

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, 20TH JUNE, 1951.

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

PRESENT:

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

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

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

The Hon. the Financial Secretary and Treasurer, Mr. W. O. Fraser (Acting).

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

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

The Hon. V. Roth, O.B.E. (Nominated).

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

The Hon. J. Fernandes (Georgetown Central).

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

The Hon. L. A. Luckhoo (Nominated).

The Hon. R. B. Gajraj (Nominated).

The Clerk read prayers.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Friday, the 15th of June, 1951, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENT

STATEMENT OF FORESTRY POLICY.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. D. J. Parkinson, O.B.E., acting) communicated the following Message to the Council:—

MESSAGE No. 10.

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council,

It will be recalled that in his Address to Council at the opening of the Second Session of the Legislative Council on the 16th December, 1948, the Governor outlined briefly the general forestry policy which aims at the systematic sustained yield management of our forests, particularly where large-scale operations are to be carried out, in order to secure the optimum utilisation of the entire resources in any area.

2. I now invite the Council's attention to the subjoined detailed Statement of Forestry Policy which has been prepared by the Conservator of Forests. Attached to the Statement are—

- (i) a Note describing the implementation of the first phase of this policy, and
- (ii) two Schedules—

A—setting out the position regarding the provision of quarters for the Forest Department staff in the various districts, and

B—showing the staff disposition.

Also attached to the Statement is a copy of the Departmental Standing Orders marked "C" which lay down the principles governing the new forest management procedure.

3. The Statement of Policy was discussed in detail with, and endorsed by, the former Forestry Adviser to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on his visit to the Colony early last year. The Statement has also been considered by the Executive Council who have ex-

pressed agreement with its terms. It should be mentioned, too, that the basic forest policy set out in the Statement is that advocated by the Forests Sub-Committee of the Main Development Committee, and that the recommendations in the Colony's Ten-Year Development Plan were based thereon. One of the principal proposals in the Statement of Policy is to vest solely in the Forest Department the administrative control of the Colony's forests which is now shared between no less than three Government Departments.

4. New legislation is required to implement the proposals, and accordingly a draft Forestry (Amendment) Bill and draft Regulations to be made thereunder have been prepared; copies of the Bill and Regulations are also attached hereto.

5. The draft Forestry Bill provides for—

- (i) proprietors of sawmills and sawpits to be required to register their business, keep proper books, and submit returns to the Controller of Timber;
- (ii) a simplified procedure for making seizures of timber in respect of forest offences; and
- (iii) the abolition of the Forest Trust whose advisory duties have been taken over since 1946 firstly by the Forestry Sub-Committee of the Main Development Committee, and latterly by the Legislative Council Advisory Committee for Communications and the Interior.

6. The draft Forestry Regulations aim at simplifying and redefining certain provisions in the Crown Lands Regulations, 1919 (which will be superseded) and vesting administrative control of the forests in the Forest Department. However, the issue of leases for areas of 500 acres and more will remain a function of the Lands and Mines Department subject to the provisions of the Forestry Regulations. The principal provisions of the draft Regulations are—

Part I—The licensing of all extractors of forest produce from Crown Lands.

Part II—The control of operations in, and exploitation of the forests.

Part III—The control of the removal of forest products.

Part IV—The introduction of Government marks for use on timber cut on Crown Land after measurement, and for the regis-

tration of licencees' property marks at the discretion of the Conservator of Forests.

Part V—The control of the use of fire on Crown Lands.

Part VI—The licensing of timber dealers and sawmills, and the keeping of certain records by dealers and sawmill operators

7. The advantages which are expected to accrue from the proposed new legislation are—

- (1) a higher degree of efficiency in the administration of the forests achieved by vesting control in a single body;
- (2) an increase in forest revenue resulting from (1) which would be separate and distinct from the increases in certain royalty rates proposed in the second schedule. Particulars of these rates are furnished in a comparative list attached to the draft Regulations;
- (3) an increase in forest revenue resulting from clearer definition of the silvicultural clauses and the consequential reduction of wastage to a minimum;
- (4) a fuller utilisation of the Colony's timber resources which should result in the conservation for a longer period of the forests now accessible.

8. The draft Bill will be introduced at an early date and, when that has been passed, the Regulations, which have already been approved in draft by the Governor in Executive Council, will be formally made.

JOHN GUTCH,
Officer Administering the
Government.
19th June, 1951.

GOVERNMENT NOTICE.

BILL—FIRST READING.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL gave notice of the introduction and first reading of a Bill intituled—

“An Ordinance further to amend the Forestry Ordinance by making provision for the registration of sawmills and dealers in forest produce; for the abolition of the Forest Trust and for purposes connected with the matters aforesaid.”

ORDER OF THE DAY

ABOLITION OF RICE MARKETING BOARD.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. Member for Eastern Demerara has informed the Clerk of the Council that he will be unable to attend this afternoon. Therefore, we are unable to proceed with his motion urging the repeal of the Rice Marketing Ordinance, 1946, and the abolition of the Rice Marketing Board. The motion is item No. 1 on the Order Paper.

