

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THURSDAY, 15th MARCH, 1951.

The Council met at 2 p.m., His Excellency the Governor, Sir Charles Woolley, K.C.M.G., O.B.E., M.C., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT.

The President, His Excellency the Governor, Sir Charles Campbell Woolley, K.C.M.G., O.B.E., M.C.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr J. Gutch. O.B.E.

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

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

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

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

The Hon. Dr. J. A. Nicholson (Georgetown North).

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River).

The Hon. W. J. Paatgever, (Nominated).

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. J. Fernandes (Georgetown Central).

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. G. H. Smellie (Nominated).

The Hon. J. Carter (Georgetown South).

The Hon. F. E. Morrish (Nominated)

The Hon. L. A. Luckhoo (Nominated)

The Clerk read prayers.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 14th of March, 1951, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

CUSTOMS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1950.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I beg to move the first reading of a Bill intitled:—

“An Ordinance further to amend the Customs Ordinance”.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the first time.

CUSTOMS DUTIES (AMENDMENT NO. 2) BILL, 1951.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: Sir, as agreed, I move the suspension of the relevant Standing

Rule and Order so as to enable me to take first item No. 7 on the Order Paper and thereafter item No. 13.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: I beg to move the first reading of a Bill intituled:

"An Ordinance further to amend the Customs Duties Ordinance, 1935".

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the first time.

CONTRIBUTION TO ESTABLISHMENT OF FARM INSTITUTE.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: Sir, I beg to move:

That, this Council approves of the participation by this Colony in the scheme for the establishment (with financial assistance under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act) of a Farm Institute at Trinidad for the Eastern Caribbean territories and of the payment of this Colony's contribution of \$41,241 towards the capital cost of the establishment of the Farm Institute such payment to be met by an allocation of available funds for Development Plan Services.

Note:—This proposal was considered at a meeting of the Finance Committee on 2nd February, 1951, and was not approved by a majority vote of the Members present at the meeting.

With the permission of the Council I propose to invite the Director of Agriculture to address the Council on the subject of this motion, consequently I will confine myself to introducing the motion, and furnishing some information as to the circumstances which led up to this proposal which the Council is now asked to approve. This Council, and certain individual Members more particularly, have always been greatly concerned that something should be done to provide better facilities in this Colony for agricultural education and agricultural training. Discussions on the subject took place at the

time when the Development Plan was being drafted, and I recall that some provision was made in that Plan for this purpose. Then in March, 1949, the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice (Dr. Gonsalves) secured the support of the Council for a motion recommending to the Government that a Farm School be established in the Courentyne district for the training of boys—to use his own words "to provide a 3-year course of instruction in post-primary technical and agricultural subjects to boys between the ages of 14 and 17 years." That was the resolution accepted by the Council in March, 1949, sponsored by the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice.

But the matter took a different turn in June, 1950, when Mr. Hotchkiss, Assistant Adviser in Agricultural Education to the Comptroller for Development and Welfare in the West Indies, came to British Guiana to explain and advocate the proposal which is the subject of this motion—the establishment of a central Farm Institute in Trinidad for all the Colonies of the Eastern Caribbean group, towards which each would be requested to contribute. That was the first time that we learned the distinction between what was previously in our minds and what was certainly in the mind of the hon. Member who moved the motion in March, 1949—the distinction between our ideas and what would really be, in our present circumstances, the most beneficial scheme for providing agricultural training. As I said, the motion of 1949 was for the establishment of a Farm School for boys, whereas the present scheme which we are now discussing is for giving practical and some theoretical training to those who will teach agriculture in the Colonies.

There is some analogy between what has happened in connection with our Technical Institute, of which we are now beginning to be proud, when that idea was first mooted. Most of us had assumed that what was required was a technical school for youths—some idea of providing them with a vocation or with a bias towards a trade, but as it has developed since Major Darlington came here, we now find that what we really want, and

what we are going to have, is an Institute which will turn out tradesmen and trained apprentices, making them skilled tradesmen at their trades. What we find is the most practical, the most suitable course for improving our farm conditions in the Colony is that we should have trained teachers at the Agricultural Instructor level who would go into the countryside, teach, instruct and train our farmers on the spot and on the farms. I do not want to expatiate on that too long because I would be trespassing on what the Director of Agriculture will have to tell you, but it seems to me that it is obviously a sound idea.

This particular matter has been very much documented, so to speak, in the course of the discussions on it. There have been circulated to Members the complete text of a speech by Mr. Hotchkiss in June, 1950. Then there was a memorandum submitted to Finance Committee dated the 25th of September, 1950, attached to which was a complete copy of the details of this scheme. Then more recently the Director of Agriculture has circulated, shall I say, a note giving in non-technical language the reasons for this proposal and the objects it seeks to achieve, and because of that it was unnecessary for a Message to be tabled. The last discussion on the subject was during the course of our deliberations on the Annual Estimate, and as Members will recall, after discussion the Committee divided, 7 Members voting against the proposal, 3 for it and 2 did not vote, preferring to reserve their comments for a later stage. On that occasion I intimated, Sir, that you would doubtless direct me to bring the matter before Council again in the form of a specific motion, such as we have before us today.

All that remains for me to do now is to remind the Council of what this scheme is. There is available in Trinidad an estate called Centeno, which I understand is extremely suitable and well situated. The land and such buildings as three are now are being given to the scheme free of cost by the Government of Trinidad, and the Secretary of State has approved of a grant of 50,000 towards the capital cost of the scheme. Trinidad has of

course, agreed to come in, and I understand that Barbados has recently also signified its intention to join the scheme. We, for our part, are asked to make a contribution of \$41,000 towards the capital cost of the scheme — obviously a comparatively small sum which would have been much greater had it not been for the free grant of \$240,000 from H.M. Treasury towards the scheme. For that we should be entitled to five places a year on a two-year basis, and our annual contribution towards the upkeep and maintenance of the institution will be in the vicinity of \$12,000. We are invited to undertake to vote that sum towards the upkeep of the institution for a period of six years, so that the object of the motion is to seek the approval of the Council as to the contribution of \$41,000 towards the capital cost, and also of the undertaking, in return for the appropriate number of places to which this Colony would be entitled, to make an annual contribution of approximately \$12,000.

Finally I would like to say that during the course of our discussion in Finance Committee it was quite clear that Members, or the majority of them, deplored the fact that if there was to be a Farm Institute, that we in this Colony had not caught the judge's eye, so to speak. Members felt that British Guiana is a large country, agriculture is its main economic feature; why shouldn't British Guiana be selected for a project of this kind? They were bitterly disappointed and considered that we ought to have a Farm Institute of our own. Everyone agrees with that point of view, and no one will dispute that we have not, to some extent, been left in the cold with these schemes. To some extent it is our own fault, and to some extent it is due to our circumstances, but nevertheless the point is that we are not as fortunately situated as Trinidad is for this kind of project. Trinidad has, shall I say, a more diversified agriculture, and the students of this institution will have wider opportunities for seeing and learning about a wider variety of crops, and certainly, in the case of animal husbandry, it is performed there on a more expert scale than it is in British Guiana. Then there is the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture

which is situated nearby, and which must certainly have an influence on the value of the training in this somewhat lower institution. If we did wish to have an institution here of our own we would have to dig deeply into our pockets. It is no use having such an institution here unless we put it on a correct basis. We shall have to have a first-class staff. It is no use having a staff of teachers who are not themselves of the highest quality and calibre, and I am afraid that both on the capital side and on the recurrent side the expenditure on our own Farm Institute would be very much higher than we could afford. So I would ask Members to weigh carefully in the balance the value of this scheme which is now before us. It is unfortunate that we have not been able to get the Institute here, but we must not, so to speak, cut off our noses to spite our faces. Let us take this opportunity. I hope Members will agree to the Director of Agriculture addressing the Council and explaining further on this subject. I formally beg to move the motion.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Mr. FERNANDES: Before the Director of Agriculture comes in I take it for granted that, as usual, Members will be permitted to ask him questions on anything we would like explained as regards the memorandum.

The PRESIDENT: Yes.

Mr. FERNANDES: Thank you.

