

# LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THURSDAY, 29TH MARCH, 1951.

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

### PRESENT.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. J. Fernandes (Georgetown Central).

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. J. Carter (Georgetown South).

The Hon. F. E. Morrish (Nominated)

The Hon. L. A. Luckhoo (Nominated)

The Clerk read prayers.

### ACCURACY OF MINUTES CHALLENGED

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 21st March, 1951, as printed and circulated, were taken as read.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I wish to draw attention to page 4 of the Minutes — "Recommendations 29 and 30 of the Venn Commission" — and to ask that the reference be altered so as to disclose the true position on the occasion of the debate on Recommendation 29. As far as I remember, Recommendation 29 as made by the Commission was put and was passed by this Council. As it stands in the Minutes it would appear that the Government's action upon the Recommendation was put and accepted by this Council.

The PRESIDENT: It was put.

Mr. DEBIDIN: You will remember Sir, that I moved an amendment that the Recommendation proper be put, and then you said "All right, let Recommendation 29 be put." That was what

we voted on, and I respectfully submit that that was what the Council agreed to.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Sir, we were dealing with Recommendations 29 and 30 together, and in view of the hon. Member's point you then said you would put Recommendation 29 as on the Paper separately. The hon. Member may have been under a misapprehension. I do not think that any other Members were lied to.

The PRESIDENT: The motion before the Council was "That this Council approves of the action taken and proposed on the Report of the Venn Commission as set out in the Governor's Message No. 4" I put the motion in respect of Recommendations 29 and 30. The hon. Member wanted to move that the Venn 'Commissions' recommendations be approved, and I said—if I recall correctly—I would put the original motion, and if that was thrown out I would put the hon. Member's amendment. That is the position.

Mr. DEBIDIN: If there is going to be disagreement on this, there is only one alternative. That is, to ask that the acceptance of this portion of the Minutes be deferred until the Recommendations are recommitted and a decision taken on them.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think the correct procedure is to confirm the Minutes if hon. Members consider they are correct. If there is any misapprehension the hon. Member may ask that the items be recommitted.

The PRESIDENT: I think the hon. Member's course is, when we go into Committee to consider the Recommendations of the Venn Commission, to ask that those particular Recommendations be recommitted and a re-vote taken. I am not prepared to have a debate on the actual Minutes.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I think that is the alternative course which can be taken, and I propose to take that course when the proper time comes.

Minutes confirmed.

#### PAPERS LAID

The following documents were laid on the table —

The Criminal Appeal Rules, 1951 — (The Colonial Secretary).

Schedule of Services, etc. to be met from funds raised under the Public Loan Ordinance, No. 9 of 1951.

Supplementary Estimate for the quarter ended 31st March, 1951.

Schedule of Provision required during 1951 for Development Plan Services to be met from Surplus Balances, and from Advances pending the raising of a Development Loan — (The Financial Secretary & Treasurer).

#### GOVERNMENT NOTICES

##### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL gave notice of the introduction and first reading of the following Bills:—

A BILL intituled "An Ordinance further to amend the Income Tax Ordinance with respect to the Imposition and Evasion of Income Tax."

A BILL intituled "An Ordinance to amend the the Civil Aviation (Births, Deaths and Missing Persons) Ordinance, 1950."

##### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FROM PUBLIC LOAN FUNDS

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER gave notice of the following motions:—

That, this Council approves of the Schedule of Services, etc., to be met from funds raised under the Public Loan Ordinance, No. 9 of 1951, which has been laid on the table.

##### SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1ST QR., 1951

That, this Council approves of the Supplementary Estimate for the quarter ended 31st March, 1951, which has been laid on the table.

##### DEVELOPMENT PLAN SERVICES SCHEDULE, 1951

That this Council approves of the Schedule of Provision required during 1951 for Development Plan Services to be met from Surplus Balances and from Advances pending the raising of a Development Loan, which has been laid on the table.

## PUBLIC LOAN BILL

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: I would like also to give notice at this stage of the introduction and first reading of a Bill intituled—

“An Ordinance to confer power to raise by loan or loans a sum not exceeding three million pound and the costs of issue; and for matters connected therewith.”

Copies of the Bill are now being circulated to Members.

## ORDER OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING RULES  
AND ORDERS

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: I beg leave to move that the relevant Standing Rule and Order be suspended in order to enable me to take at once the three motions of which I have just given notice. The motions seek the approval of the Council of three schedules which I have laid on the table and which were approved by the Finance Committee.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FROM  
PUBLIC LOAN FUNDS

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: I beg to move the following motion:—

That, this Council approves of the Schedule of Services, etc., to be met from funds raised under the Public Loan Ordinance, No. 9 of 1951, which has been laid on the table.”

The schedule comprises three items

“Purchase of Campbellville, \$480,000.

Purchase of land at La Penitence, \$21,700.

Expenses of Issue of Contingencies, \$15,000.”

Hon. Members are fully acquainted with this particular matter. As a matter of fact we discussed it in some detail when the Public Loan Bill was passed a few weeks ago, and we also discussed it in Finance Committee on vari-

ous occasions. So I do not propose at this stage to go into any detail, but for the sake of record I will just state that what is intended is that the estate known as Campbellville is to be acquired by Government in consideration of the issue of bonds to the amount of \$480,000 to the proprietors. Similarly, land at La Penitence which is required for the housing establishment there is to be acquired in consideration for the issue of bonds to the amount of \$21,700. With regard to the operation of the Campbellville Scheme I cannot at the moment give details. Members know fully well that the object of this project is primarily to safeguard the interests of those occupants of the land who have built houses thereon, and to whom the land will be sold in suitable lots after the purchase by Government. The remaining portion of the land can be developed as time goes on for other housing purposes. For the moment the primary objective is to create lots when the land is divided up, and sell to those persons who now occupy it on a lease from the present proprietors.

As I said, Sir, this matter was the subject of prolonged consideration in Finance Committee, and I do not think it is necessary for me to go into any further details at this stage. I may say that on the passing of this resolution, if adopted by this Council, action will be taken immediately to give effect to this transaction, and probably it will be advertised by the vendors and purchasers in consideration of the issue of a single general debenture for the amount stated. Subsequent to that the bonds in the appropriate denominations will be printed in the usual way and given in exchange for the debenture. That is as far as I need go at the moment.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL seconded.

Dr. JAGAN: I have spoken on several occasions on this matter and there still seems to be a great deal of confusion so far as this purchase is concerned. When the Loan Bill was introduced a week ago in this Council the hon. Mover of the motion said, as he has said today, that this purchase is intended to

safeguard the interests of the people who are residing on lands at Campbellville. He also said, Sir, that there was some rumour that private speculators were attempting to purchase these lands, and from the resale of which they would have made handsome profits. I do know that there have been malicious people who have gone around the streets telling people that I was associated with individuals who wanted to profiteer on the people who are already occupying these lands. But I want to make it quite clear that from the very inception of this project of the purchase of Campbellville I was instrumental in initiating Government's purchase of this area. I also want to make it quite clear that I am resolutely opposed to the purchase of this area at the price which it is proposed to be paid by Government.

In the past this country has had to pay a great deal of money for lands and other things which were purchased, with the result that the Colony today is burdened by payments of interest charges, and the taxpayers have to meet those payments from year to year. I have in mind, Sir, the purchase of the Demerara Railway. Hon. Members of this Council are aware that in respect of that the taxpayers of this country will have to pay a sum of approximately \$80,000 per annum forever. We cannot go on making more payments such as that against the interests and welfare of the people of this Colony. It is true that certain people are going to benefit thereby, but I do not think it is either the duty of this Administration or the duty of Members of this Council to preserve the interests of certain people as against the welfare of the masses of this country. Sir, I will speak separately on these two items in order to convince Members that this matter should not be passed today in this Council.

✓ A few days ago in this Council I tabled a petition to the Secretary of State for the Colonies asking that he intervene in this matter, and that a Land Valuation Committee be set up, and, having done that, that Committee should determine what is a fair price to be offered to the present owners of

Campbellville and La Penitence. I also gave notice of a motion in this Council quite a long time ago, advocating that a Land Valuation Committee should be set up, but so far that has not been done. Government has been paying in the past large sums of money for lands which it purchased. In that petition which I have tabled for transmission to the Secretary of State for the Colonies I have pointed out that not too long ago this Government bought from the Rupununi Development Company, through their subsidiary Company, the Abary Cattle Ranch Company, a piece of land known as No. 27 Western Berbice. That land was purchased for \$150,000. If the facts are gone into it would be revealed that that land was originally obtained by the owners as an absolute free grant from Government at a cost of 50 cents per acre. We have had recently the case of the purchase of land rights from the late Mr. C. A. McDoom. Government was leasing that particular area of 2,700 acres of land at Mahaicony-Abary and paying a sum of \$3 per acre, whereas the same individual was only paying Government a sum of 20 cents per acre for the same land. That went on for five years, over which period a sum of \$40,000 was made in profits, and then this Government subsequently purchased the rights in respect of that very area of 2,700 acres of Crown Lands for a sum of \$50,000.