INSTITUTION FOR YOUNG OFFENDERS.

Mr. LUCKHOO: I beg to move the following motion standing in my name on the Order Paper:—

“WHEREAS by the Young Offenders Detention Ordinance, 1909, Chapter 20, provision is made for the establishment of an institution in which young offenders whilst detained may be given industrial training and other instruction and be subjected to the disciplinary and moral influence conducive to their reformation and the prevention of crime;

“AND WHEREAS the necessity for such an institution is most desirable and urgent for persons between the ages of 16 and 21 years and for adult first offenders;

“BE IT RESOLVED that this Council recommends that the above Ordinance be implemented (with necessary amendments) in order that such an institution be established at the earliest possible opportunity.”

I should like to point out that section 2 of the Young Offenders Detention Ordinance, 1909, Chapter 20, which makes provision for the establishment of an institution of this nature, reads:—

“2. For the purposes of this Ordinance the Governor in Council may, by order to be published in the Gazette, establish a labour institution, (hereinafter in this Ordinance called “the institution”), that is to say, a place in which young offenders whilst detained may be given the industrial training and other instruction, and be subjected to the disciplinary and moral influences conducive to their reformation and the prevention of crime.”

In this Ordinance, therefore, the machinery is present whereby such an institution can be set up. The Criminal Justice Act of 1948 does not refer any longer to “detention” but to “training”, and in that Act also the age of a young offender is placed at not less than sixteen and not more than twenty-one years of age. The purpose of this motion is to have implemented certain provisions which are in the Young Offenders Detention Ordinance. There are two classes of individuals concerned here, the first being persons between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one years of age who are young offenders of the Borstal age group, and the other being adult first offenders. In order to appreciate why it is very necessary that there should be implementation of this Ordinance, it would be essential to look at the conditions obtaining locally at this moment.

The young offender who is below 16 years of age can be sent to the Onderneeming Industrial School and he can be kept there for any period between two and five years, but he must leave there before he is 18 years of age. Therefore, we have this peculiar anomaly—that if a person is 15 years and 11 months old a Magistrate can say to him “go to Onderneeming until you are 18 years of age,” but if a person is sixteen years of age the Magistrate can no longer say to him “Go to the Onderneeming Industrial School for a year or two, until you are eighteen years of age.” Consequently, youths between 16 and 18 years of age suffer from this peculiar hardship; they have to be sent to prison because there are no other avenues open for the Magistrate to exploit or utilise and so we find that taking place from day to day in the Courts. And, I have no doubt that other hon. Members of this Council who are the members of the legal profession are aware of the fact that Magistrates have from

time to time regretted the absence of a particular institution which would cater for youths between 16 and 21 years of age. Under the first part of the motion I propose to deal with the situation obtaining at the moment and then I shall come to certain suggestions which I intend to make to this honourable Council.

I will show what happens to the young offender who is between 16 and 21 years of age, and the same thing holds good for the older individual who is a first offender. If he is in Georgetown he is sent to the Georgetown Prison, and there every effort is made by the Prison Superintendent to assist him—and I go out of my way to pay the Superintendent a compliment in this respect. I have been there and seen it myself—how he collects these youngsters and endeavours to keep them in a separate category—in separate rooms and so on—but the first person who admits the failure of this system is the very Superintendent himself. I will give the reason for the failure.

At the moment, the youngsters between 16 and 21 years of age are housed in the same compound as the others so that you have no visible segregation. The "old lags" as they are called—those who go back to prison for about the fourth or fifth time—utilize the same lavatory and other conveniences, and they go to the same general room to meet the Doctor, and when they are ill they go into the same infirmary. They actually go into the same hall for the purpose of religious training and also to the same church, so that it is almost farcical to say that there is segregation at the moment. You will find, on the contrary, that the young offenders and first offenders meet and quite openly have some form of social intercourse—verbal or otherwise—with other individuals who will contaminate them and be a source of evil influence to them.

When a young person is sent to prison for the first time, especially if he is between 16 and 21 years of age, there are two things that operate against him and provide a handicap almost for life. One is that he loses the fear of prison; having once been there he is no longer of the state of mind that he should keep away from it and do his best to fight shy of it. Having been there once he makes associates or contacts with the habitual criminal class or type there, and develops—especially with the tendency of the younger minds for hero worship—to such an extent through that bad influence that when those individuals come out of prison they renew their association. It might be thought that these are general statements which are so easy to make, but I would, with your permission, Sir, refer to the annual report of the Prison Department, dated September 23, 1950. This report was compiled by persons who have studied the situation; they live with the prisoners, as it were, and attempt to solve the difficulties to which I have referred. Speaking of young offenders, (on page 13) this report says:—

"Physical Training classes were held by trained instructors for five days in each week and comprised young offenders and prisoners up to the age of forty years. Although all prisoners are first certified by the Prison Surgeon as being fit before being placed to do physical training, men over forty years of age are not made to do rigorous exercises like those of the younger group. Outdoor and indoor games are indulged in by both male and female prisoners."