The PRESIDENT: If hon. Members are agreeable I will ask the Director of Agriculture to address the Council on the subject of the motion.

Mr. H. H. CROUCHER (Director of Agriculture): Sir, as you are aware, considerable concern has been expressed over a number of years about the lack of progress of farmers in this country. It is felt that, with some exceptions, they are using methods which have made advancement difficult, consequently they are not in as good a position as one would like. Furthermore, some of our minor agricultural products cost rather more to produce than they do in other places. Many

reasons have been put forward for that both in this Council and outside, and in many cases it has reflected back on the Department of Agriculture, and particularly that section of the Department which we call the Extension Service. It has given me a lot of concern, and I have studied the problem and discussed it with many people. It was discussed particularly with Mr. Clay, the Agricultural Adviser to the Secretary of State, when he visited the Colony some time ago. He was quite emphatic in regard to the probable reasons, and pointed to two things. One was a weakness in the organization of the Department, and the second was the fact that our Agricultural Instructors, while they were undoubtedly doing their best, had not been trained for their jobs and moreover, that there were no facilities for so doing. He apparently found much the same problem and difficulties in the other Colonies in the area to which he went. He felt, from his very wide experience, that the first thing to do was to endeavour to provide those men on the ground, the Agricultural Instructors, with proper training to enable them to teach the farmers.

The question of the means of training farmers has been thoroughly ventilated. One question which is often put forward is that boys leaving school should be placed on a farm for a couple of years to milk cows and do other farming operations. That undoubtedly would have its effect, but if we are trying to tackle the problem on a wide and proper basis, and to train the whole farming community as rapidly as we can, that inevitably results in too slow progress. For one thing the number of persons one can have on a farm and attend to properly is very limited. The second point is that if we are only taking the boys coming from school, we have to wait until they grow up before they apply their knowledge, and only eventually as generation after generation replace their fathers would we get a better trained farming community. Further, that type of training cannot touch the farmer who is already struggling to exist because of lack of knowledge. If he is already farming he cannot afford to go away, leaving his farm for two years to go through a train-

ing farm. He may leave for a few weeks or a fortnight for a short course, but certainly he cannot afford the time to get a thorough training. So it means your training farm can only reach one section of the people, and you are leaving out the rest whose need is great. If you have a well trained Agricultural Instructor who knows his job and is keen on his job, he can work through the whole of his particular district and tackle all farmers who are receptive. In that way we would get much quicker results and on a much wider basis than we could with a training farm. Those are not ideas which apply only to British Guiana. They are the result of very long experience and, in recent years particularly, of very intensive study of the problem. This problem of training backward farmers is not confined by any means to British Guiana.

A further factor is that the institutional training, if I may put it that way, of the farmer does not always have the effect one desires. In other words, the farmer who goes to a Government equipped farm and sees the amount of capital expended on equipment, realises he cannot equip his farm as elaborate, and so may give up the idea of improvement completely. He tends to think that Government has all the money in the world and he has none, and there is nothing more likely to breed a wrong atmosphere in the farmer's mind. That again is not a point that is confined to British Guiana but is worldwide. The result of all the study and experience is that by far and away the best place to train a farmer is on his own farm and under his own conditions. The only way to do that is to have qualified agricultural teachers going about the districts, working with the farmer on his farm and showing him how to do his job better than he has been doing it, and helping him gradually to learn.

To achieve this, the only method is to establish some training school in which your teachers of agriculture can themselves be trained. As the hon. the Financial Secretary mentioned just now, to train teachers you want people of a high calibre with extensive training and experience. To obtain them is not only a somewhat expensive business but men who

have the required ability and background are not easily come by. Therefore, while each of the territories within this particular area would no doubt like to feel that it should have its own training school, it is not a practical possibility, if each is to maintain the standard we would all like to see. That factor is quite apart from the other factor of finance. It would be very expensive for each Colony to set up its own school and employ its own set of experienced teachers. Another factor is, when you train men to be Agricultural Instructors you are normally expected to find a job for them, and the number of jobs available for them in our Colony is limited. You may be reduced to running a training institute of that kind for an uneconomical number of students.

I would welcome the setting up of a farm school of adequate standard in British Guiana itself, and I am disappointed that the selection of the site for this proposed Institute has not been here. Trinidad seems to get all the plums, but it was not decided by just thinking of Trinidad. The matter was gone into very thoroughly. Several sites were considered and eventually the site in Trinidad was decided upon. As has been pointed out already, the Trinidad site has many advantages. It is near the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture which not only carries out research on crops with which we are dealing but recently it has been applying a lot of knowledge to the question of land settlement. There is a large land settlement experiment going on at the Imperial College which is already producing interesting results, and from which the students of the farm school will, I am quite sure, gain much. Furthermore, adjacent to the site at Trinidad it is proposed to commence a new type of land settlement scheme with the idea of giving farmers and settlers a far better chance of getting on and making progress than they do under the normal land settlement as we understand it today. There again, it would be next door to the Institute and the students would have the advantage of seeing what is going on there, seeing the practical difficulties and seeing how the problems are being solved.

The point has been made, I am

aware, that conditions in Trinidad are very different from the conditions in British Guiana. That is true. Nevertheless they have the same crops there, even including rice, and they have some of them on a more extensive scale and — I regret to say — possibly better basis than we have here. If you take the argument that we must train a man exactly in the same conditions in which he is going to work, you would find yourselves in difficulties in selecting a site for a similar institution in British Guiana. I am sure that the hon. Member for North Western District would feel that the conditions in his constituency are different from those on the Courentyne. If that argument does really apply then you would have to set up a series of these farm schools along the coastlands, and in the future extend them to the interior where conditions are different again. But, surely, part of the training which must be given to these men who are going to become Agricultural Instructors must be that of adaptability. They have to be trained in such a manner that they can use their knowledge and apply it to the particular local conditions in which they find themselves. Consequently, when a man goes through that institution he should, after a short time, be able to acquit himself equally well in the North-West District, or the Pomeroun, or in Demerara, or on the Courentyne. If that type of training is not given then I would say the Institute is lacking in its training.

The further point is — and that has been stressed by the proposer of the motion—that this Colony will not be committing itself for eternity. For obvious reasons it cannot be expected that this Colony could go into the scheme one year and go out the next, and for continuity of purpose and policy it must give some guarantee for a certain time, and that period has been fixed at six years. But if this Colony feels after that period that it has had enough of this Farm School, or that the school is not doing its job, or that it is in a position not only to afford to have a school of its own but also to absorb the people coming out of that school, there is nothing to prevent this Colony saying “We are sorry. We are finished with the Trinidad school. We are

going off on our own”. I admit that you would not get back your capital contribution if you did that.

The annual cost to the Government covers board and lodging of the students and not merely tuition fees. So the only additional monies that would have to be spent would be for the passages of the students from here to Trinidad, and possibly a little pocket money for them. I want to conclude by again emphasizing, if that is necessary, what an important problem this is, and how many people of wide experience have been seeking a solution to it and have come to the conclusion that this system of teaching men to teach efficiently is the best answer. This is an attempt to apply that experience and knowledge to this section of the Caribbean area, and I do ask that it be given very careful consideration and not turned aside as though it were something of sudden thought. It is the result of very careful consideration and deliberation, and the fact that His Majesty's Government is prepared to back it to the tune of \$250,000 is surely an indication that other people think it is a good thing.

Mr. FARNUM: I was one of those persons who — in fact I was the only person — in reply to the hon. the Financial Secretary's Budget Speech touched upon that item of a contribution to the Farm School in Trinidad. I tacked it because I felt that we should aim at establishing our own. But after I had the privilege of listening to the Adviser on Animal Husbandry to the Secretary of State for the Colonies — I believe his name is Mr. Simmond — I began to think otherwise. He came down here, and after a tour of 10 or 12 days going all over the Colony, the members of the Advisory Committee of the Agricultural Department were invited by the Director of Agriculture to meet him. Unfortunately it was a very rainy evening and only two of us turned up — I think the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) and myself — and we were very much impressed with what he said, and I was of the opinion them, as the result of that chat, that it would certainly be to our interest to support this school in Trinidad. I think the hon. Member for Essequibo River was

also of that opinion, but he can speak for himself. Mr. Simmond pointed out, because he was asked point-blank by us why we should contribute to a school in Trinidad and not establish a school here, (1) that it would be very costly; (2) that it would be very difficult to get teachers as, after all, teachers are born and every young fellow who has qualified at a university is not looking for a teacher's job and the number is so far and between that there is a great demand for teachers all over the world. He also told us that a school was established recently in Africa to serve all the African Colonies — I believe he was a lecturer there — and how difficult it was to get teachers. He emphasized that the establishment of a school was not only expensive but we would not be able to get teachers.

