

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.**

FRIDAY, 26TH MAY, 1950.

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. D. J. Parkinson. (Acting).

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

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

The Hon. C. V. Wight, O.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. V. Roth (Nominated).

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

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

The Hon. F. E. Morrish (Nominated).

The Clerk read prayers.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Friday, the 17th of May, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

**PAPERS LAID**

The COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the table the following documents:—

The Report of the British Guiana Volunteer Force for the period 1st June, 1948, to 31st March, 1950.

The Twenty-fifth Annual Report of the Imperial Forestry Institute of Oxford—1948—1949.

The Thirtieth Annual Report of the Imperial War Graves Commission.

The Immigration (Amendment No. 3) Regulations, No. 14 of 1950.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER laid on the table the following document:—

Statement of supplementary Loan Expenditure which has occurred during the year 1948 and which has not been included in any previous schedule for that year and is to be admitted as a charge to Loan Funds under Colonial Regulation 283.

**GOVERNMENT NOTICE****CURRENCY BILL, 1950**

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER gave notice of the introduction and first reading of the following Bill:—

A BILL intituled "AN ORDINANCE to implement an AGREEMENT to provide for a uniform currency in the eastern group of the British Caribbean territories."

## UNOFFICIAL NOTICES

Mr. WIGHT gave notice of the following motions:—

## GAMBLING AND PUBLIC LOTTERIES

"WHEREAS the Gambling Ordinance Chapter 95 was passed in the year 1902;

"AND WHEREAS it is desirable in view of conflicting public opinion to investigate whether there should or should not be a New Ordinance;

"BE IT RESOLVED that this Council request His Excellency the Governor to appoint a Committee to make such recommendations as it may deem appropriate with regard to any amendments of the Law as it stands at present in relation to all forms of Gambling and Public Lotteries."

## CONTROLS

"WHEREAS general public dissatisfaction is expressed as to the several and/or various forms of Export, Import and Local Control, including Currency Control,

"BE IT RESOLVED that Government be requested to appoint a Committee to investigate and report on the said Controls and whether such Controls are necessary and expedient in the interests of the Colony of British Guiana."

## INHERITANCE LEGISLATION

"WHEREAS there exists in England the Inheritance (Family Provision) Act 1938, Chapter 45, 1 & 2 Geo. VI which said Act has been of great assistance to those affected thereby;

"BE IT RESOLVED that this Council request Government to enact an Ordinance containing similar provisions, to the said Act viz:— the inheritance (Family Provision) Act 1938, Chapter 45, 1 & 2 Geo. VI."

## WIDENING OF VLISSENGEN ROAD

Mr. FERNANDES gave notice of the following motion:—

WHEREAS there is at present serious congestion of traffic coming into the City from the East Coast;

"AND WHEREAS this congestion may lead to accident entailing loss of life;

"BE IT RESOLVED that this Council recommend to Government

the immediate widening of Vlissengen Road between Lamaha Street and Thomas Road."

## FEDERATION

Dr. NICHOLSON gave notice of the following motion:—

"That, this Council accept in principle the proposed Federation of British Caribbean Colonies and agrees to consider in a Committee of all the unofficial members of the Council the recommendations in the Closer Association Report."

## NOTICE OF QUESTIONS

## AFFAIRS OF B.G. AIRWAYS, LTD.

Mr. FERREIRA gave notice of the following questions:—

1. How many Pilots are employed by the British Guiana Airways Limited?

2. Of these, how many are British?

3. Is it not possible to secure, (a) the services of British Pilots?

(b) suitable British Aircraft for the various services?

4. What amounts were paid in **HARD CURRENCY**

(a) by way of salaries to Pilots for the years 1948 and 1949,

(b) for Machines and Spare Parts for the years 1948 and 1949,

(c) as agency and/or other charges for the years 1948 and 1949?