The last sentence is deserving of repetition:— "Outdoor and indoor games are indulged in by both male and female prisoners." Day by day young persons, because of their association in prison with people of ill repute, are drifting back through this influence into the Courts and again into prison. Recently, the Chairman of the South London Juvenile Court, Mr. Henriques, was in this Colony, and he went over our prison compound and made some observations in the Visitors' Book there. I

have made two extracts from those observations and, with your permission, Sir, I will read them. He said:—

“I am amazed by the miraculous achievements by Mr. Baker in the extremely difficult conditions of this prison”,

and then he goes on to say:—

“This prison is a wrong place for young offenders were they to receive any proper training and there is a crying need for a Borstal.”

Here is a gentleman with considerable experience who does not attempt to lay the blame on the staff. On the contrary, he praises the work they are doing and what they are essaying to do, but he points out that under those conditions you cannot have the set-up for a Borstal institution. The purpose of this motion is to afford a better opportunity for reformation—so that the youngsters in question could be given a period of time to cultivate better habits and to develop personal responsibility and confidence. That is what we would like to see happening to the youngsters who, unfortunately, find themselves in this position. By proper training the young offender can be made to realize that he must plan his life on his release, but that cannot be achieved with the present set-up. It might be asked whether the present conditions affect a minority or a minimum of individuals, or whether they affect a large number of persons. For this reason I have obtained some figures which, with your permission, sir, I would like to read. I think they are very revealing because they show the conditions which exist but which, I feel sure, hon. Members may not be fully aware of.

In the year 1949 the prison population in Georgetown, according to an official statement, numbered 1,407 individuals. Of that number there were 196 young offenders and 572 first offenders—a total of 768 or a matter of 55 per cent. of the total population. It means

also this: that some 45 per cent. of the prisoners were persons who were returning to prison and were not in the category of first offenders. That happens year after year; between 40 and 50 per cent. of the persons who go to prison are persons who have already been there. Now, in 1950 the prison population was 752 the number of young offenders—persons between 16 and 21 years of age—being 255 and the first offenders 649—a total of 964. The first offenders comprised 45 per cent. of the total population. There are some more figures which would help to set out the position. There is an After Care department and that attempts to deal with as many persons as possible after they have left prison. Due to limited funds, however, it cannot deal with every single individual, but in 1949 of the 612 persons who came under the care of the After Care Officer, 301 were first offenders and 136 were in the group between 16 and 21 years of age. Of the 136 persons who were in the 16 to 21 years group, we had 74 going to prison for the first time, 30 for the second time, and 32 recidivists—going to prison for the third, fourth or fifth time.

These figures are important because they show that even among the people in the 16 to 21 years of age group you have individuals who are repeatedly going back to prison. 32 persons between 16 and 21 years of age went back to prison three, four or five times. In 1950, of the 654 persons who came under the supervision of the After Care Officer, 401 were first offenders and 246 were in the 16 to 21 years of age group. Of these 246 persons, 162 went to prison for the first time, 25 for the second time and there were 59 recidivists. I know that figures of this kind are inclined to be rather dry and may be said by the other side not to convey much, but I do say that these figures speak more eloquently than words because they show that in the present set-up where you have youngsters between the ages of 16 and 21 years going to prison they can be reformed at frequent intervals. Human

nature is not of the kind where one should despair. In everyone there is a bit of bad and an abundance of good. A borstal institution, a training school, would provide a corrective for those individuals who find themselves in difficulties in the early years of their lives.

I have attempted briefly to give the position as it exists at present. I come now to the second part of my address in which I propose to make certain practical suggestions. I have no doubt that the reply of Government will be "We are cognizant of all the things you are telling us, but where can we find the money necessary to set up a borstal institution?" I have no doubt that it will be said that when the money is found such an institution will be set up. If we have not the money necessary to build a school of which we may all be justly proud we should see whether our existing buildings could be converted, or whether we could start on a much smaller scale. There are two suggestions which are not my own. One, in a certain modified form, has emanated from Mr. Magistrate Dickson, while the other is from the Superintendent of Prisons. The first is to convert H.M. Penal Settlement at Mazaruni into an institution which would house first offenders and young offenders, thus segregating them from the recidivists or lags, the second offenders and the older ones who would be removed from the Penal Settlement to the Georgetown and New Amsterdam prisons. It may be asked. Is that practical? From the figures I have before me it seems that it can very well be done.

At the Penal Settlement there is accommodation for 220 persons, and the figures I have show that in March this year there were at the Settlement 129 persons, of whom 13 were young offenders (those between the ages of 16 and 21 years), 77 first offenders, and 39 lags or recidivists. At the same time there were in all of the three prisons in the Colony, 72 young offenders and 124

first offenders, a total of 196. So that if all of the 196 young and first offenders were segregated at the Settlement there would still be room, because it has accommodation for 220 persons. The 39 lags could be distributed between the Georgetown and New Amsterdam prisons.