In the speeches in reply to the hon. the Financial Secretary, one Member said that he wondered why British Guiana was not like Trinidad where they have citrus orchards and things of that kind. I think the difference is that in the Islands of Barbados, Trinidad and, I think, Jamaica, the people's money is invested in agriculture and animal husbandry. Consequently there are lots of things one can learn there. I met a member of the Jamaica Agricultural Association, and just by speaking with that gentleman I was very much impressed with what they were doing in Jamaica in animal husbandry and agriculture. I therefore think that if we join in the establishment of this school in Trinidad not only would we be able to get a great deal of knowledge from what exists in Trinidad but, due to the fact that the school will be near to the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, we would get a lot of information and scientific knowledge from there. I happened to be in Trinidad three years ago with the Hon. Mr. Raatgever, and one of the Professors there showed us what was then a peasant holding. They were then experimenting on peasant holdings of various acreages — one or two acres according to the size of the family. They were then experimenting as to the acreage to be given to a family, what it would cost to cultivate the holding, in order to see how it could pay a man and his family to cultivate a holding. Those ex-

periments would be very useful to us, and you cannot see them unless you go to Trinidad. Therefore I feel it is certainly to the advantage of our Colony to join the school in Trinidad and see what is being done there, because I am satisfied that those men who go there to be trained would be able, when they come back, to improve the conditions here for the people, and most likely the cost of production of local foodstuffs, which is one of the features of the Fletcher Committee's Report, would be lowered, and we would get the cost of living reduced thereby.

There is no doubt about it, that 10 or 12 Agricultural Instructors properly trained and spread over the Colony would do very much more good than having an establishment of 50 to 60 boys here, because we all know that it is very difficult to get an established farmer, who we regard as a countryman, to change his habits. He is accustomed to farm in one way and will not change, but if you have the Agricultural Instructors going amongst the farmers and one is satisfied when he sees his neighbour is getting better results than he is, he would follow suit. When that goes on throughout the Colony it would be of great advantage to the Colony. This matter was discussed by the Agricultural Advisory Committee, but as far as I remember, Sir, the members felt that the matter should be deferred. I think I am correct in saying that. They had not made up their minds on it but, as I said before, I am sorry they were not able to meet Mr. Simmond, as I am sure he would have convinced them that it would be in our interest to join in this Farm Institute. I feel that we should join it.

Mr. LEE: If the hon. Nominated Member did not mention my name in respect of my presence with Mr. Simmond, I would not have said anything. Mr. Simmond told us about the training school in Africa. That is very well, but I have to ask myself the question whether this money spent for a number of years would benefit this Colony, and if the Colony has the money, whether it should not apply it to the principle of assisting the farmers now in the manner in which they need to be assisted; and whether

they would be benefited by it more than by the teaching of 12 students at the school. I feel sure, from my knowledge of the people, that if we brought 12 Agricultural Instructors and spread them over the Colony, they could preach from morning to evening, from the beginning of the month to the end of the month, or from the beginning of the year to the ending of the year, the farmers in this Colony, as now constituted, would not listen to them. I cannot help saying that. They have their own way of doing things, and I feel certain that if the Government took this money and spent it on mechanical appliances so as to assist the farmers they would be benefited more. Mr. Simmond is a very learned man. He gave a very good talk that evening. I was very much impressed and I learnt more from him than I have from going around and seeing what the Agricultural Department is doing. But the question hon. Members of this Council have to consider is, can we afford it? I certainly think we cannot. I am sorry I have to vote against it as I do not think the people can carry the burden.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: To a point of explanation! I omitted in my speech to emphasize that this particular scheme will form part of our Development Plan Services. I merely say that because the question of affording it is raised. It can only refer to the annual expenditure.

Mr. LEE. May I in reply say that if I were positive that this Colony could borrow another \$20 million for the Development Plan I would vote for it. We cannot deny that the people cannot afford to pay the interest on the \$10 million loan we are borrowing.

Dr. GONSALVES: First of all I owe an extreme debt of gratitude to Members of this Council and you, Sir, for suggesting that I be given an opportunity of saying a word in this debate. I had found myself with two hot irons in the fire. I had to be in Georgetown on Tuesday and in New Amsterdam yesterday. Therefore it was impossible for me to handle those two irons at the same time. Since the acceptance of the motion brought

by me the fire has not quenched as to my burning desire to see a more agriculturally-minded population in this Colony Sir, I am again deeply grateful for the opportunity afforded me of attending the Agricultural Conference of the Caribbean held in Curacaoos Netherlands West Indies. Because of that I became much more convinced than I had been before. It will be remembered that in my argument in this Council with Mr. Hotchkiss, Deputy Advisor—I believe I am correct—to His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies on Agriculture. I said after he had spoken, that I did not see his point. I went to Curacao and, I must say, I had one or two very heated arguments with him there and he finally agreed with me that I was correct in my view, but he felt that a Farm School in Trinidad was the answer. I again had very great pressure exerted on me by a high agricultural personage in Trinidad not to oppose the item of the Farm School at the Conference. But what struck me as strange, and what strengthened my courage was that inasmuch as they were not opposing it, inasmuch as they would be receiving benefit by the Imperial College, inasmuch as they were going to receive the benefit of this farm or regional school being established there, they were still clamouring for a school of the nature I indicated in the motion I moved. If the people of Trinidad are going to receive all those benefits (perhaps if I was in Trinidad I would have felt that same way) and yet they were clamouring for a primary school of agriculture of the type I indicated and advocated in this Council. I cannot but be convinced that I am correct.

It is very strange that we now understand that the students who will be sent from this Colony to this regional school and given two years of training will come back more expert teachers, more expert Instructors than the persons who had been trained in the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture for three or four years. How is it that these students will become more expert teachers than those qualified people coming from the Imperial College and from the Technical Schools in the U.S.A.

who, we say, are not able to impart to us that knowledge we so sorely need? I have seen high powered agriculturists at that Conference, but in view of the regions from which they came I became very suspicious and I could not see anything in this kind of thing but what I call "a ramp". I cannot see how anyone can convince me otherwise. I wish the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Farnum, could have attended some of the evening seminars and seen the conditions existing. He would then understand why is it we do not have similar conditions, here. It is because, in the first place, they have a certain breed of cattle and they select the kind of efforts more suitable to their pockets.

The Instructor who came here from the U.K. said that since this is an agricultural country the children should be agriculturally minded. They were supposed to have been given an agricultural bias in the primary schools, but I am sorry I cannot see the position to be any different from what it was before. Perhaps the Director of Agriculture can tell us how a man who will go to the Farm School in Trinidad for two years' training will be qualified to teach farmers, while one who attends an agricultural school in Ireland or other first class schools of the world and returns to this Colony is not fit to impart the knowledge he has acquired.

It is said that it was not until after the second world war that the people in England became agriculturally minded, but in that same period the United States became self-sufficient; they were able to grow potatoes and sell them back to the farmers to feed their pigs. We have had agriculturists who returned to this Colony after they had been trained, to leave the Colony again because of frustration. It is my opinion that the people of this country will not become agriculturally minded until we establish a Farm School of our own. If we find that it is uneconomical for us to do so at present we should wait a little. I am sorry I have heard no argument to convince me that we should contribute towards the establishment of a Farm School in Trinidad. I therefore cannot support the motion.