REQUEST FOR DISCUSSION OF  
PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Mr. DEBIDIN: Sir, before the Order of the Day is proceeded with may I be permitted to refer to the very excellent address which you gave to this Council a week ago. Your Excellency outlined in that address certain questions of policy relating to this Government and in the the past we have had opportunities of discussing your address in conjunction with the Budget Statement usually given by the Financial Secretary. That, to my mind, is a very important aspect. This is the beginning of a new session and Members of this Council ought to be given an

opportunity to discuss matters of policy relating to this Government. Your Excellency has referred to a number of very important matters in your address and I am therefore asking you to declare a day or so open for the purpose of discussing it in this Council.

There are several matters which I, personally, wish to take up. One, for instance, is the question of the disposal or use of the Flood Relief Fund. A proposal has been mentioned which, I must say, does not meet with my approval and, perhaps, with that of other Members of this Council. I feel it ought to be discussed, and that is only one example. Others include the questions of drainage and irrigation, development and industrialisation, all of which are important and are matters on which Members of this Council would have to give their views during the course of the year.

The PRESIDENT: I will certainly consider what the hon. Member has said, but I do not think there is anything in my address of importance that has not come before this Council already or will not do so, in concrete form. I think the point the hon. Member has chosen to mention about the Flood Relief Fund has nothing to do with this Council. It is purely a matter for the Mayor and his Committee. I only mentioned it as a suggestion from myself, personally, as a very good way in which part of the Fund might be used. The disposal of the Fund by the Flood Relief Committee has nothing to do with this Council and I cannot agree that it is something which should be debated in this Council. If the hon. Member has any suggestion of his own he can very well make it to the Flood Relief Committee as I have done. As regards other important matters, I have given a clear indication to Members that they will come before this Council item by item, and I do not think the hon. Member need have any fear that the Council would not be able to discuss any of the important matters mentioned in my address. I will consider what he has said, however, and perhaps we might set a day aside for general discussion. All I fear is that it would not take us very

much further in the result, because we would have to get down to the matters subject by subject and question by question before we can do anything that would be of any real value.

Mr. WIGHT: The hon. Member for Eastern Demerara is a member of the Flood Relief Committee and knows that we had one meeting and that certain figures have to be obtained. He also knows that a meeting was called the other day but, unfortunately, owing to the fact that several members including himself were engaged elsewhere that meeting fell through and we will have to meet at an early date. It seems to me the position is that we will have to continue to spend sums of money as we have been doing for the benefit of necessitous children. That is being carried on in accordance with recommendations made by the Local Government and the amounts are being paid by cheque. Another meeting of the Committee will be held at an early date to consider what should be done with the balance of the fund.

The PRESIDENT: Council will now proceed with the Order of the Day.

#### EXHIBITION FUND FOR W.I. UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I desire to move the following motion standing in my name:—

“That, with reference to His Excellency the Governor's Message No. 1 of the 15th of April, 1950, this Council approves of the sum of \$6,000 being provided from Colony revenue to establish an Exhibition Fund for the benefit of Exhibitioners from this Colony at the University College of the West Indies.”

I rise to move the motion with some confidence that it will receive the unanimous support of the Members of this Council. The details of the proposed scheme for the Exhibition Fund are set out in the Message referred to in the motion and I need only touch upon one or two of the more important features. As hon. Members may be aware, the University College already awards scholarships and these scholarships are awarded on a competitive basis to candidates who achieve the high-



est standard. They are not awarded by the Colonies, but exclusively on merit. This Government does contribute to the Scholarship Fund and to the general funds of the University College, and we have had our share of Scholarships; we had one in 1949 and three this year. But, apart from the scholarships which are for the exceptionally gifted and talented students, there is a need for some form of assistance to others who have indicated that they have reached a sufficiently high standard to be able to make good use of a University education, but in many cases cannot do so owing to lack of funds. I think most hon. Members would agree that in this Colony only a relatively small number of students would be in a financial position to maintain themselves, and that there are many able and deserving candidates who can make very good use indeed of a University education, but cannot do so because their parents cannot afford to maintain them. It is these students who are deserving of our support. The amount of that support must, of course, depend upon what we can afford.