At the Penal Settlement there is a large wing in which are the majority of the dormitories which could be used for the accommodation of first offenders, while the other portion of the building might be used for the accommodation of the young offenders. This idea is not new. It is something which has been used with success at the Wandsworth institution in England where young offenders and first offenders are housed in the same building, but even there there is some degree of segregation. I wish to make a comparison between what I suggest and what is actually happening today at the Essequibo Boys' School at Onderneeming. There we have small boys of about 8 years of age mixing with lads up to 18 years of age, bathing together and dwelling together with them. This does not form part of the motion but I respectfully beg to draw the Council's attention to it, because one feels that something should be done there.

The idea of segregating young offenders and first offenders is not a novel one; it has been tried out at Wandsworth, England. The Penal Settlement at Mazaruni is an ideal place because the climate there is salubrious, and there are adequate supplies of vegetables and milk. There is land for farming, and there is no interference from any adjacent town or village. Indeed Nature seems to have provided there a place where youngsters may be trained and not kept in penal detention. The whole idea of modern thought is no longer penal detention but industrial training for young offenders. The Mazaruni Settlement seems to me to provide an almost natural setting—a place where workshops and laboratories could be

provided for the training of these youngsters. That, then, is the first suggestion which I respectfully offer.

The second suggestion, which I think has been put forward by the Superintendent of Prisons, is the utilization of a portion of Atkinson Field somewhere removed from the airfield itself, as a borstal for youngsters, the idea being to avoid incurring the initial heavy expenditure of money to put up large buildings, but rather to do it after the style of the Lowdham Grange, which is one of the most successful of the borstal institutions in the United Kingdom today. I may mention that Lowdham Grange started as small huts which the boys converted into dormitories which were built upon and expanded. Why should we not make an effort in the same way if the idea of the Penal Settlement is not attractive, or is regarded as not being practical? This is an effort to save lives. The figures show that of every 100 individuals between the ages of 16 and 21 who go to prison for the first time, roughly one-half return to prison for a second or third time.

The suggestion is that a portion of the area of Atkinson Field should be utilised for the purpose of setting up a borstal institution. It could be started on a small scale by the erection of huts which could be converted into dormitories by the boys. It has been urged that there is greater attraction to that scheme than to the suggestion with regard to the Penal Settlement, for the reason that at Atkinson Field the parents of the boys would have easy access to them and would not entirely lose their parental control, as they would be able to visit them there.

This is not a question which can be settled in a matter of minutes. I am fully cognizant that it is a very big problem indeed. The purpose of my motion is to draw Government's attention to the fact that under Chapter 20 the Governor in Council may by Order declare a place a

labour institution. I prefer the term "training school." Those of us who spend most of our lives in the Courts can testify to the fact that it poses a very big problem to the Magistrates who have youths between the ages of 16 and 21 coming before them charged with crime, and do not know what to do with them. As it often happens, it may be argued that a Magistrate need not send a young person to jail but could impose a fine. That is true, but if the fine is not paid it means that the person would have to go to jail. In that connection I have endeavoured to obtain some figures which show that in 1950, of 215 prisoners in the Georgetown Gaol 130 were there because they were in default of paying their fines. It may be that the fines were too high and they could not raise the money.

Having gone there for the first time, I respectfully submit that those young people lose the fear of prison. They become contaminated by bad influences there, and the result is that instead of our having citizens who should be a credit to our country we have people who are a drag on the State, and who spend their time reverting back to prison. I think it was the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Dr. Jagan) who on one occasion quoted some figures to show that it costs nearly £100 a year for the upkeep of each prisoner. I have endeavoured to see if it could be worked out, and I find that the cost is very nearly in that vicinity. If we were able to prevent these young offenders from going to prison for the first time by sending them to a training school, we would be in a position to reduce our prison population, with the consequential result, I presume, that we would also be able to reduce the enormous expenditure on the upkeep of our prisons.

I heartily commend the motion to hon. Members. I feel that something should be done, and done now. I feel that the time is over-ripe when this particular problem should not remain

just a problem *in esse*, but should be a problem solved, or a problem towards which efforts should be directed to provide a solution. I have much pleasure in moving the motion.

Mr. FERNANDES: I have very great pleasure in seconding this motion. The young people of British Guiana are going to cause us quite a lot of headaches if we are to endeavour to make the vast majority of them good citizens. There is very little more I can add in support of the motion to what the hon. Member has just put forward. He has undoubtedly gone into this matter very thoroughly and has covered the ground so well that there is very little for me to add, except to say that this is not one of the matters to which the blank wall reply "We have not got the money" should be given. We are able to find money for other things of less importance, and I am sure that without any really serious effort the money could be found for this purpose. Of course it would be difficult for British Guiana to embark upon the establishment of a first-class borstal institution for more reasons than one. The main reason is that we would not have a sufficient number of boys to fill that type of institution. But that is no excuse for us just to sit back and say that for that reason we need not have a good borstal institution. To adopt such an attitude would be tantamount to saying "Let us wait until more of our boys become criminals and then we will have sufficient of them to fill a first-class borstal institution."