Mr. FERNANDES: I hesitated to

speak because I wanted to give an opportunity to the members of the Agricultural Advisory Committee to express their views on the motion. Two of them have done so, but as the others are not in a hurry to speak I am going to say what I have to say. First of all I would like to ask just a few questions on this memorandum. On page 1, par. 3, the Director of Agriculture states:

"Already the cost of producing many of our locally grown foodstuffs is beyond that of other countries due, in the main, to the continued use of traditional, inefficient and out-of-date methods."

We are dealing now with Trinidad and British Guiana, and I would like to ask the Director to name a few of those items of foodstuffs, the cost of production of which he says is so much higher in this country than it is in Trinidad. I do not include cocoa, for which the experts say the soil in British Guiana is unsuitable, and citrus fruit, the cultivation of which has not developed in this country as well as it should have been, because of the lack of plants.

Mr. CROUCHER: I refer to most of the common ground provision crops. I get market reports from the West Indian islands and normally the prices quoted are less than the market prices in this Colony. I refer to things like yams, sweet potatoes and, to some extent, plantains—common vegetables. The hon. Member referred to citrus but I did not have that in mind. I am aware that the price here is two or three times what is demanded in other places.

Mr. FERNANDES: I am glad the Director selected sweet potatoes and yams because Trinidad is not noted for the cultivation of either of those things to any extent. The home of sweet potatoes is Barbados, and everyone knows that the land there can produce far more than we can in this Colony because our soil is not suitable. As regards plantains I know that whenever British Guiana has any surplus Trinidad is always ready to receive it, and has always paid a better price than what is obtained in British Guiana. I remember that the export market in Trinidad was so remunerative that the Director of Agriculture put a

ban on the export of plantains in order that the people of this Colony should have sufficient supplies. I wanted to be sure because, if the Director says that those things cost more to produce here because of our antiquated methods, the next question I was going to ask was why didn't the Department of Agriculture take steps to change them, because the methods being used today were used when I was a boy. On page 3 of this memorandum the Director states :

"Students cannot work satisfactorily on Government experimental farms because either they interfere with the investigational work or the students tend to be used as cheap labour on the farm to the neglect of their studies."

I would like to ask the Director in what way can the practical training of youngsters on a Government experimental farm interfere with the technical and investigational work that is being done there ?

Mr. CROUCHER : In the first place I do not think the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice (Dr. Gonsalves) had in mind an experimental farm. I believe he was thinking of a farm which was run as a commercial or a semi-commercial proposition.

Dr. GONSALVES : The kind of farm I advocated was a training farm, but at the same time there must be livestock and other things for them to practise on.

Mr. CROUCHER : That was my understanding. An experimental farm is a farm devoted to trying out new crops and modern methods. Perhaps the best example I can give is that next door to the proposed site for this Farm Institute in Trinidad is, firstly, the farm attached to the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, and, secondly, a very large farm which is an experimental farm of the Department of Agriculture, and in spite of their being within the immediate neighbourhood of that site it was very definitely concluded that it was important to have a special farm on which the agricultural students and instructors could practise and learn.

I have had personal experience of trying to train students on an experi-

mental farm, and the result has been as I have expressed in my note. At one stage they were definitely used as cheap labour on the farm, which was completely wrong. Then the officers conducting the experiments complained that the students were mishandling the cows and upsetting the whole of the experiments that were going on. It is an accepted principle, not only in the West Indies but everywhere, that if you are training farm students they must have their own cows, plots of land, and their own crops to practise on.

Mr. FERNANDES : I thank the Director very much. I asked him the question because I wanted to be sure that we would not try to train students on an experimental farm, and that the hon. Member's idea of training students on a farm specially prepared for that purpose would be the one we will get eventually.

On page 4 of his memorandum the Director says that the dairy, poultry and goat industries in Trinidad are on a more satisfactory basis than they are in this Colony. I would like to ask him what is his ground for saying that the poultry industry in Trinidad is on a better footing than it is in British Guiana ? My information is the opposite, but I would like to hear his reasons.

Mr. CROUCHER : My information is that there are many people in Trinidad running poultry farms of considerable size on an extremely efficient basis. In fact the situation was such that we were advised at one stage to import chicks from Trinidad rather than from the States; that we could get equally good breeding material from Trinidad. My information is that the people in Trinidad are more efficient on the whole. I am not talking about individuals, but of the general run of things.

Mr. FERNANDES : That sounds very nice but I would like to ask why on more than one occasion the Department of Agriculture saw fit to prohibit the export of eggs from British Guiana, even down to passengers taking a few eggs with them? To export eggs one had to apply to the Licensing Authority and the application was sent to the Director of Agriculture for approval. Even today I claim

that eggs can be exported from this Colony to Trinidad. Eggs and chickens have been exported to Trinidad until such time as the Department of Agriculture saw fit to throw a spanner into the machinery by putting restrictions on the export. The Director says that we were advised to get stocks from Trinidad instead of from the United States, but I will not ask any more questions. I will begin my contribution to the debate. I do not know who advised us, but it is also quite true to say that very shortly after we were advised not to import chickens from Trinidad because there was an outbreak of disease among poultry in that island, and licences were issued for imports from the U.S.A.

Since my return to the Colony I have been handed an import licence for two mules. Application for the licence was made shortly after I left the Colony in October, or early in November last year. The mules being required for a sawmill dray. Somebody advised that the mules should be imported from Jamaica, and after the gentleman had wasted three months in trying to find out who in Jamaica could supply the mules he discovered that their mules were like our mules, and he came back to see me. I then had to try to obtain a licence for him to import the mules from the U.S.A., which other concerns were being granted. Perhaps the Director will be able to say from whom the advice came that British Guiana could import mules from Jamaica. We do get some fancy advice sometimes.

What the hon. Member had in mind as regards a farm school is exactly what I have in mind, but if the hon. the Financial Secretary says we have not the money for it there is nothing I can do about it. But if the Financial Secretary says that the money will come from our Ten-Year Development Fund we do not have to bother about it.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: I said that about the \$40,000.

Mr. FERNANDES: I thought you said it about the farm school. If we have not the money at present we will wait

until we get money to get what we want. I feel certain that the expenditure of this money on the Farm Institute would not have the desired effect; we would be in exactly the same position as we are today. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Farnum, was correct when he said that it would be practically impossible to convince an old farmer that he should change his methods of farming. If it is not impossible then those methods should have been changed long ago. There are on the estimates of the Department of Agriculture 7 specialists and 6 Agricultural Superintendents. We pay the 7 specialists \$30,000 a year and the 6 Agricultural Superintendents another \$19,600. We have had them on the Estimates for a long time, and if they have not been able to get the farmers to change their methods I can assure this Council that a few Agricultural Instructors, five a year on a two-year course, would never be able to do it. The only way we will get a change in the methods of agriculture in this Colony is to start a farm school with a demonstration farm which would convince the farmers that farming methods can be improved. The farmers would be able to go on a farm school and see the methods being used and the superior results being achieved.

It was nice to hear the Director say that the trained student would go on the farm and actually work. I can assure this Council that we would have to get about 2,000 Agricultural Instructors if that system is to be put into operation. The training would be far below what would be needed, and it would still be almost impossible to convince the present-day farmer that he should change his methods. Our policy should be to train new farmers and show them that new methods are more economical and would provide them with a better livelihood if, of course, lands were available for them to put those new methods into practice. I am against this Farm Institute, not because it is to be in Trinidad, but because it is not what is wanted in order to give a fillip to agriculture in British Guiana, and to encourage a different class of persons to go in for agriculture. By that I mean that young men with sound education, who would sit down at night and calcu-

late what they are likely to obtain by using one method of farming as against another — young men with good educational background who would be prepared to work hard. I do not think that is what we are after.

The question of the proximity of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture will not arise if I am against the project as a whole. It is my personal opinion that those 13 experts to whom I have referred, men who have had the highest training, would be quite capable of laying out a farm school and instructing the boys of British Guiana what they should do. They could supervise the work, paying occasional visits to the school to see that the work was properly and efficiently done. In that way we would know whether farming in British Guiana is an economical proposition or not. That is something we should know and know very early. Under the present proposal we would have to wait for a few years for the Instructors to come back, and then at the end of another 10 or 20 years we would find ourselves in the same position we are in today. We will be told that the farmers would not change their methods. If a farm school is established in this Colony and the results show that farming of that type is not an economical proposition then the sooner we give up the idea that farming in British Guiana is the answer to our unemployment problem the better it would be for us.