This matter has been very carefully considered by the Scholarship Selection Committee which includes Members of this Council and they have recommended, having regard to our other scholarship commitments, and particularly to the decision taken this year to award another Guiana Scholarship, for girls, that the amount to be contributed to this Exhibition Fund should be \$6,000. That is a relatively modest contribution, but I agree that in our present circumstances—and the Financial Secretary explained these circumstances to Members in Finance Committee, yesterday—we cannot afford more. It is to be hoped that at a later date we might be able to afford more, particularly as the scope of the University itself will increase in regard to the number of subjects. These subjects have been added to since the University began and they now include Faculties in Arts, Natural Science and Medicine. The subject of Natural Science is one of particular importance to us, as mentioned in the Message.

I think hon. Members will agree that this is a deserving object for contribution from public funds. The administration of the Fund is described in detail in the

Message. It will be administered entirely by the University and it will be reserved, of course, only for students from British Guiana. Since its purpose is to assist needy students it is desirable to spread the butter thinly and send as many students as we can. It is proposed to award a maintenance grant to needy students. The exhibition would never cover all the fees payable by the student and the amount of the maintenance grant will depend upon the ability of the student or his parents to contribute. There is no fixed value to the exhibitions and we might be able to award a large number of exhibitions to students whose parents can contribute a substantial amount, or it might be a small number to students whose parents can contribute very little. If there is a balance left over in any one year it will be carried over to the following year. As the Principal has pointed out, the University cannot perform its proper functions and this Government and the other Governments contributing to it are not going to get proper value for their substantial capital contributions unless their students can get to the University. In the circumstances, I think the contribution proposed—\$6,000 a year—is relatively small.

I should like to say, finally, one word about the urgency. As hon. Members are aware, Mr. Sherlock and two other members of the teaching staff of the Faculty of the University were recently in this Colony in connection with the selection of candidates and we were informed that there were at least four candidates who could not be awarded scholarships but who had reached a sufficient standard to justify their being awarded one of these proposed exhibitions. If this Council agrees to Government's proposal it would be possible to make awards almost immediately. I do not think there is anything more I need to say.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER seconded.

Dr. NICHOLSON: There are no limitations to the possibilities of a young man or woman with a University education. There is a great need of capable officers to fill the various roles of Government, and a limited form of education such as

is acquired locally is inadequate to meet the needs of Government. I feel, therefore, that hon. Members should welcome the enterprising nature of the motion—to send our young men and women to the University of the West Indies to enable them to become capable Officers not only in Government but in industrial enterprises and other walks of life. I feel that if we were to have a few young women with University degrees in this Colony it would mean a great deal. It would act as a leaven to the intelligence of other young women and it would surely bring us dividends. I think if we have, for example, one or two such women in our Education Department and connected with primary education especially, we would obtain far better results than we have been able to get for the large amount we are spending on education. And what is more, education should not be confined to the well-to-do. There are numerous young men and women who are capable—who are brilliant—but who have not got the means to go forward to a University. We should, therefore, do everything that lies within our power to aid those who are capable of obtaining sufficient funds to go forward. I am supporting the motion and I am commending it strongly to my colleagues in this Council.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I hope that what I have to say would not be regarded as anything else but healthy criticism and, at any rate, would not be regarded as strong opposition to this motion. I regard this proposition put before the Council as meaning further support for the West Indian University. It is true that the Fund will be utilised for the specific purpose of financing exhibitions but, at the same time, it would help to buttress the expenditure of the University. That fact we cannot escape, but I have some very important questions to ask in the course of my remarks and they begin with this: Is the West Indian University offering the highest in the way of academic training? I have been made to understand that an honours degree cannot be obtained at the West Indian University. I was made more aware of this fact during my recent visit to Barbados and in the course of conversation with a group of men including at least two honours graduates. Barbados