I point out these facts to show why it is absolutely necessary that a Land Valuation Committee be set up with competent individuals to go into the question of the price paid for lands when they were originally purchased, the amount of money which might have been spent on the development of those lands, the profits or losses which might have been made during the occupation of those lands, and on consideration of all those factors, to determine a fair and just price to be paid now for them. But that has not been done. For the benefit of hon. Members of this Council I wish to point out the case of Campbellville so that Members would see that this motion must be opposed at the present time, because in passing this motion it would merely mean that the taxpayers of this Colony would be



saddled with a burden for the next 15 or 20 years. In reply to my questions tabled in this Council, in which I asked Government what was the total area of land which was purchased in 1937 for a sum of \$60,000, Government stated that the lands comprising Cummings Lodge, Turkeyen, Liliendaal, Sophia, Bel Air, Blyegzigt, Kitty, Werk-en-Rust and La Penitence amounted to a total of 2,991 acres. That purchase was not made very long ago. Any Member of this Council can examine the Deed of Transport which is lodged in the Deeds Registry. A total of 2,991 acres of land was then purchased for \$60,000.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: May I invite the hon. Member to give the names of the vendor and purchaser, if he knows the details of purchase?

Dr. JAGAN: This land was owned by the La Penitence and Bel Air Estates Limited. It was sold in 1937 to the Courantyne Sugar Company Limited for a sum of \$60,000.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: May I enquire from the hon. Member whether those were two associated Companies, and this was an internal transfer from one to another?

Dr. JAGAN: I thought it was not the practice in this Council to go into the inter-relationship of Companies. It seems that the hon. Member wants me to do that at this particular time. Whether it was an internal transaction or not, if it is an honest transaction the correct value would be transferred by one company to the other. I am not interested as to whether the sale was from one subsidiary to another. Whether that is so or not, the true value had to be set out in the transport that was sworn to by the people who made the deed, and that can be examined at any time. I did not conclude my remark. The Courantyne Sugar Company, Limited, which purchased the land in 1937 was subsequently merged in 1950 with the Bookers Estates Limited. This Council is being asked to vote a sum of \$480,000 for the purchase of 252 acres of that

land. We should ask ourselves whether it is a fair price. I am not opposed to the purchase of this land but the price to be paid must be a fair one.

Going into the balance-sheet of the Company I find that at the end of December, 1937, the profit carried to profit and loss account was \$1,559.61. In 1938 the profit was \$9,268.74; in 1939 it was \$8,196.33, and in 1940 the figure was \$8,209.12. Those are the returns which were made to the Registrar of Deeds. I hope they are not fictitious, or shown to be lower for the purpose of evading income tax. We have to take those profits at their face value or the value set out in the reports of the Company. We know that the Rent Restriction Ordinance applies to Georgetown and within three miles from the boundaries of Georgetown. So that the whole of this estate, comprising 2,991 acres of land, comes within the provisions of the Rent Restriction Ordinance.

The question may then be asked, that if in 1938, 1939, and 1940 the Company made a profit of less than \$10,000 per annum, and with the existence of the Rent Restriction Ordinance which does not allow an increase of more than 12 per cent., can we say that the profit earned today would be increased to a very great sum? It cannot be increased to any great extent over the figures I have quoted, but what will happen when Government purchases this land for \$480,000? The Company will be entitled to interest at the rate of 3½ per cent. on the bonds, and the Campbellville purchase alone will mean an annual income to the Company of \$16,800 by way of interests on the bonds. When we compare \$16,800 per annum as income on 252 acres of land, with an income of less than \$10,000 per annum on the whole estate we can definitely see that this land purchase is being made in the interest of the land-owners, and not in the interest of the people of this Colony.

H.M. Government today is a Socialist Government and has been carrying out several nationalization projects in Great Britain, and the yardstick being used for the purchase of land or coal mines is the amount collected in rents less

expenses. In other words the profit earned over a period of 20 years is taken into account in fixing the price to be paid for the land. So that if it was the intention of this Government to deal fairly with the people of this country, it would acquire not only 252 acres of land but the whole estate, determining the average annual profit made by the Company, multiplying it by 20 and giving them the sum arrived at as the purchase price. Why should a profit of less than \$10,000 per annum on the whole estate of nearly 3,000 acres be increased to \$16,800 for less than one-tenth of the estate?

With reference to the other bit of land at La Penitence which is to be purchased from the Company, it can be said that it is rice and pasture land on which Government will have to spend a great deal of money to build it up so as to make it suitable for building houses. The purchase price is \$21,700 for 30½ acres of land, which works out at about \$700 per acre. At the rate of 3½ per cent. interest on the bonds the income to the Company will be \$24.50 per acre per annum. The people of Campbellville or La Penitence will tell you that the rental of that pasture land obtained by the Company has been \$8.80 per acre. By what stretch of the imagination can Government justify an income of \$24.50 per acre per annum to the Company for pasture or rice land from which it has been deriving an income of \$8.80 per acre? If the same yardstick as used in Great Britain was used here we would find that \$9 per acre over a period of 20 years would amount to \$180, which should be the purchase price of that land per acre, and not \$700 per acre as proposed. If the purchase price was \$180 per acre the taxpayers of the Colony would have been assured that the land was being acquired at the same income the Company has been obtaining from it during its period of occupation.

I cannot understand the principle on which Government is acting in purchasing this land. It appears to me that the only principle is that money must be taken out of the taxpayers' pockets and put into the pockets of Bookers and others who own these lands. I do not think that is

good enough. I have a booklet before me entitled "Nigeria — Why we Fight for Freedom." I should like to quote from it a statement by Mr. Arthur Creech-Jones, a former Secretary of State for the Colonies, which is reproduced in this pamphlet from **Fabian Colonial Essays**, published in 1945. The statement is as follows:

"It ought no longer to be the function of colonial Governors to hold the ring for alien interests to exploit and develop what natural wealth there may be; to see the surplus wealth drained overseas for the enjoyment of anyone outside the people who produce it, or whose natural resource it is, to remain indifferent to the claims of health and education and social advance; to concede little to the people in the way of consultation and collaboration or of political representation and responsibility."

What is happening today is that the Administration is falling to this bait which has been set by — I don't know whom. Because these people are Bookers it does not necessarily follow that Government should bow down to them.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I do not think the hon. Member is justified in making the suggestion that Government is bowing down to anybody, whether to Bookers or anybody else.

Dr. JAGAN: If Government is not bowing down to Bookers it seems to me that the best thing would have been to acquire these lands compulsorily. Take it away from them! Laugh if you will, but we cannot continue to allow people to come here and plunder and rob the poor people of this country. That is what this amounts to.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: We are inviting the Legislative Council to approve of this motion, but the hon. Member is charging Government with joining in exploitation. I do not think the hon. Member is in order at all.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. Member is quite out of order in attributing any motive, implied or stated, to the policy of Government in this matter.

Dr. JAGAN: There may not be any motive but year by year we see how this country is governed and run, not in the interest of the people. It is true that this honourable Council is going to pass this motion. We know how this honourable Council is constituted, and how almost anything Government wants passed is passed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I suggest that the hon. Member withdraw that statement because it is making a reflection on the Government, and no Member is permitted to do that.

The PRESIDENT: I ask the hon. Member to withdraw his remark. It is a reflection on this Council.

Dr. JAGAN: It may be a reflection on the Council but—

The PRESIDENT: I ask the hon. Member to withdraw it.

Dr. JAGAN: If you ask me to withdraw it I will do so but I shall then prolong the debate. That is all.

The PRESIDENT: That is beside the point.

Dr. JAGAN: All right, I withdraw it. What can we expect from a Council constituted like this? I am free to say what I have to say. If Members do not like it they can sit down. I will not be interrupted again.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. Member has been called to a point of order. He must obey the ruling of the Chair. He can make a general criticism but he cannot make any reflection on the conduct of this Council in the way he did. He can criticise Government in a legitimate way but he cannot suggest improper motives.

Dr. JAGAN: All right, Sir, I will drop the issue, but I want to make it quite clear. We all know that it is going to be passed by this Legislative Council but I want to inform Government and all concerned that Government may accept this bill and the Council may accept it in its wisdom, but the people of this

country will not accept deals like these. The people of this country will object to it. The same money which is being paid to Bookers is probably building Bookers' Town at Bel Air—those nice stone houses which are going up today, mansions at the expense of the taxpayers of this country. That is what it is going to add up to subsequently. Nearly half a million dollars could certainly complete the scheme up there. Perhaps the only thing which would be left to the people of this country in 15 or 20 years to come will be to move into "Bookers' Town" and take it over. I know we do not like to hear about expropriation in this country and in this Council, but when we see the Constitution being used to put burdens around the necks of the people of this country I say that the people are not going to stand for it.