The hon. Member has thrown out two suggestions to Government, both of which are worthy of consideration, and I am sure that if some serious effort were made to remedy the present situation—even if only to the small extent of having those youngsters segregated, as the hon. Member sug-

gested, and given an opportunity to do some farming, and to get them accustomed to living a respectable life and to earn a livelihood in the right way—if only that was achieved I am sure that some good would be done.

While on this matter I would like to draw Government's attention to something else that is closely related to it, and that is the serious state of unemployment of boys around those ages. I feel certain that if that serious state of unemployment is not taken heed of, if no attention is paid to it and nothing done to provide more avenues of employment for our youngsters, in the near future we may quite easily find ourselves with the requisite large number of first offenders to warrant the putting up of a borstal institution of quite a large size. I am one of those who believe in trying to save a youngster before he goes wrong. If we fail then we could try straightening him out after he has gone wrong, but I would like to see efforts made in both directions. I therefore throw the suggestion out for Government's consideration. I have very great pleasure in seconding this motion.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think I can safely say that Government is entirely in sympathy with the spirit of the motion. Government is, of course, aware of the gravity of the problem of juvenile delinquency which has been engaging its attention for some time. Various measures have been under consideration. Something has been done to tackle the problem; the probation service has been considerably developed in the last few years but we are, of course, aware that much remains to be done, and that the existing arrangements for dealing with young offenders are in many ways outmoded, inadequate and unsatisfactory. We have had reports, to which the Mover referred, by Mr. Dickson, the Magistrate, who has taken particular interest in the subject, and by Mr. Henriques, whose

experience makes his advice particularly valuable. Those suggestions have been carefully considered and we have been trying to see what can be done.

The hon. Mover and Seconder both, of course, anticipated the principal difficulty, rather than objection, which is finance. Hon. Members will be aware that provision for a young offenders' institution was included in the original Ten-Year Plan. The cost was then estimated at \$80,000, but that estimate is several years old, and no doubt would have to be greatly increased now. However, I think it is proposed to include this item in the schedule of schemes for consideration in connection with the revision of the Plan which has, unfortunately, been necessary owing to the general rise in the cost of schemes and our increased commitments generally.

The hon. Mover has made a practical suggestion with regard to H. M. Penal Settlement, for which I am grateful. The suggestion has been considered already but I think the objection has been raised, that while suitable in many ways as regards site, locality and environment, the fact that it has been a penal settlement for so long, and is so impregnated with the traditional atmosphere of a penal settlement, it might not be the best place to establish a detention or training institute of the type envisaged. That is the objection which I think has been raised.

These young offenders fall into three main groups—those under 10 years, those from 10 to 17, and those from 17 to 21 years. Undoubtedly we should have an institute, such as I think the Mover envisages, for the young offenders between the ages of 17 and 21, and an approved school for the 10 to 16 group, with separate accommodation again for those 10 years and under. We have made some progress in that direction. We are considering the transfer from the Essequibo Boys' School of

the youngest age group to the Belfield School. That is a proposal which is receiving active consideration, and may be implemented very shortly. The boys would be in the care of the Salvation Army. Even if the suggestion regarding the Mazaruni Settlement were adopted it would, of course, cost money, if not nearly as much, presumably, as the erection of an entirely new institute. On the financial question I do not propose to present what the Seconder described as a blank wall refusal, but on the other hand I think it is doubtful whether this Council could agree, and I do not think Government could accept the motion exactly in its present form, because that would in effect be giving a blank cheque, as opposed to a blank wall, to the Government, because if we implemented the Ordinance it would mean that we would have to provide accommodation.

To bring the 17 to 21 age group within the scope of the Ordinance would require an amendment of the law. If we put it into law that they are to be accommodated separately in a separate institution we would have to provide accommodation. Presumably, before that is done we would want to have some idea of what it is going to cost, and at the moment it is not really possible to say. The estimate for a completely new institution is out of date, and we have no estimate of what it would cost to implement any of the other suggestions. For that reason, Sir, I would like to suggest an amendment which would not, I think, affect the spirit of the motion, but would make it possible for the Administration to vote for it. What I would like to suggest is that the resolve clause be amended to read:—

“BE IT RESOLVED that this Council recommends that Government give immediate consideration to the implementation of the above Ordinance (with necessary amendments) and to the provision of the necessary funds in order that such an institution be established at its earliest possible opportunity.”