is not quite happy over this aspect—that in spite of the excellent number of men available at the University and capable of teaching up to the standard of the B.A. honours degree, that degree would be denied the University students. This fact gave rise to the criticism that there will be a difference in the standard of a B.A. degree from the West Indian University and one from London University, say. It seems that there is very little more a student would have to do in order to get the B.A. honours degree instead of the B.A. general degree, and I think we must get an answer to this question. At Queen's College in the Salaries Commission Report we find there is a different scale for the man who is an Honoursman as against the man who holds the ordinary degree. So it does make a great difference. Therefore we in this Colony must have a declaration from the West Indies University as to what is their policy now, or in the immediate future, as to the standard of their degrees.

Then comes another question. I see there are to be a limited number of faculties. The one I am most concerned about is the medical faculty. I am going to ask and I would like to see His Majesty's Government give not merely a statement which may give rise to doubt as to the true position but state emphatically whether a student who has qualified as a medico at the University is entitled to practise anywhere in His Majesty's kingdom, either in the United Kingdom or some other Commonwealth country. It is an important fact because it does go to the question of money. If these Colonies are asked to subscribe, and they subscribe very substantially as they are doing, to the West Indies University, we expect the best and we expect that the West Indies University would live up to what it is expected to be—a university second to none—so that West Indian students should not in any way be regarded by reason of their attainments at that University as being inferior to those of any other University. Probably it would be cheaper to go to the West Indies University than to a University in the United Kingdom, but the mere visit to that country with all its traditions and things we have studied provides an education in itself. When a student



goes to a university or takes up any type of training in the United Kingdom, he pays a little more to go there but apart from what he goes there to study he gets that which has a certain standard attached to it and more of a general education which, I respectfully feel, is not what one can get by going to the West Indies University. Therefore for that extra benefit the student from British Guiana will be tempted to select the United Kingdom first, if opportunities are available for entry into the Universities there. I feel then that the West Indies University must declare what it stands for more clearly than it has done, how its degrees and those men who qualify there in the various faculties are going to stand in relation to those who have qualified in the United Kingdom.

There is another aspect, one which goes to the motion very closely, and that is we are asked to give \$6,000. This may be regarded as a small amount, but we know how amounts are increased if not sufficient for a particular purpose, and so this amount may be increased to \$10,000 in the future. Whatever it is, however, it is going to be tied to our annual expenditure. The question I would like to ask, therefore, and it is something we must pay attention to when proposals such as this come up, is "Are we justified now to spend this amount of money when at this very moment we have not fully equipped ourselves so far as Queen's College is concerned and we have not fully equipped ourselves so far as primary schools are concerned?" There is no doubt whatever that within the near future we have again to meet up a tremendous rise in the Budget for Education in this Colony—increase in equipment and in the number of teachers and head teachers who will be required to take charge of new schools, and also increase in our school accommodation. This \$6,000 will be very much needed for the establishment of new schools in areas where there are no schools and are so far from schools nearby that they lend themselves very much to illiteracy because the pupils hardly attend school at such distances away from their homes. I have had sufficient indication that our future expenditure is going to be high. Therefore we have to try and conserve in order to assist our 10 year Development Plan.

We must try as much as we can to carry it all through, and that can only be done if our financial position is able to stand it in the future. Therefore I am asking this Council to pay very high regard to every proposition which comes before it and to commit itself to something which it can do year after year, as the tendency is not to reduce but to increase.