I am asking that even though this motion will be passed today it should not be implemented because, as I said before, I have tabled a petition which I hope has already been forwarded to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. This matter will also be raised in the House of Commons, and until the Secretary of State approves of this purchase I hope Government will not go headlong and acquire this land. I would like to see Government take over the whole estate for \$480,000. That would at least be more just, because it would be at least eight times the price the Company paid for the land, but to purchase a small section of it for that price in the name of proper security for the people is not good enough.

It is true that the people of Campbellville are monthly tenants and, consequently, are subject to being dispossessed at any time, except that they have the protection of the Rent Restriction Ordinance. It is also true that there may be individuals who may want to acquire these lands and speculate on them. That is why I say that since Georgetown is likely to be extended in the future, and there are large tracts of land owned by these very proprietors, I think it would be the best thing if Government undertook to acquire the entire estate at the purchase price of \$480,000 which it proposes to pay for Campbellville alone.

In that way we would find that not only would the housing problem be settled adequately for all concerned, but that the people who are obtaining their livelihood in that area, such as dairy farmers, would be provided with good pasture lands.

In the Financial Secretary's statement in moving the motion I did not hear any mention of what is to be done at Campbellville in the name of development. I did hear once in Finance Committee, however, that the Central Housing and Planning Authority intended to develop the area at a cost of something around \$600,000 but, apparently, that scheme has been dropped, because I have not heard the Financial Secretary make any statement with regard to the development of that area. What is going to happen now? Does it only mean that Government intends to purchase without developing the place, building proper roads and putting in proper sanitation? Does Government merely intend to purchase at this high price and charge rentals to the householders there, and the rates of interest which will be paid to the Company? The revenue per acre for Campbellville will be \$66. On that sum the interest charges will be in the vicinity of \$10 or \$11 per annum to the people concerned. Let us say that the interest charges will be \$10 per annum for the owners of house lots. If the area is subsequently declared a Village or Local Authority the people would have to pay rates and taxes, and perhaps other necessary charges.

I want to know, therefore, what Government intends to do about this area — whether it intends to subsidize the farmers or the people who at present occupy lands there. We know that at present the people are only paying between 90 cents and \$1.50 per house lot, and if we are not careful we may find that in purchasing this land at this high price we would be putting an additional burden on the very people we are trying to protect.

Another factor which must be taken into account is that many of those people do not have the wherewithal at present to build houses, and many of them will have to have recourse to loans from the Building Society at 6 per cent. interest,

which would mean that they would be jumping from the frying pan into the fire. They would be burdened with interest charges in respect of the purchase of the land, and also interest charges for building on the house lots. I do hope that hon. Members appreciate all the facts relevant to this issue, and will let justice be done in this country, because for a very long time now we have had nothing like justice in this country.

Mr. FARNUM: I am sorry that I very often have to be on the opposite side to the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Dr. Jagan), and that on this occasion I have to maintain that record. I happen to have been living in the Campbellville and Kitty area for the last 35 years, and I know what Campbellville was in the early days. It was nothing but forest, with rice beds here and there. The opening up of Campbellville is the result of the enterprise of one of the Managers of the Company who is now dead. At the request of certain persons for housing, the Company spent large sums of money to convert those rice fields into residential areas. In doing that the Company not only provided houses for several people who could not at that time get houses, but improved health conditions in Queenstown Ward which, at that time, was regarded as a fever hole, as it was felt that the rice fields in Campbellville were responsible in a great measure for the ill-health of the residents in Queenstown. The estate authorities filled up the land at Campbellville, provided drainage, built roads, and did all manner of things to make conditions livable for the people. I therefore think that the owners of Campbellville are justified in asking for their property what I consider a fair price.

My experience at Kitty is that the lands in the extension of Kitty which is now known as Subryanville, were sold at prices about six times what they were bought for, and I maintain that those prices are reflected in the value of the lands at Campbellville. If the proprietors were to sell those lands at Campbellville in lots they would get very much more than the sum they are asking for the lands now. The hon. Member said that the lands which are being sold at La Peni-



tence are in very bad condition, and that \$700 per acre should not be asked for those lands. If the lands at La Penitence are in such bad condition and that price is being asked for them, surely the proprietors are justified in asking for a higher price for the lands at Campbellville which have been made up to a very great extent.

I am sorry to say that a very undesirable situation seems to have arisen in this matter as a result of the racial element being brought into it. I have been asked by a large number of people at Campbellville, who are not East Indians, to vote in favour of the acquisition of Campbellville by Government, because they are satisfied that the price asked is not beyond their means, and is not higher than what they would have to pay for lands anywhere else, in view of the difficulty they experience in getting land to build their own homes. They are therefore quite prepared to pay this price and, what is more, they feel that Government will sell those lands to them on a long-term arrangement. At present, Sir, the land is being rented by those people on a month by month basis. They are unable to develop these lands because no one who is living under such conditions would be willing to improve his property by planting economic trees and things of that kind which would assist him economically. They are quite prepared to pay this price. They feel, Sir, that if the lands are sold to them on easy terms they could then approach Government to allow them to have the place declared as a Country or Village District, and then they could go to Government again and ask for assistance by way of a loan to put roads and drainage in order. They feel that it would be capital well invested, as every cent put in that land could be always recovered. I am going to support the motion.

As regards the land at La Penitence, as a member of the Central Housing Authority I know that the Chairman of that Body had to do quite a lot of hard bargaining to get the owners to sell that land at \$700 per lot. We were told that at that time they could have got more than \$700 if they wanted to sell to another purchaser. Another feature of

Campbellville is, while agitation was going on over the price asked by the firm for that land on the ground that it was too high, I was told by responsible people in that district that a group of persons actually visited the property and were endeavouring to purchase it from the owners. The people thereby became very alarmed. I have personal knowledge of a case in which a certain investor approached the firm and asked them whether they would sell, and at what price they would sell, and the principal of the firm told him they were not going to sell to an outsider but would sell to the Government on condition that the Government resold to those people who are now residing there so as to secure their present holdings.

Mr. FERNANDES: I listened very carefully to the speech of the hon. Member for Central Demerara. I am one of those who supported the purchase by Government of Campbellville from the very beginning. I knew that there would be no difficulty whatever for the owners to sell Campbellville for the price which we are asked to pay for it today. I listened to quite a few remarks on the value of the land, the method by which land is usually paid for, and things of that kind. I have listened very carefully and thought very seriously over the statement that we should take this land away. That is the usual statement to make. British Guiana has a law which entitles us to take the land away in a case of this kind, but it is because the amount to be paid for that land has to be decided by a Court of Law that I agree to the purchase of this land for \$480,000. When I first heard that this land was being offered on the market for sale, the thought came to me of the plight of those poor people who live there under a very short tenure of lease—month by month—if the land fell into the hands of persons who are prepared to get the most they can out of their bargains. Then I thought that the best thing in the interest of those people was that Government should acquire the land and continue to lease to those who do not want to buy, and to sell on easy terms of payment to those who would like to know that their houses are on their own lands.

I have discussed this matter with several of those who live in that area and put up the proposition as to what the price is likely to be. I asked them what was their honest opinion, and in each case I was told "If we can get the land to buy on easy terms, go ahead and try to get it for us". If we take this land away by force, it is obvious that the value is going to be compared with that of the land around that area in a Court of Law, and rightly so. We have Subryanville nearby, where I live. At the time Subryanville was bought by the Kitty Village Authority it was bought at a very low figure. It was laid out in lots and offered for sale at public auction. I attended that sale. That was subsequent to 1939 or the date which the hon. Member gave as the time this property in question changed hands from one associated company to another. On that day less than one-fourth of the lots were sold, I think I am correct. The lots were being offered at anything from \$900 down to \$700 for those of regular size. But those lots could not find purchasers at that time. I am speaking subject to correction. That was somewhere in 1941 or 1942. Some of those lots were bought subsequently at the upset price of \$700, and they have been kept and used as pasture lands, from which no revenue was obtained. In this case nothing was done to them, and quite recently those same lots were sold for four and a half times the price at which they were originally purchased. The cheapest of them changed hands recently for \$3,100. I just mention that to show the difference between land values of a few years ago and land values of today.