I make this suggestion not with an idea of delaying action, but merely for the reason I have stated. I do not feel that this Council can very well say, in effect, "Go ahead and amend the law and provide an institution" without having some idea of what it is going to cost. If the motion is amended in the way I have suggested, we would have to produce an estimate and then go to Finance Committee and put the facts before them, and they would decide on the financial issue. I do not think anyone would deny that it is extremely desirable that we should make arrangements of the kind contemplated by the mover of the motion. I beg to move the amendment I have mentioned.

Mr. ROTH: I beg to second the amendment.

Mr. PETER : I certainly must commend the hon. Mover of this motion for his very laudable effort to bring this Council—and one might say the entire Colony—to a sense of awareness in respect of the difficulty that faces the Magistrates who are disposed to do what they can to assist young offenders when they are brought before them. There is no doubt that we in this Colony have certainly lagged very far behind the forward-looking people in this world in respect of the matter of tackling the behaviour psychosis of the young people who must need learn how to adjust themselves to the demands of the society of which they are a part. It is only reasonable that so far as our own Colony is concerned child psychology as such should begin to be taken very seriously as one of the subjects that must be studied and implemented where possible in the body politic of our Colony. Too long have we taken for granted the fact that the mental and moral reactions of the child must be just the same as those of the adult, but we have seen that the child observes and reacts in certain ways—because of its immature experience—diametrically

opposed to the way in which adults might react in similar circumstances. Then, too, we have failed to realize what really in deed and in truth is the youth problem in our own community. We are just beginning to become aware of the nature and the gravity of that problem.

If we address our minds intelligently to it we should find that in nearly all communities the problem of child life might ever be the problem of the child who is physically defective. More often than not physical defect on the part of the child might pre-dispose him to a type of behaviour that might not be generally desirable in the community. Then again, we have to become aware of this fact—that a child might be predisposed to things that are wrong in a community because that child might be socially dependent. That child might not have known a mother or a father, or might have been an entire orphan left to be raised by a decrepit grandmother or grandfather, and this fact that it is dependent upon society for its care and upbringing might be the pre-disposing factor to its behaviour in the long run. Then again, the child might be inherently morally delinquent and that might be due to the environment in which it was brought up—the home, the neighbourhood, the contacts and the tendencies of the child.

Then we have the other class—where the child might be somewhat mentally deficient. There again you have another problem. Because of its mental deficiency it might behave as though it were a perfectly normal individual in the community, yet its behaviour in certain circumstances might be totally undesirable. All this will have to be taken into consideration as conditioning factors that have to do with the life of the young person—usually one that has grown up and might be at the very threshold of taking up responsibility in adult life.

So far as we are concerned, the time has come for us to go beyond and behind the question of erecting a Borstal Institute which I would always claim to be a great necessity in our midst today, but we have to be at pains to study the very psychosis of the particular individual—the operation of its mind, the reactions of the child, the history of its life and career—to determine whether such a person must be put into a Borstal Institution or not. I think that oftener than not we make the mistake of thinking that an institution or institutional care is of necessity the only means of assisting a young person who might find it difficult to adjust himself or herself to the demands of the body politic to which he or she might be a part. That is a mistake.

I have had the experience of dealing with young persons in the course of my ministry abroad, and I know of various cases where it was thought that a young person would be better off out of an institution than in it. We found that some cases needed no institutional care, but should be allocated to homes selected in different parts of that particular community. Indeed, I refer to Newport, Rhode Island, U.S.A., where I had the privilege of serving as a Minister of religion for seven years. Those who did need institutional care were allocated to different parts of the community on the advice of Ministers from different districts. The homes were placed in surroundings which were perfectly congenial and conducive to the adjustment of the lives of these young people and, periodically, the social workers of the State would visit these homes and check up on their condition and behaviour. I am happy to state that several of the young people with whom I had to deal in this manner have turned out to be prominent and self-respecting members of the community. After I had left that district for some 12 or 14 years, I returned

there to find that two of the young men who had been given that sort of surveillance had turned out to be outstanding and self-respecting citizens, and no one who did not know their history would have suspected that there was some difficulty in having them adjusted to society.

The next thing we have to consider as regards this type of young person is that, all things being equal, when he comes to the age of post-delinquency—the years running up to his attaining his majority—there is often a conflict of ideas and ideals, all being hitched to the question of opportunity or restraint of opportunity. There again we have to be very careful. The mind of the child grows up to the point where it begins to learn how to adjust itself to society—the life of those who surrounded it in the days of its helplessness. As it grows up he begins to learn something more—the rules of living, or life in its incipient stages. Then the light comes on and he begins to cease accepting the *ipse dixit* of its parents as to what to do in order to become a self-respecting member of the community. He begins to argue back and to cease taking things for granted; that is where the knowledge of the world is breaking in on the child.

Then the child becomes very much aware also of the changes taking place in its own body so far as life is concerned. Both the girl and the young man are making this discovery and they close themselves up a youngsters. That is, the girls get together and keep the boys away, and so on. That is why a boy when he reaches 15 or 16 years of age begins to take care of himself—because he wants to be admired by the girls—and the girl begins to take care of herself because she wants to be admired by the boys. They want opportunity and that is why we have the greatest difficulty in getting the child to adjust itself to the society of which it is a part.