Whilst saying all this, may I be permitted to say that I have a very high regard for Education. If I may say so, I am very much at heart an educationist, but I like to see first things come first. I would like to see our education in this Colony developed and more facilities made available for our own education in this Colony before we think of a privileged few who may take up a large quantity of our money. It is an important aspect, and when one looks at the proposal before us still I doubt how far these Exhibitions will go. I do not know whether these exhibitioners will be having a full professional course and how many years they will be there. I see the Message is silent on that—how many years their exhibition will last and to what height they will attain. I see one Member spoke about the need of our boys to be better equipped for the Civil Service. I am of the opinion that Queen's College would, if provided with a properly equipped laboratory, give to this Colony men with sterling educational qualification fitting them for any post in this Colony. Then we would need only to go outside for a specialist or something to be of great advantage to this Colony. As an example, at the present moment we would like to see our engineers more qualified than those who are in our districts. In this Colony we have men who are merely mechanical engineers being called upon to do things which require a knowledge of civil engineering. Send such a man to Holland to study irrigation and drainage problems. Spend \$6,000 on him and when he comes back he will be an asset to the Colony. To my mind that will be of greater advantage to this Colony than merely sending a man to a University to get a degree and an education which can be got at Queen's College.

I am opposed in principle to this proposal. It goes against my grain. If we

can get more accommodation for 500 pupils let us have that. But that is if we can afford to do it and if what is proposed is really justifiable. I respectfully submit that this motion should stand down until we know our financial position. We have had the financial statement for 1949 laid on the table today, and we have yet to go more fully into the programme and our future financial position in the light of what we are going to discuss soon in our 10-year Development Plan. I hope it will not be long delayed in so far as having that before this Council. The estimates are to be gone through again, and it seems that another year will elapse before we get that. I do trust and urge that the 10-year Development Plan should come before this Council within a matter of a month or two. When we have gone into it and examined the position we will then be in a better position to say whether we should tie this Colony to a commitment of \$6,000 a year for these exhibitions.

Mr. FERREIRA: Nearly six or ten years ago there was a terrific hue and cry in this Colony and throughout the West Indies for higher education. It was felt that there was need for a university and, I think, that was a perfectly just and reasonable feeling. As a result of that and largely helped by the Imperial Government, a university was set up in the West Indies. I am indeed surprised today to hear the words of the last speaker, although I do sympathize with him when he mentions the need for education among the lower groups. But surely when the people of the Colony and the West Indies called for a university they must have been aware at the time that a university cannot be established and run merely on the fees of the students. Members of this Council and the public must have realized that it called for sacrifices on the part of the people and government of the various Colonies. It is rather late, it seems to me, to come forward now and decry the vote of \$6,000. We must at this stage either signify our intention to withdraw, if that meets with the approval of the public, or bear our full share of the responsibility and co-operate to the fullest. If we are going to have a university in the West Indies it is going to cost us

money, and we may as well face facts. I appeal to Members to put aside political views and to look at the wider issues. If we are going to have responsible public opinion, then we must be prepared to pay for it.

Mr. FERNANDES: I am supporting this motion wholeheartedly. This money, as I see it, is to be used to give those whom God has blessed with average ability an opportunity to develop that ability, even though they may not have been blessed with the finance necessary to enable them to develop that ability in ordinary circumstances. I would be very pleased if all motions coming from Government to spend the money of the taxpayers were like this one for the benefit of the young men and women of this Colony. I am not going to say I am an educationist, even though I would like to see every facility given our young people to develop whatever talents they have. There is one thing I always stand for, and that is to see that every person, every child, is given the opportunity he or she deserves. In this case, as I see it, the parties to benefit will be those who were clever enough to obtain an exhibition which will give them free education but which will not give them the wherewithal to maintain themselves whilst absorbing that education. I do not think we can spend our money to better effect than in this way. It is true that these votes have a peculiar habit of getting higher, but this is one case I will not be unduly worried if the amount increases twofold or threefold.

Dr. GONSALVES: I would like to say a few words in support of this motion. Some years ago I knew of one medical school in the U.S.A. where they were contending about the insufficiency of the endowments. Appeals were made to the Carnegie-Rookefeller Foundation, known as the General Education Board, for a \$2,000,000 endowment. That was given and that particular college felt secure as with the endowment it was able to secure highly paid Professors, etc. Fifteen years hence because of changed conditions and according to present day methods and advancement it was disclosed that that endowment would not be enough to meet the needs of better paid professors. What

I want to say, as I have a little bit of experience, is that I am afraid that until we are able to set up through, perhaps, hard sacrifice a certain amount of endowments for the West Indies University, even though the contribution of this Colony is very high—\$135,000—it would still be faced with extreme and major difficulties.