I am going a little further. In another section of Subryanville, which the Kitty Village Authority did not purchase because the proprietor would not sell, there are a number of people who are in a similar position as the people in Campbellville. That is, they have leased the lots and have their houses there. They are, however, better off than those in Campbellville, as in most cases their lease is for 10 years with the right of renewal and the option to purchase if the proprietors want to sell. The people of Campbellville have no such undertaking, no specific time placed on their lease and,

therefore, they are subject to being put off the land at short notice. The owners of the land in Subryanville, despite the fact that the lease is \$3.50 per month or \$42 a year in a large number of cases, and a little less in some other cases, are asking \$1,600 for one of those lots. So you see, if you take \$42 and multiply it by 20, as my hon friend suggested, you would get \$840, but nevertheless the price asked is \$1,600. My friend did not suggest that the value of the land in Campbellville is 20 times the lease, but he suggested it is 20 times the profit. That is a different matter altogether. He kept on saying it was \$140,000. The yardstick which he was speaking about was really 20 times the lease, because if it was 20 times the profit I would be very sorry for the hon. Member or anybody else who had a nice piece of land and at the time Government wanted to take it over, finds that he had lost money on that land for the previous five years, because in that case Government would expect the proprietor to refund 20 times the loss saved for the next 20 years. That shows that you cannot take the profits made on anything as the basis for the purchase price, except it was a business or manufacturing concern. This is land, and land has a certain value regardless of what use it is put to. If land is being used for a profitable purpose, it has no more value than if it was not used at all. The lands in Subryanville which have been fenced around are of very little more value, except for the cost of the fencing, than the other lands on which nothing has been done. That has been proved by the buying price.

If this Council accepts the idea of taking this land away by force and let the Court of Arbitration say what the British Guiana Government would have to pay for it, I can assure hon. Members—it is my honest opinion—we would have to pay a good deal more than \$480,000, and the additional amount would have to be borne by the very poor people whom my hon. friend has said he is trying to protect. I have also heard him refer to the matter of interest. He said the interest on this money would be equivalent to \$10 a year for a house lot. That is just over 80 cents per month, and that

is less than the lease these people are paying today. If Government bought the land, paid \$10 a year interest on a house lot, and added a little more to that for the collecting of the rents from these people, they would at least be assured of being able to retain their house spots at a very reasonable lease. There can be no question about it. Some of them are paying \$18 a year now, and I am sure the cost of collection would not make it that high. This block of land has over 1,100 building sites on it, and if you take the cost of a building site it is going to work out at something around \$450. I can assure hon. Members that if this land was not purchased by Government and it was offered by the proprietors for sale to the public — I am talking about the lands not already leased — they would have got a good deal more than the price which Government is going to pay. There is no secret about it. These sites would have fetched a sum in the vicinity of \$800 and \$1,000 each. There is no question about that in my mind.

I will now move on to show why I am so keenly interested in these people owning the land on which they have their houses. The tenancy is monthly and no company is going to lend them money on mortgage of their house in order to assist them to extend their house under such conditions. It is obvious that the only place they would be able to borrow money for that purpose under those conditions is that of the moneylender, to whom they would have to pay not 6 per cent. interest but perhaps 60 per cent. If these people got the opportunity to buy the land and become the owners of house and land they would have no difficulty in borrowing money at 6 per cent. to extend their buildings, instead of having to pay an exorbitant rate of interest. There is something else. If the landlord is the Government of British Guiana it is obvious that the tenancy of any person on that land would be absolutely secure, and the lending companies or private individuals would consider, on the assurance of Government that the land would be leased to a person so long as he pays the lease, lending him money on the security of his house. They would know that the land would not change hands at any time in the near future and with new

landlords these people might be ejected. It is absolutely a sure protection for these people and that is why I strongly recommend that Government buy this property for \$480,000.

I maintain that it would be a good thing in the interest of the people. It is no secret that Government does not intend to make a profit, but only to act as an agent between the people who occupy the land and those who own the land and want to sell. Therefore, if a person has a house in Campbellville which is worth him \$1,000, and Government takes over the land and sells the land on which his house is to him for \$480, for the sake of argument the value of that house and land if he wants to sell the next week after would not be \$1,480. It would be \$2,500. These people would benefit immensely by being in a position to own house and land. The value of the house would go up when the person selling is able to sell the land along with it. That is obvious to anybody, and I am sure all right-thinking people of Campbellville, looking at this matter from that point of view, would rightly expect hon. Members of this Council to stand up here and vote for the purchase for two reasons

(1) if the land is expropriated it would cost the Colony and the people more than \$480,000, and (2) if the land is not bought by Government the people who occupy buildings at Campbellville would be the losers by a very wide margin. On that account I have no hesitation in voting for it.

I can assure hon. Members that I am not considering to whom the land belongs, or how much it has changed hands for from one company to another. All I am considering is that it is worth \$480,000 to the people who are there, and that they are getting a square deal. It is my personal opinion that they are getting a very square deal, and I would like to know that the people leasing land in Subryanville are equally in the happy position of being able to purchase the land they occupy at a price that is related to their rental, in the same manner as the people of Campbellville will get theirs.

Dr. NICHOLSON: It would appear superfluous to add anything further to

this debate after what has been said by the hon. Member for Georgetown Central, but as I have taken a very active part in encouraging Government to purchase Campbellville I crave the indulgence of this Council to give a brief narration of the facts which influenced my action in this matter. It was some time early in 1949 that a deputation comprising occupiers of Campbellville called at my surgery and solicited my help in asking Government to intervene in order to prevent the proprietors selling that property to a company newly formed for that purpose. The matter was in some measure ventilated in this Council, and at once the hon. the Financial Secretary and Treasurer set the wheels of Government in motion for the acquisition of the property. He approached the proprietors who fixed a figure of £100,000 as the price and agreed to accept payment in 3½ per cent. bonds. Government was only too pleased to do that, because ready money was not forthcoming. The fear of the tenants of Campbellville was this: This newly-formed company of proprietors was quite willing to pay any price for Campbellville—\$500,000, six, seven or \$800,000, or more — and it was feared that it was going to end up in exploitation. After the matter was ventilated in Council and the hon. the Financial Secretary and Treasurer had agreed on the purchase I passed the news on to the tenants, and immediately there were marches and demonstrations of the tenants there, led by their representative in this Council, against the purchase of the property.

Dr. JAGAN: To a point of correction Against the purchase price!

Dr. NICHOLSON: Under one pretext or another. Let us accept it that it was against the purchase price. Other tenants who did not join in the demonstrations came to me again. They were distressed because they thought that, owing to the demonstrations, Government would not purchase any more. They informed me that a petition had been prepared and sent to the Government asking Government not to make the purchase, and they enquired of me what steps they should take. I told them they had better decide on a counter-petition. That they did, and the

petition dated 30th August, 1949, was presented to me bearing 369 signatures, and asking Government to pursue to the bitter end the purchase of Campbellville. That, in a nutshell, is how the matter stands.

The hon. Member for Georgetown Central has exploded the myth that Government is purchasing the property because Government wishes to benefit the proprietors. It is nothing of the sort. It was done solely to protect those persons who are living at Campbellville. Unfortunately there are quite a large number of persons in our community who can be easily led, easily fooled, but you cannot fool all the people all the time. That is why we have this petition with 369 signatures, and from that day on to this moment I am being button-holed, and inundated with letters and telephone calls asking me if Government is not going to implement the recommendation of Finance Committee to purchase Campbellville. About two or three weeks ago we opened the Ruimveldt Housing Centre, and on that occasion two or three persons from Campbellville came to me and said: "What is Government doing about Campbellville? Is it true that Government is not going to purchase it any more, and we are going to fall into the hands of this newly-formed company who will exploit us?" I am worried in and out of season by the tenants living there. I have no option but to vote along with the hon. Member for Georgetown Central and other Members for Government to purchase Campbellville.

Mr. CARTER: I think it is over a year that this question of the acquisition of Campbellville has been before this Council, and it is a very long time ago since this Council indicated that it is in favour of the acquisition by Government of this land. I accuse the hon. the Financial Secretary and Treasurer of undue delay in bringing this matter before the Council, when for a long time we had indicated our willingness to support the purchase of Campbellville and Bel Air. Everyone in this country knows that land values have soared tremendously during the last few years. I am informed that not very long ago Subryanville was purchased for \$7,000 and today it is impossible to buy three house lots at Subry-



anville for that figure. I have here the figures quoted by my friend, the hon. Member for Central Demerara, in relation to the price asked for Campbellville, and the price at which it was acquired. Surely the hon. Member should know, like anyone else, that land values have gone up. I think he ought to know that.

Dr. JAGAN : To a point of correction! I pointed out that they have increased 96 times. I hope the hon. Member sees my point. I did not say that land values have not gone up. I said that the purchase price has increased 96 times, which is a tremendous increase.