I agree with the mover of this motion with respect to the question of a Borstal institution but, on the other hand, I agree with the Colonial Secretary that this whole question calls for greater and deeper study than what seems to appear on the surface. I am going to suggest that we accept the amendment propounded by the hon. the Colonial Secretary and also urge upon Government that the study of this problem be delegated to a Committee that would have knowledge of all its aspects and implications so that when we come to give something to the community it would be something which would not be merely the result of our desire to assist the youths, but something that would bring result because of its value in the circumstances with which we are faced today.

Dr. JAGAN: I too would like to commend the mover of this motion for bringing it before this Council, and I must say he should be congratulated for presenting it in such an admirable way—fully illustrated by facts and figures. Unfortunately, whilst he was reading out those valuable figures I was not able to get them down and comprehend them fully. I would have been grateful if we had an opportunity of going into those figures carefully and drawing our conclusions. I know that the hon. Member has given us his conclusions, and there is no doubt about it that this is an admirable way of helping to solve the very serious and tragic problem which faces us at the present time. I have been told that when Mr. Stannard (British Council representative) was here some time ago he referred to the Onderneeming Boys' School as the only school in British Guiana. Possibly that was done because of the all-round and inclusive training which the boys receive there. Unfortunately, many of our primary schools are not so biased in their curriculum as to give the industrial and technical training which is so desirable at the present time for the majority of our school population.

Whilst the hon. Mover of the motion laid emphasis on the fact that a Borstal institution should be established because first offenders and young persons are being contaminated by those who are regular offenders and have been in prison on several occasions, this Council must not lose sight of the fact that in British Guiana today we have a very grave and urgent unemployment problem. Recently some of us were sitting at a meeting of the Family Allowances Committee and the fact was disclosed that more than half of our population today is below the age of 14 years. We can readily appreciate what would happen in the very near future when these children who are now between 10 and 14 years of age grow up and begin to look for jobs. They will find that there are no jobs available and they will resort to stealing. I myself have been exposed very recently to the receiving end of this stealing and I know that it is assuming great proportions. The other day my car was parked near my office and although it was locked two shirts were stolen from it. The other day also an attempt was made to break into my surgery, and only this morning I had to call the Police on account of something similar. The youths of this Colony are looking around and breaking their heads to find employment, but cannot find any. While this is a reform measure, I think we must do everything possible to see that opportunities are given to the young people in this Colony to obtain full employment.

I can see a great deal of good to be derived from an institution such as this, where industrial and technical training would be received by these first offenders. I have visited the Onderneeming Boys' School myself and have seen the very admirable training that the boys are getting there. I do hope Government would give serious attention to this matter and without incurring the expenditure

of a great deal of money adopt either of the two suggestions put forward by the mover of this motion. I can see that it would not involve a great deal of expenditure, and in the long run it would save us a great deal of money since we would have to pay for the upkeep of these individuals in prison—not only for the first time, but for the repeated occasions that they find themselves there. I have great pleasure in supporting the motion.

The PRESIDENT: I now call upon the hon. Mover to reply.

Mr. LUCKHOO: I must say that the remarks made by the hon. the Colonial Secretary had an aroma of delightful conservatism. He said that while the Penal Settlement was suitable as a site for the institution, the fact that it was impregnated with that atmosphere so long presented what was to him the chief obstacle. I am very happy that that is the chief obstacle, more or less, because one could say that it is merely a figment of the imagination and nothing factual. If the Penal Settlement is impregnated with that atmosphere, then it is time that a new atmosphere should prevail there. Nevertheless, it is good to find that there has been wholehearted acceptance of the motion I have endeavoured to move. One is placed in the position that he endeavours to bring before Government only what he thinks would be accepted.

I accept, unhesitatingly, the amendment moved by the hon. the Colonial Secretary because I think it in no way impinges on or destroys the spirit of the original motion. I would like to make this observation, however,—that we do not want elaborate schemes with a prohibitive cost put before us because it is clear that very much money cannot be found for this purpose and that would be a sure way of committing suicide so far as the motion is concerned. I do hope that one of the two suggestions put forward will be adopted and that it

would not cost a tremendous sum of money—say \$80,000 or a sum in that vicinity. I think that the Penal Settlement is deserving of some consideration so far as the siting of the institution is concerned. It is a pleasure to find hon. Members giving the support which one expects for a measure of this particular kind.

The PRESIDENT: I will now put the motion as amended. It reads:—

“WHEREAS by the Young Offenders Detention Ordinance, 1909, Chapter 20, provision is made for the establishment of an institution in which young offenders whilst detained may be given industrial training and other instruction and be subjected to the disciplinary and moral influence conducive to their reformation and the prevention of crime;

“AND WHEREAS the necessity for such an institution is most desirable and urgent for persons between the ages of 16 and 21 years and for adult first offenders;

“BE IT RESOLVED that this Council recommend that Government give immediate consideration to the implementation of the above Ordinance (with necessary amendments) and to the provision of the necessary funds in order that such an institution be established at the earliest possible opportunity.”