Another point I want to make is this. About a year ago I supported in Finance Committee a proposal for the further training of a Guianese young woman in one of the Colleges of England. That young woman had obtained a scholarship from this Colony and from perusal of her work in England it was reported that she had done so well that when she had come to the end of her time it would be a very unwise step to allow her to discontinue her studies. Therefore it was suggested by the University to this Government to allow her to continue her scholarship for further studies for which she was very much apt. It was granted and, I am glad to see, that young woman has been appointed as one of the Lecturers of the West Indies University.

I would like to say that all Universities when they begin have their hardship. No new schools turn out men who do not, according to the Faculty Association, come up to the standard of A or B and much prefer to have a C class college education. We must not believe that Queen's College is any college at all. It is not even what we can call "a high standard high school" to be found in other places. I am rather surprised to find that people seem to believe that Queen's College is the "be-all and end-all" of everything. It is only the beginning of what we call a good, sound secondary education. For that reason I am supporting the motion wholeheartedly. I am happy to observe it is to be given to a bright young boy or girl without any segregation by only giving exhibitions to boys. It must not be limited. If we wish to develop this Colony, if we wish to remove some of the feeling of frustration, I believe it can only be done through the encouragement of education, and if we are going to give our boys and girls a bias to look at things with proper perspective,

I do believe what has been proposed is the best investment. For that reason I support the motion.

Mr. WIGHT: In supporting this motion I do so feeling fully well it will be justified in that it will assist parents who are unable fully to pay the expenses of their child who may otherwise be very capable of being fully educated. Therefore this exhibition is in the nature of assisting them to make up what they cannot themselves afford. It is amazing to me and I am unaware of it that, according to the hon. Member for Eastern Dmerara (Mr. Debidin), honours degrees will not be obtainable at the West Indies University. His reference no doubt may be to Barbados. One can only glean from what he has said that the conversation took place in Barbados among presumably Barbadians. Maybe the only conclusion that I can come to is that there is at the moment a college in Barbados, Codrington College which is affiliated to Durham University, and because of the existence of the West Indies University that college has to cease certain of its curriculum, particularly in the Arts. That was brought up and discussed at the last University Council meeting and it has been decided that that matter can be adjusted by an approach to the University of Durham in conjunction with the assistance of the Vice-Chancellor of the University of London and others. That is the only matter which, I think, those gentlemen might have been discussing in total abysmal ignorance of what they were talking about. That is no cause for alarm because that is being taken up immediately. To say that the honours degrees will not be obtainable at the West Indies University when it is in full swing is a matter I cannot for the moment think any decision could have been arrived at by the Council at its last meeting.

Mr. LEE: I desire to support this motion. Those of us who have been to Jamaica and have had the privilege to go to the West Indies University can substantiate the good work the University is doing. The different students from the West Indian Islands meeting there and being in one class group and spending their university life together, I feel sure



it would benefit British Guiana if we can, and I do sincerely hope so, at all times afford to send students there to take their degrees. I desire also to let hon. Members know that we are in great need for doctors, and if some of these scholarships would meet that need, I feel sure that this Colony would benefit. With these few words I would like to support the motion.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am afraid I did not anticipate any general attack on the University College, and so I am not in a position to quote chapter and verse regarding the degrees which it is proposed to offer, but it is certainly my impression that it will offer honours degrees as soon as it can build up to the necessary standard acceptable to the parent university, London University. I am sure that is the intention. You cannot create a university overnight by waving a wand, and it is bound to take some time to be established. Certainly it can never be established properly unless it gets the support of the British Caribbean territories. So I think it would be very shortsighted to hold back support at this stage with the intention of waiting until it becomes, through someone else, developed to the necessary standard. I am sure it does intend to offer honours degrees eventually.

The hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Debidin) referred to the fact that students might prefer to go to the United Kingdom where they can get the higher degrees, and there was one particular point he mentioned. He said it would cost very little more. I think he must have overlooked the fact that the University College pays all travelling expenses of all students — scholarship holders, exhibitors or undergraduates—from their original colony to the University, and that is a very substantial consideration in these days. I think we all realize there are great demands existing both in primary and secondary education, but I do not think that is a valid reason for ignoring higher education altogether. I think it is most important that this University should have support, and we should make this contribution not to the University but to the students themselves.

The hon. Member said something about the "privileged few" which I do not quite follow. The intention of this scheme is to counteract the question of a privileged few by providing funds for those who do not have resources of their own. This \$6,000, it is suggested, should provide exhibitions for about six students. Some may need more money and some less, but it should provide for six students, and if the Colony's finances reach such a parlous point and we cannot afford to go on with it we would then have to stop contributing to the Fund. It is not something we are absolutely bound to forever. I hope myself, however, that we should eventually be able to increase the numbers which the Fund would provide for.

The hon. Member also suggested that the motion might stand down. I am glad that this has not found support. I think it would be a great pity, particularly when, as I have explained in my opening remarks, there are already four students who might be awarded exhibitions and who could then take up residence at the University College in October this year.

Mr. DEBIDIN: May I ask the hon. the Colonial Secretary a question through you, sir? What period are these exhibitions to last?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am sorry. The hon. Member did refer to that but I forgot to answer him. It is not possible to answer definitely. It would depend on the period of the particular course. A student may take a course in medicine which may take him six years. The natural science course may be only three years. It depends on what course is taken. The exhibition will be for the period of the course. It will be subject to review. If circumstances change and more money is needed the Fund would be there to provide for any justifiable increase.

Motion put, and carried unanimously.

#### GRATUITY TO RETIRED FOREST RANGER

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: I beg to move the motion standing in my name at item 2 on the Order Paper, which reads:

"That, with reference to His Excellency the Governor's Message No. 2 of the 26th of April, 1950, this Council

approves of an *ex gratia* payment of \$864 to Mr. H. J. Weir, a Grade III Forest Ranger who has retired on medical grounds with effect from the 1st of December, 1949."

The motion seeks this Council's approval of the payment, by way of a gratuity, to an employæ of the Government, Mr. H. J. Weir, who has had to retire on account of illness. This employee, as Message No. 2 indicates, has given 20 years' service to the Government but, unfortunately, not continuous service. It has been interrupted no fewer than three times. He was a boathand in the Lands and Mines Department from 1923 to 1931 when he was retrenched through no fault of his own. He was re-employed in the same capacity from 1933 to 1934, and again as a boathand and Ranger from the 18th of July, 1941 to the 31st of May, 1943. Finally he served as a Forest Ranger from 1948 to 1949. Under the existing Regulations superannuation benefits can only be awarded after a period of at least 7 years' continuous service. Through his out-door service he certainly had an opportunity, by exposure, to contract the disease from which he is now suffering, and which led to his retirement, and having regard to the circumstances it is proposed that he should be awarded as a gratuity the same amount which would have been payable to him had the whole of his service been continuous. The amount is \$864, and I commend the motion to the Council.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I am not opposing the motion but I may be permitted to draw the attention of Government to the fact that there are large numbers of persons who have served this Colony in a manner which we have always commended. I refer particularly to the D.D.T. campaign in which men have endangered their lives by going into the fields and suffering illness and many other privations. For one thing I know that many of those men who worked in that service have suffered very badly with their eyes, and some of them have to wear spectacles today. On behalf of some of them I applied to Government that they be given some sort

of allowance. Several of them served seven years continuously before they were retrenched. In one or two instances they have been asked to send in particulars, but I do not know if they have been given any consideration in respect of their services.

A circular has been issued by Government to the effect that after seven years' continuous service a non-pensionable employee of Government would be considered for a gratuity. The employees I have referred to come within that circular, and I think the hon. the Financial Secretary would know the circular to which I refer.