Mr. CARTER : The hon. Member for Central Demerara should know this. A member of his own Party, the Peoples' Progressive Party, owned Pln. Coverden, I am informed that he paid \$12,000 for it and eventually sold it for \$40,000, making a profit of 400 per cent. That is a member of my friend's Party and certainly he should know —

Dr. JAGAN : I must object to the inference the hon. Member is making that a member of my Party exploited. If the hon. Member wants to make a political speech he must go to the street corner.

The PRESIDENT : The hon. Member has just stated a fact. I do not think he imputed anything to the hon. Member for Central Demerara.

Mr. CARTER : My friend has been allowed to use so much of his street-corner methods in this Council that I thought I might have been allowed to do so myself. In that case, with which the hon. Member should be familiar, a profit of 400 per cent. was made, and while we have been delaying in this matter people have been ejected by the Courts on proper grounds, and have been at their wit's end to find houses. I am, therefore, very anxious that this Council should get on with the job of acquiring this land in order that houses may be built for the people in Georgetown. It is strange that when we were considering the proposal to spend money for the purchase of Cane Grove-La Bonne Mere there was not all this opposition we have today when we

are trying to spend money for the acquisition of land for the extension of Georgetown. I see that another \$50,000 is to be spent on the Cane Grove-La Bonne Mere settlement, and not a single word has been raised by the hon. Member against this additional expenditure. Why then all this opposition to people in Georgetown getting houses and acquiring land?

I was very much impressed by the speech by the hon. Member for Georgetown Central (Mr. Fernandes). I think it was one of the finest speeches we have heard in this Council, and I endorse all he said about land values at Campbellville. It is also known that the value of one's house goes up if the transport for that house has land attached to it, as against a house on leased land. I have also been approached by many tenants of Campbellville who are most anxious that Government should acquire this land, and they were most anxious to pay the price suggested by Government. I have also heard of the combine which is at work and is "waiting in the slips" to see whether or not Government is going to purchase this land. The hon. Member for Central Demerara (Dr. Jagan) said he had heard it suggested that he was associated with the combine, but he said he was not. I heard the same thing myself and I am glad he has disowned it here today in Council. But whether that is so or not I think it is important that this Council should approve of the purchase of this land. Let the people of Georgetown get some houses to live in. People are living under all kinds of odd conditions, and I am not going to sit in this Council and do anything to prevent relief being given to those people. It is all right to talk airily about these matters, and possibly to speak from one's heart, but there are times when one has to bring one's good sense into play in these matters.

The hon. Member has also spoken about a Land Valuation Committee. Who will appoint the Committee? Has my friend considered whether the same forces that he is attacking, who are in the grand conspiracy to exploit the people, are not the same forces that will appoint the Committee which would consider the

valuation of the land? On what basis would the valuation be made? Certainly the only basis on which it can be made is in relation to the price of land in the neighbourhood. We have heard from the hon. Member for Georgetown Central (Mr. Fernandes)—and I know it myself personally—of the increased price of land at Subryanville which is next door to Campbellville. Recently a person purchased a house lot for \$3,000, and certainly the Committee would have to take into account the value of the land next door. It does not stop there. There is always a right of appeal, and there are many decided cases on this matter. It is not a question of what the Committee alone says; there is a Court of Appeal.

The hon. Member for Central Demerara has also spoken about the basis of assessment for the acquisition of estates, but I challenge him to present one instance in Great Britain where this basis of assessment has been used with respect to building estates. It might be all right in the case of the acquisition of railways, steel companies and so on, but I challenge him to present one instance where that basis of assessment has been used for the acquisition of land for building purposes. I feel very strongly on this housing question and I think it is time we got on with the job and stopped all this talking we are doing.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I think I have come very conveniently after the last speaker, because he has brought out the point I made during the debate on the Land Bill as to the issue between rural housing and urban housing. Just as strongly and vehemently as he has advocated a place for settling the overcrowded City dwellers I would advocate that the fullest opportunity be given to people to settle in the rural areas rather than cramping themselves in the City and around the City. But it is not a point I intend to labour at this stage, because I have been listening carefully to all the arguments, and I am convinced as to the reasonableness of purchasing Campbellville, and also the very important point made in the course of the debate, that the vendors are prepared to give a mortgage to the Government at 3½ per cent. That is a very important point, and one which must be

considered in dealing with this vote. The whole point seems then to turn, not on the question whether it is necessary to purchase Campbellville, but as to whether the price is a reasonable one.

I am not concerned with outside politics, but from the speech of the hon. Member who has just taken his seat there seems to be a great deal of external politics so far as the purchase of Campbellville is concerned. I was not aware until he spoke, that there was so much in it, and it seems to me that I should make some enquiries into some of the external politics in view of the speech of the hon. Nominated Member on my right (Mr. Farnum) who referred to the racial question. Personally I am sorry to have heard reference to that. If Campbellville is to benefit the people, and if the price is reasonable it will not benefit one set of people but all concerned, and I trust that on that basis the purchase will be made. As a matter of fact we must regard Campbellville as being between the rural areas and the City, and as an area which will embrace varying types of people and cater for all concerned. There should be no racial question raised as regards Campbellville.

It seems to me regrettable to find that Government is dealing with the question of purchasing land for the extension of Georgetown in a piecemeal manner. I cannot conceive of any good reason for skipping Newtown and jumping to Campbellville, in view of the fact that there are so many obstacles to get over before we can get to Campbellville. Roads will have to be built, and there must be some agreement with the proprietors of Newtown. More than that. It seems that Government ought to have attached a great deal of importance to the question of saving this money and gaining the greatest advantage for the City of Georgetown on the question of housing. I refer to the D'Urban Park scheme, which was put up before Finance Committee, by which it is proposed to shift the race course to some other site and to erect a stadium at D'Urban Park to the advantage of the entire populace. An area which is very contiguous to Georgetown would then have been developed as a high density housing area,

and it would have proceeded eastward until it connected up with Government lands at the back of the race course, and probably for some years to come the housing problem in Georgetown might have been controlled. More than that, if the D'Urban Park area had been converted into a housing scheme its impact would have been felt as far as Lodge Village, where there would have been a greater housing utilization of the lands. It seems to me that that would have been a more logical thing to do.

It induces me to make the point that it is rather a neat way Government has taken to accept, before discussion in this Council, the report and recommendations of the Town Planner recently laid on the table. If Government is going to purchase Campbellville before the Town Planner's report is properly discussed and accepted, and is proceeding with the decanting scheme at Ruimveldt in connection with the slum clearance in Albouystown, it seems to me that Government is accepting on the outside rather than on the inside, portions of the plan for a Greater Georgetown, which is contrary to what is reasonable. We should be able to see to what extent the City should be developed within a certain period, and what portions of the plan this Council is prepared to accept before we embark upon schemes which, if accepted now, would compel Government and this Council to decide to do something as provided in the plan for the intermediate areas. I think that is a fundamental objection to the whole idea of purchasing Campbellville which borders on the City.

We have to consider another important question—that it will cost Government a great deal of money for a period of years to lay out Campbellville properly, and it seems to me that this half a million dollars will increase to the extent of probably two million dollars before Campbellville is converted into a livable area and eventually into a village area. Is it fair to the development of British Guiana that we should devote so much money to the development of an area so far outside Georgetown before more important schemes are embarked upon?

The next proposal to be put before this Council will be the purchase of Bel Air, an intermediate area, and the same argument will be adduced by the hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Carter) and other hon. Members, that we must have the people of Georgetown settled. With all respect to him and every Member here I say that what we need is a housing scheme such as is being embarked upon at Ruimveldt, and what I have seen just outside San Fernando and Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, where our lower and middle-class people would have an opportunity of securing their own homes. Here is a scheme which, in my opinion, has back-fired. It is not so important to the upper and middle-class people as it is to the working class people, because they are the ones who are suffering from overcrowding. What sort of housing scheme will be put up at Campbellville which would provide the necessary outlet for the lower class people? I am afraid that the housing problem will remain in the same position and, what is more, the taxpayers will be saddled with tremendous expenditure on the development of Campbellville into a proper village or urban area. Those who have settled there have done so, not so much because they were overcrowded in Georgetown, but because they could carry on a bit of gardening and rear some cattle nearby, even providing some milk for Georgetown. In other words Campbellville is not, strictly speaking, an area to which people from Georgetown will go, because is it conceived that working people will travel all that distance to and from their work in Georgetown? The laying out of roads over which a bus service to Georgetown can be organised is a development which will take a long time.