Speaking for myself I must confess that I am not too optimistic about that, because I find that although we continue to employ new experts of one type or another the old evils are still there, like moushi ants, the problem of flooding and the difficulty in getting citrus plants. Those difficulties have been experienced for years, and I think the time has come when we should find out whether they are real difficulties which cannot be eradicated, or whether they are just difficulties to which nobody is paying any particular attention, but if attention were paid to them they could be eliminated. I am going to vote against the proposal in the motion because I feel absolutely certain that it is not what we want, and that it would not do farming in British Guiana any good.

Dr. JAGAN: I too would like to join hon. Members in opposing this motion. The time has come when we must stop spending money on theoretical education, since it appears that we have no real basis for agricultural development in this country. Our contribution to this proposed Farm Institute is to be in the vicinity of \$40,000 towards capital expenditure and \$10,000 annually for the training of only five students, or \$2,000 per student. I am wondering what is to be obtained at the end of it all for all this expenditure of money. The aim is to improve farming in this country, but the questions must first be asked: why hasn't farming improved in this country? Why is the plight of the farmer what it is today? Is it because he is using antiquated methods? Is that the sole reason? From time to time we have spoken in this Council on agricultural policy, and I for one would go so far as to say that in the present state of our organization we can even do without an Agricultural Department. I have said that before and I say it again.

Assuming that we join this Institute, when these students are trained and return to British Guiana, what will they do? I suppose they would go around the various districts and teach the farmers improved methods. For instance, they would tell the cane-farmers that they need to put so many cwts. of fertilizer into the soil so as to get so many tons of cane; that they need to improve the drainage and irrigation of their fields in order to prevent the invasion of pests and so forth. The farmer would then ask "Where will I get the money?" He would be loath to accept those improved methods, not because he does not realize that they would be profitable to him. No farmer on the East Coast today is not aware that fertilizers are profitable in the long run, but what is the use of telling that farmer that he must fertilize his field when he knows that, having done so, possibly as a result of flood or pests he may at the end of the year lose even what he has put into the field. Therein lies our problem.

Another problem is the availability of land. I have already quoted in this Council figures from the Census report

dealing with the land question. The average farmer in British Guiana has 3 to 7 acres of land. I suppose we will have to teach him the best methods in order to get more yield from this limited acreage. It seems to me that we should concentrate on first things first, and the number one problem should be the first to be tackled. That is the question of making more lands available to the people—lands properly irrigated and drained. Unless we have that, I say we are wasting time with the Agricultural Department and wasting time to train other persons to teach the farmers how to go about their business. What are the trained agricultural officers of the Department doing at the present time? It is not therefore, any fault of their own that they cannot achieve anything. They are put in the districts; the farmers have certain complaints, but when those complaints are referred to those officers they can rightly say that is not their problem but the problem of the Drainage and Irrigation Board or the problem of the Land Settlement Officer. Pushing the responsibility around does not help the farmer in the long run. Once it was said that these people had the best training at the Imperial College, now we are being told that they need practical education.

We have had a lot of trained people in agriculture who are not in agriculture at the present time, but it seems the emphasis now is to train people, and having trained them to find employment for them. I am wondering how far this will go. It is said that possibly a limited number, about 20, would be trained who could find employment with Government. Is that the aim of Agriculture in this country? What we need to do is to train the farmers themselves, and I suggest that the best way to do it is right here. We have the facilities but if we have not then we must make the way to provide those facilities. We have colleges and high schools in this country, some of which are run by Government and some are partly subsidized by Government. There is no reason why we should not have these colleges and high schools teaching Science with an agricultural bias, such things as soil

chemistry, sugar chemistry, chemistry of rice, etc., and the breeding of plants. There is no reason why we cannot do that right here. I think even with our present Queen's College, the Bishops' High School, and the Berbice High School we should begin that sort of education so as to help the people of the country, thinking in terms of what is necessary and required in this country. If agriculture is to be the primary occupation in this country, then it seems to me the educational bias should be directed in this sphere. I can visualize that we can train students at these institutions, giving them theoretical knowledge. Having acquired that limited theoretical knowledge they can then be sent to the various land settlement schemes that we have in this country. We have a Government Farm at Anna Regina, one at Vergenoegen, one at Mahaicony-Abary. It is true that most of those are specializing in rice. We have now a banana experiment station in the near vicinity of Georgetown. Those are places where the students can be given practical training after having been given some amount of theoretical education.

I do not see why the present officers of the Agricultural Department, the Superintendents, who have had a proper training at the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad and other colleges abroad, cannot give the students lectures, and then they can be distributed to the various places controlled by Government for the purpose of practical education. I want to suggest that Government could go even a bit further afield in setting up in the various Counties what I may call Government Farms to be run on a commercial basis and also as an experimental farm, where not only rice could be grown (it seems to me we are now concentrating mostly on the production of rice) but other crops, catch crops, ground provisions, etc., so that the farmers could see at firsthand what could be done. Sir, only in that way will the people of this country know how to get about doing their jobs. I can visualize that these same Government Farms in the various counties can also be centres for providing machinery which are too expensive for the small man to acquire. A machinery pool can be set up at these centres

and these students can be trained in the proper use of the machinery at those various places.

One of the reasons — I think a strong reason — to be adduced against the setting up of the Farm Institute in Trinidad is that British Guiana has certain conditions which are not to be found in Trinidad. In the case of bananas, we know that they can be grown in Trinidad and in Jamaica in superabundant quantities, but nevertheless we are still experimenting here in British Guiana, and it is to that place the students should be sent if they are to be trained at all. Let the students get a theoretical knowledge of local conditions. We also know that machinery will have to take a prominent place in agriculture in British Guiana in the future. We do know that soil conditions, water conditions, etc. are very peculiar to British Guiana, and unless we can get firsthand knowledge right here of the type that may be required it may be found that what adheres especially in the West Indies may not be applicable in this country. We do know, Sir, that equipment which may be suitable in the canefields or ricefields in Louisiana are not really suitable for the canefields and ricefields in British Guiana. They have to be brought out here and accepted if found suitable.

Therefore I feel that the best training-ground for the farmers of this country is British Guiana itself and I do not think it is necessary even to have one centralized Farm Institute. We should have various centres, and even those that we have at the present time can be adequately utilized. But before we begin to train any students or farmers we must lay the basis. Having acquired that education the farmers would be able to set up independently on their own lands, either as individual farmers or with others as a co-operative. We have had the Agricultural Department here giving training to certain people, but those people, because the necessary foundation was not laid, went into divers occupations, seeking to make a living after having acquired that knowledge. So the mere setting up of an organization which would

continue to train people as teachers, is a suggestion with which I am not in agreement.

This is a taxpayers' budget expenditure, and I feel that we have to spend our money more carefully in the future. In the past we have been subscribing a great deal of money to the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad and we have today in British Guiana a lot of people who have been trained in that College. Some of them are now doctors and lawyers, and some are working in other spheres of activity. We are spending money on what is known as the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux which has been criticized not too long ago in this Council—the expenditure of several thousand dollars per annum. We are spending a great deal of money for the establishment of the West Indies University, and now we are called upon to spend more money on a Farm Institute in Trinidad. I think the time has come when we must call halt to all this expenditure of money, and instead give the people a chance to get a real education right here, where local conditions are well known, and where the people have to earn their livelihood in the future.

The PRESIDENT: I would like to quote a word or two from the report of the recent meeting of the Caribbean Commission which the hon. Member for Central Demerara and also the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice attended. There, as they know, a special Committee, No. 6, was set up to deal with Extension Services, and this is what they recommend:

“We endorse the general principles laid down in the papers “Agricultural Extension” by J. C. Hotchkiss, “Agricultural Extension Work in Puerto Rico” by Antonio Perez-Garcia and “Agricultural Extension” by M. L. Wilson, and we invite special attention to the following aspects:

(a) that the first essential for a successful Extension Service is an adequately trained staff;.....