Motion put and agreed to.

X-RAY PLANT FOR SUDDIE HOSPITAL.

Mr. WIGHT: I beg to move the following motion which stands in my name on the Order Paper:—

“WHEREAS there is dire necessity for the installation of an X-Ray Plant at the Suddie Hospital;

“BE IT RESOLVED that this Council recommends to Government that an X-Ray Plant be installed at the Public Hospital, Suddie, Essequibo, immediately.”

I am pleased to say that I am not going to occupy very much of the time of the Council because of the fact that the motion has been practically implemented by Government, if my information is correct. I have been informed

that the machinery and plant are already here and that all that is left is the choosing of the site for the erection of the electrical plant. I understand that the X-ray plant is also in the Colony and I do hope that Government would, through the proper Department, see to it that the building to house the electrical plant is erected as expeditiously as possible. It should not be a task of any great magnitude, because of the fact there is available land around the hospital, and it seems to me that the plant should be installed within a couple of months. I do not see that there is much necessity for me to continue with the motion, in view of the information I have received, but I would ask Government to give instructions to the Department concerned, which I presume is the Public Works Department, as to the location and erection of the building to house the electrical plant, and that the work should be undertaken as early as possible.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I confirm that what the Deputy President has said is correct. Provision was made for the X-Ray unit in the 1950 estimates, but until the supply of electric current could be provided it could not be put into operation. The equipment for the electrical plant has been received and we are now in a position to go ahead with the installation as soon as possible.

Mr. WIGHT: That being so I ask the leave of the Council to withdraw my motion.

Motion withdrawn.

Y.W.C.A. (INCORPORATION OF TRUSTEES)
BILL.

Mr. FARNUM: I beg to move the first reading of a Bill intituled:

"An Ordinance to incorporate the Trustees of the Young Women's Christian Association in the Colony and for purposes connected therewith."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the first time.

Mr. FARNUM: I beg to move the suspension of the relevant Standing Rule and Order in order to enable me to take the Bill through all its remaining stages today.

Mr. FERNANDES seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. FARNUM: In moving the second reading of this Bill I would like to give the Council a few facts about the Y.W.C.A. movement. It was started in this Colony in 1908 by an English lady who had taken up residence in the Colony for a number of years. Before her departure from the Colony in 1919 she had collected by means of various forms of entertainment a sum of \$800 towards the erection of a building. Unfortunately, after her departure from the Colony the movement remained dormant until 1926 when a band of ladies got together and revived it. I am glad to say that they have carried on the good work until the present time, and I believe that during the year the Y.W.C.A. will celebrate its 25th anniversary. The movement is affiliated to the World Y.W.C.A., and is classified as the second in the West Indies, the movement in Jamaica being the first. The object of the movement is the moral upliftment of the under-privileged and working class girls of the Colony. There are branches in Albouystown and at Bartica, and during the last few months I think an effort has been made to establish another at Whim, on the Courentyne. The Y.W.C.A. also gives its services to the Girls' Home at Belfield.

In 1942 the membership of the Y.W.C.A. stood at 142, but at the end of 1950 it had increased to 1,057, made up as follows: Girls under 12 years, 65; between 12 and 16 years, 278;

between 16 and 21, 327, and over 21 years 387.

As a result of the increased membership the building then occupied became too small, and during the last six years the ladies organised fairs and other entertainments by means of which they were able to raise a sum of \$13,000 towards the erection of a new building. We have all seen the new building which has been erected in Brickdam at an estimated cost of \$31,500, towards which, I understand, Government has been good enough to give a grant of \$6,500, so that a sum of \$12,000 has still to be raised. The interior of the building has not yet been finished, and there is quite a good deal of painting to be done. In order to be able to raise funds by means of a mortgage for the completion of the building it is necessary to have the Trustees of the Association incorporated. Having given these few facts about the Association I should pay tribute to the present and past Presidents and officers of the Y.W.C.A. They have given service to the community which I think we should all be grateful for. I therefore have very great pleasure in moving the second reading of this Bill.

Mr. FERNANDES: I would like to second the motion and I endorse all that the hon. Member has said about

the Y.W.C.A. I think I can pay them no greater tribute than to say that this Colony can do with a few more organizations as hard-working and sincere as the Y.W.C.A.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Council resolved itself into Committee and considered the Bill clause by clause with two verbal amendments.

Council resumed.

Mr. FARNUM: With the consent of Council I move that the Bill be now read a third time and passed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

The PRESIDENT: I understand that the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Debidin) will not be free from a case in which he is engaged, until next week. I therefore adjourn the Council until Wednesday, 27th June, at 2 p.m.