Personally I feel that the price asked for Campbellville is extremely steep. It is not sufficiently good argument to say that the value of land in Subryanville has increased four times. Subryanville is in an entirely different position. It is near to the public road and to the sea. It is beautifully laid out and has a delightful playground, and there is a well in the area. There are also houses erected by aristocrats from Georgetown which lend beauty to the area and enhance the value of the

house lots. I was recently at the point of purchasing a lot of land at Subryanville myself, because it is developing into a locality which is the envy of everyone who desires to purchase a house lot. It does not bear relationship to Campbellville, the area south of the railway line. As regards Newtown, which is contiguous to Campbellville, house lots in that area are leased at \$1 per month. In considering values we must take the rental value of land, because the type of houses to be put up in Campbellville will be more or less the same as those in Newtown.

In considering the reasonableness of the price asked for Campbellville we must consider the expenditure involved in constructing roads, and the cost of other amenities required to develop the area. I feel that we must not take the view that if Government does not purchase Campbellville somebody will do so. I suggest that Government should build up a housing area at D'Urban Park where people from Georgetown could settle, and let Bookers keep Campbellville until some day when the price of land may come down. The present tendency is for the prices of land and houses to become cheaper. Some people say, however, that prices will stand for another few years.

I am against this motion, as I have indicated before, and I want to be consistent. Although I am impressed with the argument as to the necessity to purchase land I think that priority should be given to housing schemes which are more practicable than this one, and that there should not be this hasty rush to purchase Campbellville. I know that Campbellville has been developed, not so much by what the proprietors have done, but as a result of the hard work of the people who settled in that area, and what they have done to make it what it is today. I am sure it would have been built up in the same way as Newtown has been built up, and Government could have utilized this money in a more practical scheme. I am going to oppose the motion in principle, and also on the ground that it ought not to have been brought forward before a decision was given by the Secretary of State on the petition which has been submitted. It does not matter who the petitioners are, or whether they are in-

spired, I feel that due importance should be attached to any representation which has been made in this matter. I think Government should have awaited the decision of the Secretary of State which would have been accepted by the petitioners one way or another, with the knowledge that it had been considered on the highest level. For the reasons I have stated, I am going to vote against this motion.

Mr. WIGHT: In subscribing to the views of those hon. Members who have supported the motion I would say that there is very little more that can be added to what has already been said. I was, however, rather amazed to hear the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Debidin) say that the prices of land and properties are going down, and that it is difficult to sell properties at present. If that were so it would be logical to expect that rents would be reduced. I do not think the hon. Member would be so bold as to say that rents in this City have been reduced. I therefore think that on reflection he will admit that he was wrong in suggesting that property values are going down.

Some hon. Members have said that \$480,000 is too large a sum to pay for Campbellville. I wish to draw the attention of those hon. Members to the fact that they have been shouting from the house-tops, the street corners and even in this Chamber, that the Colony's progress is being hampered by this, that and the other, and the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Dr. Jagan) and his associates have promised the people the millenium and manna from heaven. Surely if we are to have this progress, this millenium—the falling of manna from heaven, increased wages, improved standard of living for the people of this Colony, as advocated by the hon. Member for Central Demerara, he would expect increased production and land and house values to increase. The more people are able to purchase. It would create a scarcity of land and dwellings, and naturally, the ordinary economic factor of demand and supply would come into play and the values of land and house would rise. It is obvious that the value of this land which this Council and this



Government are invited to purchase would increase. As the hon. Member for Central Georgetown has quite rightly pointed out, within the last five or ten years the value of properties of all sorts has increased four, five or six times the original figure, and there is no tendency of a stagnation in the market no visible sign of any serious decrease in either rents or the purchase price of houses. Therefore, these people who are being given an opportunity of securing their land and houses at a reasonable figure, and securing themselves in a reasonable rental against this rise in value, should be given the opportunity of purchasing now at the present price rather than wait perhaps 5 or 10 years when this promised millenium will only aggravate a rise in both spheres, i.e., rental value and purchase price. Market values have increased considerably and would continue to rise.

We have been told about a probable decrease in value. We have visual evidence of the Wortmanville housing Scheme. The rents were put at \$10 to \$12 per month and the premises were occupied. Today we have seen, in certain instances, that the rents have gone up to \$18, and the people are saying that they cannot pay that. We have made efforts in the rural areas referred to by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara, but he says nothing has been done. Personally I would like to remind the hon. Member that in my constituency in Essequibo we have a considerable amount of building operation assisted by Government under the Housing Scheme. The hon. Member himself was advocating and appealing to Government to extend that scheme to the Cane Grove Settlement, and he thought that Government should give a bigger grant.

Mr. DEBIDIN: To a point of correction! When I spoke of something being done in the rural areas I was not particularly referring to housing alone, but to the general development of the rural areas, so as to attract people away from the City.

Mr. WIGHT: Even if that is so, I see the hon. Member has Cane Grove in his constituency. He knows about the Vergenoegen and other Settlements. If

he referred to the present schedule he would see that there is going to be an extension of the scheme by the purchase and reconditioning of Pln. Lima. There are several more instances where we are progressing. I was wondering at one time whether the hon. Member for Central Demerara was going to compare the purchase price of Pln. Lima with that of Campbellville, because I see he has only recently returned from that area and, no doubt, he may be able to tell us how much that \$141,000 would benefit that particular area. I cannot say truthfully that there has been no attempt to make settlements and carry out developmental projects in the rural areas as against Georgetown.

I was very pleased to hear the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara say that he was in favour of the scheme. I think at one time he was favourably impressed with the arguments adduced for the purchase, because he thought of the necessity of increasing the City limit. Then he said that it should come after the rural development of which he speaks. It is obvious that the City of Georgetown will have to be extended and that it has to go one way or the other. Unless we bridge the Demerara River we must go along the East Coast or along the East Bank, Demerara. Apparently, we are going both ways. I do not know if he suggests that we should jump the areas from Vlissengen Road past Bel Air and start to develop from that point and leave this as a sort of patchwork. I do not think the hon. Member for Central Demerara went so far as to suggest that.

There are only two other points I may touch upon as the hon. Member referred to them. It is rather surprising to hear at one moment the hon. Member for Central Demerara suggesting that Government should adopt the policy of giving the masses the opportunity of acquiring their own freehold property, and now that we have the opportunity of these same people acquiring freehold property we find the hon. Member suggesting that it should not be done. On other occasions he was always against the granting of leases, and suggested that the people be given freehold property. That is the intention at the moment. It

is rather amazing to hear this sudden wail and howl by certain elements in the community who are inciting certain people to make demands of self-government, that we must govern ourselves and strike and retard production in the Colony. The people lose; they lose their wages which are not implemented by funds received in or from outside the Colony by those responsible for this agitation and incitement. Here we are sitting around this table and in calmness are considering a motion for the betterment and in the interest of the poorer class of people, and we are promptly held up by way of a petition to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. No doubt the sponsor of that petition still envisages a state of bondage under the Secretary of State forever and ever. If we are of the opinion that we should have self-government and should govern ourselves in the interest of the Colony, I would have to reflect for more than one minute before I consider appealing to the Secretary of State for the Colonies by way of a petition to turn down what might possibly be a decision of this Council.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Lest there be any misunderstanding in the minds of Members of this Council in regard to the Acquisition of Lands for Public Purposes Ordinance and the provision relating to compensation, I should like to refer hon. Members to that Ordinance, Chapter 170, section 18 of which reads as follows:—

“In determining claims for compensation for lands acquired under this Ordinance, the Court may take into consideration—

- (a) the market value of the land at the time of awarding compensation;
- (b) any damage sustained by the person interested at the time of awarding compensation by reason of severance;
- (c) the damage (if any) sustained by the person interested at the time of awarding compensation by reason of the acquisition injuriously affecting his other property or his earnings;

- (d) if in consequence of the acquisition he is compelled to change his residence or place of business, the reasonable expenses (if any) incidental to the change . . . .”

The hon. Member for Central Georgetown in his speech pointed out the values in the areas and environs of this land at Campbellville. Obviously that will be a matter to be taken into consideration by any tribunal in assessing compensation. Looking at the provision one can clearly see that it is the market value of the land at the time of awarding compensation that will be determined. Therefore, the question is, what will be regarded as the market value at the time of awarding compensation? That is a matter of evidence, and that evidence is taken from what happens either to other lands in the district or other lands generally at the time. It is quite clear that whatever the price was in 1939 the fact is that during the relevant material years prices have considerably advanced. It is a matter of commonsense, apart from the legal aspect, and I am sure that hon. Members will appreciate the fact that the price which was offered, and which Government now proposes to purchase at, if approved by this Council, is a reasonable one having regard to all the surrounding circumstances, particularly the market value at the time of awarding compensation.

I do not think it is necessary to labour the point, because it has been put from a practical point of view to this Council by the hon. Member for Georgetown Central. From a general point of view I can imagine that those who are occupying premises there, who are living on the land on a monthly tenancy, will be glad to know that the land is purchased by Government, and that they will have security for many years, and that they in turn can utilize what savings they have to purchase the land and become the owners themselves of their own spot.