“We recommend that the Caribbean Commission draw to the attention of Territorial and Member Governments the necessity for the immediate establishment of institutional training facilities for extension staff where these are not already available.”

This is the conclusion of the Commission itself on this question. The Commission considers the prime prerequisite for the success of any extension programme is availability of adequate training facilities. That will be supplied by this Farm Institute to serve the Eastern British Caribbean. That, hon. Members, is the conclusion of the Conference to which we sent two representatives, where they support this decision.

Dr. GONSALVES: We were delegates to the Conference, but we were not participants in the Commission's recommendation. I would like that to be understood. I still contend that I am correct, and I have had my argument with Mr. Hotchkiss. He contends that we want teachers, but the fact is that though we want them the Farm Institute in Trinidad is not going to give us the teachers.

The PRESIDENT: I particularly mentioned it to show that this question of a Farm Institute of this kind, as the Director of Agriculture has pointed out, has been the subject of very special and wide consideration, and the conclusion has been reached that it is the best proposal. The recommendation of the Commission, supported by the Director of Agriculture himself, shows that the matter has not been lightly regarded.

Dr. JAGAN: Sir, you have to be very careful with those recommendations.

The PRESIDENT: I am just saying what the hon. Member said when he came back.

Dr. JAGAN: Those recommendations were made with Mr. Hotchkiss and other British delegates present, and Mr. Hotchkiss did not waste any time in lobbying those members. Because two members were there from British Guiana it does not follow that they were able to oppose those recommendations. I do not think I was on that Committee.

The PRESIDENT: I see that neither of our delegates was on that Committee.

Dr. JAGAN: We are not opposing the idea of training personnel. The question is: to what use that personnel is to

be put. That is the whole point, if we are not going to get any benefit out of it.

The PRESIDENT: I hope the hon. Member is not making another speech.

Dr. JAGAN: I am not making another speech.

Mr. SMELLIE: I would like to say that as a layman I have listened with a great deal of respect to the views of the members of the Advisory Committee on Agriculture. I am only sorry to note that so many of them—it seems to me the majority of that Committee—are not in favour of this motion. I think it is generally agreed that people of the most diverse shades of views are almost unanimous that the cure for the ills which exist in the world today, is to produce more. This particular scheme—it may not be ideal—is an honest attempt to grapple with the problem at once. Some Members may feel it is too easy to agree to something that was presented to one cut and dried on a plate, so to speak. At any rate any other alternative scheme that is going to be suggested is going to take time. As you yourself pointed out, Sir, this is the result of the wisdom and recommendation of people of experience and of note. Although I am a layman on these matters and have no experience of practical agriculture, I have heard enough to confirm me in my opinion that this motion should be supported. From what I can gather from the hon. the Financial Secretary and Treasurer, the capital cost will form part of the Development Plan and beyond that British Guiana will have to pay \$10,000 per annum for its places in the school. That seems quite a small annual amount, considering the importance that should be attached to agriculture and the training of the farmers in better methods of farming in this Colony.

I am going to support this motion, but before I resume my seat I would like to make one suggestion, and that is this: Those people who are selected to attend this course in Trinidad should be very carefully chosen; they should be men of personality and men who, when they return to the Colony, will not give any cause for the remark made by the hon.

Member for Essequibo River to become a fact. He said that whatever happens, whatever training these men get, when they come back they will not be able to convince the farmer so as to make him change his methods. That is why I say you have to choose your personnel very carefully and secure men of personality who could see that and make their weight and impression felt. Secondly, I notice towards the end of the memorandum by the Director of Agriculture that "*a representative from British Guiana will be on the Board of Directors of the Institute who can ensure that proper attention is given to the study of those aspects of farming which are most likely to be required in British Guiana.*" I think that is a wise and very good provision, and I trust that great care will be taken also with regard to the selection of the representative.

Mr. PHANG: I am one of the Members who, in Finance Committee, opposed this Farm School idea, and I am still of the same opinion. I am not so sure that any student sent from this Colony to Trinidad for a two-year course will return and teach our farmers in the North-West District anything at all. We have a peculiar form of farming there. We have swampy lands and hilly lands, and we farm both in the swamps and on the hills. I have found that those men who farm in the swamps have 40 to 50 years' experience and hand their experience down to generations. The farmers there can tell at a glance whether the land is good or not; if it has white lilies growing on it they know it is bad, and if cedar grows on the land they know it is good land. You cannot come from Trinidad and teach them anything in that respect at all. You cannot expect that with but two years' training in Trinidad one can return here and tell those farmers with 40 to 50 years' experience anything.

I have had a lot to do with the Agricultural Superintendents and Instructors stationed in the North-West District, and I feel they can teach the people in that district very little indeed. As a matter of fact they learn very much from them. Like the hon. Member for Central Demerara I prefer to see this money being spent in assisting the farmers in one way or an-

other. That reminds me of an application I made to the Director of Agriculture. Let me give the history of this thing. I received a letter from the La Roza brothers, three Indian boys in the Moruca. Without any financial assistance at all they felled 80 acres of forest trees, cleared the site and planted cocoa. They did so by the sweat of their brow without financial assistance from anybody. The trees are now coming into bearing but those boys found themselves in difficulty and asked me if I could not get some carbon dioxide and sulphate for them as acoushi ants were attacking their crop. I approached the Director with the view of obtaining a supply, but he said there was no vote from which he could give it. I would rather take this money for the farm school and assist those people. It would be so much better if that money is taken to assist the farmers in one way or another. As I said before, I am against this motion altogether, as I do not feel it is going to benefit this Colony.

Mr. DEBIDIN: Before I say anything may I ask a question? The Director of Agriculture said that several sites were considered. May I ask where were those sites, and whether any site in British Guiana were considered?

Mr. CROUCHER: The final selection of sites was made by Mr. Page in consultation with the Adviser and Assistant Adviser on Agriculture to the Comptroller for Development and Welfare. One site was in Antigua and British Guiana's claims were also put forward.

Mr. DEBIDIN: May I ask where?

Mr. CROUCHER: On lands Government had available, as it would obviate any actual purchase of an estate, for example at Cane Grove and La Bonne Mere.

Mr. DEBIDIN: May I ask another question? Is a scholar, who is trained at the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, and who has been appointed to the Department as being qualified to instruct, not competent to teach the farmers about farm methods, especially in view of the fact that there is a library

in which they can get additional experience?

Mr. CROUCHER: I am glad to have the opportunity to explain that point. We have a number of more senior men trained at the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, and most of them have the diploma. The idea of training at that College is that by taking an associateship they should get training equivalent to that of a University degree. Very shortly that College will be associated with the West Indies University College, and students going there will get an agricultural degree course, and the diploma or lower course will be abandoned. The only agricultural training available then would be through the Unity College or at a University in England or Canada. These degrees are intended to qualify men for the highest administrative posts in the Departments of Agriculture in the West Indies, and a man who has received that training comes back expecting to get a senior post and commensurate salary. He goes with that idea and is selected with that idea. Consequently, if we train the whole of our Agricultural Instructors on that basis they will come back expecting to get commensurate salaries.

In other words we would have 10 or 20 men expecting to get salaries of from £750 to £1,000 a year. I think most hon. Members will agree that, much as we would like to have men of that calibre throughout the Colony, we cannot afford it. Therefore, the idea behind this Institute is to take men who are not so good and give them a certain amount of training to enable them to do their jobs properly in close contact with the farmer. They will go through the usual Agricultural Instructor grade up to the senior Agricultural Instructor grade. The proposed Institute will provide training for lower grade people, and in that training we could include people like managers of land settlements who would benefit from a little technical training in order to help the settlers. There is a very definite distinction between the training it is proposed to give at this Farm Institute and that now given at the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, and in a very short time at the University College of the West Indies.

We are trying to provide for young men who may not have another chance unless a Farm Institute is established.

Mr. WIGHT: I would like to ask on question, perhaps of the Financial Secretary, but he is not in his seat. Perhaps the Director of Agriculture may be able to answer. The Financial Secretary did say in his remarks that after six years we could pull out of this arrangement and continue on our own, but after six years we will have spent \$100,000, and having done so how are we going to pull out and continue on our own? With what money?