Mr. ROTH: We are discussing a motion for a gratuity to Mr. Weir, and if the hon. Member wishes to refer to ex-employees of the D.D.T. service the proper course would be to move a motion to that effect.

The PRESIDENT: I think the hon. Nominated Member is correct. I do not object to the hon. Member making brief reference to other cases but I cannot allow a full debate on a matter that is not before the Council. I think the hon. Member has made his point.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I was going to make one more point. It seems to me that the patience of my friend, the hon. Nominated Member, has become very much less within recent years. Had he waited a minute or two more he would have seen what I was driving at. I crave your indulgence, Sir, because a grave principle is involved and a precedent is being created. There is an employee in the Public Works Department who has given over 20 years' service but has lost the qualification of seven years' continuous service by just one month. He has applied for a gratuity but has been given the "No." I think he is deserving of a gratuity.

I do not want to oppose this motion, but in principle I should, because we are making fish of one and fowl of another. If I support this motion I hope that when similar cases come up they will be supported to the same extent. There are several people who have fallen short by

about one year of the qualification of seven years' continuous service but I think some special provision should be made to give them a gratuity in respect of the number of years' service they have given. So far as this particular case is concerned the gratuity is being calculated on the basis of 20 years' service in spite of the circular to which I have referred. I am not quarrelling about that. I have not had an opportunity to examine just what this particular officer is entitled to, but I hope that when other cases come up this Council and the Executive Council will not turn a deaf ear to their appeal, particularly in the case of the ex-employees of the Yellow Fever Service.

Dr. SINGH: I rise to support the motion: I happen to know the gentleman concerned and I remember when he was retrenched and subsequently re-employed in the Lands and Mines Department. He was lost in the bush for three days whilst on duty and had to live on berries and leaves. He was brought to me and I was able to assist him. He was in a very weakened state and I believe his illness originated when he was lost in the bush without food. He was in an exhausted condition which was the incipient stage when he contracted pulmonary tuberculosis. I fully support the motion.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY and TREASURER: I only wish to comment on the remarks of the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Debidin) who referred to a circular. I wish to assure the Council that the superannuation benefits to non-pensionable employees are awarded on precisely the terms and conditions laid down and approved by this Council by resolution. It is true that those terms and conditions are not prescribed by law as is the case with officers on the Fixed Establishment, but nevertheless those conditions are held to be in the nature of legal provisions, and they are not normally departed from except in very special cases, as the one with which we are dealing, and in this special case the specific approval of the Council is sought. I do not know of the cases to which the hon. Member has referred with regard to the Mosquito Control Department, but I assume that if those cases deserve exceptional treatment, such as this

particular one does, they will be given consideration. Quite obviously, in the case of superannuation, rules which are laid down must be complied with. Conditions of service must be fulfilled before superannuation benefit can be awarded. That is a normal rule, and I think Members will agree that to depart from those rules, except in special cases with the specific approval of the Council, would be quite wrong.

Motion put, and agreed to.

#### HOUSING (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1950

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move the first reading of a Bill intituled:

"An Ordinance to amend the Housing Ordinance, 1946, to enable the Legislative Council to waive loan charges made in connection with the Wortmanville Housing Scheme."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the first time.

#### GEORGETOWN IMPROVEMENT WORKS (FINANCE) (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1950.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I move the first reading of a Bill intituled:

"An Ordinance to amend the Georgetown Improvement Works (Finance) Ordinance, 1932, with respect to payment by the Georgetown Town Council of its share of its liability for the cost of the sewerage works and for the cost of the Water Works."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the first time.

#### AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH (INCORPORATION) BILL, 1950

Mr. PETERS: I move the first reading of a Bill intituled:

"An Ordinance to incorporate the Board of Trustees of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in British Guiana: to vest therein certain property; for purposes connected with the matters aforesaid."

Mr. DEBIDIN seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the first time.

The Council was then adjourned until Friday, June 2, at 2 p.m.