Capt. COGHLAN: It is not a question of whether Government can really afford to buy Campbellville and La Penitence. It is a question of, can Government afford to allow an outsider to purchase these places and exploit the

people by reselling them at very much enhanced prices, entirely different from what will be charged by Government on reselling to the people? Government intends to pay \$480,000 in 3½ per cent. Government Bonds for Campbellville. As you know, Sir, very few persons are willing nowadays to invest money at 3½ per cent. The least that people look for nowadays is 4 per cent., and quite recently the Mayor and Town Council of Georgetown issued bonds at 4 per cent. For that reason it would be very difficult for the proprietors of Campbellville to secure \$480,000 at 3½ per cent. If the Bonds were issued at 4 per cent. all they would be really getting is \$420,000, and that would be, to my mind, more or less what Government is actually paying for the bonds.

The next point is about the value of land going up. I know from my own experience that land on the West Bank, Demerara, which was sold some 15 or 16 years ago at 20 cents per acre is selling today at anything from \$2.50 to \$3 per acre. Therefore it is news to me to hear that the value of land is going down. If you take an acre of land, which is roughly 3 rods by 100 rods, you can get 10 house lots measuring 5 rods by 6 rods, which is considerably more than you find in most house lots in the vicinity of Georgetown. Further, if you want to raise money on a house which is on leased land you find it difficult or well nigh impossible to do it, whereas when people have purchased the land on which their houses are built they can go to any insurance company or building society and raise money on the house and land.

With regard to the hon. the Attorney-General's exposition of what the present law is, I am well aware of that. Even under the Irrigation and Drainage Ordinance, if you are not satisfied with what is offered to you, it allows you to go to the Magistrates' Court and the Magistrate has jurisdiction regardless of the amount. If you are not satisfied with the Magistrate's decision you can appeal to the Supreme Court and, as the hon. the Attorney-General has pointed out, the real question in determining the value of land is what is the value of the adjoining lands, and not what it was sold for in

1939 or 1940 would be its value today. What is required is the value of the land today. All the other points have been covered and there is nothing more I have to say except in regard to La Penitence.

At La Penitence 30½ acres of land is being purchased for \$21,700. That works out at roughly \$711 per acre of 10 house lots 5 by 6 rods each. That works out at a very small amount per house lot, even after an Authority has taken over and has put in drains and roads which will be necessary for the amenities of the people living there. So I feel that the people of La Penitence will be served very well by this Government purchasing this 30½ acres at what I consider a very reasonable figure. It is certainly less than what can be got in the open market. Government will be serving the people of La Penitence by purchasing at the price put down here and giving out the land to them, so that each person instead of being a tenant, will be the owner of his own property.

The PRESIDENT: I do not wish to take part in this controversy about land valuation except to say that we are considering whether this is an extraordinary price or not. We should therefore consider what are the prices of properties and buildings, not of the well-to-do but of the poorest class: I have been told 100 times that you have people paying for a single room as much as \$12 per month. Go to Albouystown and see 12 rooms in a range which is nothing but squalor. \$5 is charged for each room. That is \$60 for the whole range which is under the size of a small house. That is the position in Georgetown today, and it shows how much values have changed. If you compare the price or rent the poorest people have to pay for a room you would find you are not far off in the price asked for in the purchase of these properties outside Georgetown, such as Campbellville. That is a fact. I do not know who are the people who are exploiting the tenants by charging \$5 per month for those rooms, but I should say that the people in the outskirts would be far better off, even at this price, than any of the poor people in Georgetown.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: I shall try to be very

brief. The hon. Member for Georgetown North has given a summary of the events leading up to this particular matter, and I want to confirm and amplify in some respects what he has said. It was on the 3rd February, 1949, that there was a debate in this Council under the Head "Local Government — Central Housing and Planning Authority", and I have here an extract of the Hansard of that day's meeting. The hon. Member for Central Demerara is reported to have said :

"There is another problem in regard to the areas known as Newtown, Campbellville, Bel Air, etc. A portion of that area is owned and administered by the Courentyne Sugar Estates, Ltd., and several persons have come to me from that area and told me that there is some move to sell the land. I do not know whether it is the whole or a part of the area, but I was told that private individuals were attempting to form a company to purchase the land. I certainly feel that it would be a good idea if Government would take some steps to see that, if the land is sold at all, the people who are at present occupying it be given an opportunity to acquire it....."

That statement was followed by a speech by the hon. Member for Essequibo River, who is not here today, supporting that idea, and lastly by the hon. Member for Georgetown North himself who said :

"The question was brought to my knowledge a week ago by the tenants of Campbellville, old and new. They said they were there at a rental all these years, and it was not fair to them after they had built up the land and had built their houses on those lands. They said one of the proprietors had gone to them and told them that they would be given priority to purchase the land, but since then there has been a change in that attitude. They told me that a company is being formed to purchase this area outright and then resell it to them at 100 or 200 per cent. profit....."

Entirely on my own initiative, and without any instruction from Government, I took steps to approach Booker Bros. Mc. Connell & Co., Ltd. I spoke to two of the senior Directors and invited them to offer the property to Government if it was in fact the case that they were going to sell out. On the 9th February a letter came to the Government from one of the

Directors of Messrs. Booker Bros. offering the property for sale for £100,000. Among other things it said "Naturally we were loath to sell the land to any individual or any block of private speculators because the interest of the tenants would be jeopardized". I was able to persuade them that before proceeding with the private sale they had in view, they should make the offer to the Government.

The next step was, the Colonial Secretary wrote to Booker Bros. and asked for time to consider this project. That letter was dated the 19th February, 1949. Today is the 29th March, 1951. They have given us a lot of time. Shortly after, when the matter was favourably considered by Government, I again approached the Directors, again on my own initiative, and told them we had not got the funds, but would they be prepared to take the purchase price in bonds on a Government Loan which would be issued? They expressed their willingness to do so, and the rate of interest agreed on was 3½ per cent. Although, as the hon. Member for Demerara River has said, the general interest rates are somewhat higher today yet they have loyally kept to that bargain and will accept the bonds at 3½ per cent. It is correct to say, if one takes 4 per cent., which is the rate of the recent issue of Town Council bonds, as the present normal rate, on that basis the price would be a reduced figure of \$420,000. (But naturally Government bonds have a slightly higher value than Town Council Bonds). That is the early history of this matter. It was a genuine attempt by the Government to forestall a private sale which might have resulted in hardship to those tenants who are now in occupation of the land and have their houses there.

I am very sorry indeed that the hon. Member for Central Demerara has thought fit to sully our records by an intemperate speech. I am sure, Sir, that some of his conclusions are entirely wrong. He referred to the price which he was able to ascertain from an examination of the record of the sale made some years ago. As I indicated when I interrupted him, that was a sale between friends. It was a private internal sale. It is perfectly true that a valuation has to



be put on transports for legal purposes, but hon. Members would know that in cases like that the absolutely minimum amount is put down. The figure put down has no true relation to the actual value of the land, and certainly not is market value. I can speak with some knowledge and feeling about Campbellville. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Farnum, referred to a gentleman to whose enterprise much of the development of Campbellville is due. That gentleman was my brother-in-law, the late Mr. W. E. Delph. I can tell hon. Members I am quite sure that it was due to his enterprise that much of the building at Campbellville did take place. He persuaded his employers to allow him to spend capital on setting up a housing scheme. He built roads, cleared the land and secured the tenants. I used to spend many week-ends in his house. He was the Manager and I know what I am talking about.

The proprietors expended a fair amount of capital on that scheme, but they wrote it off year by year. That is why their profits, if the hon. Members' figures are accepted, appear reasonably small. They were developing those lands and were looking for profits by the accretion which was bound to take place in the capital value of the land. They were prepared to wait. It is unfair to say, because those credit balances to which the hon. Member referred may have been small, that that is a good reason to deprive them of the true market value of the land now that it is about to be sold. It is a fact that the market value appreciated because the proprietors spent money on development. It is also true that the tenants have contributed to the appreciation of the value of that land. I grant that; but nevertheless it is also true that what the proprietors will get from this sale is not equivalent to the market value but is less than the true market value if these lands were put to private sale. I used to tell my brother-in-law that I wondered how it was he was able to secure so many tenants of this property on what I call a very tenuous tenure plan of a monthly rental, and the answer was that the tenants had every faith in the integrity and goodwill of the present proprietors, Messrs. Booker

Bros. McConnell & Co., Ltd. They felt sure they would not be dispossessed of that land if they built their houses on the land, and they were content to build on those very short tenancy terms. Quite obviously, if the proprietors sold and the ownership fell into private hands a different story would be told. That is why the people are extremely glad that Government has been able to effect this transaction with the present proprietors.