Dr. SINGH: That is the very point which has been worrying me. What will happen after we have spent this money?

Mr. CROUCHER: As I have already pointed out, \$40,000 will be the cost of the experiment. Several things may happen during the six years. The least likely, I am satisfied, is that you will say that the system of training people is no good. You may be so satisfied that you may want to train 40 people a year in British Guiana and be prepared to put up the money for that. Whatever happens you will at least end with 12 well-trained Instructors, and I would point out that the intention is that in the first instance we should take our younger Instructors and give them a chance to get proper training which they have not had up to now.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: I did not myself emphasize this point about being able to withdraw after six years as something of value. I know that the Director was very keen on throwing it out to Members that there would be no compulsion on the Colony to remain in the scheme after six years. What I did emphasize was that we were being asked to undertake to continue the annual subscription for six years. That is what I emphasized. I myself have never envisaged the situation arising in the sixth year that we would be so dissatisfied with the scheme, with its results and with the men who have been produced by its training, that we would want to cut ourselves adrift altogether and lose the

capital sum which we have contributed towards its establishment.

As regards the annual expenditure we shall, of course, gain a number of students whom we have trained, but I do not emphasize that ability to withdraw in the sixth year as being something of value. All I am emphasizing is that we are asked to undertake an annual contribution for at least six years. So I am not quite sure that the question does arise.

Mr. WIGHT: The hon. the Financial Secretary may not be here with us in the next six years, and we may not be able to produce the necessary —

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: It is quite conceivable that I may be here. I have no fears about that.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I think it is a very good thing that this motion has come forward. For one thing it has shown us that there are Members here who are caviling over a paltry \$10,000 but have been willing to vote large sums of money at budget time from which we will get no returns. Why I say this motion has done some good is because it has shown us the weaknesses of the Agricultural Department. I am reminded of the Bill which sought to bring the C.D.C. into the rice industry in British Guiana. It was as a result of that Bill that we were able to see the weakness and the restrictive effects of the Rice Marketing Ordinance. The weakness of the Agricultural Department is something which I have discussed here from time to time, but my views never found favour with hon. Members. Today I see that they are with me. We have a vast army of Agricultural Instructors. I have been looking through this list and I find —

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: I can tell the hon. Member that they number 25. It is not a vast army.

Mr. DEBIDIN: There are 25 Technical Assistants in addition to the very top-ranking expert men of the Department — the Director of Agriculture, the Deputy Director of Agriculture, Chief

Research Officer, Agricultural Economist, Economic Botanist, Marketing Officer, 3 Veterinary Officers, Entomologist, and so forth. We have six Agricultural Superintendents, five Assistants and 29 Agricultural Instructors. So I am right in saying that there is a vast army, and I remember asking what those officers are doing to educate the farmers of the Colony. I remarked that they were just cooling their heels in their sinecure jobs. I still maintain that that position is the same today. It is a strange thing that we have all those technical men, including the Director himself, who is an able man, who could educate the very large army of 29 Agricultural Instructors in the modern methods now sought to be achieved by this motion. If that were done it seems to me there would be very little need for us to send our students for special training in another Colony in methods which might be peculiar to the conditions there. It seems to me that when those students return to the Colony they will find themselves in the same position as the vast army of men we have who have some ability to instruct but are not performing their duty.

There must be some reason why we have not got the results expected. Those reasons must be found in the conditions we have in this Colony. We cannot make progress unless we have drainage and irrigation, and unless a large quantity of efficient stock is introduced into the Colony, which requires money. We have had from the Agricultural Economist Economic Report No. 2 on the La Jalousie cow byre. It is an excellent report and an indication of what further can be done if facilities are provided. I would like to know that it is being encouraged, and that another \$100,000 will be spent on it. If we had cow byres like that scattered all over the Colony our cattle and meat position would be much better.

I am a most disappointed man as regards the education of our boys and girls. I am disappointed in the fact that the Technical Institute now being erected is nothing but a misrepresentation of the intention of Government. It is something which is far from embracing primary education in this Colony at a stage

where pre-vocational training should be offered. I would like to know whether Government will spend \$100,000 without anything being done to give the children of the primary schools the necessary agricultural bias so that they may love the land. The principle involved is one of which we must take cognizance, and we must vote according to how we feel.

One last point. Too long have those who have to do with the establishment of institutions and industries in the Caribbean area been thinking only of the Caribbean Colonies and not at all of British Guiana. I consider it a sad commentary on the way in which development is thought of in certain quarters, that British Guiana, a country with agricultural potentialities, is overlooked as regards the site for a Farm Institute. It is an insult to British Guiana and I shall indicate my feeling in the way in which I shall vote on the motion.

Mr. FERREIRA: When this matter was first discussed in June last year we had an opportunity for a full discussion with Mr. Hotchkiss. At that time I felt satisfied that we would not be well advised to pursue this project, and today I have not at all changed my opinion. One thing that struck me at that time was the remark by Mr. Hotchkiss that the Instructors who were to be trained were not capable of undertaking the work that was required of them. That was rather a strong statement to make when we are spending \$800,000 a year on our Agricultural Department. Maybe that is the reason why agriculture in this Colony has not progressed as it should have done. I do not want to take up too much time in discussing what has happened to our coffee industry. The fact is that 10 years ago we had coffee, but today we have Nescafe. Some years ago we could buy sticks of chocolate produced in this country, but today we import cocoa.

Are our Agricultural Superintendents and their Assistants not capable of imparting their knowledge to the various Agricultural Instructors, and the Instructors in their turn passing that knowledge on to the farmers? Is it that they are far too busy with other work? If that

is so I think it would be an economic proposition to employ Instructors to teach the farmers. I think it would be a waste of money to spend \$41,000 as our contribution to the capital cost of the Farm Institute, when in six years we may abandon the project. If Trinidad and the other Colonies care to go ahead with the scheme we should let them do so. I agree with hon. Members that we should first decide whether we can afford it. I think we should have a farm school where youths from the villages could be trained. I will oppose the motion.

Mr. THOMPSON: I had not the pleasure of meeting or hearing Mr. Hotchkiss. I was a bit surprised to find this matter coming up again after we had discussed it fully in Finance Committee. The majority of Members were against it and I just cannot understand the idea of pressing it on us. I have not changed my position one bit. I am certainly opposed to it and I will vote against it. I have always urged that farm schools were necessary. Whenever the question of agriculture is brought up here I have always contended that the Agricultural Instructors should be on the farms with the farmers instead of compiling statistics, as I find in most cases. I have personally spoken to them in my own district and advised them to go around the farms and give the farmers the necessary instructions.

Why should we contribute to a Farm Institute away from British Guiana? If it is even on a small basis we should establish a school of our own. We could make a start with this \$41,000. On a farm school of our own the students would be able to study soil conditions here. One of our great problems here is the acoushi ant, and in spite of the presence of all these technical officers in the Department it still remains a problem.

The question which was asked by the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. Wight) has been exercising my mind. Is it the intention that after six years we can withdraw from the scheme?

The PRESIDENT: It is not a question of the scheme lasting six years. All

we are asked to do is to contribute to the scheme for at least six years if we go in at all, and at the end of six years, if this Council thinks we are not getting the benefits expected, that would be the time to withdraw from the scheme.

Mr. THOMPSON: By that time we will have lost a good sum of money. Let us invest this money in our own farm school. We have had an agricultural apprenticeship scheme at the Botanic Gardens but many of the boys on whom we have spent money received no help after they had served their apprenticeship, and have become shoemakers, policemen, and everything except farmers. I suggested quite recently that when those boys leave the institution they should be provided with a plot of land well drained, but I was told it was unworkable. This is an agricultural country and we must do something to help our boys to cultivate a love for agriculture. I am sorry I cannot support the motion.

Mr. WIGHT: I am in hearty agreement with the view which has been expressed, that in most of these schemes British Guiana is always left out. We have two Departments, the Geological Department and the Forest Department, in view of which I think this country can be made the centre for any future schemes.

