know whether the Commissioner of Lands and Mines would agree with me but I make that suggestion as a result of my experience.

The CHAIRMAN: I agree. I have been into the Mazaruni in which there are about 10,000 square miles of just flat plateaux and if the problem is not tackled in that way I do not know of any other way to solve it.

Mr. RAY GREEN: I quite agree. The whole trouble is that we have to administer thousands of square miles of dense forests with only four or five Police stations and a few Sub-Wardens. Until such time as money could be found for a bigger staff, I am afraid the difficulty would have to continue. Increased protection would naturally mean increased expenditure.

The CHAIRMAN: Then I am afraid it is no fault of ours that the interior and other areas are very inadequately administered. We cannot deal with that at the moment.

Item passed.

LANDS AND MINES—GEOLOGICAL  
SURVEY.

The CHAIRMAN: I have heard a comment that we have a Senior Geologist (at sub-head 1, b,) but we have to go ahead with a survey for which a grant has been made.

Mr. SEAFORD: This is one of the Departments to which I feel this Council should have no objection to giving an increase of staff. I feel that it is an investment by the Colony, for in spending money here we would get a return. It is a great pity that the geological work was not being carried out for some years as it has fallen right back.

The CHAIRMAN: I entirely agree. The position at the moment is whether we should have everything done by this Senior Geological Surveyor, or whether we should fill these two vacant posts. I am in communication with two persons—one of them an Englishman—but I have not had a reply from them as yet, so we had better keep the votes on the Estimates.

Mr. JACOB: I quite agree that we should spend all the money we can on this Department, but I think it is better to pay the head of the Labour Department a bigger salary so that we would get all the labour we want when we come to explore mining possibilities.

LAW OFFICERS.

Mr. JACOB: The salary of the Solicitor-General on the Civil List is \$5,040, while the Commissioner of Labour gets \$5,760 on the Fixed Establishment by contract. What an anomaly. The Solicitor-General (acting), a Government Officer, is drawing a smaller salary than the Commissioner of Labour, and it is impossible to compare the two officers.

The CHAIRMAN: I said there was no comparison.

Mr. JACOB: Except of course, pay.

The CHAIRMAN: That's right.

Head passed without amendment.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

Mr. JACOB: Speaking generally I wish to say again that it seems highly desirable that our system of local government should be improved. The system of nominating persons to Local Authorities is very ancient and is not at all satisfactory. Recently representations were made to me and I in turn made representations to the Secretariat and to the Commissioner of Local Government regarding a particular individual who is not qualified either personally or educationally. The suggestion was made that Government should apply to the villages the principle of frequent changes as regards nominations to the Executive Council. It seems to me that the Local Government Board does not want to adopt that principle, and unless we begin from the villages to train people in the art of local government and self-government we will make no progress. I recommended to Government very strongly that frequent changes be made in the nomination of village councillors—that no councillor should hold office for more than two consecutive periods, or for more than four years.

The CHAIRMAN: I quite agree with you in principle.

Mr. THOMPSON: With reference to the nomination of village councillors I certainly disagree with the hon. Member. I have been on the Local Government Board for some time. I have also been President of the Village Chairmen's Conference for some time. I take a personal interest in village affairs and I have settled many disputes. I am in personal contact with most of the villages. It is not a question of anybody seeking my favour for nomi-

nation, but whenever the occasion arises I have always endeavoured to recommend for nomination a person who would be able to benefit a local authority intellectually and otherwise. Recently there has been quite a stir about nominated councillors. It is felt that a nominated councillor should not be allowed to sit on a council for more than two periods or four years. With that I disagree entirely. In Village Districts the ratepayers are allowed to elect two-thirds of the members, and a councillor may be elected 100 times. Government is allowed to nominate one-third of the members. Why then should there be objection to anyone so nominated?

It has been the custom for persons who desire to be members of Local Authorities to seek the favour of elected councillors and lawyers, and I think it is certainly disgusting to find such a state of affairs existing. As soon as a man resorts to canvassing it shows his weakness. I think up to the present we are satisfied with the members we have nominated to Local Authorities. We have no reason to be ashamed of them.

Mr. LEE: I beg to differ from the last speaker for the simple reason that there are several other persons in the villages who could give service, and if a nominated member has served two terms Government should nominate someone else. In that way the villagers would take an interest in their village affairs and see that the funds are not misspent.

With regard to Item 12 — Duty allowance to District Commissioner, Georgetown and East Bank, Demerara, \$480—I would like to know whether it was not a special allowance to the officer who has been promoted from this Colony. If that is so I would ask Government to delete the item. I read

in one of the newspapers that the officer has been promoted and will soon be leaving the Colony.

The CHAIRMAN: It is news to me.

Mr. LEE: Mr. Green used to be the District Commissioner for Georgetown and the East Bank. Hasn't he been promoted to another Colony? (laughter).

The CHAIRMAN: I have not heard so.

Mr. GONSALVES: There are different shades of green.

Mr. WOOLFORD: The hon. Member is confusing it with Mr. Ray Green of the Department of Lands and Mines.

Mr. JACKSON: The hon. Member's remarks were as erratic as his mistaking one Green for another. With regard to the appointment of village councillors it is quite plausible to say that the honour should go around, but as a matter of fact it would be very bad policy to change a councillor who is giving satisfaction and is infinitely superior to others in a village merely because he has served a term or two. I cannot understand this hue and cry in the villages that ratepayers should have a say in the nomination of councillors. The Ordinance gives them the right to elect two-thirds of the Village Council, and if the Local Government Board is given the power to nominate one-third of the members I do not think anyone in the villages or any elected councillor should have anything to say about it. There are times, perhaps, when some of us who are outside an organization feel that we could administer it better than those who are inside, but we find when we are put to the test that we were all wrong. To suggest that a nominated councillor who has given satisfaction should be changed after serving two terms so as to give another individual a run is a mistaken policy. I would

not remove a councillor who has given the best service simply to bring in another who may be totally unfit for the position. If there are men in a village who are fit to be councillors they should be elected if they have the ability and desire to serve.

The Council resumed and adjourned until 2 p.m. the following day.