I am not going into any details regarding the future of this property. I have explained that the first step would be to allow the present occupants to buy their land if they wish to do so. The first step is to make suitable arrangements to that end. As regards the section of the land which is not now being used, quite obviously plans will have to be prepared and money found to develop it into a housing estate, but that is a matter for the future.

Lastly, I must refer to the curious charges which have been levelled at me by the hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Carter) who accused the Financial Secretary of a good deal of unnecessary delay in bringing this matter to a conclusion, and by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Debidin) who accused the Financial Secretary of this hasty rush to buy Campbellville. We have been walking on a tight rope between those two points of view for a long time, and I hope that if we get through with this resolution I may still be excused by both for being either hasty or dilatory.

The Council divided on the motion and voted:—

For — Messrs. Morrish, Luckhoo, Carter, Smellie, Phang, Peters, Kendall, Fernandes, Coghlan, Farnum, Thompson, Ferreira, Raatgever, Wight, Dr. Nicholson, the Financial Secretary and Treasurer, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary — 18.

Against — Dr. Jagan and Mr. Debidin — 2.

Motion carried.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE JANUARY-  
MARCH, 1951.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: I now move:

"That, this Council approves of the Supplementary Estimate for the quarter ended 31st March, 1951, which has been laid on the table."

This Schedule was taken in Finance Committee last week when I explained that most of the items are re-votes of unexpended balances of last year's provision in respect of works which are in progress. There are very few new items, and the total of the Schedule is \$126,166.72. I now ask that it be approved, and I will not move that the Council go into Committee unless any Member wishes to discuss any point of detail.

Mr. DEBIDIN: There is one point I would like to raise on page 2, but I do not see the necessity for the Council to go into Committee. Now that the East Demerara Magisterial District has been rearranged to include Mahaica and Mahaicony I think there is need not only for additional staff but additional typewriters. I see an item for the purchase of three typewriters for the Georgetown Magistrate's Office. I know that there is a great deal of work to be done in the East Demerara District in the handing over of matters like the collection of maintenance and affiliation arrears, fines, etc., and that there must be some adjustment which will require additional staff. Because of its urgency I have taken this opportunity to mention the matter.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The Magistrate is going into the matter himself.

Schedule approved.

PROVISION FOR DEVELOPMENT  
PLAN SERVICES

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: I beg to move:

"That, this Council approves of the Schedule of Provision required during 1951 for Development Plan Services to be met from Surplus Balances and from Advances pending the raising of a Development Loan, which has been laid on the table."

This Schedule represents expenditure estimated for 1951 on those Development Plan items which are not included in the main Estimates, and one or two new items which have since been agreed to, the first of which is under Head III — Agriculture — Refrigeration plant, etc. at Lethem, \$50,000. Practically all the other items are works and services already in progress, and this provision is to continue them in this year within the limits of the authorized estimate for each. Attached to the Schedule is a subsidiary Schedule which is headed "Development Plan Services to be met from advances pending the raising of a Development Loan," and contains one item — Reconditioning of East Bank road, \$400,000.

Members will recall that in Finance Committee it was explained that in consultation with, and with the concurrence of the Public Works Department Advisory Committee, Government had decided to allocate, with the approval of this Council, a sum of \$600,000 for reconditioning the East Bank road in the emergency which has arisen because of its condition, and because of the fact that we cannot at this stage take on the major reconstruction of the road. That sum of \$600,000 will do two things. It will provide for the deviations to the extent of 6½ miles which form part of the permanent reconstruction work, and also for re-sheeting of a large section of the road. In other words it is an expedient to keep the road open to traffic and in fairly good order pending reconsideration of the project of reconstructing the road on a permanent basis. The amount which is estimated to be spent this year on this road is \$400,000 out of a total estimate of \$600,000, and of that \$600,000 a sum of \$400,000 will be for the deviations which form part of the permanent reconstruction project in any case. So that to some extent this is part of the capital work of reconstruction. That is the major new item on this Schedule. I do not know if Members will wish to go into Committee.

Mr. DEBIDIN: On the very first item I wish to say that I am not at all satisfied that we are receiving full value for the expenditure on the refrigeration plant at Lethem. I would like to be in-

formed by the hon. the Financial Secretary of the approximate annual income from this station, and what method is adopted to collect any charges for refrigeration, meat inspection, and so forth. The reason why I ask those questions is because I was told by someone who recently visited the district, that there is not much prospect in the Rupununi ranch; that there may be a reduction of profits because feeding conditions are bad. If we are to expend money we should make sure that it will be recouped.

On the question of the East Bank road I am in total agreement with the proposal to recondition it. It is important that, as in the case of the East Coast road, we should maintain the East Bank road in reasonably good condition until the completion of the Courentyne road permits of the construction of first class all-weather roads on the East Coast and East Bank. We find that those roads have deteriorated principally because the amounts voted are hopelessly inadequate for their proper maintenance. I feel that something should be done, and I was very disappointed when the Public Works Department Advisory Committee did not ask for an additional amount for the maintenance of roads, at least on the East Coast, on which there seems to me to be the heaviest traffic. It is a nightmare to travel by car over that road which constitutes a danger to motorists, and many times my car has been trapped by the concrete strips because the roadway between and outside of the strips is not properly maintained. I have escaped accidents by a close shave. Driving over that East Coast road is no pleasure at all, and when one has to travel on it many times every week it is very trying.

Just as Government is providing \$400,000 for the reconditioning of the East Bank road I hope it will make similar provision for the reconditioning of the East Coast road between Georgetown and Buxton at least. I had a chat with the District Engineer who told me that if he had at least one more grading machine he would be able to maintain the East Coast road in better condition, but he pointed out that a grader cannot be used on the portion of the road between Georgetown and Buxton on

account of the concrete strips. I would therefore suggest that the concrete strips be removed and the material be ground very fine and used as sheeting material so as to make the road less dangerous. I hope that when the Advisory Committee asks for the necessary funds the Financial Secretary will not put a large "No" against it.

As regards the East Bank road I am not satisfied that we should have embarked upon any deviations at all. It seems to me that we should spend the entire sum of \$400,000 in putting that road in a fair condition, because conditions will vary from year to year. As a matter of fact, at the time when the construction of an all-weather road to Atkinson Field will be started there may be so many changes that the deviations may be considered unnecessary in some places, and Government may be saved expenditure for the payment of compensation to owners of land. I therefore think that the deviations should not be undertaken until the proper reconstruction of the road is about to be put in hand. The amount proposed to be spent is not too much for the reconditioning of that road into a good second-class road.

Mr. MORRISH: I have listened to what the hon. Member has said in regard to the East Bank road. I entirely disagree with his suggestion that the deviation should not be carried out, for one very important reason that they would appreciably shorten the eventual length of the road. Furthermore, the deviations will to a large extent eliminate portions of the road which are lower than the surrounding land levels, the results of which is that those portions of the road are not drained. Advantage will be taken of the deviations to construct the roadway at a higher level than the surrounding land level, so that it can be easily drained.

Pln. Lima—

Item 29B|(b) *Reconditioning including purchase of agricultural equipment,* \$117,720

Mr. FERNANDES: I would like to ask a question or two on this item of \$117,720. Through a series of coincidences

I was absent from the Colony when this item was passed in Finance Committee, and I had already resigned from the Agricultural Advisory Committee, before it was passed by that Committee. This item came up during the time when I was Chairman of the Advisory Committee and it was turned down. I resigned from the Committee and it was brought up again and passed by the Committee. It was subsequently passed by Finance Committee on November 23. I left the Colony on October 5. I am not against the purchase of Pln. Lima but I would like some details from the hon. the Financial Secretary so as to be able to express an opinion at this stage for the purpose of record.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: I am sorry I cannot give any details now. I have not the papers with me and I assumed, in view of the extraordinary consideration given to this item, as the hon. Member says, twice in the Departmental Committee and in Finance Committee, that it had been agreed to. I can get the figures because I know that a memorandum was circulated in Finance Committee giving all the details.

Mr. FERNANDES: It is nice of the Financial Secretary to make those remarks but I have nothing to do with what any other Member of this Council, or what the Chairman of the Committee has done. I am here representing a section of this community and I have every right, before I pass any vote, to ask to be given information necessary to enable me to express my opinion or to vote one way or the other. I would like to remind the Financial Secretary and this Council that on both occasions I was not absent when I could have attended, but did not. I was in New Zealand representing this Council.

The PRESIDENT: As it is close upon 5 o'clock we may adjourn and continue the debate tomorrow, when the information the hon. Member wants will be ready. I do not remember the details myself but I know that a lot of clearing of the land is required, and the digging of drainage and irrigation canals. I think those are the main items.

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