The PRESIDENT: It has been made the centre in the case of the Geological Department which covers the whole of the Caribbean.

Mr. WIGHT: I am pleased to hear that, and I hope it will be extended to the Forest Department. In view of the idea that we should co-operate with our neighbours in the Caribbean, not necessarily by political federation, but economic co-operation as regards agriculture, Customs tariffs, etc., I shall support the motion. I will do so because I do not wish it to be said that we have refused to co-operate in one of the first schemes for improvement of agriculture. I however trust that this will be the last time this Council will be called upon to support a scheme of this nature before full consideration and weight is given to the

claims of this country. On the occasion of the previous Caribbean Conference it was remarked, either at the Conference or outside, that the British were the stumbling block to the majority of the schemes put forward at those Conferences. It seems to me that this proposal can be regarded as one of the recommendations made at the Caribbean Conference, and in view of that our neighbours should not be given the opportunity of saying that we are the stumbling block in the way of the acceptance of that policy. It is perhaps in the minds of the West Indian Colonies that we are disinclined to join a political federation, but we have shown in economic and other ways that we are perfectly willing to co-operate with them.

Mr. PETERS: When this matter was brought up in Finance Committee I was one of those who felt that we should not subscribe to this Farm Institute and I am still of the same opinion. Perhaps the reason why I might be regarded as unyielding in this respect is that I am satisfied that the Agricultural Department, whatever credit we may give it for its past and even present achievements, has evolved no argument by which I can accept its suggestion now without any measure of diffidence or timorousness. For a number of years we have been contributing to the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture; for a number of years young men have gone from this Colony to be trained there, and when they returned to the Colony they seemed either to have come up against a sort of discouraging, not to say disconcerting, frustration, and to have changed their mind as regards their original intention of following an agricultural vocation. On the other hand others who were retained in the Service seem to have been kept in cloistered posts where their practical and theoretical knowledge was not placed at the disposal of the farmers of this country in a way that might have been exceedingly helpful to them. It is a matter to be regretted, that for as many years as our Agricultural Department has been existing in this Colony. We have no vast administrative plan, whether it be for the rearing of poultry, or cattle or crops,

and what not. I should say that, had the Department a practical objective in its perspective that would have been a very big and convincing argument in favour of this new proposition which is under consideration today.

If in the long run this motion is thrown out, the Department will have to subject itself to a great searching of heart as to whether its policy made very obvious its activities in the way that the common man in the street can be convinced that it was the best policy in the years gone by. There is the suggestion that we should contribute towards the setting up of this Institute. If one must argue from the known to the unknown, from one's own practical experience of what happened in the past in order to make up one's mind as to what would happen in the future, one cannot avoid having a fear that the same result will accrue from the cautious and unprogressive attitude which seems to have been infesting the life and operation of the Department for many years. One must need ask oneself if we make this expenditure upon the lives and intellectual ambition of these young men who desire to learn, and they go there and spend three years, when they return would they fall into the self-same state of inertia, from a practical point of view, that seems to have marked the life and career of those we have sent before? This country has been pretty well placed with the many things that are conducive to the development of the agricultural prospects and perspective of our land.

We have an abundance of land throughout the length and breadth of this country; we have an abundance of water in one form or another, we have various levels of the escarpment and our climate is very propitious for the raising of tropical crops. But there are many things that we have not. We have not, for instance, developed as yet any concerted attitude or determination to stamp out the many things that lead the average farmers to a mood of utter frustration when it comes to develop his life and action in a way that would be encouraging to him.

Reference has been made to the acoushants which attack crops throughout this land, but there are other pests we seem to do nothing about. Not so long ago I was speaking to one of my farmers in the rural areas where I go to visit my Mission Stations, and he told me that monkeys, deer and wild hogs were attacking their crops. These problems which are right here with us have to be considered. We do not seem to have as yet developed any urge in order to give any assistance to these farmers in stamping out these things which make it difficult for them to follow their chosen occupation. We speak of spending this money to bring our young men into training in the Institute at Trinidad. So far as I am concerned, I am not against the idea, but I feel that the method by which it is proposed to improve the life of our farmers in our land should be different, and I agree with those who would say "Let us have a Farm Institute started in British Guiana, however unpretentious it may be, and let us raise the idealistic acumen of the men we have trained in it." It is time that we have something under our very eyes, and if the time comes that there should be any sort of academic rapprochement between the students of our local institute, however unpretentious it is, and those of the proposed farm school, then it would be wise for us to spend what we consider necessary either to send our boys there for the summer or let those come over here. If there is any clamant call at this hour for British Guiana to help along the agricultural aspirations of this land, it should be something that we want to see done here. So far as I am concerned, if I am going to cast a vote for anything to be started, I would cast my vote for a Farm Institute to be set up in British Guiana for the good of the people so that we can see what goes on from time to time.

Dr. SINGH: When this subject was first mooted in this Council, during the discussion and after I felt that it was a very good project as it is something that would improve the standard of living of our agriculturists, and we would have

more production. Our young men would be sent to Trinidad, and after a course of practical and theoretical training they would return to this Colony and be able to impart to our agriculturists and farmers knowledge as to what to plant, and when to plant, etc. There is one thing that irritates me at the present time, and it is what will decide on which side I will vote. It is why should everything go to Trinidad? Everything seems to be going that way. Here we are willing to spend this money and we are not so well off as Trinidad or Jamaica, yet when things should come our way whereby our people would be employed, having such an institution in this country, we find that opportunity is taken away from us. That is one regrettable feature of this motion.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: I shall be very brief. I have little hope that what I say now will convince those Members who have spoken so strongly against this motion, seeing that Mr. Hotchkiss, Agricultural Adviser, Colonial Development and Welfare, our own Director of Agriculture, and also the most impressive Mr. Simmond, Agricultural Adviser to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, have all recommended it, but I am extremely disappointed in some of the arguments used, and I would only like to emphasize again before we take the vote on the motion, that we would select most carefully from our present agricultural staff of instructors the best men who ought to have more training. In future, I have no doubt whatever that if this scheme goes through, the selection of candidates for that institution would be made from probationer-instructors, apprenticed people, who have started in that field already and, therefore, with the addition of two years' theoretical and practical training they would meet the criticism of the hon. Member for North-Western District that no one can teach his farmers anything.

That brings me to one point — the implied slur on our own farming community. More than one Member has emphasized and insisted that our farmers are hard-headed, obstinate old fellows

who would not be changed. I cannot believe that. I do believe that if our farmers

Mr. FERNANDES: To a point of correction! I am going to ask the hon. the Financial Secretary to withdraw that remark about any Member of this Council referring to our farmers as "obstinate old fellows". No one said that. It was said by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee that it is nearly impossible to convince them to use methods other than what they know. It may be possible that theirs may be the right method and no fallacy.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: It is no quotation. It is my idea of what is implied from those very emphatic statements made about our farming community. I repeat, it is a slur on them. The irony of it is that within the last two years the farming community has taken to mechanical methods like a duck to water. I would like the hon. Member to see them working at it now. I am satisfied that in every sphere of activity where our people are shown modern and new methods they would take to them. I do, on behalf of the farming community, like to record that I do not think it is fair to say that, notwithstanding what advice given, they are not all intelligent to follow.

There is one other remark by the hon. Member for Central Demerara which, I think, is the most curious, and that is when he said, to my horror, that the time has come to stop sending people out of the country for theoretical education of this sort. I hope I quote him correctly. But I seem to remember that during the course of our Budget debate the hon. Member emphasized the great need there was for sending our people abroad for theoretical and practical training, and bringing them back here. He is one who has always referred to training in the U.S.A., and I am surprised that he should consider it wrong to send our people to be trained by the same type of teachers as we would find at an Institute in Trinidad. I do not think it is necessary for me to say more. I feel that Members have made up their minds on this subject. I

feel that much of this criticism and opposition is due to a fact with which I completely sympathize. We have not had an opportunity of having this started in British Guiana. No one more deeply sympathizes with that view than I. I commend the motion and again ask

Members not to cut off their noses to spite their faces.

Motion put, and negatived.

Motion lost.

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